

TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2001

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

SURFERS PARADISE BY-ELECTION**Return of Writ**

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that my writ issued on 21 March 2001 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Surfers Paradise has been returned with a certificate endorsed thereon by the returning officer of the election, on 5 May 2001, of Alexander James Douglas Bell, to serve as such member.

Member Sworn

Mr Bell was introduced, took the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the roll.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

4 May 2001

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

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 3 May 2001:

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989'.

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison
Governor

PRIVILEGE**Public Works Committee; Comments by Member for Beaudesert**

Mr SPEAKER: I refer to the matter of privilege raised by the member for Nudgee on 3 May 2001 concerning the alleged revelations of private deliberations of the Public Works Committee. I advise the House that, after considering correspondence from the member for Nudgee, I have decided to refer the matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for its detailed consideration.

PRIVILEGE**Industrial Commission; Comments by Minister for Industrial Relations**

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.33 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I refer to a statement that appears on page 598 of *Hansard* and which was made by the Minister for Industrial Relations during the debate on recent amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999. The minister stated that the Industrial Commission was to be the same type of model as we have in the Supreme Court. As you know, Mr Speaker, we disputed the accuracy of that statement during the debate. I now table legal advice that states—

With the utmost respect to the Minister, the statements to the effect that the amendments to the Act are intended to implement in the QIRC a similar model which exists under the Supreme Court Act 1991 are plainly inaccurate and misleading, in my view.

Mr Speaker, I ask that you consider this matter with reference to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. I table the document.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

11 May 2001—

Marine Safety Incidents—Annual Report 2000

14 May 2001—

Board of Teacher Registration—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Ipswich Girls' Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Ipswich Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Board of Trustees of the Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 2000

Griffith University—Annual Report 2000

James Cook University—Annual Report 2000

Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 2000 (Volume One and Two)

University of Queensland—Annual Report and Appendices 2000

University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 2000

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Crimes (Confiscation) Act 1989—

Crimes (Confiscation) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 38

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Forest Reserves) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 39

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (Red Imported Fire Ant) Quarantine Notice 2001, No. 40

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail Harvest Period) Notice 2001, No. 41

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 42

Associations Incorporation Act 1981—

Associations Incorporation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 43

Wagering Act 1998—

Wagering Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2001, No. 44

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE TO A PETITION

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

Response from the Minister for Environment (Mr Wells) to a petition presented by Mr Nuttall from 403 petitioners, regarding the retaining of land at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge as bushland reserve—

8 May 2001

Mr R Doyle

The Clerk of the Parliament

Legislative Assembly of Queensland

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 6 April 2001 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 5 April 2001 regarding the retaining of land at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge as bushland reserve.

Education Queensland owns the land in question in freehold. Disposal of the site, if considered surplus by Education Queensland, would be handled by DNR (Department of Natural Resources). Treasury requirements would require the proceeds from any sale be paid to Education Queensland.

With a potential market value in excess of \$1m, acquisition funding of this magnitude is not available to the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). The Brisbane City Council may be in a position to purchase this land from the Council's Environmental Levy.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Dean Wells

DEAN WELLS

Minister for Environment

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Hon. T. M. Mackenroth (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport)—

Report by Hon. David Hamill MP regarding Queensland Treasury Corporation Investor Relations Tours to Financial Centres from 23 October to 2 November and from 19 November to 26 November 2000

OVERSEAS VISIT**Report**

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.35 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report by the Honourable David Hamill in relation to two overseas trips that he made at the end of last year.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Unemployment**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: Last week, the unemployment statistics for April were released, showing the jobless rate in Queensland had risen to a trend rate of 8.7 per cent. I am the first to admit that the figure is disappointing. However, I can assure Queensland that my government remains totally committed to creating new jobs.

Until the middle of last year, we were doing well with unemployment down to a 10-year low of 7.5 per cent. Suddenly in August 2000, the employment situation turned sour in Queensland and across the nation. The state government policies which delivered 7.5 per cent unemployment had not changed. The only changes were the introduction of the GST, an unnecessary interest rate increase in August and a blow-out in fuel prices. Nevertheless, we are fighting hard to steer the ship back on course. I am encouraged by the fact that Queensland has recorded growth in the number of jobs in each of the last three months, but we remain committed to doing more.

One of the difficulties in bringing down the jobless rate in Queensland is that this state has a very high participation rate— 65.2 per cent of working-age people want to participate in the work force. In other words, they are seeking jobs. More Queenslanders want to work than people elsewhere in the nation, and particularly in the southern states.

If Queensland had the same participation rate as New South Wales, our unemployment rate would be just 4.6 per cent. That would be lower than the current unemployment rate in New South Wales of 5.7 per cent. If Queensland had the national participation rate, our unemployment rate would be 6.7 per cent, which is the national unemployment rate. If we used the Victorian participation rate, the figure would be 7 per cent.

In summary: New South Wales, participation rate 62.3 per cent, unemployment rate 5.7 per cent; Victoria, participation rate 63.9 per cent, unemployment rate 6.2 per cent; Australia, participation rate 63.7 per cent, unemployment rate 6.7 per cent; Queensland, participation rate 65.2 per cent, unemployment rate 8.7 per cent.

Unlike the coalition parties, my government believes that it should play an active role in creating the right atmosphere for job creation. The previous coalition government, in 1997, just gave up. The conservative parties said that there was nothing they could do about unemployment. I can assure Queenslanders now that my government will never throw in the towel like the coalition did. We will never give up on Queenslanders.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, you will recall that the last Borbidge budget predicted an increase in unemployment. That is their legacy. I should point out that when the coalition was last in government in Queensland the unemployment rate under the Borbidge government was 9.8 per cent—the highest in mainland Australia. All we can say about that is that at least it was lower than the Joh days, when unemployment hit 10 per cent, which was the highest rate of any Australian state.

The real test of a government is what it is doing to stimulate job creation. Any objective analysis will show that we have not been sitting on our hands—far from it. We have been out there creating jobs and we will continue to do so.

My government has been actively working to bring new business enterprises to Queensland—and we have been very successful in that field. The employment benefits of many of those new projects have yet to be fully felt. But they will be. Let us have a look at some of those major projects and think just what the unemployment rate would be now if my government had thrown up its hands and said there is nothing we can do to create new jobs, as the coalition did.

Firstly, successfully encouraging Virgin to set up its Australian headquarters in Queensland will create about 700 jobs. The decision by Qantas to locate its new 767 maintenance facility in Brisbane will provide more than 500 jobs. The establishment of IBM's Asia Pacific Technical Support Centre in Queensland will provide another 250 jobs. The expansion of Australian Meat Holdings has resulted in 400 new jobs over the past 18 months and is expected to create another 1,200 jobs over the next two years.

I have a list of projects that have been attracted to Queensland by my government and to which I will refer. This list is proof of my government's commitment to jobs creation—something the conservative parties have said was just too hard. Let us go back and have a look. In November 1998 we encouraged the establishment of the Stellar Communications facility here, creating 200 jobs. In October 1999 we attracted Bechtel's head office here, creating 200 jobs. In October 1999 Austar's Customer Response and Support Centre came here, creating 1,000 jobs. We attracted Parmalat's regional headquarters here, creating an additional 30 administrative jobs. The list goes on. I am just picking some of them out.

The attraction of Qantas' flight catering subsidiary for food production—Snapfresh—created 230 jobs in August 2000. Comalco chose Gladstone as the site for the proposed three-stage alumina refinery, the first stage of which was worth \$1.4 billion and 1,400 construction jobs, 400 operational jobs, and it is approaching financial close. The attraction of the DHL shared services centre created 225 jobs in May 2000. The attraction of Jetcare Pty Ltd's maintenance facility to service Virgin aircraft created 93 jobs. The Hutchison Telecommunications—Orange—call centre expansion created 824 jobs in November 2000. The Qantas Boeing 767 maintenance facility to be located in the Australia TradeCoast precinct is a \$66 million investment, creating 680 jobs in January this year.

The Aldoga aluminium smelter, near Gladstone, is a \$3 billion investment, creating 900 operational jobs and 3,000 construction jobs. Major project status was granted in February 2001. The EGR Plastics expansion created 500 jobs in January this year. The Australian Magnesium Corporation production plant is an investment of \$800 million, creating 1,000 jobs, and the project is nearing financial close. And then there is the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, which will create 2,926 direct and indirect jobs during construction. Inghams Enterprises is developing a greenfield site at Murarrie, resulting in a \$38 million capital expenditure and 96 new jobs. The Millmerran power station and coalmine will create 1,200 jobs during construction and 230 during the operational phase.

In the interests of time, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of this list in *Hansard* so that the House can be fully informed about our job creation drive.

Leave granted.

Jobs attracted to Queensland by the Beattie Government

- Attraction of Saville Systems who are a leading provider of customer care and billing software. 250 jobs created in Brisbane October 98
- Establishment of Stellar Communications facility. Created 200 jobs, Nov '98
- Establishment of Indus International—is the world's largest provider of enterprise asset management solutions. 50 jobs created in Brisbane Jan 99
- Attraction of Quantum ATL products Asia Pacific headquarters. Quantum designs and manufactures automatic tape libraries used in networked computer environments. Created 60 jobs in Brisbane. September 99.
- Establishment of Hatch Regional Centre. Hatch is a global Engineering company. Created 320 jobs. December 99
- Attraction of IBM Asia Pacific Technical Support Centre. 250 Jobs created in Brisbane 1999
- Attraction of Bechtel Head Office. Created 200 Jobs, Oct '99
- Citibank has established a customer service centre in Brisbane to service its Australian and New Zealand business clients. The centre will employ 200 staff., Oct '99
- Moura Ammonium Nitrate Plant is commissioned. Created 200 jobs. Late 1999.
- Relocation of Berri Plant from Bulimba to Australian Trade Coast zone and the development of a new juice processing facility valued at \$15 million and employing an additional 30 staff. December 1999.
- Establishment of Australian Provincial Newspapers' National Financial Services Unit on the Sunshine Coast. Created 40 jobs. November 1999.

- Establishment of shipping company, P&O Nedlloyd shared facility. Created 140 jobs. June 1999.
- Construction of WMC Fertilisers Pty Ltd, including a fertiliser factory at Phosphate Hill. Created 1250 jobs. December 1999
- Attraction of World Headquarters of the Association of Surfing Professionals, which was previously in California. Created 12 jobs. June 1999.
- Mediherb Expansion of production plant, 120 jobs, Feb 99
- Mills Tui, manufacturing operations, 66 jobs, June 1999
- Tropico Fruits, Manufacturing, 119 jobs, January 1999
- Austar, Customer Response and Support Centre, 1000 jobs, October 1999
- Electronic Arts, Software Production, 75 jobs, December 1999
- Establishment of Varley Manufacturing workshop for specialised vehicles. Created 80 Jobs. December 1999.
- Parmalat's regional headquarters, An additional 30 administrative jobs were created.
- Century Zinc Mine officially opened. Created 350 jobs. April 2000
- Virgin Airlines, Headquarters, 700 jobs, Jan '00
- Placer Dome, Australian HQ, 25 jobs, September 2000
- Budget Direct, HQ, 188 jobs, Oct '00
- GE Medical, Diagnostic Centre, 70 jobs, Oct '00
- Cummins Diesel, Manufacturing operation, 117 jobs, Nov '00
- Woolworths Distribution Centre expansion, 100 jobs, Dec'00
- Bendigo Bank, National Back Office, 80 jobs, Dec '00
- Reopening of Laminex Medium density Fibreboard line, with capital investment of \$1.2 million and a target to create 25 full time jobs within first 12 months. January 2000. Actual numbers averaged around 60 for the December 2000 quarter—well above the target.
- Expansion of Kerry Ingredients. Special ingredients manufacturing operation at Murarrie. Created 130 jobs. January 2000.
- Establishment of Red Hat Asia-Pacific Headquarters—Red Hat is a software distributor and developer. Created 60 jobs. January 2000.
- Establishment of Pioneer National Customer Service Centre. Created 75 jobs. March 2000.
- Establishment of Qualifyer Customer Care Centre, Air Travel industry. Created 120 jobs. March 2000.
- Attraction of Qantas flight catering subsidiary (Snapfresh) for food production. Created 230 jobs. August 2000.
- Attraction of National Road Management Authority claims processing centre. Created 70 additional jobs. June 2000
- The State Government has funded the QLD Institute of Medical Research to establish a world class Cancer Research Centre at the Royal Brisbane Hospital at a cost of \$55 million. It will have a staff of 700 scientists and support staff.
- Comalco choose Gladstone as site for proposed 3 stage Alumina refinery—1st Stage \$1.4 billion, 1400 construction jobs, 400 operational jobs approaching financial close
- Apha Pharm at Carole Park 140 jobs , Oct '00
- Universal Communications Group establishes Call Centre in Cairns—100 new jobs. October 00
- Attraction of DHL shared services centre, Created 225 jobs. May 2000.
- Jetcare Pty Ltd maintenance facility to service Virgin aircraft. Created 93 jobs. June 2000.
- Vision Airlie Project—upgrade of Airlie Beach main street, loop road and construction of a swimming lagoon. \$8 million funding for construction of the lagoon. Creation of 43 jobs. December 2000
- AAPT 'Cellular One' Customer Support Centre, 300 jobs, January 2000
- Hutchison Telecommunications (Orange), Call Centre Expansion, 824 jobs, Nov '00
- Qantas Boeing 767 maintenance facility to be located in Australia TradeCoast precinct. \$66 million investment, 680 jobs, Jan '01
- Aldoga Aluminium Smelter near Gladstone—\$3 billion investment, 900 operational jobs, 3000 construction jobs. Major Project Status granted February 2001
- Pacrim Avionics, Headquarters, 50 jobs, Jan '01
- TATA Ferrochrome Plant, 80 jobs, Jan '01
- Adacel Technologies, Software Development, 220 jobs, Feb '01
- Macquarie Bank, National Investment Centre, 160 jobs, Feb '01
- Luxury Paints, March, 60 jobs, Mar '01
- Pro-biotech head Office, 16 jobs, Mar '01
- Smith Industries, HQ, 60 jobs, March '01
- Fauldings Pharmaceutical, Manufacturing, 147 jobs, Apr '01
- AEMS Electronics Manufacturing, 111 jobs, Jan '01
- EGR Plastics, expansion, 500 jobs, Jan '01
- New Product Developments, Healthfood manufacturing, 83 jobs, Jan '01
- Redevelopment of a meat processing facility at Churchill. \$10 million investment and 356 new jobs by 2005.

- Port of Brisbane Motorway and Lytton Road upgrade to be completed by 2003. 200 jobs
- The first Clean Fuel production from the \$500 million BP Oil Refinery expansion at Bulwer Island just opened. Approximately 700 jobs during construction and 25 permanent jobs.
- A light metals strategy had been developed to assist industry to take full advantage of the State's potential light metals industry.
- In partnership with CSIRO, the State Government has committed \$24 million on stage 2 of the QLD Centre for Advanced Technologies at Pinjarra Hills. The expansion will create 80 new jobs and enable QCAT to accommodate a total of 350 research and support staff.
- Investment of \$3.75 million for establishment of State Government I-Lab. 70 jobs created, and 15 Companies located in centre—Sept 00
- 35 new jobs at Palmwoods—Berri Ltd, Queensland Investment Incentive Scheme and Queensland Industry Development Scheme support.
- Australian Magnesium Corporation production Plant. Investment of \$800M creating 1000 Jobs.
- Consolidated Meat Group upgrade of Rockhampton plant will create over 98 new jobs and assist in the retention of over 900 existing jobs.
- Assistance to Joy Mining Company has resulted in the acquisition of land, completion of new premises, investment of \$13 million and the creation of 130 jobs.
- South Bank Bridge, including works in the Maritime Museum and Botanic Gardens at landing Point. Creating 173 jobs Mid 2000-Aug 2001.
- State Government contribution of \$100 M for Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. 2926 direct and indirect jobs during construction.
- Construction of WMC Fertiliser shiploading facilities at Townsville Port. 1250 jobs. December 1999
- State government support for Bowen Growers Cooperative has resulted in 40 jobs being retained.
- Construction of a \$26 million new milk processing and packaging plant by National Foods. Creation of 50 jobs during construction and eventual employment of 120 jobs. September 98.
- Inghams Enterprises is developing a greenfield site at Murarrie resulting in \$38 million capital expenditure and 96 new jobs.
- Refurbishing and building of new facilities at a meat/food processing facility at Cannon Hill owned by Australian Country Choice/Coles. The project involved a \$24 million investment and 680 jobs were retained.
- Proposed \$1 Billion integrated industrial development near Bundaberg (Bundaberg 2000+). Proposal will create 1200 jobs.
- State Government assistance retains 55 jobs at Hume Doors & Timber
- The expansion of Australian Meat Holdings at Dinmore has created 400 new jobs in the past 18 months, and a further 1200 jobs in the next 2 years. It has resulted in \$92 million invested and a further \$50 million over the next 3 years.
- The State Government has provided \$15 million towards the construction of the Institute of Molecular Biosciences and a further \$77.5 million operational funding over 10 years. The Institute will house 700 scientists and researchers including 400 new jobs. A further 400 new jobs will be created during the construction phase. February 99
- Combined Cycle Gas Power Station at Swanbank E. Investment of \$250 million. 210 jobs will be created.
- The Swanbank Energy Park is a billion dollar natural gas co-generation project plus renewable energy and scientific research proposal. The proposal includes the utilisation of methane gas from the Swanbank landfill to generate energy for a range of new industries and is expected to generate over 1000 construction jobs, and up to 3000 permanent jobs.
- Millmerran Power station and Coalmine—1200 during construction and 230 during operating phase
- Ferra Engineering—\$15M investment in light metals diecasting. Creation of an additional 75 jobs when operational.
- Darling Downs Bacon upgrade of its pig processing facility in Toowoomba to export standard creating 72 new jobs.
- Swickers export accreditation for a pig and goat processing facility at Kingaroy. (up to 156 jobs).
- Tender Plus meat manufacturing plant at Gold Coast. Phase 1—for value-adding portion and traceback equipment at Burleigh Heads (27 jobs); Phase 2—new smallgoods and value adding plant (41 new jobs, \$3.3 Million Cap Ex).
- Burnett Pork Alliance, pork production and meat processing alliance and supply chain venture based in South Burnett region. (45 new jobs, \$8.8 Million Cap.)
- Churchill Abattoir, assistance toward the upgrade of environmental management system and training. (60 jobs)
- National Meat Association (NMA) assistance provided for WorkCover seminars and an occupational health and safety service Statewide as well as mandatory meat testing training. Both programs aimed at retaining 5,000 jobs in regional meat processing.
- Cherbourg Abattoir assisted by joint DSD and DATSIP funding of \$300,000, contributing \$150,000 each to the Cherbourg Community Council (CCC) for the upgrade of the Cherbourg abattoir. (14 Jobs)
- Kilcoy Pastoral Company assistance for packaging and value-adding project at meat processing plant in Kilcoy. Looking at significant job retention (270 jobs) in regional Kilcoy area and supporting a regional community and rural based industry. Est. \$450,000 Cap. Ex
- Hans Smallgoods, expansion of manufacturing plant at Colmslie, Brisbane. Value-adding and market expansion. Anticipated 50 new jobs, \$5 Million Cap. Ex.
- ORAFIT, a major international food ingredient producer is being assisted with the location of a new food processing plant in the South Burnett region with over 200 new jobs and over \$150 million in capital investment.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fisher and Paykel

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: During the parliamentary lunchbreak today I will be travelling to Cleveland to take part in another significant event, which is also about jobs. I will join management and staff at Fisher and Paykel's Cleveland plant to celebrate as the millionth refrigerator rolls off the assembly line. And I will be joined by my Parliamentary Secretary, the local member, Darryl Briskey. It is an important landmark for the company, which employs 450 people and has invested \$75 million in Cleveland since it began operating there in December 1990—as a result of a Goss Government initiative to attract it to Queensland; another Labor initiative.

The Fisher and Paykel workers produce a wide range of white goods, including one in every six refrigerators sold in Queensland. The company has been smart and innovative in meeting the demands of an increasingly competitive global marketplace. For example, when the company began at Cleveland in 1990, 50 staff produced about 50 refrigerators a day. Now 101 people produce 420 refrigerators a day. This significant boost in productivity has enabled Fisher and Paykel to stay competitive in the global marketplace. Some 20 per cent of its refrigerators are exported to markets as diverse as Greece, the United Kingdom, Asia, South Africa, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the Pacific Islands.

The company has also joined the Queensland and federal governments in a traineeship scheme for school students. Students work one day a week while still at school and then take up a one-year traineeship at Fisher and Paykel once they have completed their schooling. I applaud this scheme, because it gives young people skills to take into their working lives.

We must be smart, we must be innovative, and we must export—all three criteria apply to Fisher and Paykel and I congratulate them on their success. They are a role model for other companies to follow. I would encourage other companies to follow Fisher and Paykel's example and set up on south-east Queensland's TradeCoast close to Fisher and Paykel's Cleveland factory today and close to a major international airport and world-class seaport.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Goodwill Games; Queensland Signature Dish Competition

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: Victorians have long appreciated the attractions of Queensland. We need only ask the many, many thousands who have migrated here over the years—and indeed the ones who flock to Noosa, for example, during the holiday season. It is almost like little Melbourne at times.

Last week, during a visit to Melbourne for the Centenary of Federation, I offered an open invitation to the rest of the Victorians to also come to Queensland, for a short stay at least, for a holiday. Last week, the Tourism Minister, the Honourable Merri Rose, and I launched a major advertising campaign aimed at enticing Victorians north for a holiday. This was also duplicated in Sydney; there were television ads and newspaper advertisements in Sydney and Melbourne.

We told the Victorians that not only can Queensland offer magnificent warm weather in winter but we have also attracted a whole series of major events which will make this state an even bigger drawcard. Let us have a look at some of those events—

- in October we have the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting;
- in July we have the World Veterans' Athletics Championships;
- in October we have the Honda Indy 300;
- in November-December we have the Australian PGA championship;
- in February next year we have the Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions Racing Carnival;
- also in February next year we have the ANZ Ladies Masters Golf;
- and in March and April we have the LightIce Australian Surf Lifesaving Championships.

I am sure all members here will agree that is an impressive list. Where else could we expect such a wide range of attractions? Where else but Queensland? This year, with the Goodwill Games and CHOGM, Queensland will receive exposure in terms of promotion to the world in an unprecedented way. The Goodwill Games will be broadcast into 450 million homes around the world and will have one billion viewers. CHOGM, with 54 heads of government visiting here, will

also receive world attention. The biggest sporting event and the biggest political event in the world will both be in Queensland.

But the main attraction that the Tourism Minister and I sought to promote to Victorians in our bid to entice them north was the Goodwill Games, which members will know are to be held in Queensland in August-September. Olympic gold medallist Kerri Pottharst also was there to help promote the games. The tourism push was featured in Melbourne newspaper advertisements last week. Strip advertisements on early pages contained the message: 'Ask Tatiana where she will be this August' and 'Ask Grant Hackett where he will be this August'. And a full-page, full-colour advertisement contained the simple answer: 'Where else but Queensland'.

Tourism is Queensland's fastest growing industry and our largest employer. It is our second biggest industry. My government will continue to be proactive in promoting the attractions that this state has to offer. The timing of the advertising campaign was determined by research which shows that people who have held off taking holidays because of last year's Olympics and the introduction of the GST are likely to come now. So now we are extending the hand of welcome to all Victorians to come and see what Queensland has to offer.

I table the advertisement for the information of the House. Mr Speaker, as you can see, it was part of the Centenary of Federation. All of the political leaders in Australia were present in Victoria at that time. Even the Leader of the Opposition was there. But as you can see, Mr Speaker, the advertisements read: 'Ask Grant Hackett where he will be in August'—just to get the Victorians excited. The same questions is asked about Tatiana over the page, and then there is an advertisement promoting Queensland and the Goodwill Games to Victoria. We will do everything we can to promote this state. I table that ad for the information of the House.

Mr Schwarten: That would have gone over well in Victoria!

Mr BEATTIE: It certainly did. I was sitting next to the Speaker at the Centenary of Federation events, and I know that he was impressed. Had the minister been there, I know he would have been, too.

While we are talking about tourism, one of the other things that we need to do is broaden the opportunity to promote Queensland. One of the ways we are doing that is through food. Recently on the Gold Coast, along with other members I launched an important initiative. As all members here would know, we want Queensland to be the Smart State. However, I would not be disappointed if Queensland also establishes a reputation for being the succulent state. From the Wet Tropics to the Granite Belt, from the coast to the outback, this state is blessed with a rich variety of fresh, high quality produce. We are also blessed with great chefs and innovative cuisine. It is this combination that is earning us a great reputation nationally and internationally.

As I said, earlier this month—in fact, it was the day of the Surfers Paradise by-election—I was on the Gold Coast, where I launched the second annual Queensland Signature Dish Competition, which was promoted by the Department of Primary Industries. The Minister for Tourism was also there. I call on Queensland chefs to make the most of a great opportunity to put their talents on show. In addition to showcasing the chefs' talent and our local produce, one of the aims of the competition is to increase awareness of Queensland as a food lovers destination. Melbourne has done this very well. We can do better.

The competition is open to all Queensland chefs. They are encouraged to create a dish which reflects the spirit and vitality of Queensland cuisine using specialist local produce and their own culinary imagination. It is my hope that the competition, which as I said is an initiative of the Department of Primary Industries, will help put more Queensland food on plates around Australia and throughout the world. The competition closes on 1 June and will be judged by a panel of national food identities, including celebrity chef Peter Howard and last year's competition winner, Richard Burt from Ristorante Fellini on the Gold Coast. Three finalists will be chosen to take part in a cook-off at the Queensland Day Picnic in the Park at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens on 10 June.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I would have thought that a National Party member would be supporting food exports. They should get on side with positive things and stop whingeing.

We all know that Queensland has the climate and natural attractions to make this such a great place to live. What was perhaps less well known is that this is a great place to dine as well. I encourage Queensland chefs to get behind the Queensland Signature Dish Competition, to help build that reputation and to support Queensland's primary industries.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Higher Education

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.51 a.m.), by leave: For the first time in 20 years Queensland has finally reached the national average participation rate in higher education. For many years, Queensland was the hardest state in Australia in which to go to university. The Beattie government wants to make sure that never happens again. After 20 years we cannot slip back now. Not only do we aspire to maintaining our current levels, we also aim to increase our participation rates to give as many young Queenslanders as possible the chance to attend university and become leaders in the Smart State. In its submission to the federal Senate committee inquiry into the capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs, the Queensland government last week called on the federal government to increase the number of funded undergraduate university places by up to 15,000 over the next five years.

Queensland has the fastest growing population in the country. The number of young people in Queensland is projected to grow by nearly 10 per cent by 2006. Despite this population growth, there has been no growth in the number of available places since 1999. Without those extra funded places—up to 15,000—young Queenslanders hoping to go to university will be denied the opportunities that their brothers and sisters had only a couple of years ago. That, in my view, would be a tragedy, particularly in regional Queensland, where 40 per cent of all Queensland's higher education students now attend local campuses.

There are currently 79,109 funded undergraduate places in Queensland. Although the Commonwealth has recently allocated an extra 2,000 places nationally—and we are grateful for any extra places that may come Queensland's way—our share will be only a fraction of that total and will not address the shortfall. If the number of places does not increase with population growth, within three years Queensland's participation rate will drop back to unconscionable pre-1994 levels, when Queensland was the hardest state in Australia in which to get into university.

I am very pleased to see that a number of vice-chancellors have already expressed support for the Queensland government's proposal. I look forward to working with Queensland's vice-chancellors and with the federal government to ensure that young Queenslanders have the best chance possible of going to university in the future.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

South East Transit Project

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government's \$350 million South East Busway between Eight Mile Plains and the city opened to scheduled services on Monday, 30 April 2001 with overwhelming community support. More than 10,000 new passengers used the core busway routes in the first week of operation—an additional 2,185 commuters a day. At 50 passengers a bus, that translates to 44 extra buses a day for Brisbane Transport alone, and I understand the member for Mansfield has been out on the busway again this morning.

This strong patronage increase was evident from the first morning of operation. On the Labour Day long weekend, an average of 30 passengers took advantage of the TransLink 111 service, which operates every 15 minutes between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. These patronage levels for Sundays and public holidays are unprecedented in Brisbane. At times over the long weekend, the 111 service was carrying 50 passengers. Early figures from other bus operators show that patronage has increased on all services using the busway, and that patronage on some Logan City Sunday services has trebled now that they can service the South Bank precinct. We will review these figures again after three months of operation to confirm this trend.

The bus industry is pleased with the public response to the new system, as is the state government. The early figures are extremely positive, and I look forward to continued success. The corridor will be servicing the needs of south-east Queensland commuters well into the next century. In 10 and 20 years time, travel demand in the corridor will be significantly higher.

The Beattie government is making solid progress to encourage more people to consider alternatives to the private car. Figures from Queensland Transport show that south-east Queensland has experienced significant increases in patronage on public transport over the past two financial years. In the 1999-2000 financial year, patronage on urban bus services in south-east Queensland jumped by 8.1 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent in 1998-99. Over the past

two years, patronage of services in Cleveland and Redland Bay has increased by 43 per cent. On the Sunshine Coast and in Toowoomba, patronage has increased by 24 per cent. On the Gold Coast an increase of 10 per cent has been achieved over the last financial year. The increase for Deception Bay services was 14 per cent.

The Beattie government believes that the South East Transit Project will lead to more improvements in the efficiency of bus services and make more people consider using public transport. This week saw the opening of another key part of this government's strategy to enhance the region's transport system. Six kilometres of T2 transit lanes on the Pacific Motorway between the Gateway Motorway and Mains Road will allow cars with two or more occupants, taxis and motorcycles to bypass congestion. The T2 transit lanes are a part of the Beattie government's ongoing efforts to improve the transport system.

The T2 lanes allow travel in both directions in the median lanes of the Pacific Motorway 24 hours a day. They provide a clear path, even in congested periods, for vehicles carrying more than just the driver. The transit lanes will also enable a faster response to accidents and other emergencies by allowing emergency vehicles priority. Providing priority passage for vehicles with more than one occupant allows for the more efficient use of valuable road space, and encourages people to offer lifts to others or to enter into car pooling arrangements with friends and neighbours.

Early indications show that people are responding well to the new lanes. The transit lanes and busway form part of the Beattie government's \$599 million South East Transit Project. The SET project is designed to improve public transport options and reduce car dependency and, at the same time, increase travel options for commuters in the south-east transport corridor. These initiatives open up tremendous opportunities for commuters in south-east Queensland. They are the beneficiaries of a public transport system that is second to none.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

International Year of Volunteers Youth Campaign

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday I had the pleasure of launching the International Year of Volunteers Youth Campaign. It is an important campaign because it formally recognises the significant contribution our young people make in their communities. They form the lifeblood of organisations such as Surf Life Savers, many of the local rural fire brigades, the State Emergency Service, and they provide the thousands of people necessary to raise funds for local charities.

Yesterday I also unveiled the first of 100 billboards recognising the contribution of our volunteers. Throughout the year these will be appearing all over the state. The billboard, titled Queenslanders—lending a hand, has been generously sponsored by GOA Billboards. One hundred billboards throughout the state will promote and recognise the work of Queensland's volunteers.

I am proud to say that the Queensland government was the first state government to acknowledge the contribution of our volunteers in this International Year of the Volunteer. We did this by allocating almost \$300,000 to 55 volunteer groups throughout Queensland for community projects as part of the state government's recognition of the International Year of the Volunteer. These funds were provided for a wide range of events and celebrations to say thank you for the army of volunteers throughout this state. Applications for a second round of funding are currently being sought.

Tomorrow the Premier and I will be presenting the Premier's Awards to some of Queensland's most recognised volunteers representing communities throughout the state. We will also be launching a new website designed to profile ordinary Queenslanders making extraordinary contributions. We have produced special International Year of the Volunteer medallions and certificates to honour the achievements of volunteers throughout Queensland. Each member of parliament will be provided with 20 medallions and certificates to award to volunteers who have made an outstanding contribution in their community. The medallions will be ready for distribution in the next few weeks.

Volunteers are important to Queensland. Nowhere is the work of our volunteers more obvious than in some of our smaller communities. These are the people who comprise the local school's P&C committee, who are the backbone of the sports club, the scouts, guides and the

range of other organisations that make up our towns and cities. I would urge anyone in the community who is aware of an individual who should be recognised for their dedication and generosity of spirit to make sure that that person is nominated. All too often the volunteers who make up our invisible army go unrewarded. This is a tremendous opportunity to show our gratitude.

Volunteers have traditionally provided important resources for many local communities and, in many cases, maintained important services and facilities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 524,000 Queenslanders formally volunteer 93 million hours, which is worth approximately \$2 billion each year. These are ordinary people making an extraordinary contribution. They give up their own valuable spare time to help others. They ask for no reward. All too often they receive little community recognition. They invest a significant amount of time and energy into training our young people, raising money for charities and delivering a whole range of services which would be struggling without their assistance.

The International Year of the Volunteer gives us an opportunity to examine the impact volunteers have on our communities and the immense contribution they make. I am wearing—and all members were given one this morning—an International Year of the Volunteer lapel pin. I note that many members have taken the opportunity to wear the pin this morning. I thank them for that. It collectively gives us the opportunity to show the thousands of Queensland volunteers that they do a magnificent job.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Tourism is one of Queensland's key economic drivers in both the short and long term. Few industries offer tourism's potential for job and wealth creation, sustainability and quality of life for all Queenslanders. Tourism is a diverse and complex industry. Its benefits are enjoyed across the state and its needs derive from a range of government agencies. The industry comprises thousands of small businesses and is becoming an important additional or alternative economic contributor in regional areas.

To keep tourism at the forefront of Queensland development, the Beattie government has launched Growing Tourism, a groundbreaking, whole-of-government strategy to foster cooperation and collaboration between key agencies on tourism issues. Growing Tourism is an exciting step forward in public sector support for tourism and a manifestation of the government's commitment to the industry. The strategy will harness government resources and direct them to ensure that tourism reaches its full potential in Queensland. It is the blueprint for a whole-of-government approach to the development of the state's second-largest industry and the creation of thousands of jobs.

Growing Tourism builds on the wide range of initiatives currently being undertaken and identifies key policy links and priorities across government. It incorporates the industry's needs into all levels of government planning and funding. The strategy recognises the roles of the public and private sectors and what the government can do to provide the right environment for growth, add value and market Queensland's tourism assets. Growing Tourism is a tangible set of strategies, initiatives and measurements that will ensure that tourism stays top of mind in resource allocation. It is structured around four key areas. These areas are: infrastructure and services, including public sector investment, private investment strategies, the economy and employment; the environment, including management, operations and planning on public lands and waters; market trends, including destination marketing, new and emerging tourism market development and monitoring market trends; and government leadership and coordination. Key strategies and initiatives—some new and some existing—have been identified to ensure each area is advanced. An action plan specifies priority actions, time frames, the agencies responsible and performance indicators. The plan was developed in conjunction with the industry.

Coordination and reporting mechanisms have been established to ensure successful and timely implementation. A CEO forum on tourism will report to cabinet annually and review the action plan to ensure it continues to address tourism issues across government. The forum will comprise representatives from the Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Tourism Queensland, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of State Development, the Department of Main Roads, Queensland Transport, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Treasury and Education Queensland.

Growing Tourism is the framework for government and the industry to work together to grow tourism. It is a smart response to the tourism needs of the Smart State. Tourism has always been a priority of the Beattie government. This strategy confirms our commitment to the industry. Later today I will host a lunch to which all members and leading tourism industry figures have been invited. I am sure members who attend will leave with a better understanding of the role tourism plays in this state.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Awards for Excellence in Planning

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: On Tuesday, 8 May I was honoured to launch the Queensland division of the 15th Royal Australian Planning Institute's Awards for Excellence in Planning. As patron of the awards in Queensland, I invite members of the planning and development industries, Commonwealth, state and local government agencies, residents action groups and students to submit entries for these prestigious awards. The awards acknowledge and encourage the vital work carried out by the planning profession. The fact that Queensland award winners are so often among the winners of the national awards for planning excellence clearly highlights the very high standard of planning in Queensland.

In the past entries have come in from all parts of the state and covered a broad range of issues such as residential and environmental issues in small communities to regional plans and academic research. Entries must be lodged with the Department of Local Government and Planning on behalf of the Planning Institute by 31 August and will be judged on a range of criteria, with category winners to be announced in early November. Category winners will then be entered into the 2002 National Awards for Planning Excellence.

In conjunction with the RAPI launch, I was also pleased to award three university students the Minister's Town Planning Prize. This year's winners were Belinda Jackson from the University of Queensland for *Planning Policies and Practices Applied by Local Governments to Address Urban Design in Regional Centres*; Craig Morgan from the Queensland University of Technology for *Guiding Principles of Brownfield Redevelopment*; and Daniel Murray from the Griffith University for *Developing Socially Sustainable Communities: The Role of Traditional Design Principles in Facilitating the Development of Social Capital and Sense of Community*. Each of the award recipients submitted outstanding work and demonstrated great insight into the practical problems facing local governments in applying town planning systems. These awards and the quality work submitted by students exemplify the importance of this government's Smart State strategy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ambulance Service

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: I rise today to recognise the outstanding work of the Queensland Ambulance Service, in particular the excellent work being carried out through the Priority One program.

When the QAS was established 10 years ago, one of its first initiatives was to set up a staff support service now known as Priority One. It was set up because we have a duty of care for the health and wellbeing of our officers. It was set up in recognition of the fact that being an ambo is tough. It was set up because we recognise that the most valuable part of our Ambulance Service is its people. Every time our ambos put on a uniform or answer a call there is the potential for trauma; 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, these men and women provide first-response care for Queenslanders. They save lives.

Our ambulance officers are highly regarded for their commitment and compassion, but there is no doubt that theirs is a stressful job and our carers need care. However, like any job, it is also a reality that sometimes people do not cope. Sometimes, no matter how much rehabilitation or counselling is provided for a person, the trauma is too great and, unfortunately, a valued member of our team leaves.

Priority One is designed to help our officers work their way through stresses affecting them. It has a full-time coordinator to make sure that our officers can readily access a range of services, including a 24-hour free telephone counselling service and 30 specialist counsellors across the

state. I acknowledge that the member for Cairns was one of those excellent specialist counsellors, working in the city of Cairns. Other services include critical incident stress debriefing, peer support programs, gay and lesbian support and indigenous employees support service.

I am disappointed by the attitude of some honourable members opposite who continually undermine the work being done. I am particularly concerned by recent comments by the member for Mirani, who it seems is intent on running down the QAS. Everyone agrees that the QAS is the best service in the nation—everyone except the member for Mirani. His attitude is yet another sad indictment of an opposition in shambles. I suppose we cannot really blame him; he has got a lot of work on his hands—

Mr MALONE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask the minister to withdraw those comments. I support the QAS wholeheartedly. The minister needs to look at his own—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There will not be a debate.

Mr MALONE: I ask the minister to withdraw the implication that I am not supporting the QAS.

Mr REYNOLDS: I withdraw it if the member finds it offensive. I suppose we cannot really blame the member for the statements he has made. He has got a lot of work on his hands, with three shadow portfolios to represent. We cannot expect him to check all his facts. Perhaps his most outrageous story to date relates to claims of officers flushing blood products down stormwater drains. Ambulances do not carry blood products, and the honourable member should know this.

The member's latest allegation is that stress levels are soaring out of control, so I would like to place a few matters on record. There are currently 22 people in the QAS on stress leave. That is less than one per cent of our 2,400 work force. New South Wales last year recorded double that figure. Internationally, up to 12 per cent of the ambulance work force is on stress leave at any one time, and in some services up to 75 per cent retire on health grounds before normal retirement age. The members opposite do not like the statistics.

Priority One is doing a great job, and we should continue to commend it, rather than indulge this knocking that we hear. In fact, the program has received international recognition from other ambulance services looking to model their support systems on Priority One. I am only too happy to accept constructive and positive feedback on our services and suggestions for improvement, but the QAS does not need, nor does it deserve, the sort of petty politicking that the opposition is engaging in.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.13 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 1 of 2001* and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Infrastructure Projects

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 a.m.): It did not take the Beattie Labor government long to break a major election promise of no new taxes. First we saw the imposition of a picnic tax in relation to recreation areas around dams and last week we saw the imposition of a new pub tax—a tax not mentioned in the election campaign. This tax will impinge on every single patron of hotels around Queensland as the costs are passed on.

The rest of Queensland must be wondering what they have to do to get projects undertaken in their areas. The pub tax was slapped on because the Beattie government had made an unfunded promise to construct Lang Park—a lavish promise of \$300 million with not a red cent set aside. At the same time, people around the rest of the state implore the government to provide major facilities and meet needs affecting their daily lives. People want seatbelts in school buses. Is there any money for that? No, there is not. People want dams in places such as the Burnett, the Atherton Tablelands and Taroom. Is there any money forthcoming for these? No, there is not. The people of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts would like to see some decent transport systems. Where are they? There is nothing—not one red cent—but this government can

slap on a pub tax straight away to put a facility in the centre of Brisbane that will be open probably only 20 or 24 times a year.

It is about time the government got its priorities right. There are very real needs around this state, such as roads and dams—the sorts of things that provide for real jobs. This government simply bypasses those, breaks an election promise and slaps on a new tax. Queenslanders deserve better. This should be a government for all of Queensland, not just for the minority in the centre of the city. This should be a government that gives consideration to regional Queensland, to coastal Queensland and to western Queensland for important infrastructure projects that are desperately needed in order to create jobs.

Time expired.

Marlin Coast Electricity Supply

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (10.15 a.m.): Reliability of power supply is one of those absolutely essential services demanded by society today. Power failures have the potential to totally disrupt business and industry, costing thousands of dollars and causing enormous inconvenience. Residents can be equally affected and can suffer similar consequences. My electorate has suffered from power failures, and some parts still do, so I welcome the announcement by Ergon Energy Corporation last week that it has commenced planning for the Marlin Coast electricity reinforcement project, which will see a 132kV high voltage line extend from Kamerunga to Kewarra Beach north of Cairns and which will guarantee greater reliability of power supply well into the 21st century.

However, my enthusiasm for this Ergon project is tempered by the knowledge that one of the options for achieving reliability of power supply could involve overhead transmission lines strung between concrete towers some 25 metres high along the 16 kilometre route. I place on record my total opposition to this option and urge Ergon to underground this high voltage powerline. The arguments for undergrounding are compelling in terms of making the line cyclone proof, preserving the visual amenity of the area for locals and tourists and protecting property values.

I have already told Keith De Lacy, the chairman of Ergon, that I am totally opposed to any overhead power line that will impact adversely on the character of the area and that I will be advocating strongly for the underground option. I do not imagine that my personal stance is going to make me very popular with Ergon or Mr De Lacy, given the extra cost involved, but I have told him that I do not believe my constituents will settle for anything less. The cost of undergrounding may be high for Ergon, but so will be the cost to the tourism industry if we turn the Marlin Coast into an ugly urban jungle with an overhead powerline project of the scale proposed.

An extensive public consultation process will begin very shortly, and I urge all residents and businesses to make their views known to Ergon and to me. I was first elected in 1989 on a platform of environmentally sensitive development, because that is what the residents of Barron River wanted. In 2001 that feeling is even stronger, and I will do my utmost to ensure that Ergon and the state government listen and respond to the views of my electorate regarding the Marlin Coast electricity reinforcement project.

Time expired.

Equality

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.17 a.m.): In my electorate we have had the upsetting experience of posters advocating white supremacy being plastered around the city centre. I know that the same thing has occurred in Rockhampton, and my suspicion is that it is the work of the same group of people. This conduct is completely unacceptable. It is upsetting, it is isolating, it is denigrating and it is humiliating, not only to those being attacked but also to the many Aussies who still hold that old Aussie attitude of a fair go for all.

All people are equal. Our equality is not based on skin colour, ethnicity, education or some superficial test. Our equality is purely based on the fact that we are equal. No-one has the right to feel superior to another. No-one has the right to treat any other person as inferior. We may have differing roles, but we are not of unequal value. We were all created equal.

My hope is that those responsible will be brought to account. The police are saying that they do not have jurisdiction to take action, but I am sure that, in our enlightened society, as soon as the culprits are identified some action will be taken. I think the group is identifiable by the fact that its members carry out these activities under cover and during the night, when no-one can identify

them, and they disappear into the vortex when daylight comes. I also hope that after these people are brought to account they will realise, at some time in their lives, that they are no better than the people they attempt to denigrate. They may be different, but they are no better.

Gold Coast, Housing

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): Today I wish to advise honourable members of the great achievements of the Department of Housing in addressing the growing need for affordable housing in the Gold Coast region. The Beattie government has injected more than \$20 million into the Gold Coast economy since coming to office through public and community housing construction projects. If the money for various grant programs is added to that, then around \$45 million has been spent on housing assistance in the past three years. This is a significant boost to the local economy, particularly for the construction industry, which has been hardest hit by the job destroying GST.

Under the Beattie government, more than 200 new dwellings have been built in the Gold Coast region, generating valuable job opportunities for local tradespeople and apprentices. Much of the Gold Coast area has been developed in recent years and it is in fact the fastest growing region in Australia. As such, the cost of private rental is now out of reach for many low income individuals and families. The median weekly rent for a three bedroom house in the Gold Coast region is \$190, compared to a statewide figure of \$170. A large family has to pay an extra \$30 a week to rent a four bedroom house on the Gold Coast, with the median rent being \$240, compared to the statewide average of \$210. The median weekly rent for a one bedroom house is \$155—\$40 more than the statewide figure.

The Beattie government has initiated numerous programs to assist elderly local residents in private and public housing to stay in their local community, where they are familiar with public transport and services. There are almost 900 Department of Housing seniors units in the Gold Coast region, with close to 290—a third of them—in my electorate of Mudgeeraba. The Beattie government has also put in more than \$3 million in the last three years for Home Assist/Secure schemes, which assist elderly people with advice and information about maintenance, repairs and modifications to help them remain in their own homes. The Gold Coast scheme helps around 6,000 households per year; one of those schemes is in my electorate of Mudgeeraba and is operated by the trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. I thank the Minister for Housing for his commitment to elderly Queenslanders.

Time expired.

Industrial Commission

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (10.21 a.m.): I call upon the Premier to order immediately the repeal of the recent administrative amendment rushed into this House which stripped the President of the Industrial Court of his powers. This was done, quite frankly, so that the government could control the commission and not wait until the president turns 70.

The bar association has come out strongly against this move. Its members are shocked and horrified that the commission has lost its independence. Might I also say that when the president called a meeting of the commission to discuss, as Bill Ludwig said, the nobbling of its powers, the Premier came out and he said, 'Stay out of the argy-bargy of politics.'

For goodness' sake, the Premier is talking about the commission and its independence. The commission is not a plaything for a government with a big majority. I ask: what about the separation of powers?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr LESTER: Indeed, those opposite have ignored convention. They can laugh about it and carry on. When it suits them they believe it is all right to break the rules and do as they like and pay scant regard to their responsibilities. The government enjoys a big majority and it must treat this issue responsibly. It has no mandate to be irresponsible. It has rushed this amendment through and has not even thought about the powers of delegation. In fact, the administrator has no powers of delegation. So we can see that at a future time cases will be held up; we can see all sorts of issues coming up. When I asked this question of the Industrial Relations Minister he declined to answer it because, quite frankly, when the administrative area—

Time expired.

Plastics Recycling Project

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (10.23 a.m.): I want to outline to the House a significant environmental initiative under way in Mackay. In March, Tri-Q Recycling of Mackay secured support under the Queensland Sustainable Technology Development Program to engage a consultant to assess the feasibility of establishing a plastics recycling facility.

The Sustainable Technology Development Program is managed by the Built Environment Research Unit of the Department of Public Works. It targets ventures likely to improve energy efficiency, waste reduction and environmental performance in Queensland's built environment.

Tri-Q Recycling, formerly known as Bayersville Resource Recovery Centre, was established in 1993. Its goals are to reduce landfill through its re-using and recycling activities; provide employment for people with disabilities and to raise community awareness of the need to reduce, re-use and recycle.

Recently, I was advised by the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, the Honourable Robert Swarten, that the national environmental engineering firm, Gutteridge Haskins and Davey has been chosen to assess the feasibility of the plastics recycling project. GHD is expected to submit its report to Tri-Q Recycling and the Built Environment Research Unit by early October. Tri-Q Recycling is keen to address the growing environmental problems of used plastics.

This project reinforces the Beattie government's commitment to the environment, jobs and building Queensland's regions. Australia produces more than one million tonnes of plastic annually and dumps half of that as landfill. That represents a terrible degradation of our environment. Plastic does not break down but remains a lasting reminder of wastefulness. Its manufacture also consumes finite resources—crude oil, gas and coal.

If the feasibility study by GHD shows this is cost-effective, Tri-Q could expand its operations to include plastics recycling. It is an exciting development for our city, our region and Queensland as a whole.

I want to thank the minister for his support of this scheme, which has the potential to lead to a new local industry, more local jobs and a better environment for us all.

Time expired.

Computers

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (10.25 a.m.): There are those who have been dragged into the 21st century by the absolute need to come to grips with modern technology and become part of the Premier's much vaunted Smart State—a state with which I would have to agree.

There is little doubt that the area of technology causing the most concern to many Australians is the personal computer, a basic tool within the reach of most Australians, I often hear people say. Not so. There are many senior citizens on severely limited pensions, thanks to the neglect of the major parties so far, whose means do not extend to anywhere near the purchase of this equipment.

Mr Hopper: And dairy farmers.

Mr FLYNN: And dairy farmers. I believe that this problem extends to many others on pensions other than retirement and also to those unfortunate enough to be unemployed. The unemployed are flat out paying their rent without the issue of convincing finance companies to provide them with the means to buy computers.

A further issue connected with these machines is the cost of training and software. Whilst in time there are many able to train themselves, we forget that many of these people have had no previous contact at all with computer technology and it frightens them.

I add that in our haste to embrace the all-powerful electronic banking lobby we have, it appears, not done nearly enough to provide aid to those less fortunate. Increasingly, our day-to-day activities are being directed by high-tech.

If we are truly going to become the Smart State we must urgently address the need for assisted access for disadvantaged persons together with the appropriate training.

Time expired.

University of Southern Queensland

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (10.27 a.m.): Last week I attended the Gold Coast graduation ceremony of the University of Southern Queensland. This was one of a number of ceremonies the university holds up and down the Queensland coast for many of its students who study by distance education. At a time when this government is adopting strategies to develop the Smart State, I was pleased to have the opportunity to see this university at work.

As members may know, it is the current joint winner of the *Good Universities Guide* University of the Year award for developing the university. Coincidentally, it is also the holder of the International Council for Open and Distance Learning's award for the world's best dual mode university.

In this Smart State it is important to acknowledge that we have a university recognised for both its e-capability and its capacity to deliver education at a distance to skill people across the entire state.

Its students may be the first in their family to go to university. They may be from isolated farming families where there is no money and perhaps no inclination to send them away for higher education, at least until they have proved their potential closer to home. They may be from city families where work and family pressures make distance study the most efficient option. Some may be school leavers and some will be mature age students. Some will be indigenous Australians and perhaps second-chance learners where the first chance was hardly a chance at all.

The University of Southern Queensland, or USQ, supports all distance learners, whether they are in Antarctica, Singapore or Cunnamulla or downtown Sydney.

Where the university provides printed material, it aims to make it attractive, comprehensive, self-sufficient, accurate and reliable and, above all, understandable. It takes great care with instructional design and similar requirements apply to online materials. It also provides an online study option. For distance students there are opportunities for interaction via telephone tutorials, the tutor help line, the online chat sessions, email inquiries and so on.

I hope members find this information of interest.

Time expired.

Dingoes

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 a.m.): The multimillion-dollar sheep and cattle industry in this state is facing one of its real scourges—the dingo. This morning in this House we heard the Premier talking about the succulent state. I have to say that the dingoes think it is a succulent state, too.

The best way to control the menace of Queensland's dingoes, which are reaching plague proportions at this point in time—

Government members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Members opposite might laugh, but this is a very serious issue. As I was saying, the best way to control dingoes is the 1080 baiting campaign, which has a proven track record. I call on the Minister for Natural Resources, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Local Government to join forces to put in place a program that will eradicate much of this devastating problem confronting our rural industries today. The most important fact to remember is that 1080 poisoning cannot be carried out in national parks. That is one area that has gone unattended for too long. I call on the government to give proper and good leadership in addressing this contentious problem.

We are now in the peak period of the dingo mating season in this state, and in a short while we will see young pups running around. The calving and lambing activities in spring of the livestock industry will prove most tortuous. I do not say this lightly today. Last week in the early hours of the morning I drove through western Queensland from Tambo to Alpha and saw three dogs just outside the barrier fence.

The other issue that needs attention is that domesticated dogs such as Alsatians and Dobermans are being allowed to run wild. They are getting out of control. They are a scourge not only to our rural and regional communities but they are also a scourge to our livestock industry. They are no different to the dingo.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for Private Members' Statements has expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Unemployment**

Mr HORAN (10.31 a.m.): I refer the Premier to his substandard, below-average performance in generating jobs, and I remind him that Queensland has now recorded a 9 per cent unemployment rate—the worst in mainland Australia for the ninth consecutive month. I also refer to the St Vincent de Paul report which yesterday warned that Queensland could become the poverty capital of the nation, and I ask: will the Premier now overturn his job-destroying policies, such as unfair dismissal restrictions on small business, high workers compensation costs, the regional forest deal and his freeze on new regional infrastructure and start creating some real and permanent jobs for Queenslanders?

Mr BEATTIE: As I understand it, our workers compensation premiums are the best in Australia. We have one of the best workers compensation schemes in Australia. It is well funded. We do not have the problems that exist elsewhere.

Look at what happened with HIH and look at what happened with other funds. Indeed, the member should stay tuned. My colleague the Minister for Housing will have a little bit to say about that very shortly in terms of how effective the coalition was in government in relation to HIH and what it wanted to do. The former government actually wanted to go down the road of HIH in relation to housing.

We have the best workers compensation system in Australia. Are we going to abandon it? No. Why should we? We have the best regional forest agreement in Australia. It provides jobs, it provides security, and it was signed up by every one of the millers. The members opposite know that it is effective. Are we going to abandon the RFA? No, we are not. We are going to deliver on the RFA. Are we going to turn back the major projects like the Esplanade redevelopment in Cairns, the CBD redevelopment in Townsville, the Gold Coast convention centre, the prison in Maryborough and the work that we are doing in Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Gladstone? No, we are not. We are going to continue to deliver them because we are about jobs, we are about opportunities.

This morning, in a detailed statement to the House, I indicated the sort of things that we were doing in relation to jobs. But I did not detail all the jobs that we have created since we came to office.

Ms Bligh: Are there more?

Mr BEATTIE: There are more, and I think that I should detail them. We attracted Saville Systems, which is a leading provider of customer care and billing software. In October 1998, they created 250 jobs in Brisbane. We had just come into office and we did it. I have mentioned Stellar Communications, so I will not repeat that. In January 1999, Indus International, the world's largest provider of enterprise asset management solutions, created 50 jobs in Brisbane. There was the attraction to Brisbane of Quantum ATL's Asia-Pacific headquarters. Quantum designs and manufactures automatic tape libraries that are used in network computer environments. In September 1999, they created 60 jobs in Brisbane. There was the establishment of the Hatch regional centre, which is a global engineering company.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Why does the opposition take pleasure in the misery of the unemployed? The Leader of the Opposition and his National Party members take satisfaction from the misery of the unemployed.

We will fight to do everything that we can to create jobs for Queenslanders. We will ensure that issues dealing with poverty, as raised by St Vincent De Paul, are dealt with in the budget because we are serious about addressing poverty and we are serious about creating jobs.

There was also the establishment of IBM's Asia-Pacific technical support centre, which in 1999 created 250 jobs in Brisbane. The Bechtel head office was also attracted, along with the establishment of Citibank's customer service centre. That is really good news. The members opposite should get on to it.

Lang Park

Mr HORAN: I refer the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to the promise made by the Premier that the financing of Lang Park would not cost one cent of public money and the announcement by his government of the new pub tax to finance part of the debt that the redevelopment will

incur, and I ask: in the interests of parliamentary and public accountability, will the Deputy Premier and Treasurer now refer the financing of Lang Park to the Public Accounts Committee for full and ongoing scrutiny?

Mr MACKENROTH: The Premier never said that at all.

Mr Horan: Are you going to back off from that?

Mr MACKENROTH: No, we are not backing away from something that the member claims that the Premier said. He never said that.

Mr Seeney: Tell us what he said.

Mr Horan: Not one cent of public money.

Mr MACKENROTH: If opposition members would shut up, I probably would. They will not be quiet. They should just calm down. The Premier said that the funding of Lang Park would not come from existing resources that fund education, hospitals and the Police Service—that not one cent of money would come from any of those areas.

Mr Horan: You are changing what he said.

Mr MACKENROTH: I am not changing what he said. The member is trying to believe that the Premier said what he wants him to have said. The Premier never said that at all.

Mr Horan: Didn't he?

Mr MACKENROTH: No, he did not. We are going to fund the Suncorp-Metway stadium with a levy on hotels. The member opposite was wrong when I heard him say this morning that every hotelier in Queensland, or every hotel patron—

Mr Seeney: Are you sure he said that?

Mr MACKENROTH: He did say that. I am positive. Obviously, if the member is not sure, he does not listen to his leader. I do. The member said that all hotel patrons in Queensland will have to pay this levy. They will not; it is only the top 20 per cent of hotels in terms of their metered win, that is, those hotels that have a metered win of greater than \$100,000 a month. We are not levying the first \$660,000 of gross profit made by hotels each year. The first \$660,000 is under the normal rates. After the hotels make \$660,000 a year profit, we are charging them a levy of 10 per cent on the amount above that. When the metered win of those hotels goes above \$200,000 a month, the levy is 20 per cent. At that rate, it is still less than the tax that they paid previously before Dr Watson reduced it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Stafford, I welcome to the public gallery pupils, teachers and parents of the Mount Samson State School in the electorate of Ferny Grove.

Aviation Investment

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I refer the Premier to the great successes the Beattie government has had in attracting significant aviation investment to Queensland. I note that the board of Qantas is meeting in Brisbane. What impact do these developments have upon Queensland's reputation as an aviation hub in the Asia-Pacific region?

Mr BEATTIE: I take this opportunity to welcome the Qantas board to Brisbane. Like other major aviation industry players, Qantas has recognised the benefits of doing business in Queensland. Tomorrow night I will be joining the Qantas board at a dinner to discuss a range of matters, including the fertile investment opportunities in this state.

The decision by Qantas to base its 767 maintenance facility in Brisbane will create more than 500 jobs, mostly highly skilled engineering jobs. This is the sort of attraction that the Queensland government has been pursuing. It complements a decision to establish the Qantas flight catering centralised meal production facility in Queensland, which it is in the process of doing and which will provide 230 jobs by its fifth year of operation. Therefore, Qantas is making two major investments in Queensland as a result of particular initiatives taken by the Queensland Government to attract it here. That is in addition to the decision by Virgin Airlines to base its Australian headquarters in Queensland, creating 700 jobs. Indeed, Queensland's success in attracting Virgin Airlines has resulted in the most competitive situation in terms of air fares that Australia has perhaps ever seen, which is good for consumers, good for travellers and good for tourism in this state.

In conjunction with Boeing, which has its regional headquarters here, Qantas and, obviously, educational institutions, the government is committed to establishing an Aviation Centre of Excellence in Brisbane. During the election campaign we promised to commit \$10 million in seed funding for the project, and that will be delivered.

The Aviation Centre of Excellence will create up to 1,000 training placements within three years. This is about creating jobs, jobs, jobs. This is about a vision for the future in a new industry. More than that, it is also about creating the Smart State. Many of those future jobs will be in new industries. As a state, we are creating new opportunities.

We have also been supportive of the history of Queensland. We have put funds into the Qantas Museum as part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations. I was there recently, with the local member, Vaughan Johnson. If I recall correctly, we allocated \$1.5 million to that project. We have allocated a significant amount of money to recognising that Qantas started as a Queensland airline.

We have focused on developing a whole new industry in aviation. This has been about competition, competition, competition and, out of that, the big winner is the Queensland tourism industry, which is our second biggest industry. For this reason, Merri Rose and I attended the Centenary of Federation celebrations in Melbourne to promote tourism and our domestic market. Particularly considering the impact of the GST and the problems associated with it, we need to be aggressive about new industries like aviation. We need to be aggressive about promoting what is, obviously, a very important industry for this state. That is why we have done it and that is why we will continue to do it.

T2 Transit Lanes

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the confusion concerning the law applying to the use of the T2 transit lanes between the Gateway Motorway and Mains Road. The advertising referred to a limit of two or more passengers, but then mentioned a driver and one other occupant. Will the minister confirm that the advertising has had to be corrected and advise which limits apply? Will he also advise when the transit lanes between the Gateway Motorway and the Logan Motorway, promised as part of the South East Transit Project, will be commenced?

Mr BREDHAUER: I suggest that if there is any confusion, it is in the mind of the member for Gregory. I appreciate the question from the member for Gregory because it gives me another opportunity to talk about the great things that the Beattie government is doing in south-east Queensland. We are encouraging people to reach our integrated regional transport plan targets by trying to minimise the growth in traffic congestion on our roads because of the serious impact that that potentially could have both on the economy and the environment in south-east Queensland.

The opening of the T2 transit lanes yesterday marks an important milestone in the operations of the South East Transit Project, because it provides yet another alternative for people who are seeking easier access to the city. It also provides us with an opportunity to try to reduce traffic congestion on our roads.

In cities throughout the world, including Brisbane, part of the traffic problem is that many single-occupant vehicles use the roads. We are trying to encourage people to have more than one person in their vehicle. There is no confusion about that. The statements by Queensland Transport have been quite clear, that if there are two or more people in a motor vehicle they are eligible to use the transit lane, as are taxis and motorcycles. If there are two or more people in a motor vehicle, they can use the transit lanes. If we can encourage greater occupancy per vehicle, we can reduce the number of vehicles on the road and help to ease the traffic congestion problems. In conjunction with our public transport initiatives—the busway, improvements to the Citytrain network and scheduling of new Citytrain services, as has happened over the last couple of weeks—Queensland Transport, on behalf of the state government, has implemented an aggressive program aimed at encouraging people out of their private motor vehicles.

In relation to the other issues raised by the honourable member, additional work is still being undertaken to finalise the South East Transit Project. Also, the Premier has announced that we will soon be starting work on the inner northern busway. Not only the people on the south side of Brisbane but also those on the north side will benefit from the efforts that this government is making in building infrastructure, improving public transport services and reducing congestion.

Those initiatives will help improve air quality, improve the capabilities of our public transport services and, importantly, save money for both motorists and industry in south-east Queensland as we help to ease traffic congestion.

Comprehensive Cancer Research Centre

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Premier to a thankyou dinner being organised by the Queensland Institute of Medical Research tonight following the federal government's commitment of \$20 million towards a comprehensive cancer research centre being built at Herston, and I ask: is the Premier attending the dinner tonight and what will this latest contribution mean to the project?

Mr BEATTIE: Firstly, I congratulate the honourable member for his participation in the fundraising efforts of the Leukaemia Foundation. I reckon that it is a good look. It is a significant improvement and I wish the honourable member well. We are all right behind him. Well done and congratulations.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I reckon that we could do the honourable member over there for free.

Unfortunately, I have had to decline the invitation to tonight's dinner because of other commitments, but the Queensland government will be well represented by my colleague the Health Minister, Wendy Edmond. Wendy has been an outstanding advocate for the centre and I have also taken a strong personal interest in the project.

As members would know, the state government has embarked on a 10-year \$270 million program to make Queensland an international centre for biotechnology. Indeed, that is one of the key responsibilities for our new minister, Paul Lucas.

The Queensland Institute of Medical Research's new \$55 million comprehensive cancer research centre is well positioned to form an integral part of our biotechnology initiative. Over a period of four years, the Queensland government has provided QIMR with \$20 million towards this new research centre. A further \$20 million was provided by an anonymous international philanthropist who was impressed by the research being undertaken by the Queensland Institute of Medical Research under former director Lawrie Powell. I have had an opportunity to talk with the person concerned. The Leukaemia Foundation and the QIMR Trust guaranteed the remaining funding, but additional funding was needed to complete the project.

On behalf of the government, I personally assisted by lobbying the Prime Minister and, indeed, the federal Health Minister, whom I met, asking the Commonwealth government to provide financial support. For the information of the House, I table a copy of my letter to the Prime Minister and the research centre's submission which accompanied it.

I am delighted that the Commonwealth has come good with \$20 million to complete the construction of and contribute towards ongoing research at the centre. This really takes a lot of pressure off the centre and the Leukemia Foundation, which is committed to the centre and the lifesaving research to be performed there. That is why it was so important that the member for Bulimba asked this question.

The QIMR is one of the leading research institutes in Australia and has unrivalled expertise in cancer research from basic molecular biology to applied clinical research and clinical trials. It employs more than 400 scientists and support staff. The QIMR receives \$5 million each year from the Queensland government, which is an indication of our commitment to research and development. It also receives national health and medical research grants.

The state government will support the development of smart industries in this way to capitalise on Queensland's world-class capability for research and technology development. The state government aims to advance Queensland's research development, improve our science, engineering and technology base of networks and accelerate commercialisation.

I wish them well tonight. I know that the minister will represent us well, and I will be sending a letter of congratulations. When one is talking about small business and investment innovation, it is worth noting what is happening in terms of new industries. They are coming to Queensland.

Water Entitlements

Mr HOPPER: I ask the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines: will he give an undertaking or an assurance that any cap and associated management rules will preserve the

existing level of water entitlement to irrigators in the Condamine-Balonne catchment between Cecil Plains and Warrah in my electorate of Darling Downs?

Mr ROBERTSON: I am not going to intervene in a process that has yet to be completed. As the honourable member would be aware, a water resource planning process is under way. That is due to be completed around the middle of this year. In fact, I was out the member's way just last week meeting with the very people he is referring to.

Mr Palaszczuk: I heard you on the radio.

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the minister.

That tour demonstrated to me that there was a wide range of views right along the Condamine-Balonne catchment area, and some of those views are indeed competing views. We have this planning process under way so that we can meet those sometimes competing demands while, of course, maintaining our commitment to the health of that river system.

The member would be aware that those issues are complex. There is substantial investment right along those catchments in a wide range of industries. That is what really impressed me during the visit that I made to a number of centres last week. What was also brought home to me was the preparedness of those land-holders and irrigators to participate in this process. They know that their future depends on the future health of the river system. It is no good extracting water out of that system to the extent that we jeopardise the health of the river system. There are some difficult issues ahead of us. But we believe the water resource planning process, and subsequent to that the ROP process, which will actually allocate water for at least the next 10 years, is the fairest way possible to address those competing needs.

During that visit last week individual land-holders and irrigators said to me time and time again, 'Thank goodness we've got a government in office that is prepared to do the right, sustainable thing. What we are sick of is the level of corruption in years gone by where people's entitlement to water basically depended on what office they held in the National Party.' Time and time again land-holders and irrigators said to me, 'I never belonged to the National Party. That's why I didn't get a fair allocation.' Wherever I went that was the message I got. This process is about addressing the corrupt practices of the past and will set in place a sustainable future for the catchment that the member represents.

HIH Insurance

Mr REEVES: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the disastrous financial collapse of the HIH insurance company, and in particular to its effects on people seeking cover for new housing construction, and I ask: can the minister advise on the position in relation to home building warranties in Queensland?

Mr SCHWARTEN: There is no doubt that the HIH meltdown is an absolute disaster for the building industry and home owners across Australia. Some \$2 billion worth of building work is on hold at the moment and some 14,000 building contractors are sitting on their hands instead of setting concrete throughout Australia.

Just yesterday the Victorian government announced that it was going to spend some \$35 million on trying to assist the building industry in that state to overcome this financial disaster. But, of course, in Queensland we are very fortunate that back in 1998 the good people of Queensland chose to elect a Labor government. Part of electing that Labor government meant that the Building Services Authority got to retain its mandatory insurance scheme. I pay tribute to the then minister, the Honourable Judy Spence, who had the foresight to ensure that that coalition plan of privatisation of that building fund was turned on its head and that Queenslanders now have protection in a market that is collapsing all around Australia.

Mr Mackenroth: Who would the policies have gone to?

Mr SCHWARTEN: They would have gone to HIH. That is exactly where they would have gone. That was the plan, the same as it was in New South Wales. It was heralded at the time as the great saviour. It is a bit like the time they tried to privatise Q-Fleet. Honourable members would remember that. Dr Watson was in that up to his eyeballs. That was a great disaster as well. But the truth is—

Mr Lucas: How much money did they give to the Liberal Party?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I was just about to get to that. Perhaps Dr Watson had some insight at the time, because of the \$800,000-odd that the Liberal Party was the beneficiary of from HIH. Obviously, he saw it as an investment for Queenslanders to be part of that privatisation racket.

Queenslanders can take some comfort from the fact that they have a government that does not follow the privatisation route; we do not accept that the private sector can necessarily do it better. This is a classic case. Queensland builders and home owners are much better off as a result. The whole point is that we in Queensland will not have to expend taxpayers' money to help people complete their homes and to help builders get a start. The reality is that in other states that is an issue—and it is a huge issue that is going to get worse. The GST has had a terrible effect on the building industry in Queensland. That will have an impact on our Insurance Fund in Queensland. As a result of that, we have to follow the market in that regard. But the one thing that is guaranteed is that we still have building cover for Queensland home owners and builders.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Southern Downs, I welcome to the public gallery parents, teachers and students from Bray Park State High School in the electorate of Kurwongbah.

Mr W. T. D'Arcy, Superannuation Entitlements

Mr SPRINGBORG: I ask the Premier: when will he present to parliament the report and recommendations of the committee which he established to consider recovering the superannuation entitlements of convicted former MP Bill D'Arcy?

Mr BEATTIE: That committee has not yet provided me with its report. When that report is provided to me, I will give due consideration to it and consult with the appropriate people before making a final determination.

Mr Springborg: You said a month in February.

Mr BEATTIE: As I was about to say, and as the member knows, this is an independent group of people that includes such distinguished people as Sir James Killen, and the agenda and timing obviously is a matter for the committee. I do not think the member or any other honourable member should at any time impugn the integrity of Sir James Killen. I make it very clear: I will stand by the integrity of all members of that committee. I regard Sir James Killen as a great Queenslanders. I believe it is a matter for him and other members of that committee to make a determination.

Mr Springborg: That's an excuse.

Mr BEATTIE: That is not an excuse; it is a matter for the committee. The member is unbelievably offensive to a group of non-political people including Sir James Killen. What is the member suggesting? What is the honourable member's point about Sir James Killen? Does he not have any faith?

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I see. Here we go. Let the record show that he is now questioning the integrity of an independent group of people.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Oh yes he did.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right. Here we have another attack between the National Party and the Liberal Party. Is that the story? They are not satisfied with the 40 per cent swing against them in Surfers Paradise; they want to reduce their vote to even less. Do members opposite want to know one of the reasons why the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, Lex Bell, is here? It is because members opposite always spend their time in the gutter. It is good to have a member here who will not do that and who will actually argue for people. The National Party is down to 11 members. Some honourable members would remember that they were all over the place—there were 20 or 30 of them. And now there are only eleven. Why? It is because they are in the gutter all the time, whingeing, moaning and trying to impugn the integrity of decent people.

The member has attacked the integrity of decent people. When those decent people have completed the deliberations and tasks that they have been given they will provide me with a report, and I will stand by the integrity of Sir James Killen, I will stand by the integrity of every member on that committee and I will fight against any National Party member who wants to get

into the gutter. I say again that the reason why there are 11 of them and the reason why they had a 40 per cent swing against them is that they are in the gutter. They can only blame Rob Borbidge for so long. I like the great stuff from the Leader of the Opposition. There was a 40 per cent swing against him and they said, 'Whose fault was it? Not mine. Rob Borbidge did it.' Where is poor old Rob? He has retired. But they said, 'Rob Borbidge—he did it.' Maybe it was the member's fault. He voted for him. They will call him '40 Per Cent Mike'.

Rock Eisteddfod Challenge

Mrs REILLY: I ask the Minister for Health and the Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy: will she confirm the Beattie government's commitment to the 100% In Control Rock Eisteddfod Challenge as a drug prevention strategy for young people?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for the question and I note her absolute enthusiasm for this program. Get in there, kid! Of course, she is much closer to the age group of those who are involved than I am.

Mr Mackenroth: So am I!

Mrs EDMOND: Rock on, oldies!

The Queensland government, through Queensland Health, has been a major sponsor of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge since 1991. The Beattie government has reaffirmed its commitment with its Quitting While You're Ahead policy. The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge is a high school performing arts competition which gives young people an opportunity to produce and stage live entertainment as a 100 per cent drug-free experience, and I recommend it to the member for Callide. If he took up his time with singing and dancing maybe he would not have so much energy for meaningless interjections.

The Queensland government supports the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge in three key ways. Firstly, we provide the naming rights sponsorship of \$120,000 per year through the 100% In Control prevention campaign; secondly, health workers, including our youth health nurses in schools, use 100% In Control activities and resources to work closely with participating schools in drug education and health promotion; and, finally, 100% In Control activities and resources are used at the events to extend and support the drug education and health promotion interventions run during the lead-up.

The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge events will be hosted at five sites throughout Queensland in 2001. The sites are Toowoomba on Friday, 1 June; Mackay on Wednesday, 6 June; Cairns on Wednesday, 20 June; and Townsville on Tuesday, 17 July. Heats in Brisbane will be held from 25 to 27 July. The grand final is on Friday, 24 August. I urge all members to get in there and support these young people. It is great entertainment as well as a meaningful campaign against drugs.

Support for the Rock Eisteddfod is just one element of the Beattie government's prevention strategies. Other statewide strategies include the Croc Eisteddfod Festival, Rumble in the Jungle and the Poison smoking prevention commercial in cinemas. We recognise that one-off strategies for young people do not work. We also know that, if a person has not taken up smoking, binge drinking or drug taking before their 19th birthday, there is statistically less chance of them doing so when they get older. That is why we have policies that focus on early intervention and family support.

Industrial Commission

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Premier to media comments attributed to him in which he said that it was necessary in the last sitting week of parliament to introduce controversial amendments impacting on the administration of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission because union leaders had failed to honour undertakings made in 1999 relating to the way they would 'treat the commission', and I ask: what were these undertakings, between whom were they made, which undertakings were broken and when did this occur?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have on a number of occasions, as I would expect all leaders of this state to do, responded to questions at news conferences asked by all sorts of journalists. I always respond in an open, honest and frank way. On this occasion I was asked questions in relation to my dealings with certain union people and I responded accordingly. In terms of the issue that the member referred to, at no time was I seeking to denigrate the role of the commission, nor did I at any time seek to denigrate the role of

the president of the commission. The comments I made were basically these: when I make agreements with people, I expect them to honour those agreements. I have said that publicly, I have said that privately and I will continue to do that.

Let me refer to some issues. The member has made some reference to the sittings of parliament and this issue raised by the commission. Under statutory requirements I am accountable to this parliament, as is everybody else. Let me be very direct. My view is that the commission should get on with its job. It is given responsibility by statute of this parliament and it has a responsibility to perform accordingly. This government is required to perform and so is everyone elected on that side of the parliament. I expect the president of the commission and the Industrial Relations Commission to perform. I expect them to work. I acknowledge their independence, I respect their independence, but I also expect them to work.

When issues are raised with me and my government in relation to how the commission or any other body within government responsibility can enhance its performance, we will make amendments. I make it very clear today that, in relation to the Industrial Relations Commission, the Crime Commission, the CJC or any other body, if there are ways to enhance their performance that can be legislated for, they will be legislated in this House. That applies to the Industrial Relations Commission as much as it does to everybody else.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I have already answered that.

In my view the full bench hearing was a matter entirely for the commission. In my view they misinterpreted or misunderstood—whatever term you want to use—the reported remarks in the *Courier-Mail* and they acted accordingly. It is a matter for them. We did not appear yesterday because there was nothing to respond to. My advice to the president of the commission is to get back to work, because that is what the people of Queensland expect—and so does everybody else. They are entitled to have full bench hearings. Frankly, I think those full bench hearings satisfied some need within the commission, but I believe that that need is past. They should go back to work.

Renoir to Picasso Exhibition

Ms MALE: I refer the Minister for the Arts to the exhibition Renoir to Picasso currently on show at the Queensland Art Gallery, and I ask: can he inform the House of what kind of public response there has been to this exhibition?

Mr FOLEY: The public response has been sensational. For those who scoff at the arts, I say let them go to the Queensland Art Gallery, and let them have a look at the people queuing up at the Queensland Art Gallery to see one of the most exciting exhibitions of modern times. When this exhibition closes on Sunday, 20 May, we expect that over 100,000 people will have passed through the doors. That drives home that the arts are for everybody.

The Queensland Art Gallery has a proud record of reaching out to the community and nurturing local art and also of ensuring that Queensland is regarded highly in the art capitals of the world so that we get access to exhibitions of this standard of excellence. Of course, if you are unfortunate enough not to live in Queensland, you will be able to see it in places like Sydney and Melbourne, where it will travel to after it leaves here. If you miss it there you will have to go to Paris to see it.

With only one week to go, a last minute rush is expected as viewers catch the opportunity to see 81 paintings by 11 of the most famous names in international art. The audiences have included many schoolchildren, and I am delighted to see that schoolchildren and their teachers have taken such an active interest in this exhibition. I think it does help all of us to understand the work of Queensland artists and what they are trying to do to make sense of this crazy world if we can identify with and see some of these classic works—works that characterise the work of the impressionists and the modernists, by people like Renoir, Cezanne, Matisse, Soutine, Modigliani, Picasso and so on.

These works are in Queensland because the Musee de l'Orangerie in Paris has been undergoing renovation, and it is a real coup for the Queensland Art Gallery. It is the sort of reputation upon which the government intends to build when it announces in the near future the international competition for the spectacular Gallery of Modern Art which will rise on Kurilpa Point on the Brisbane River. The arts are alive and well in Queensland. The response of the Queensland public has been truly outstanding.

TAFE Training

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth to the fact that I have personally criticised the Minister for Families and the Minister for Education about the waste of magnificent resources at BoysTown, resources which could be used to assist youth at risk to become job ready. Queensland has in excess of 167,000 unemployed, yet there are magnificent facilities at the Salisbury TAFE campus and Team Employment and Training in the minister's own electorate which are not being fully utilised. I ask: like the other ministers, why is the minister blatantly wasting these facilities which could be used to make our youth job ready?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. Unlike the opposition, this government is investing in jobs and training for Queenslanders.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member should simply look at the facts. Instead of seeking to denigrate the work of staff of the Employment and Training Department, he should take into consideration the fact that over 25,000 Queenslanders have obtained employment and training opportunities through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative since it was implemented in 1998 during the term of the first Beattie Labor government. Indeed, the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative is being enhanced as a result of election promises which are being delivered by this government. We are also seeing delivery of training initiatives which will upskill the work force.

If the honourable member is motivated to do something positive for a change, he might take up the advocacy cause for Queensland in the case of the scandalous refusal of the Commonwealth government to come to the party with anything remotely resembling a decent offer for the Australian National Training Authority agreement. When do we ever hear the honourable member for Beaudesert, or indeed any of the opposition, actually standing up for Queensland? At the moment we are seeing Dr Kemp refusing to come to the party with a decent and reasonable financial agreement on which we could get about the serious business of upskilling the work force, particularly through TAFE and private training providers.

The honourable member is plainly unaware of a number of important initiatives such as the Housing Industry Trade Training Program where, together with the support of the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, training opportunities have been created for 341 first-year apprentices. He is also plainly unaware of the Community Employment Assistance Program, which has assisted some 9,975 long-term unemployed people. Unemployment is the single greatest social and economic issue facing this generation. This government remains totally focused on the top priority of jobs, jobs, jobs. We remain committed to upskilling the work force through industry based and industry focused training. I just wish that the opposition would stand up for Queensland and let us get the sorts of resources from the Commonwealth government we urgently need if the Australian National Training Authority is to be of force and effect.

DNA Testing

Mr MICKEL: I ask the Minister for Police and Corrective Services: can he inform the parliament on the status of the introduction of DNA testing in watch-houses?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for Logan for the question. He has been and is a very valued member of my caucus committee. This is an issue in which he has taken a great deal of interest. DNA testing of Brisbane City Watch-house prisoners who have been charged with indictable offences commenced on 26 April this year. As part of a staged roll-out, this week the trial has been extended to the whole Metropolitan North police district. The trial at these stations will include further evaluation and review of the DNA sampling process. Sampling will then be rolled out across the state from 4 June. A simple mouth swab or hair sample is collected by suitably qualified police and is then analysed by Queensland Health's scientific section.

Funding has already been approved for the implementation of DNA forensic scientific services through Queensland Health, which has the specialist resources to analyse samples and provide DNA profiles for the police. The DNA profile that is created is stored on a database and can be compared against DNA profiles taken from previously unsolved crimes. DNA samples taken from crime scenes will be able to be compared against existing DNA profiles on the database as it builds up. This process is expected to become an invaluable investigative tool in helping to establish or indeed rule out links to crime.

I believe DNA sampling will eventually become recognised as a standard third form of identification next to the fingerprint and photograph systems which have been used by the police for many years. The DNA profiles will be added to the Commonwealth's national database and will be available to police in all the various states. This initiative is just another example of modern technology allowing for smart policing which will boost the Queensland Police Service's effectiveness in controlling and solving crimes.

Gympie Hospital

Miss ELISA ROBERTS: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the fact that, as a result of the downgrading of services within my electorate's local public hospital, many patients are being forced to travel approximately 70 kilometres to Nambour in order to seek treatment. I ask: if this government sees fit to remove much-needed medical services and facilities which are essential to and a basic right for all Queenslanders, would it consider providing, or at least partially subsidising, a daily bus service from Gympie to Nambour for those patients who are being turned away in ever-increasing numbers?

Mr BREDHAUER: The premise of the honourable member's question is wrong. There has been no downgrading of services at the Gympie Hospital. In those cases where people are remote from medical services, especially specialist medical services that are available under the Minister for Health's portfolio, the Patient Transit Scheme is available to assist those people with transport. The question should have been addressed to the Minister for Health.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Cairns, I welcome to the public gallery students, parents and teachers from Toowoomba Grammar School in the electorate of Toowoomba South.

Daintree Remote Area Power Supply Rebate Program

Ms BOYLE: I ask the Minister for Environment: does he intend to inject extra funding into the Daintree solar rebate program?

Mr WELLS: The Environmental Protection Agency has injected \$750,000 into the Daintree Remote Area Power Supply Rebate Program. Of that amount, \$424,000 has been allocated so far. The government is prepared to spend up to \$300,000 more this financial year. I am advised by my department that the federal government has cut the amount of funding available to applications from the Australian Greenhouse Office. The Daintree Remote Area Power Supply Rebate Program, a partnership between the EPA and the Australian Greenhouse Office, enables people living in the Daintree exclusion zone to get rebates for the installation or upgrade of renewable energy power supply systems.

I am advised that last October the Australian Greenhouse Office, an agency of the Commonwealth government, halved the rebate funding amount from about \$5 per watt to about \$2.50 per watt. In the seven months since this decision the public uptake in the Daintree RAPS rebate program has dropped substantially, not surprisingly. My department would like as many people as possible to take up the rebates before the program ends on 30 June, so we have decided to increase the amount my department gives to applicants, in order to pick up the Commonwealth government's shortfall. Owner-occupiers can apply for rebates of up to \$22,500 for the installation or upgrade of diesel generators and/or renewable energy-based generation systems.

I can also confirm that the EPA is working towards the introduction of a RAPS rebate scheme for commercial businesses in the Daintree. Strong interest from local businesses in the Daintree district has prompted the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a similar rebate program for them. This scheme should be finalised soon. The new program will be run in conjunction with the Australian Greenhouse Office. This is a very worthwhile initiative of the Beattie Labor government, and it is a significant step in the direction of the generation of renewable power and the mitigation of contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Racing Industry

Mr HOBBS: I refer the Minister for Tourism and Racing to the ongoing uncertainty in the thoroughbred racing industry following her comments such as, 'I am unhappy with the direction of racing,' 'I am unhappy with communications between the QPC and the industry,' and, 'The

Premier knows how I feel.' As the minister has recently met again with industry representatives, can she advise the House whether those discussions have resolved these uncertainties?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a very serious question. I do remember the comments I made on the last occasion, when I said that I was not happy with the direction racing was taking in Queensland. When I got back to my office one of my staff said, 'Minister, I have just solved all your problems for you. If you don't like the direction racing is taking in Queensland, we will just turn them around and run them the other way, as they do in Victoria.' For anybody who does not understand, in Queensland the horses run clockwise while in Victoria they run anti-clockwise.

This is a very serious question. We have seen some great racing over the last couple of weeks through the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival, as the shadow minister knows. He, like me, was at Doomben last Saturday when we saw a Queensland horse win the Doomben 10,000—Queensland bred, Queensland trained, Queensland owned and ridden by a Queensland jockey.

Mr Bredhauer: Did you back it?

Mrs ROSE: It was a great win for Queensland and, yes, I did back Falvelon. There were a couple of really good Queensland horses in the field, and I was very pleased to see a Queensland horse win.

In answer to the member's question, I am still putting together a submission which I will be taking to cabinet in the not-too-distant future. Until such time as that happens, I will of course continue to have ongoing communication with the racing industry. One thing I will say about people in the racing industry is that, as I am sure the shadow minister is well aware, everybody has an opinion about how racing should be run in Queensland, and there are some really good ideas. However, the racing industry is made up of many facets—from breeding to training, from the jockey association to the owners.

The racing industry is a very important one. It is the state's fourth largest industry. It is a huge employer in Queensland and we do want to get things right. There are a lot of a challenges facing the industry but, as I was saying, at the moment we are seeing some pretty exciting things happening in Queensland racing. The Winter Racing Carnival is going very well. That has only happened because of the hard work that has been put in by the Brisbane Turf Club and the Queensland Turf Club, ensuring that the feature races throughout the carnival are successful.

There was a really good crowd at Doomben last Saturday. The Doomben Cup is in two weeks time. Unfortunately I cannot go, but the Premier is going to make the presentation of the Doomben Cup. I encourage all members to take the opportunity to participate in racing during the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival.

Land Clearing

Mr STRONG: My question is directed to the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines. I refer to a recent promise by the Deputy Prime Minister and National Party leader on ABC Radio that the Commonwealth will not interfere in or ride roughshod over tree-clearing practices in Queensland. Does not Senator Hill's decision to list land clearing as a threatening process under Commonwealth environment protection legislation effectively scuttle any chance his federal National Party colleagues have to honour his promise to Burnett and Queensland land-holders?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think it is fair to say that nothing identifies the crisis that is the federal coalition government at this point in time more than this debate over tree clearing. We have Senator Hill bringing in new regulations that impose themselves on Queensland responsibilities for land clearing to the extent that land-holders who legitimately get permits under our system now have to go down to Canberra to get permission to clear their land.

After the Deputy Prime Minister heard of this—of course, after the proposal had gone through cabinet—he discovered that his core constituency would be affected by this absolutely ridiculous proposal by his cabinet colleague Senator Hill. So what did the Deputy Prime Minister have to do? He had to get on the radio and back-pedal. Such was the embarrassment by the National Party in Canberra as to its Liberal coalition partner's extremism and unwanted interference in state matters that the Deputy Prime Minister had to get on the radio and basically dump Senator Hill in it.

I have to wonder exactly who Senator Hill's friends are. Not even the newly independent Liberal Party in Queensland, free from the shackles of coalition, would seem to support Senator Hill's stance. In the previous sitting week the member for Robina, during a debate on vegetation management, said—

This is why the Liberal Party wholeheartedly endorses the basic principle that the state government should have the responsibility for the control of land clearing on both leasehold and freehold land. This is the only way to ensure a properly coordinated response towards minimising the damage caused by land clearing across the state ...

That is the position of the Queensland Liberals, yet the federal Liberals have a completely different stance. Is it any wonder that the bush is burning? They can get absolutely no sense out of the Liberal Party. They can get absolutely no sense out of the National Party. That is why only a few months ago the Beattie government was returned with the majority we have here today.

It is only the Beattie Labor government in Queensland that can deliver certainty and sustainability on land management issues right across the state. Land-holders know that they cannot trust the National Party and they cannot trust the Liberals. Confusion reigns supreme, based on the extremism of Senator Hill and the contradictory position of Mr Anderson. This is a federal government in absolute crisis.

Dingoes, Fraser Island

Dr KINGSTON: My question is directed to the Premier. Did all the conservation officers who carried or used firearms on Fraser Island at the time of the recent dingo killings have firearm licences for the weapons so carried and used, or were they exempt?

Mr BEATTIE: As the member would appreciate, these matters were handled by the department and by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The answer to that question is: I frankly would not have a clue. The member would not expect me as Premier to know whether the rangers on the island have appropriate licences or not. I would assume that they have. I would expect—

A government member: I thought you knew everything!

Mr BEATTIE: I thought I did, too. I am just stunned to know that I do not.

Mr Mackenroth: Almost everything.

Mr BEATTIE: Almost everything, yes. I am happy, as I am sure the minister would be, to check the position, but that would normally be the case. Frankly, I do not think the member would expect me to know that level of detail, but we are happy to find out. However, I do want to say a couple of things. I noticed some reports in the press this morning in relation to the dingo culling. I want to restate the point—and I hope that the opposition is supportive of us—that culling was the only sensible thing to do on Fraser Island, and I stand by what we did.

I notice that today an expert is claiming that because of the culling that was carried out other dingoes are moving in and are now biting people. My advice is that the claim as it relates to biting is absolute nonsense; it is simply not true.

I want to point out that the dingo cull occurred across a range of townships and camping grounds on both the east and west coasts and from the top to the bottom of the island. In the Indian Head region, where these recent bites occurred, only four dogs have been removed out of a total of 31 culled so far. Dingoes were also shot at 13 other locations, and no bites or interactions have been recorded at these other sites since the cull—absolutely none.

So the claims this morning in the *Courier-Mail* are simply untrue. I may not be a scientist, but I find it rather odd that a pattern of dingo aggression that has been occurring for more than a decade can suddenly be blamed on a limited cull. The fact is that those things have happened in isolated instances, which is why the planning process started in the first place. I just say to everybody concerned: let us have some sensible and rational debate about these things. If any dingo poses a threat to human beings, it will be destroyed.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Unemployment

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): There is a matter that is very serious and of great concern to Queenslanders that should be discussed by

this House here today. It is the matter of unemployment. Month after month Queensland comes last in the unemployment stakes in Australia.

Queenslanders like to think that they are above average, Queenslanders like to think that we can win our share of football matches and our share of cultural competitions, that we can be the best tourism state, and that we can be the state that leads and drives Australia. However, the sad realisation is coming to the people of Queensland that in the area of jobs and in the area of unemployment Queensland is coming last. Month by month for the past nine months Queensland has recorded the worst unemployment figures for the mainland states of Australia. The latest employment figures are simply a disgrace. Queensland's unemployment rate has hit nine per cent. We continue to be last, behind South Australia. Only last month we were last, even behind Tasmania.

So what has gone wrong in Queensland? What is it about this Labor government that makes its performance and the creation of jobs relative to the other states of Australia substandard—below par and below average? While all the other states in Australia are stabilising or decreasing their unemployment rates, Queensland is actually going in the other direction. All the verbiage, all the hot air, all the words and all the excuses from the Premier do not hide the fact that we have a terrible and disgraceful unemployment situation in Queensland and, most importantly of all, it is affecting our young people. Queensland had the second worst annual employment growth figure and even Tasmania had a figure that was almost double ours.

During the coalition's term in government Queensland generated 37.3 per cent of all new jobs created in Australia, while under the present Labor government only around 17.5 per cent of new jobs were created in Queensland, less than half the figure that was achieved by the coalition government. Last month while the number of employed people in Australia grew, Queensland actually lost jobs. Last month 167,800 Queenslanders were unemployed, an increase of 10,500 over the previous month. That is over 10,000 more Queenslanders who are facing the pain of not having a job.

This is the sort of figure that we should all sit up and start to take notice of. According to the most recent figures, 30 per cent of Queensland's youth are unemployed. That is around one in three young people who do not have a job. The Labor government is failing our youth, it is failing our future and it is failing our hope. The National Party opposition will continue to stand up on behalf of young people in Queensland in an endeavour to give our young Queenslanders opportunity, chance and hope.

This morning the Premier quoted some high unemployment figures from both the Borbidge and the Joh days. Strangely, he neglected to comment on the 11.1 per cent unemployment that was achieved by the Goss government—considerably higher than any figure under a Queensland government from this side of the House.

I say again that the benchmark is: how is Queensland performing against the yardstick of the other states? The fact is that we are coming stone, motherless last. We are failing our young people. We have become a state of hot air when it comes to jobs. We are not a state with a practical plan that attempts to address the problems that exist.

The Premier also gave us a lecture on participation rates. He neglected to mention Western Australia, which has a participation rate considerably higher than Queensland on 67 per cent, yet Western Australia managed to achieve an unemployment rate that was almost a quarter less than Queensland. Why can Western Australia handle a higher participation rate with an employment environment very similar to Queensland's, yet this government has to pass the buck and make excuses?

The Premier attempted to blame the GST, he attempted to blame petrol prices, he has attempted to blame interest rates, and he attempts to blame the low Australian dollar—any excuse he can think of rather than accept ownership and responsibility for the problem. This Premier has been in his position since 1998. There has been enough time to bring Queensland's situation back to above average, but we have fallen below average, we have fallen to last place. The last time I looked, the whole of the country had all these influences—the GST, the interest rates and all the other excuses that the Premier likes to trot out.

The Premier also tabled a document which claimed to list the present government's successes in job creation. I was thinking this morning while I listened to all that: well, how many jobs must the other states be creating? He can sit here and name different projects and how many jobs his government has created, but we are coming last, we have a 9 per cent

unemployment rate and one in three of our young Queenslanders are out of a job and without hope.

Obviously, the other states are doing far better. Can honourable members imagine the list their Premiers must be able to read out when they have unemployment levels far below ours? Their Premiers must be able to stand up and proudly list hundreds, if not thousands, more jobs that they are creating compared to what is happening in the below average performance here in Queensland.

Just look at some of the projects on the list the Premier read out this morning in parliament. Most of them were coalition projects driven by the coalition and were active before the Beattie Labor government actually came into power, such as the Century Zinc mine, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Cancer Research Centre, Comalco in Gladstone, Boeing moving to Queensland, Australia Magnesium Corporation production plant, funding for the Institute of Molecular Bioscience, the Millmerran Power Station and mine and many others. The list that he had this morning even contained the Swanbank Energy Park, which is not really even in the planning stage yet.

Yesterday a very concerning report was delivered by the St Vincent de Paul, a society which really does have concern for those in our communities who are less fortunate than the rest of us. It was called *Two Australias—Addressing Inequality and Poverty*. Regional Australia, in particular, was shown to have an increasingly serious long-term unemployment problem as rural and regional industries falter or fail and are not being replaced by the existing state government.

The report recommends a long-term strategy by government to correct this, and that is what the National Party opposition is recommending. These areas need to be targeted.

Mr Hayward: What do they say about the GST?

Mr HORAN: The member should stop making excuses. Every other state has a GST, and we are coming last. So the member should not use that as an excuse. The government's performance is substandard, and it should be ashamed of it.

The National Party opposition wants to see practical plans put in place. We want to see regional areas identified and targeted. We want to see projects started that not only deliver jobs whilst they are under construction but also projects that, once completed, deliver real jobs that see small business grow and prosper and hang from it like a coat from a coathanger. We want to see people get jobs in picking, packing, transporting, light manufacturing and all the associated work that can stem from job-creating projects such as the recycled water project from Brisbane to the Lockyer and the downs, such as the Paradise dam, such as the Nulinga dam on the tablelands, such as the base load power station that is needed in north Queensland, such as some of the roads that are needed in the far north of the state, and such as some of the transport systems on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast that could make the growth of those areas more efficient and the doing of business even more efficient.

Where is the Queensland government when the federal government is coming forward with initiatives such as the regional Australia summit, the regional and rural renewal program, community plans and other such things? They are nowhere to be seen. The Premier bleats all the time that Canberra is not doing anything. He will not put his hand in his own pocket. He will not, in a bipartisan way, join in these good schemes that can deliver real jobs to regional Queensland. He just simply carries on with the hot air.

Not only is regional Queensland crying out for jobs—and I refer to areas such as Mount Morgan, which has 32 per cent unemployment; Burke Shire, which has 22 per cent unemployment; Kolan Shire, which has 19.3 per cent unemployment; and Perry Shire, which has 18.4 per cent unemployment—but in the capital city where Wacol has a 24.8 per cent unemployment rate. There are areas of the state—cities, towns and regional areas—that need identifying and a real plan put behind them.

The National Party opposition is calling on this state government to target capital works that will actually create jobs. It is time to stop building parks, playing fields and art galleries. They are lovely when we can afford them, but they are lovely when everybody has been given jobs and when youth are given hope. They are lovely when the roads are right and when there are secure irrigation and water supplies. The parks, playing fields and art galleries are the niceties of life that we should have once the basic, core, important day-to-day things are done.

It is time that we had a government that attended to the things that matter, and what matters in Queensland is jobs for young Queenslanders. The National Party opposition will stand up for young Queenslanders. It is time we had a proper plan in place to address unemployment.

Time expired.

Holocaust Remembrance Day; Anzac Day

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): Recently, I attended two very special memorial services: Holocaust Remembrance Day and an Anzac Day commemoration for Jewish servicemen and women. Both services were very moving and emotional. Holocaust Remembrance Day was set aside to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to remind us all what can happen to civilised people when bigotry, hatred and indifference reign. The day also reminds us that tolerance and respect for all faiths and cultures are virtues that we must nurture and maintain every day.

At the Holocaust Remembrance Day, Mr Ron Weiser, whose parents survived the Holocaust said—

Words themselves cannot begin to describe what took place at the hands of the Nazi beasts and their collaborators. I am the child of survivors, I have tried to understand everything that happened during the Shoah, everything that my parents went through and felt.

But of course, the reality is that I comprehend very, very little, if anything at all.

Today in many cases we excuse the most antisocial behaviour of our young, general thuggery and violence because of the suffering and abuse a person may have gone through in their life.

Ron also brought the violence home with this horrifying account—

My late mother, and some of her sisters were rounded up in their home town. She and her sisters were taken firstly to work in a brick factory and then to Auschwitz and later to Tzitaau.

On the same train of cattle cars that she was packed into as if she was less than an animal, with three other people I never had the chance to meet with, to talk to, to share life with, my Auntie Erica—only 10 years old. Another of my aunts that I never would see—Anush—and her three year old son—Robby—the cousin I would never know, shot in front of their very eyes because he would not let go of his mother.

No-one can deny that the Holocaust happened. To deny the Holocaust is to deny history.

I rise to inform the House of a distressing situation—a situation where one man's uninformed opinions have caused great hurt and sadness. Dr Frederick Toben is the director of a far right extremist organisation, the Adelaide Institute. The institute claims to examine the truth about historical events, especially those connected with World War II and the Holocaust. The web site questions whether the gas chambers ever existed at Auschwitz.

Let me tell members a little bit about Dr Toben. Last year, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission ordered the institute's web site to stop publishing material questioning whether the Holocaust occurred after numerous complaints. The ruling was based on grounds that the main purpose of the institute was to humiliate and denigrate Jewish people. Dr Toben was also ordered to apologise to Australia's Jewish community, and so he should. He should apologise unreservedly to the Australian Jewish community. Kathleen McEvoy, the head of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission stated—

In public discourse there is a need to balance rights and responsibilities. It is never appropriate to victimise people of a certain race in the name of freedom of speech.

Dr Toben has indicated that he will not remove the material from his web site and would prefer to go to jail.

It does not end there. In March this year, this nasty and offensive man attended the South Australian Press Club to cheer on the guest speaker. Who was that guest speaker? None other than Pauline Hanson! Of course, if the One Nation members were present in the chamber, they would shake their heads in denial. Unfortunately, it is all true. The leader of One Nation even invited Dr Toben to stand up amidst rousing applause from her members at the luncheon. What did Pauline Hanson have to say about this anti-Jewish, Nazi genocide-denying individual? She said—

I have spoken out and Dr Toben is probably like a lot of other Australians that he is supporting me here today and I thank him.

Thank goodness staff at the press club had the good sense to stop Dr Toben from sharing the microphone before he could indulge the fantasies of One Nation members.

I suppose that it makes sense that Dr Toben would support One Nation—conspiracy man meets conspiracy party. Individuals like Dr Toben and his supporters do nothing but incite racial and ethnic hatred. They need to be shown for what they are: foul and offensive people. They need to be outed whenever the opportunity arises. To the One Nation members I say: if you dance with the devil, there is hell to pay.

Centenary of Federation; Women

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): Last week, during the Centenary of Federation celebrations, women from around Australia spent two days networking and celebrating women's place in Australia. The first event, 100 Years, 100 Women, was spent in Parliament House in Melbourne launching the Labor women's story. Honour was given to Sara Lewis, from the 1913 Women's Organising Committee, when she said—

Women to a large extent must help each other and we can then stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers, confident of our strength, better fitted for the fight, and more hopeful of success.

Joan Kirner, a former Premier of Victoria and champion of women, is known for her skills at fighting paternalism. She and the national network of women organised an event bringing together 800 women from around Australia, many of whom were significant firsts in the nation's development. Others in the 250-strong honour roll of the history of Australian women's struggle and achievements were also remembered. Queenslanders were among those honoured, including Faith Bandler, co-founder of the Australian South Sea Islanders United Council; poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal; Muriel Heagney, one of the pioneers of the equal pay movement; and Australia's first female air commodore, Julie Hammer.

Other famous women in the list of firsts included Australia's first policewoman, Lillian Armfield; lawyer Flos Greig; and religious minister Winifred Keik. Joan Kirner used the occasion to predict Australia would have its first female Prime Minister within a decade. She said—

The history we are celebrating today shows that although women got the vote in 1901, it took 40 years to get a woman into the federal parliament.

Prior to this event, hundreds of women gathered on the steps of Parliament House to celebrate women shaping the nation.

In 1895, Frank Madden told the Victorian parliament—

There is the chaste, honest, amiable matron, whose charity outruns her discretion, and whose knowledge of politics is so small that she cannot see the impossibility of her objects (and) the shrieking women (whose) idea of freedom is polyandry, free love, lease marriage and so on.

Are these the qualifications for the franchise? Are we going to allow women who would sap the very foundation of a nation to have votes? Are we going to allow women who do not understand the meaning of the word "home" to have a voice in the government of the country?

Madden's words, quoted by Deputy Speaker Judy Maddigan, were greeted by gales of female laughter.

Earlier a petition was presented to the only male who was part of the celebrations, Premier Steve Bracks. The petition commemorated the Great Petition of 1891, signed by 30,000 women, that helped Victorian women win the vote. The Great Petition, gathered by doorknocking in the days before fax and email, had asked for women to be given equal political representation with men. The 2001 Women's Petition, developed in consultation with 2,000 women across 72 municipalities, asked the government to prioritise such areas as equal representation in decision making, genuine equal pay, safety for women and children, and strong education and health services.

One thousand students from Richmond Girls College released balloons in suffragette colours to mark the handover of the petition. However, as Joan Kirner said, while women have the vote they do not yet have equality. Having said that, she still predicted that we would have our first female Prime Minister within a decade. This is all about having a critical mass of women, something that the Queensland state government can boast. We are not quite there, but we have a model to beat the rest of Australia. There is a sea change in Australian politics and, as Joan says, while we celebrate a record number of women in parliament, we still have a way to go—particularly under the John Howard model—to achieve women as partners rather than decorations, women as participants rather than advisers and women as leaders in the power group rather than as followers.

With this in mind, and as part of a growing mass of female politicians, it is worth reflecting on the big picture and the feminisation of poverty. By this I mean women having a higher incidence

of poverty than men, women's poverty being more severe than that of men and the trend to greater poverty among women, particularly associated with rising rates of female headship of households. The world march of women has set a good example for all of us as politicians. They denounce the impact of current economic globalisation on the majority of the planet's inhabitants, both women and men. In particular, they denounce the unprecedented global rate of impoverishment, especially of women, and all forms of violence against women.

Many of the political parties and economic policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund contribute to the present disorder of the world and constitute an obstacle to women's exercise of their fundamental rights. I will be clear: I am not against globalisation. On the contrary, I want globalisation based on equitable wealth distribution, equality between women and men, and respect for different cultures and for the environment.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies contribute to the present disorder of the world, affecting women in particular. Indeed, it is women who pay a high price for current neo-liberal globalisation. It is women who suffer most notably the consequences of the debt and structural adjustment programs. It is women who assume, by our unpaid work, the impact of privatisation and budget cuts in key sectors such as education, health, social assistance and food.

Time expired.

Unemployment

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (11.52 a.m.): Almost three years ago to the day, the then opposition leader promised Queenslanders that he would reduce unemployment to 5 per cent. The then opposition leader said that he only wanted to talk about jobs, jobs, jobs; indeed, he would be obsessed with jobs. When that opposition leader, Peter Beattie, took office in June 1998, he did so at a time when Queensland's unemployment rate was 8.6 per cent and Australia's unemployment rate was 7.9 per cent. The difference between the state and national levels was only 0.7 per cent.

Last week, Australia's unemployment rate was 6.8 per cent and Queensland's was 9 per cent. The difference between the state and national levels has now blown out to an alarming 2.2 per cent, and that gap gets bigger and bigger by the day. Unemployment today, whether in trend or seasonally adjusted terms, is higher than when Mr Beattie took office. This has nothing at all to do with the GST. The Premier would have us believe that the GST applies only to Queensland, but we all know that it does not. It applies in every state.

Is it not interesting to note that the Labor premiers in other states do not seem to be having any trouble at all with the GST when it comes to keeping their levels of unemployment low? New South Wales Premier Bob Carr is getting close to a 5 per cent unemployment rate. That state has an unemployment rate of 5.7 per cent. Labor's Victorian Premier does not seem to have too much trouble with the GST either. His state recorded a 6.3 per cent level of unemployment, but not Queensland. Our rate is 9 per cent and rising.

Rising with our unemployment rate is the number of excuses proffered by the Premier, his Treasurer and his Employment Minister. So much for a government that is committed to jobs, jobs, jobs. So much for the so-called 5 per cent unemployment target. Queensland now has the highest level of unemployment in mainland Australia. Only Tasmania has a higher rate. Queenslanders are fast beginning to see through the rhetoric of this government and they are also beginning to see through the slick media statements promising more and more jobs.

When we talk of unemployment, it is easy to dehumanise the issue by referring to figures and statistics—talking about real figures, seasonally adjusted figures or trend figures. What we must not forget is that we are talking about real people with real families. We are talking about the 167,837 Queenslanders who are looking for work. That is an extra 17,000 people looking for work since the Beattie Labor government took office. That is the reality. Over the past three years, an extra 17,000 people have been looking for work. All this has happened while the rest of Australia has recorded a decrease of over 67,000 people on the unemployment lines. We are increasing the number of people unemployed and the rest of Australia is decreasing that number. Since June 1998, the total number of Australians looking for work has dropped by a little over 9 per cent. By contrast, the number of Queenslanders looking for work has increased by 11 per cent. The national average is going one way, decreasing by 9 per cent, and Queensland is increasing by 11 per cent.

The obvious conclusion to draw is that the government's policies are failing. We have a failure in terms of industrial relations laws, we have native title laws that are strangling mining exploration, and we have the government's refusal to give any assistance to struggling industries like the dairy industry, which wants some compensation. All of those things combined are having a detrimental effect on the reputation that we once had as the engine room for job creation in Australia.

The Premier has tried to dismiss these latest unemployment figures by saying that they are not trend figures. He is playing with words. Let us look at the trend figures and put them on the record also. When the Borbidge/Sheldon coalition took office, it inherited from the Goss government a trend rate of unemployment in Queensland that stood at 8.9 per cent. We reduced the trend rate to 8.46 per cent when the Beattie government took over in June 1998. Last month the trend rate of unemployment in Queensland stood at 8.74 per cent. Not only is this trend figure higher than when Mr Beattie took office, it is soaring towards levels recorded under the Goss Labor government.

The facts and figures speak for themselves. One can argue about trend figures and seasonally adjusted figures. It does not matter. Whatever way one looks at it, this government has an abysmal record in terms of unemployment.

Time expired.

Anzac Way Memorial

Ms PHILLIPS (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.57 a.m.): It is an honour for me to be able to report on the opening last month by His Excellency the Governor of Queensland of the striking new Anzac Way memorial in Townsville. Anzac Way takes the form of a gate or archway that provides an avenue through to the cenotaph in Anzac Park. It symbolises the gratitude of the people of Townsville/Thuringowa for the efforts and sacrifices of all Australians who have served in operations that have been officially recognised with a service medal or award. It also recognises the sacrifices and support of civilians.

The memorial was an initiative of the Townsville sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans of Australia Association which, of course, represents veterans from throughout the twin cities of Townsville/Thuringowa. They formed a committee that was solely responsible for raising the equivalent of \$250,000 for the construction of Anzac Way. The project was funded without government expense through sponsorships, cash and in-kind contributions. All facets of the construction, including the architectural design, attachments, research, printed material, lighting and masonry were sourced from firms or individuals in Townsville, Thuringowa and the Burdekin. Funds were also raised from within those communities and from donations from outside as well. Much of the cost of the construction was offset by in-kind contributions of labour and materials and with considerable assistance from the Townsville City Council.

The committee of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Townsville 2000 was responsible for the project from beginning to end and was led by Neil Weekes, brigadier retired. As chairman of the memorial committee, Neil was singularly instrumental in its construction. The group that worked with him included John Robertson, Peter Martin, Dave Twigg, Gary McGlone, John Reading and Noel Pinch, president of the Townsville sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans of Australia Association.

The memorial is striking. It is robustly constructed of black granite to exemplify the strength of character and determination of spirit of the people memorialised therein. Anzac Way is not a memorial to the dead; it is an opportunity to remember the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary Australian people who have maintained and protected basic human freedoms worldwide, including those who are currently serving overseas. There are four columns, three representing the Army, Navy and Air Force, and the fourth honours the contributions made by members of the civil community to the military and to the nation. Each of the columns has attached to it a bronzed symbol of the particular service, and in the case of the civilians it is a stylised man, woman and child. On top of each column is a solid square, shaped and bevelled as a shell or sail. The words 'We called, they served' are etched into the face of these sails. The walkway beneath has a map of the world depicted on the floor. The 71 numbered plugs set into the map represent locations where personnel from Australia have served in a military, military-like or policing role. Adjacent to the memorial is a legend that provides basic historical details of each location.

I was fascinated to count 14 occasions when members of my family have served, including during the Boer War, in which my grandfather fought. Atop this magnificent gateway burns an eternal flame. The flame was lit from the Eternal Flame of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and transported to Townsville in a miner's lamp. This is only the second time that this flame has journeyed outside the national capital. The Eternal Flame signifies truth and freedom, and while it illuminates the past, depicted on the many locations identified on the map of the world, it also provides a light of hope for the future.

This is a unique memorial by its design—the Eternal Flame, the recognition of those who have served and are serving in all conflicts, not just a single occurrence; the inclusion of honouring civilians; the timelessness—additional plugs could be added if required; and the educational value in that it teaches visitors about the enormity of Australia's contribution to world peace. I thank publicly all those responsible for this wonderful memorial which, while a symbol of the gratitude of the entire Townsville/Thuringowa community, is also a significant contribution to the celebration of peace.

Feral Pigs

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (12.01 p.m.): Feral pigs breeding in the World Heritage-listed area of the Wet Tropics are causing severe damage to endangered native animals and affecting economies of our northern industries. Feral pigs are destroying 90 per cent of turtle nests between Cairns and the cape, the traditional breeding ground for many species of endangered turtles found on the Great Barrier Reef. If we allow this to keep happening, soon we will not have any turtles left. We cannot let these feral pigs kill off one of the ocean's greatest creatures. Six out of seven turtles in the world inhabit the Great Barrier Reef and they all rely on the coast of Queensland for their breeding cycles. The plight of the turtles is not great at the best of times, as only one third of their eggs hatched survive into adulthood.

Feral pigs pose a threat to our primary industries as well. They have the potential to be a carrier of many destructive diseases. If a wild pig was infected with foot-and-mouth there would be a massive explosion throughout the north of this disease. If we continue to let feral pigs roam around the north, we are running a risk of a widespread epidemic, with lethal diseases such as foot-and-mouth, Japanese encephalitis and TB.

Pigs are affecting the natural and farming terrain in our area, causing a large amount of destruction to many protected areas and farms. Farms located close to World Heritage protected land are suffering at the hands of this pest. The pigs use the protected areas as a harbour from hunters and trappers, enabling them free rein over many farms, coming and going as they like.

The pigs are affecting important industries in north Queensland such as our sugarcane crops. Roaming in large mobs, substantial damage is being done to crops. Digging up canefields and destroying sizeable areas, they are heavily affecting the production capacities and capabilities of this vital industry. Pigs are also being found to cause damage in more widespread areas and in places that are not traditionally associated with mobs of pigs.

This pest poses a very real threat to humans as well. Wild boars can weigh over 100 kilos and have large sharp tusks. People have been known to be injured or even killed. The pigs are growing in numbers, harbouring in the sanctuaries of environmentally protected lands. The Wet Tropics Management Authority has not devoted enough resources to the management and destruction of this pest in the past, allowing large numbers of pigs to breed in relative safety.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority needs to work with local action groups to resolve the problems of the feral pig, implementing a positive strategy. Budget limitations have restricted the success of the community based feral pig trapping program. Only \$207,000 has been allocated to the program for the year 2000-01—clearly not enough funding to deal with such a destructive pest. There are massive numbers of pigs causing untold damage in the World Heritage area. It is difficult to understand the state's attitude of increasing national park areas yet neglecting the management of the integrity of a resource it professes to be of great importance.

The damage caused by feral pigs is understood by the community to be a major problem. There is a willingness to take responsibility to eradicate them. However, we need adequate funding to successfully exterminate this pest. Traps currently being used in the eradication of feral pigs have been successful in not trapping other animals. Large Koppers logs have been supplied for use as trigger bars. These additions to the traps stop cassowaries and other animals from being unintentionally caught. More traps are needed to continue the eradication program.

Perhaps other techniques of controlling the numbers of feral pigs need to be looked at as well. Pigs are not going to eat things like bananas which are used as bait in traps.

Time expired.

Beyond the Pink Collar

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (12.06 p.m.): Today it is my pleasure to rise to draw the attention of honourable members to a report prepared at the direction of the Premier's Council for Women on women and work. This report, titled *Beyond the Pink Collar*, is an excellent report. Work has gone into it over some years, and it was completed in March of this year. It was prepared on the suggestion of the then Minister for Women's Policy, Judy Spence. At that time, too, Premier Peter Beattie had said to the council that he expected from it full and frank advice, and that is what is contained in this report. It is clear that the council members, led by chair Cathy Miller, embraced their task with enthusiasm. I commend the report.

One of my concerns is that because the report is titled *Beyond the Pink Collar*, and because it comes from the Premier's Council for Women, many, particularly perhaps the male members of this House, will discount it and brush it aside. However, it contains very important information for all of us as representatives of our electorates and as we have a significant proportion of the population who are not yet in employment and who may not even rate on the unemployment statistics, so limited are they in their skills or through other disabilities in joining the work force. Yes, unfortunately, women are still disproportionate in those groups.

The report makes clear that despite our action of the nineties, despite equal employment opportunity, despite women moving into some fields in which they had not been represented before, we have not in fact got there in large numbers—not at all. Largely, women's progression into new fields in the work force has been tokenistic. However, it is wonderful that I am now in a position in this House to say that, of course, the participation of women in this government in the year 2001 is not at all tokenistic, with one third of members being women.

I dare say that on hearing me embrace this report there may well be some who raise their eyebrows, want to put it down to women's business, question the need for it and whether there is good justification for spending time and resources on the issue of women and work issues. I say to such people: have a look inside the report. It is indeed a disappointing report in terms of its good-quality research but also in terms of statistics. I give members a glimpse: unemployment in Queensland is much higher among women from a non-English speaking background. It is higher, too, among indigenous women and among women with a disability in comparison with other groups. Double disadvantage may be even triple disadvantage. What a resource we are missing out on.

On the topic of casual employment, the rate for female casual employment in Queensland is 38.6 per cent, which is higher than the comparable national figure and higher than the rate of casual male employment in this state, which is 24.9 per cent. Therefore, when we talk about the problems of casual employment, we need to recognise that they are much more severe for women than they are for men.

What about the top end of the employment market? The facts are that in the year 2000, 13.6 per cent of full-time managers and administrators were women. What a pity not only for women who wish to work, who are entitled to better opportunities in this fine state of Queensland, but also for the businesses and the government departments as they are missing out on the tremendous diversity and style of participation that women bring. Their skills and their experience are a resource that all of the state needs to use as well as possible. For those who would care to explore further, the report is available through the Women's Policy Council. I really do recommend that all members read the report, apply it and search for some solutions in their own electorate.

Dingoes, Fraser Island

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—Ind) (12.10 p.m.): I rise to address the issue of poor consideration of suggestions by acknowledged authorities and the experienced residents of Fraser Island concerning the growing problems with dingoes and their close contact with, and growing dependence on, humans for sustenance. During the last session of this parliament I identified a report commissioned by the Beattie government which concluded that there was a danger of a human mortality and that the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service had a duty of

care. It appears that that commissioned report by Dr Corbett was ignored and the predicted fatality unfortunately has occurred.

During the public consultation on Fraser Island, the then minister was handed a joint submission from Bruce Jacobs and Fred Williams. This drew on Bruce Jacobs' 25 years of experience of running a dingo tourist farm without a single bad interaction between dingoes and his tourists. Fred Williams, the author of *Written in the Sand*, was well enough regarded by the then Minister for the Arts for him to receive funding to write—and he is still writing—a definitive book about the dingo. Jacobs and Williams then combined to produce a management program to benefit both the dingoes and tourists on Fraser Island. This was the document which was handed to the then minister, and it is a symbiotic solution to the problem. It appears that this report, along with others, has been ignored and we are now seeing the unfortunate consequences.

I seek leave to table the report.

Leave granted.

Racing Industry

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (12.13 p.m.): I draw to the attention of this House the effect that the GST has had and that the proposed ban on Internet gambling will have on the thoroughbred racing and breeding industry. Australian racing and, of most concern to us in this parliament, Queensland racing has been threatened by decisions made by the Howard coalition government in Canberra. The thoroughbred racing industry employs more than 100,000 people Australiawide, and many of those jobs will be lost as the industry loses viability.

An analysis of the effect of the GST on the racing industry in Western Australia by chartered accountants PKF has calculated that, for thoroughbred racing, the introduction of the GST has added \$3.9 million to the annual cost of racing activities and \$1.9 million to the breeding activities of Western Australian horse owners registered for GST. The Queensland industry is at least three times the size of the Western Australian industry, so it is reasonable to assume that the cost of the GST to Queensland racing amounts to over \$18 million per annum. This cost puts an additional burden on racing participants in Queensland and must contribute to the weakening, if not the demise, of this fourth largest industry in the state—an industry that employs 6,000 people directly and 24,000 people indirectly and is responsible for injecting \$700 million into this state's economy.

The Minister for Racing, Merri Rose, has previously alerted the parliament to the danger of the Howard government's proposal to prohibit Australians from accessing interactive gambling and wagering services, but this matter bears repeating because it is so important to the survival of the industry. Much of the information I have on interactive gambling comes from the Australian Racing Board, which is quite alarmed at the effect that a ban on interactive gambling would have on Australian racing.

Unlike most other sports, racing is heavily reliant upon large and consistent revenue from wagering turnover. At present, 70 per cent of the racing industry's total revenue is derived from TAB payments. Without this revenue, a severe reduction in the income flow to clubs, breeders, owners and industry workers would follow. The Howard government's concern that new interactive technologies have the potential to expand the availability of gambling in Australia and thereby exacerbate problem gambling shows a basic misunderstanding of the racing industry. The federal government and some sections of the community may have concerns about the proliferation of electronic gaming machines and casino games in homes via the Internet, but there is absolutely no basis for believing that wagering on the Internet will open the floodgates of problem gambling. Telephone wagering has been accepted in Australia since the 1960s. So the Internet wagering facilities add almost nothing to what has been available over the telephone for decades. The federal government's Productivity Commission itself agrees and said—

Internet wagering only represents a small technological step since people could already lodge bets remotely by phone.

Wagering on the Internet is no different from the existing TAB telephone betting service, but it costs less, and this is a direct benefit to the industry. Online gambling is different. It adds a new dimension as it enables what was previously impossible—access to gaming from the player's home.

There has been negative growth in wagering in Australia for many years. Increases in expenditure on gambling have been wholly attributable to increased gaming. So who benefits

from the Howard government's ban on interactive gambling? It is obvious. The free-loading offshore-based bookmakers, such as the ones in the tax haven of Vanuatu, taking bets from Australian citizens on Australian races. One of these Vanuatu operations alone has a turnover of over \$500 million. This operation has recently been sold to a UK company which is the seventh largest bookmaker in Europe and has telephone based operations in the Channel Islands and the Caribbean. It is vitally important that Internet wagering is with Australian licensed operators who are properly regulated, pay tax to the Australian government and make fair commercial returns to the Australian racing industry.

In an article in the *Australian* on the weekend of 14 and 15 April, Patrick Smith said—

The community has every right to fear the potential damage that is inherent with access to gaming facilities (poker machines, roulette etc) on the Internet. That is accepted. But gaming is not wagering. On the Internet, that is a powerful difference.

If it cares at all for the racing and breeding industry, the Howard government must exclude any ban on interactive gambling products offered by TABs, where clients place bets by Internet or direct link, and betting products are offered by licensed bookmakers, where clients place bets on the Internet.

Burke and Wills; Di Zischke

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.18 p.m.): It took Burke and Wills six months to reach the Gulf of Carpentaria. Di Zischke and her camels hope to take four months including the return journey, both following as closely as possible to Burke and Wills' footsteps. Di set out from Nappa Merrie Station four days ago on her way to Innamincka before heading north to the Gulf of Carpentaria. One thing Di does not have to worry about is burying anyone and she will not have to spend a day drying out horse meat because of hunger.

Di has permission from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to camp at many of the same sites as Burke and Wills did, including the 'dig tree'. Between Innamincka and Birdsville, Di will be accompanied by her husband, Cederic, who will be carrying supplies for both of them and the camels. At this point they will not meet again until Di reaches the 15 blaze trees in the gulf. This was the northernmost camp for Burke and Wills. At that point Di will be resupplied for her return journey to Birdsville.

Di's love of camels started a long time ago. In 1984 she took a 14-day safari on a property outside Alice Springs and developed a long friendship with the owners of that property. She began entering camel races and in 1994 won the prestigious Alice Springs Camel Cup on a camel called Bundy. Di's love of camels intensified and she and her husband bought a mob of wild camels and built their own racetrack at Coominya. They spent months breaking them in and started their own tourist property. It is a beautiful area of the Nanango electorate. If any members wish to take the opportunity to visit, I assure them that it would be well worth their while for the unique experience.

On her trip Di has taken four fully educated and prepared camels that were originally caught in the Northern Territory—that is, a lead camel, two camels to carry food and one for water. These camels will also carry up to 1,000 pounds of gear. Di will physically load and unload this weight every day—no mean feat! Di hopes to cover an average of 40 kilometres per day depending on terrain, some of which is extremely rugged. Her only concern is the possibility of running across crocodiles, not the fact that some rogue male camel might take a liking to her female camels. These camels were freighted by Queensland Rail to Quilpie and they will be freighted back at no cost. Parks and Wildlife in the Territory have issued permits free of charge.

Once Di reaches the northern-most camp, as did Burke and Wills, she will take a helicopter to the water and place a wreath in memory of the first expedition of the brave men who gave their lives trying to achieve the impossible. Those brave men never returned and, to this point, no-one has ever retraced the steps of Burke and Wills and returned. Many have travelled north to the gulf, but this will be the first time someone will reach the gulf and hopefully return by the same route. We have been informed of a rumoured reward put up by the South Australian government a long time ago when the area which Di will cover was still unopened. This reward was for someone who could travel to the gulf and back to achieve what was unachievable at the time. Di plans to claim this reward on her return if the offer is still valid.

The trip Di Zischke is undertaking is monumental. Some may say it is foolish; some, but most, would recognise her courage, her drive and her tenacity. It is only because of people such as Di who push the comfort zone barriers that we progress through life as individuals and as

communities. I ask this parliament to recognise this woman's courage and that, on her return, she be welcomed in a manner which is befitting of such a remarkable effort. I am sure the communities of Esk, Coominya and Toogoolawah will put on a great feast for her, but such an effort should not go unrecognised by this government.

Many people helped to get Di where she is today. Those involved include the National Geographic Society and the Esk Shire Council, including Mayor Jean Bray, who moved heaven and earth to get hold of a satellite phone which was then donated by Michaels Electronics at Toowoomba, which also supplied the battery and solar panel for the trip. Clutch Start is a group in the Esk area which strongly believes that many opportunities are lost because people with great ideas get no initial support from official bodies. It believes it can offer support to 'clutch start' interests and worthwhile projects. It is an inspiration to smaller communities and it should be emulated. It donated \$1,000 to help. Di and her camels have left their footprints over 15,000 kilometres.

Time expired.

Lions Youth of the Year Quest

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (12.23 p.m.): Today I rise to inform the House of the very worthy Lions Youth of the Year quest. This year the state final was hosted by the Daisy Hill-Loganholme Lions Club, a club I am proud to be a member of. The function was held in my electorate at the Springwood Hotel function room and was enjoyed immensely by all who attended. I want to tell the House about the history of the quest. The quest began in 1964 and was initially confined to the Brisbane metropolitan area. In 1966 the quest became open to other Lions multiple districts. The quest was solely for boys because it was considered that there were already a number of quests for girls. However, in time this changed and the quest became open to both young men and women.

Another reason I enjoyed this night is that it brought back memories of my high school years. In 1978 I represented Cavendish Road State High School in what was then called Youth Speaks for Australia. It seems that, from reading the history of the quest, I was probably one of the first females to be involved in the quest. Today I reflect back to that night and think what a great experience it was. I did not realise it at the time, but it was probably one of the best forms of training I had for the duty I now perform.

The Youth of the Year quest is a project of the Lions Clubs of Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is designed to encourage student interest in leadership and promote community involvement. In this the International Year of the Volunteer, it is pleasing to see a program that highlights to our youth the important work volunteers provide to our local communities. I am especially pleased to speak on this subject during National Volunteers Week. Candidates compete for many prizes, the ultimate being to travel overseas and act as an ambassador for Lions Club International. Students from all nations are brought together to discuss a wide range of international issues and to meet with international groups of professional men and women.

Some outstanding students represented the Springwood electorate. Miss Carla Simms, the Springwood State High School captain, recently competed at the district level. This means Carla went through the previous rounds of club judging and regional judging. I am sure this was no easy task, and I congratulate Carla on this achievement. On 7 April four students competed to represent Queensland in the national final to be held this month at Wollongong. Timothy Rawlings of Marymount College, Daniel Brown of Atherton State High School, Claire Schneider of Mt Michael's College and Eleanor Donovan of the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School were subjected to a mix of impromptu questions that were used to judge their knowledge and depth of understanding on a range of current issues. National and international issues of interest were well addressed by the four contestants.

However, that was only the beginning. The four then delivered prepared speeches on a topic of their choice. I was really pleased that I was not selected as a judge, because the performance of these four students could only be described as outstanding. While the judges were making their decision, we were treated to a speech by last year's state winner, Ms Allana Coxon. I use the word 'treat' because that is exactly what it was. It was a real treat to listen to her. She told us of her adventures travelling around Australia with the other state finalists. They visited some of our best-known tourist spots, as well as many worthy Lions projects throughout Australia. She was truly inspirational and makes a wonderful youth ambassador for Queensland Lions.

I now turn to the winner on the night. This was one time when the saying that there can be only one winner rings true. The four students were outstanding not only in delivering speeches but also in their commitment to high academic and sporting achievements and to promoting community service organisations. Timothy Rawlings of Marymount College is this year's state finalist winner. I congratulate Timothy and wish him well in the national final this month. Now back to 1978. Did I win? Yes. Even though I did not win the competition, I was a winner because I participated in a truly worthy event, an event that assists youths in leadership skills and to have a more active role in community services. I congratulate the Lions on keeping this quest alive for our youth.

Inter-Dominion Championship

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (12.27 p.m.): Recently at Parliament House I had the privilege of being a guest at a dinner hosted by the Minister for Racing, Merri Rose, for the Australian Harness Racing Carnival. This dinner was held to acknowledge members of the Inter-Dominion Council and to celebrate Brisbane being the host city for the 2001 toast.com Inter-Dominion Championship for pacers and trotters, which finished last weekend.

Mr Lucas: I'm putting my money on you.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Thank you very much. You might come in a winner. Not only were the championships held in Queensland, they were held at the Albion Park Paceway, which of course is situated in the electorate of Clayfield. The racing industry is a very significant contributor to the Queensland economy, especially in the Clayfield electorate, which also includes Doomben and Eagle Farm racecourses. As far as horseracing carnivals in the southern hemisphere go, the annual Inter-Dominion Championship is the ultimate test of speed and stamina for the horse. They have to perform over four nights in just two weeks. The Inter-Dominion Championship was first held in 1936 and has been the harness racing industry's showcase ever since.

The Queensland Harness Racing Board needs to be acknowledged for assisting with a share of the prize money to enable the championships to be held in Queensland. The carnival distributed some \$1.5 million in prize money and injected more than \$5 million into the south-east Queensland economy over just two weeks. The support for the Inter-Dominion was fantastic, with the quick sale of reserve seating and the catering facilities filled to capacity. It seems that everyone in the racing industry was part of the Inter-Dominion Championship. The Inter-Dominion is the Melbourne Cup of harness racing. It is unique in the harness racing world, bringing together the best horses from Australia and New Zealand.

I acknowledge the principal sponsor, Dean Shannon, of toast.com for his generous sponsorship. Dean and his wife, Kelly, are huge harness racing enthusiasts and have been great supporters of Queensland harness racing. Thanks must also go to the Queensland Events Corporation. Its chairman, Des Power, and his staff generously supported the 2001 Inter-Dominion Championships in promoting and marketing the championships interstate and overseas. They recognised what a great event this is and just how much it contributes to Queensland. I have to say: it was a fantastic two weeks. Everyone who went there had a lot of fun and there was a lot of money to be won. I look forward to the next time the championships are held in Queensland.

International Year of the Volunteer

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (12.30 p.m.): 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer. Today I take this opportunity to acknowledge the unpaid work done by the many in my electorate of Pumicestone. The government is also recognising these people, along with all the other volunteers throughout Queensland, and the important roles they play in communities.

The state government is committed to helping celebrate the International Year of the Volunteer. It is providing half a million dollars in community grants programs, which are open to all non-profit organisations, and \$200,000 to Volunteering Queensland. Awareness of volunteers' work will be increased by the handing out of special medallions and certificates in recognition of community achievements. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In my electorate, a special steering committee has been established to award various long-term volunteers with a special medallion. Voluntary groups have been asked to nominate an outstanding member or members whose actions have

changed communities for the better. The job of the steering committee will be difficult as there are so many deserving volunteers.

I was chairing a Bribie Island Community Hospice Committee meeting only last week, and I was inspired by the volunteering work they do. They are so selfless in their task of helping people with a terminal illness and their carers. I was overwhelmed to read that in most cases the volunteers only get a day or two notice and they have never let anyone down—not on Christmas Day, not on Easter Sunday, not anytime. They simply drop what they are doing and go to someone's home to comfort and help those who need them.

They are currently raising money to build a Hospice on Bribie Island which has a predominantly high percentage of retirees. The hospice committee obviously has the full support of the entire community as their financial statement showed they raised over \$70,000 in only four years—a truly remarkable feat considering most of the volunteers are of a retiring age.

Time here is limited and it is difficult to mention all individuals and groups who have that strong sense of duty and commitment to others, but I would like to express a communities' gratitude to Dorothy Vessey, who passed away in April of this year. Dorothy was never one to leave the work to someone else. Before she and husband Bert came to Bribie Island in 1969, she was a volunteer Guides Leader, Sunday school teacher and telephone Counsellor with Life Line in Brisbane. From 1979 to 1983 she held various voluntary positions on the Bribie Island golf club committee and was a foundation member. She volunteered her services to Red Cross and to the Bribie Island branch and helped run the book shop there for a number of years. She was also a foundation member of the Bribie Island Community Arts Centre. Dorothy will not only be remembered for her love of people (she was also a carer at the Golden Age Centre), but also for her love of animals. She worked tirelessly for the SPCA and was rewarded with Life Membership. Dorothy Vessey is missed already.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT (BURNETT BASIN) BILL

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (12.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to facilitate investigations into the feasibility of developing water infrastructure in the Burnett Basin.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (12.32 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill represents the first step in delivering the Beattie government's commitment to water development in the Burnett region. Specifically, the commitment is to commence design for construction of a major dam in the Lower Burnett region, allowing additional water allocations of up to 130,000 megalitres to support agriculture and industrial expansion, and to commence additional design work for the construction of the Eidsvold and Barlil weirs and the upgrades of Jones and Walla Weirs. Development of the additional water infrastructure will provide the Burnett region with much-needed resource security and inject momentum into the local economy at a time when sugar prices are depressed and employment opportunities in the region are limited.

The purpose of the bill is to allow for the quick but thorough investigation of the feasibility of water infrastructure development in the Burnett Basin. The bill achieves this by allowing a state-owned company to take over responsibility for an environmental impact assessment process in respect of the water infrastructure component of an industrial development currently being conducted by a private company. The government's intention is that the development rights for the water infrastructure will be awarded through a competitive process, and this action is being taken with this outcome in mind.

The Bundaberg 2000+ project (B2K), an industrial development presently being investigated by the private company, includes the consideration of developing new water infrastructure in the Burnett Basin. B2K was declared a significant project under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 (SDPWO Act), and terms of reference for B2K have been prepared and finalised in accordance with the requirements of that act. Accordingly, the draft terms of reference were made available for public comment.

The bill recognises that these terms of reference are directly applicable to the government's commitment regarding the major dam in the Lower Burnett and the Walla Weir upgrade. Thus,

the bill allows the state-owned company to assume responsibility for the EIS process for those components, without the need to duplicate processes already undertaken in respect of them as part of B2K.

The impact assessment investigations relating to the new Eidsvold and Barlil weirs and the upgrade to the existing Jones Weir will also be undertaken by the state-owned company but under separate assessment processes which in the case of Jones and Barlil weirs are already well advanced.

The bill also modifies the process under which the state-owned company may apply to the Coordinator-General for an authority to access land to undertake the necessary investigations for the project. The bill deems that the water infrastructure options to be investigated have met the requirements of section 91c(3) of the SDPWO Act in terms of identification of their substance and worthiness.

The bill further removes the requirement for the proponent to have first attempted to negotiate access with the landowner. The intention here is to simplify and shorten the process for applying for access to land to undertake investigations relevant to the water infrastructure options so as to ensure that there is no undue delay in completing the impact assessment process.

However, the rights of landowners will still be protected in so far as the Coordinator-General is required to consult with the landowner prior to deciding an application for access to investigate land. The investigation will be bound by other provisions that require rectification of any damage caused during the investigation.

Furthermore, the removal of the requirement to negotiate is limited in so far as it only applies to an application by the state-owned company concerning the specified water infrastructure options, and it will expire, along with the rest of the bill, in accordance with the bill's sunset clause. In practice, the state-owned company will seek to negotiate entry before seeking authority under this provision of the bill.

This bill is an important component of the government's commitment to the people of the Burnett region as outlined in the government's 10-point plan for a better Bundaberg. It is one of the steps being taken by the government which will—

- ensure more jobs for Queenslanders by providing competitive water infrastructure to create economic development opportunities in the Burnett region;
- build Queensland's regions by developing water infrastructure to improve the living standards of communities within and around Bundaberg and other centres in the Burnett region;
- protect the value of the environment by ensuring responsible and sustainable access to, and development of, Queensland's natural resources; and
- ensure long-term security over water allocations for irrigators, industries and regional communities reliant on rivers for their wellbeing.

I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND MISCONDUCT TRIBUNALS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (12.38 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (12.38 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The objective of this bill is to amend the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 to preserve their respective review and appeal provisions from the operation of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 after 1 July 2001. The bill is considered to be a reasonable and appropriate way of achieving the objective.

Firstly, I will outline to the House how certain provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 may affect these two acts after 1 July 2001. The Industrial Relations Act 1999 (s. 686(1)(c)) currently exempts certain industrial matters from the jurisdiction of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, known as the Industrial Commission, or the Industrial Court of Queensland, known as the Industrial Court, where a process or procedure of another act already provides for such matters to be pursued.

On this basis, the review process for police officers in Part 9 'Review of Decisions' of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 is currently exempt from the Industrial Relations Act 1999. Subject to conditions, a police officer may apply to have a Commissioner for Police Service Reviews review his or her grievance arising from: a decision about the selection/appointment of an officer to a police officer position on promotion or transfer; action against the officer for any breach of discipline; the suspension or standing down of the officer; or other matters that are prescribed by regulation as being open to review under this part.

The Police Service Administration Act 1990 (s. 9.5) requires a review commissioner to make such recommendations as are considered appropriate to the Police Commissioner on the matter under review. The Police Commissioner, upon consideration of the matter reviewed and having regard to the recommendations made, is to take such action as appears to the Police Commissioner to be just and fair.

The Police Commissioner's discretionary decision-making power to either affirm or reject a recommendation by a review commissioner is balanced by the right of a police officer who is aggrieved by any such decision to apply to the Supreme Court to have it reviewed, subject to specific grounds, under the Judicial Review Act 1991.

Two appeal avenues of the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 for prescribed persons, including police officers and other designated persons, are similarly exempted from the Industrial Relations Act 1999. These involve appeals to a Misconduct Tribunal exercising appellate jurisdiction and appeals to the Supreme or District Court arising from a decision of a Misconduct Tribunal exercising original jurisdiction. However, the Industrial Relations Act 1999 (s. 686(5)) provides that these exemptions will expire on 1 July 2001.

I will now outline the reasons why the respective review and appeal provisions of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 should be preserved after 1 July 2001. Part 9 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 was developed to facilitate the effective and timely delivery of police services for the maintenance of law and order in Queensland with a minimum of delay and cost. It reflects the unique personnel management demands placed on the Police Service to ensure this important outcome is achieved on a day-to-day basis. The proposed amendments to the Police Service Administration Act 1990 are in line with recommendation 61 of the Report on the Review of the Queensland Police Service known as the Bingham Report of 1996.

The review committee recommended that the promotions review process for police officers should remain non-adversarial and that the system of review commissioners should be retained. Should the Police Service Administration Act 1990 not be amended before that date the following problems may arise: mandatory compliance with decisions of the Industrial Commission by the Police Commissioner, subject to any appeals to the Full Bench or the Industrial Court, may impede the specialist management and timely deployment of police officers to the detriment of the public interest; a significant growth in the number of police matters being heard in the Industrial Commission could be expected. This may impact proportionately on staffing and work levels in the Queensland Police Service Ethical Standards Command and the Health, Safety and Industrial Relations Branch of the Human Resources Division; and the Police Service may incur additional expenses that would not apply under the current review scheme.

The appeal mechanisms of the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 may also be thrown into doubt unless they are exempted from the operation of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 before 1 July 2001. They were similarly developed to most effectively address matters arising from misconduct proceedings in the public interest.

I will now outline how the respective review and appeal provisions of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 can be preserved.

The Industrial Relations Act 1999 (s. 686(1)(b)(i)) provides that act binds the state, other than in relation to a matter about which another act excludes the jurisdiction of the Industrial Court or Industrial Commission about the matter. Consequently, both the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 are to be amended to include such an exclusion.

Finally, I will outline the proposed amendments to both Acts. The Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 is amended by inserting after section 4 a new section 4A (Relationship with Industrial Relations Act 1999) to preserve the current situation by providing that the Industrial Court and the Industrial Relations Commission do not have jurisdiction in relation to a matter that a tribunal, the Supreme Court or the District Court may decide under this act even though it may be, or be about, or arise out of, an industrial matter within the meaning of the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

The Police Service Administration Act 1990 is amended by inserting after section 9.1 a new section 9.1A (Relationship with Industrial Relations Act 1999) to preserve the current situation by providing that the Industrial Court and the Industrial Relations Commission do not have jurisdiction in relation to a matter that has been, is being, or may be reviewed under this part even though it may be, or be about, or arise out of, an industrial matter within the meaning of the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.47 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.48 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This Bill amends two acts: the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994. The purpose of the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 is to establish a legislative scheme that supports the effective operation of a new electronic toll collection system for Queensland's toll roads, called e-toll. E-toll will commence operation from 9 June 2001 on both the Gateway and Logan Motorway toll roads.

E-toll marks the beginning of a new era for Queensland's toll roads. E-toll is not a new toll. Nor is it about increasing existing tolls. Rather, it is an important improvement in customer service for motorists who regularly use toll roads. For the first time in Queensland, all motorists using e-toll lanes will be able to travel through the toll plazas on our toll roads without stopping. Motorists travelling through e-toll lanes will be able to pass through the toll plazas at up to 30 kilometres per hour. This should significantly reduce delays at toll plazas on Queensland toll roads.

But e-toll does more than make paying the toll faster. Because a motorist with an operating e-toll transponder from the toll operator need never again fumble for coins or wait for change, it makes paying the toll easier, too. E-toll employs electronic transponders to enable motorists to meet their toll liability. The transponders send a message to computers at a toll plaza that record payment of a toll or, in the case of credit account holders, record a liability for a toll.

While the change to e-toll is clearly desirable, it is also in large part inevitable. The current electronic toll collection system is obsolete. Its defects include the unavailability of spare parts and the reliance on transponders that operate on frequencies used by mobile telephones.

Importantly, the current system does not use the standard operating frequency agreed upon by the Australian Transport Council and adopted by all other operators in Australia. The current electronic system, therefore, is not interoperable with electronic toll collection systems in other states.

E-toll will rectify all these defects and will provide improved customer service by meeting rapidly increasing traffic volumes and overcoming consequent delays. It will do so in a way that ensures that Queensland users, especially commercial users, will be able to use their transponders to electronically pay tolls on the other major toll roads in Australia. This is especially important for Queensland businesses that haul freight interstate. Of course, the scheme is reciprocal: truck drivers from Victoria or New South Wales who have transponders from those states' toll road operators also will be able to use the e-toll lanes in Queensland and be billed for their use by the toll road operator who issued them their transponder.

To deliver to toll road users the benefits such a system makes possible, an electronic toll collection system must do two things. Firstly, it must ensure that payments of motorists having valid transponders are recorded or, in the case of those motorists having billing arrangements with the toll operator, that a liability for that driver is recorded. Recognising that some e-toll account holders will not pay the toll at the toll plaza, the bill creates a liability for a motorist to pay a toll to the toll road operator for the use of the toll road. It also provides the ways by which such a liability may be met, including by electronic payment under the e-toll system.

Secondly, there must be a cost-effective way to make sure that those motorists who use the system without a valid transponder pay the toll and associated collection costs. To ensure that all motorists pay their fair share without losing the efficiency gains of the e-toll system, the bill enables an enforcement regime based on camera monitoring, triggered by electronic sensing equipment. The bill does this through the adoption of a deferred toll approach. When a driver passes through an e-toll lane without a valid transponder, an image of the vehicle is grabbed by the video cameras mounted at each e-toll lane and recorded. The bill provides such drivers an opportunity to pay the deferred toll, which consists of the toll due and an administrative charge to cover the reasonable cost of collecting the deferred toll. While the costs of the administrative charge have not yet been determined, it is anticipated that they would be between \$10 and \$20.

It should be noted that mere failure to pay the toll is not an offence. This is an important element of the scheme. The scheme is not in place to raise revenue from motorists by imposing offences with heavy penalties for improperly using the e-toll lanes. Rather, by allowing motorists the opportunity of paying the toll operator the deferred toll, the enforcement scheme in the bill is the least burdensome way of ensuring that all motorists using the toll roads pay their fair share. An offence arising from the failure to pay a toll occurs only where a motorist, who has been notified of the obligation to pay a deferred toll, fails to do so within a prescribed period, not to be less than 30 days. Like traffic offences, the offence will be enforceable by way of a penalty infringement notice—PIN—issued under the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999. As any money collected as a result of a penalty will go to consolidated revenue and not the toll operator, there is no incentive on the toll operator's part to proceed to an offence.

By using the deferred toll approach, the bill will result in far fewer penalty infringement notices being issued to motorists wrongly using the e-toll lanes to avoid paying the toll than would be the case if an offence occurred directly upon such unauthorised use of the e-toll lanes.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the balance of my second reading speech and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As noted earlier, the deferred toll will incorporate an administrative charge narrowly targeted towards those motorists who have avoided their obligation to have a valid account with the toll operator before using the E toll lanes. The Bill provides that the administrative charge is to be no more than the reasonable cost of collecting the deferred toll. This would include the set-up and running costs of the deferred toll scheme. Without such a charge there will be no deterrent to motorists simply using the electronic toll collection lanes without paying the toll. Should the costs of implementing the system exceed the amount of the administrative charges, the difference will be borne by the toll road operator (currently Queensland Motorways Limited (QML)), and offset by increased toll revenue resulting from the increase facilitated by the E toll system.

The scheme has other safeguards to ensure that it does not impose excessive hardships on motorists. For instance, only one offence may issue for a single trip on a toll road, even where more than one toll is avoided on a single trip and the driver fails to pay any of the deferred tolls. This means that only one offence can be imposed, even where a motorist fails to pay any of the deferred tolls arising from the unauthorised use of three E toll lanes during a single trip on the Logan Motorway.

As the system relies on registration plates to identify the driver, the Bill provides for the notice of deferred toll to be sent to the registered operator of the vehicle recorded as using the E toll lane without a valid transponder. Similar to provisions in the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 and the camera-detected offence portion of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the Bill provides that, where appropriate, the registered operator may identify another as the driver who avoided the toll. Anyone identified as the actual driver may in turn be sent a notice of deferred toll.

As some motorists may inadvertently proceed through electronic toll-only lanes, signage has been developed to alert motorists to the existence of the E toll lanes. Further, QML's advertising campaign has been designed not only to encourage greater take-up of the electronic tolling option but also to reduce the likelihood of the inadvertent use of the E toll lanes. QML plans a two-month moratorium period during which only serious abusers, such as fleet vehicles, will be pursued. In this initial period QML plans to manually record those vehicle details where the toll has not been paid.

So that inadvertent users of the E toll lanes are not required to pay the deferred toll, QML plans to send notices of deferred toll only to those motorists who have used the E toll lane without a valid transponder on more than one occasion.

QML will identify registration numbers and forward these to Queensland Transport. Queensland Transport, as the agent for QML, will send an information letter to registered operators, who have travelled through the E toll lane and not paid the toll. The letter will advise of the requirement to have a valid transponder in a vehicle using E toll only lanes. On detection of a second evasion, a notice of a deferred toll will be sent to the registered operator.

As I have previously indicated, E toll operates on the standard operating frequency adopted by the Australian Transport Council to ensure interoperability of these systems throughout Australia. This ensures that Queensland toll road users, especially commercial users, will be able to reap the benefits of an interoperable nationwide scheme for the electronic payment of tolls. This makes good sense for business and for consumers.

The Australian Transport Council has also requested the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT) to develop legislative principles to broadly govern the operation of ETC systems nationwide. This Bill is consistent with the fourteen principles developed by SCOT. Of particular note is the principle designed to protect the privacy of toll road customers. Because the electronic tolling system will store personal details of account customers and their traffic movements, the Bill provides that the improper use of such information is an offence.

Finally, the legislation provides a head of power within the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for the making of a regulation to declare roads to be toll roads and the vehicle types liable for tolls. The legislation also provides for the setting of toll amounts for each type of vehicle either in the regulation itself or in a method to be determined by the regulation. The Bill also allows that the regulation may provide for the setting of the administrative charge component of the deferred toll.

It is my intent to make a regulation to continue the current method of having tolls set by the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Main Roads by way of gazette notice. The regulation will also provide for the setting of the administrative charge in a similar fashion.

The amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 revise the administration of port pilotage services in Queensland. The transfer of responsibility for provision of pilotage services from Queensland Transport to port authorities will be finalised on 1 July 2001. Port authorities will then assume responsibility for ensuring port pilotage is provided in their ports.

The new approach to provision of port pilotage recognises benefits can be derived from seeking competition for the provision of the service but does not support competition in service provision. Under the new regime, port authorities will be able to ask for tenders to provide services but there will be only one pilotage service provider approved for each type of vessel in the port. The changes will allow competition for the port pilotage service market but do not support competition within the market.

Port pilotage is an important link in the logistics chain for our traded goods travelling by sea. The safe and efficient movement of vessels under the guidance of port pilots provides a safeguard to the port environment and enhances protection for port assets including berths and channels. Port pilots seek to manage the risks of vessel movement and ensure trade moves through our ports in an orderly manner.

The changed regime for the administration of port pilotage clarifies aspects of training and licensing of port pilots. The regime for training of port pilots now recognises the role of a probationary pilot. The current link between licensing of pilots and provision of pilotage services will be removed and pilots can now be licensed without being directly involved in delivering the service. This will have the effect of widening the group of pilots who could potentially provide a service.

Port pilots currently have immunity from civil liability for a pilot's actions while engaged in piloting a vessel. This reflects the approach to pilotage administration in other states and in Commonwealth countries around the world. Amendments extend this immunity to cover employers of pilots and pilots accompanying other pilots for the purposes of training and assessing. This immunity is economically justified given the alternative would impose an increased cost on our traded goods and could place Queensland ports at a trading disadvantage compared to other national and international ports.

In summary, the Bill amends legislation administered by my portfolio to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS (LIABILITY) BILL

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

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to limit the strict liability of accommodation providers for the property of their guests, and for related purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

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

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to reform the law that regulates the rights and duties between traveller accommodation providers and their guests in Queensland. Queensland's hotels, motels and guesthouses now host a significant number of visitor nights per year. Under common law these transactions are governed by an ancient doctrine called innkeepers liability. Under the doctrine, accommodation providers are totally responsible for the loss of a guest's property, even if it is not their fault. There are few exceptions and the fact that the innkeeper took all reasonable care is no defence.

This is extremely harsh and it is difficult to find an equivalent liability cast upon any other form of commercial operation. Even an insurer limits its liability and is able to require an insured party to take precautions and to describe the insured property and declare its value before accepting the risk. An accommodation provider cannot. The modern accommodation provider must put full trust in the honesty of the guest, with the scope for fraudulent claims obvious.

Insurance is not the answer to these problems. Some policies do not presently cover the risk. Where policies do cover the risk and as it becomes more widely known and as claims grow, insurers will potentially raise premiums or exclude the risk from cover. Legislation is needed to restore some balance to the equation through migrating some of the harsh consequences of innkeepers liability. It will benefit the Queensland tourism industry through ensuring the rules remain fair and suitable for travel in contemporary times.

This legislation will apply to a whole range of traveller accommodation establishments such as backpacker, bed and breakfast, hotel, motel, resort and serviced apartments. The bill provides that the liability for property loss and damage be limited to \$250 per room, or \$50,000 if an accommodation provider has provided safe custody facilities. These monetary amounts were negotiated with industry.

The government is mindful of the need to ensure these monetary limits remain appropriate and reflect contemporary requirements. It is therefore intended to review the monetary limits in two years.

The bill will maintain the existing right of an accommodation provider to hold a lien over a guest's property. A lien is the right to take possession of things a guest brings to an establishment and retain them until charges for such things as accommodation, food, beverage, and telephone have been paid. The lien would cover such things as luggage and goods but not include the right to sell the items retained.

The bill also provides that existing defences which an innkeeper has under the innkeepers doctrine at common law continue to apply. These so-called perils of travel include such things as acts of God and where fault can be attributed to the guest.

This legislation is all about finding the right balance between the rights of the accommodation provider and the rights of the guest. Importantly, the limits will not apply where the loss or damage results from the fault or negligence of the accommodation provider or an employee. The legislation places certain requirements on accommodation providers to notify guests about the act. A notice about the act will be required to be conspicuously displayed in the reception area or main entrance of the establishment.

Additionally, a notice will be required to be displayed in the room or drawn to the guest's attention in some other way. This will ensure guests are aware of the limit and to give them the opportunity to take special precautions where necessary.

The bill represents the culmination of a lot of hard work. I would particularly like to thank the Queensland Hotels Association, the Hotel, Motel Accommodation Association of Queensland, the Queensland Backpacker and Independent Traveller Industry Association, the Queensland Tourism Industry Corporation and the Queensland Law Society for their contribution during development of the bill.

The bill represents an important legal reform measure. It will provide protection to both traveller accommodation providers and guests and will bring Queensland in line with most other Australian jurisdictions and common law countries around the world. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

NATURAL RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (2.30 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend certain acts administered by the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines.

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) (2.31 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill proposes to make amendments to a number of acts within my portfolio to improve their operation. These acts include the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Explosives Act 1999, the Land Act 1994, the Land Court Act 2000, the Land Title Act 1994 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991.

The amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 will insert machinery provisions, which will allow the chairperson of the land tribunals, established under those acts, to be appointed on a part-time or full-time basis. The amendments will give greater flexibility in the appointments of chairpersons of the tribunals.

The Acquisition of Land Act 1967 provides for the payment of an advance of compensation to the owner of the land being acquired. However, the act precludes the payment of an advance of compensation to a person who is, for example, the lessee of the land acquired. This anomaly has the potential to cause financial hardship to such persons by, for example, preventing early relocation of the business conducted on the acquired land. The amendment will rectify this by recognising new categories of persons able to receive compensation advances.

The amendment to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 is in itself a safety precaution. The amendment will insert a transitional provision to ensure mine rescue services previously accredited under the Coal Mining Act 1925 continue to have accreditation until accreditation is in place under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999. Without this amendment, and until accreditation of the existing mine rescue service is reconfirmed, operating mining companies may be technically in breach of the act, particularly those provisions relating to safety.

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel is drafting new regulations to replace those continued under the transitional arrangements of the Explosives Act 1999. However, these replacement regulations will not commence by the current regulations expiry date of 30 June 2001. An extension of the transitional time to 30 June 2002 is proposed to ensure regulatory control of explosives is maintained until the replacement regulation is implemented.

The amendments to the Land Act 1994 relate to a new plan format for easements and covenants, a new form of public utility easement for water impounded by a weir, streamlining of plan requirements for future easements, the priority as between a prior registered mortgagee and a registered writ of execution and the administrative arrangements for port lands under the act. These amendments are, in part, the result of a review initiative by my department, together with submissions from stakeholders. The plans of survey available administratively, under the Land Act 1994, do not include a plan capable of being prepared without ground survey and the use of typical survey requirements of pins in the ground, monuments or survey marks.

The amendments will provide for a new plan. The explanatory format plan will be capable of defining the extent of particular interests, for example, easements and covenants, using attributes and information available in the Land Registry, as well as other information of a standard satisfactory to the chief executive. The chief executive will set the content and use of these plans. People other than surveyors will be able to complete the plan, in appropriate circumstances. The plan format will also be made available under the Land Title Act 1994.

The construction or upgrading of weirs on rivers or streams results in the inundation of land behind the weir. In many instances, the affected land is acquired compulsorily, or by agreement with the landowner, under the provisions of the Acquisition of Land Act 1967. Compensation is paid to the landowner under that act. As an alternative to that type of acquisition and to minimise the trauma of compulsory acquisition, a water storage arrangement in the form of an easement will be able to be created by agreement between the landowner and a public utility provider. This arrangement, which will be registered against the land as a public utility easement under the Land Act 1994, will allow the owner to retain ownership of the land. It will show the extent of the inundation, as well as the rights of the parties to the agreement about the use and access of the water under storage. To minimise the administrative costs of showing the extent of the inundation, these easements will be able to use the proposed explanatory plan I previously referred to.

A technical amendment is also to be made to the Land Act 1994, which will be replicated in the Land Title Act 1994, to clarify the legal position of particular legal interests where a mortgagee exercises power of sale under a mortgage. As the issue is of a complex nature, I will provide honourable members with some background to the proposed amendment.

Under the Land Act 1994, a registered mortgage is an interest in the lease the subject of the mortgage. The mortgagee has the power to sell under the mortgage where there is a default by the mortgagor, that is, the lessee. Where, on the other hand, the lessee also owes money to a person other than a mortgagee, and the lessee defaults on paying, the person owed the money, that is, the creditor, has the right to obtain a writ of execution through the courts for the money owed. The creditor may then register the writ under the Land Act 1994. The registration of the writ allows the land to be sold to recover the debt. It is, however, important to realise that, even though the writ may be registered, at law, the writ does not create a proprietary interest in the land for the judgment creditor.

Instances have arisen where a mortgagee, exercising the power of sale under the mortgage and whose mortgage is registered prior to the writ of execution, is in competition with a sale under the writ of execution for the same lot. The question at issue is whose rights prevail? Is it the mortgagee or the creditor under the writ? The courts have determined that a prior registered mortgagee can sell, and lodge a transfer, even where a writ is registered before the transfer is lodged. Examples of these decisions are *Commonwealth Bank v. Austral Lighting Pty Ltd* (1984) 2 Qd R 507 and more recently in a Supreme Court decision in 1999 of *Lawyers Private Mortgages v. Glenwood*.

Under the law, once the mortgagee's transfer to the new owner has registered, the creditor who sought enforcement against the previous owner has no right to claim against the new owner. The judgment creditor's rights now lie in a civil action against the previous owner. To give the new owner clear title, legislative power will be given to the chief executive to remove the writ from the land register. Additional machinery amendments to the dictionary will also be made to the act to support the principal amendments already outlined.

Amendments are to be made to the Land Court Act 2000 to allow the chairperson of the land tribunal under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 to hold a concurrent appointment part-time as a member of the Land Court, and acting members of the Land Court to be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis.

The Land Title Act 1994 is to be amended in an identical fashion to that proposed in the Land Act 1994 for explanatory format plans, water storage public utility easements and the effect of a writ of execution on a transfer after a sale by a mortgagee. Other technical amendments of a clarifying nature are proposed to the Land Title Act 1994. The amendments are in relation to standard format lots and caveats. I will provide background information in each instance, to assist honourable members to understand the need for the amendments.

The first technical amendment concerns standard format lots. The review of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 in 1999 highlighted that the Land Title Act 1994 implied the characteristic of the base standard format lot existed but did not state it

adequately. This amendment, which statutorily recognises the characteristic of the base standard format lot, will provide the requisite clarity.

The land, which is the base lot for subdivision under the Land Title Act 1994, is a statutory determined to be a standard format lot. The lot may be further subdivided by other plans, including further standard format plans of subdivision, building format plans of subdivision or volumetric plans of subdivision. A building format plan of subdivision, for a strata titled high-rise building, invariably results in a lot, which is the balance of the land remaining from the subdivision. This remaining land must still retain the characteristics of a standard format lot to allow it to be further subdivided or amalgamated with other standard format lots.

The second technical amendment concerns caveats. Under the Torrens system, a caveat is merely a mechanism to allow a person, who wishes to perfect their interest in a lot, to freeze the register in respect of that interest, whilst taking certain action in the courts and have the court decide on the validity of the applicant's interest. Caveats are regarded as an instrument under the Land Title Act 1994 for the purposes of the Land Registry's administrative functions to deal with the application for the caveat. Those administrative actions could include: allowing correction, withdrawal, requisition or rejection. However, caveats do, of themselves, create an interest in a lot. The proposed amendment will clarify the application of the administrative aspects of the Land Registry to apply to the caveat but ensure the caveat is not an instrument in itself that creates an interest.

In addition, minor machinery amendments are included to support the proposed amendments to the act. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.41 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.42 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 was last amended with effect from 1 July 1999 to provide legislative recognition to the state's Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility and its accrual output budgeting framework. Both are now well-accepted initiatives and are key factors in ensuring that the people of Queensland are aware of the outcomes the government wants to achieve and its performance in meeting those outcomes.

Since those amendments, the government has continued to closely monitor the financial and operational performance of its various agencies. In doing so, a number of areas of the act have been identified where more flexible processes can be implemented, leading to improved efficiencies in the way the government manages its business of state.

The focus of the amendments in the Financial Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2001 is thus on improving the speed and efficiency of the business of government, without compromising essential accountability and control mechanisms.

In particular, the bill provides for a more concise time frame for the finalisation of end of year issues for departments, with a new requirement that appropriations will now lapse after 14 July, rather than remaining valid until 31 August, as was previously the case. This initiative will require agencies and Treasury to implement more efficient and effective ways to conduct their end of year accounting processes and is complemented by new measures to simplify the finalisation of appropriation payments to agencies.

In lieu of complex legislative provisions, the government will introduce new administrative processes that provide greater flexibility in the management of end of year appropriation payments, without compromising parliamentary control. These are essential in order to achieve the new time frames that agencies and Treasury are both now required to meet.

It is also proposed to simplify the loan raising processes of departments. Under the previous system the Treasurer borrowed loans on a department's behalf. Departments were then required to enter into an arrangement with the Treasurer to repay the loans. Under the new arrangements, departments will now be permitted to borrow from the Queensland Treasury Corporation in their own right, provided they have the prior approval of the Treasurer.

The government is conscious of the need for the financial reports of individual agencies and the state's whole-of-government financial report to meet the criterion of 'timeliness' in addition to those of being 'reliable' and 'relevant' to the users of the statements. Following consultation with individual agencies and with the Auditor-General, the bill provides for a more concise time frame in which agencies must now prepare their annual financial statements and have them audited. It also requires a more collegiate approach between agencies and audit in establishing an overall timetable for these processes.

Under the current act, agencies could effectively take up until 31 October each year to have their financial statements finalised and audited. Under the amendments now proposed, agencies will need to work closely with the Queensland Audit Office to ensure that the financial reporting and audit processes are finalised by 30 September. It is a measure of the improvements that have been, and possibly can still be, made to agency reporting and audit processes that these initiatives are endorsed by the Queensland Audit Office and the respective line agencies.

A further benefit is that the new time frame should help expedite the preparation of the state's whole-of-government financial report. In the past, this has been delayed by the late submission of a small number of individual agency financial reports. The new deadline of 30 September will enable Treasury to have all the data required for its whole-of-government report received, assessed and actioned by an earlier date.

In addition to a number of measures aimed at greater efficiencies, the bill also introduces a number of minor but significant amendments to clarify accountabilities and further entrench the doctrine of the separation of powers. These measures include—

- recognition of the Office of the Governor as a 'department' for the purpose of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, thus enabling the Governor to be appropriated directly by parliament, rather than by a grant from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet;

- a provision enabling the Official Secretary, Office of the Governor and the Clerk of Parliament to present their annual report to the Speaker rather than to the Premier, in better recognition of the separation of powers doctrine;

- recognition of the Electoral Commissioner in a similar manner to the other independent offices recognised under the act, namely the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman; and

- strengthening the obligations of accountable officers under the act to ensure that they implement strong systems of internal control and risk management in their agencies.

Also included in the bill is a minor amendment to the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 that enables the Treasurer to require information for whole-of-government reporting and budget monitoring purposes on a regular basis. This reflects a similar amendment to the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977.

The amendments proposed in this bill do not in themselves fundamentally alter the processes of government. What they are aimed at are more efficient processes that tighten existing time frames, simplify and clarify existing processes and enhance the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the government of this state.

Queensland is fortunate in having financial legislation of the calibre of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. This government is committed to the continual review of this legislation to ensure that it remains of the highest standard and in keeping with best practice corporate governance. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

FIRST HOME OWNER GRANT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading**

Resumed from 1 May (see p. 530).

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.50 p.m.): The bill that is before the House is a very important bill for a couple of reasons. First of all, it will put in place arrangements to expedite the payment of the \$14,000 First Home Owner Grant Scheme funds to potential first home owners and, secondly, it deals with certain matters associated with the proposed gas pipeline from Papua New Guinea to Queensland. Anything that can be done to expedite that proposal, which has been in the planning stage for some time now, would be of great benefit to the state.

The objectives of this bill are, as I said, first of all, to amend the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 to give effect to the temporary extension of the First Home Owner Grant Scheme on and from 9 March 2001 and, further, to amend the Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act 1998 to specify a further date for the lodgment of access principles for the Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline.

On 9 March 2001, the Prime Minister announced that the federal government would increase the first home owners grant from \$7,000 to \$14,000 for those first home buyers who sign a contract to build a new home or to buy a previously unoccupied new home on or after 9 March. I think we would all agree that it was a good move that has resulted in a very large impetus to the home building industry. The \$14,000 grant was designed to be a short-term measure. It is proposed that the grant will revert to \$7,000, which was the original grant amount, for new home contracts entered into after 31 December this year. The grant remains at \$7,000 for first home buyers who purchase existing homes.

The increased grant was a practical response by the federal government, and it should be commended for the initiative and the quick response in addressing a need to combat the economic circumstances of the housing construction industry. The positive response also brought tremendous direct benefits for first home buyers, home builders and building suppliers as well as the flow-on benefits brought about through job creation across Australia.

I think we all remember the tremendous surge in home building that occurred prior to 1 July last year, when the GST came in. There was an enormous surge in home building for probably 12 months before that, and it was difficult to engage contractors and subcontractors. Consequent to 1 July, the industry has gone through a trough. The \$7,000 grant was of some assistance, but there is no doubt that this \$14,000 grant is working well. If a couple has been able to save something towards their deposit and adds to that the \$14,000 grant, that is probably going to bring a new home into the reach of many young people.

In some of the debate and discussion that has occurred about the grant there was discussion about which banks would accept the \$14,000 grant as the total deposit, and so forth. One thing that always should be remembered is that it is prudent to have a reasonable deposit. To try to buy a house with no deposit other than the \$14,000 can be very difficult. However, if a young couple have been able to demonstrate that they have been able to meet the weekly rent repayments on their rental unit or house, that is a good indication of their savings capacity and responsibility. That issue was taken into account by Westpac when it decided that the \$14,000 could be used as the full deposit towards the purchase of a house. Although it was a good idea to allow the \$14,000 grant to be used as the total deposit in certain cases, unfortunately, Westpac did make the blunder of saying that it would apply only to those homes purchased in capital cities.

I would like to give credit to De-Anne Kelly, the National Party member for Dawson, who brought up this issue and fought stridently for regional and country towns and the right of their young couples to also be able to use the \$14,000 grant as their total deposit if their savings and repayment patterns indicated they were good, responsible savers. Also, with the cost of houses in some rural areas, the \$14,000 grant would be a lot closer to being a reasonable deposit for a house that costs \$90,000 to \$120,000 than it would for a more expensive home in a larger city. Full credit should go to De-Anne Kelly for what she did there and also to Westpac for finally agreeing to the use of that \$14,000 as the total deposit in certain circumstances.

The estimated cost of this federal government grant is some \$60 million in the year 2000-01 and \$90 million in the financial year 2001-02. The First Home Owners Grant Scheme recorded a 135 per cent surge in new house sales Australiawide in March, with a total of 16,700 homes

bought during the month. When talking about this grant, it is important to realise that its effects will be felt not just in the building industry but also in the associated industries, such as real estate, landscaping, furnishings and so forth. But more importantly, it gets young people started, and I think that is the important part of the scheme.

The First Home Owner Grant Scheme is administered and delivered by the states on the Commonwealth's behalf, and all the states and territories have cooperated in implementing the scheme. The federal government has also asked state governments and territories to consider waiving at least part of the stamp duty collected in respect of all new house purchases. The federal government considered that such a commitment from state governments would also reinforce the stimulus, and there is no doubt that it would have. New South Wales was able to say to the federal government that full concessions from stamp duty already existed in that state for the purchase of homes costing up to \$200,000 and partial exemptions were offered on home purchases up to \$300,000. However, the Queensland government would not play ball and ruled out any additional stamp duty exemptions.

The Treasurer should be looking at this as a way of trying to address the unemployment problems in this state, in which we are consistently coming last. We do need to stimulate jobs for tradesmen and subcontractors. The building industry is very important in virtually every part of the country. Giving some relief via stamp duty exemptions, particularly for first home buyers, in addition to those particular rebates that currently exist would be an additional stimulus. I am aware that, under the normal stamp duty arrangements, if you buy a house that is your principal place of residence, you pay slightly lower stamp duty than you would for an investment property.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr HORAN: It is \$1 per \$100,000 compared with \$1.50. So it is about 30 per cent less in those lower amounts.

If it is the first principal place of residence, a further concession exists in Queensland. For properties costing up to \$80,000, the rebate is \$800, which in fact means you would pay no duty. For properties costing \$80,000 to \$150,000 the rebate is \$500 and so on. The point I am making is that if we are looking for a further kick to help boost the building industry and help young couples, then a further rebate would be advantageous, even if it were only a temporary rebate to help the building industry get back on its feet.

While the Prime Minister's call for stamp duty exemptions, or part thereof, fell on deaf ears, the Premier certainly looks out of step with what has been provided in New South Wales, where there are major exemptions, and certainly with Victoria, where a four-year program consisting of a \$774 million cut in business taxes of various sorts has been announced.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr HORAN: I did not say that we should implement their system. I said that they have made a cut to their existing rate. Why doesn't the Treasurer consider a temporary cut to our existing rate, which would assist the building and construction industry in this state and provide some assistance to young home buyers in addition to what the Commonwealth is providing? This is not a one-way street. These things are two-way streets. If we get a bit of state assistance as well as Commonwealth assistance, it can do something for the industry; but if the Treasurer has an attitude like that, it is no wonder we have 9 per cent unemployment and it is no wonder we are coming last all the time. Imagine what all the subbies around the place think of that sort of attitude. A little bit of help would go a long, long way in helping young Queenslanders and helping builders and subbies.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr HORAN: I was asking them to put taxes down. The Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act 1998 provides for the introduction of a national pipeline access regime administration by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. During the formulation of this regime, applicants for the Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline commenced the procedure for the determination of access principles under the Petroleum Act 1923. The procedure was similar to that adopted under the national regime. Specific provisions were inserted in the Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act 1998 to recognise the procedure undertaken under the Petroleum Act 1923. Once access principles are approved under this procedure, they are deemed to be approved under the national regime.

The time for lodgment of the access principles is currently specified as being one year after the commencement of the Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act 1998. This requires lodgment

by 18 May 2001. Due to a number of uncertainties with the Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas project, the pipeline applicants are unable to lodge final access principles for consideration by the minister by this date. If the pipeline applicant does not lodge access principles by 18 May 2001, the access principles would need to be approved under the national regime. The process would therefore need to recommence. It is estimated that this would put the Papua New Guinea to Queensland pipeline back a further two years.

In his second reading speech, the Treasurer advised that, as a result of delays encountered by the PNG gas producers group, the AGL Petronas consortium—the preferred PNG gas pipeline constructor—made representations to the government for an amendment to the act. Other than acceding to the request from the consortium to gain more time to bring this major project to conclusion, once again the government has been remiss in not outlining its plans to facilitate a successful conclusion of this project. It is understood that the major producer group participants, Exxon and Oil Search, are taking a more prominent role in developing the project. Exxon and Oil Search have been forced to take a more prominent role because the government has been reticent in facilitating this project.

In March this year the *Courier-Mail* reported that the project was in the throes of a major shake-up after months of stagnation and poor perceptions about the \$6.1 billion project. In the same article it was reported the gas aggregators, Energex and Ergon, also appeared to have lost their central position in the marketing strategy because of government fears that the taxpayer will be left carrying an overwhelming amount of risk in the project. Additionally, on 25 April it was announced that one of the key backers behind the project had been forced to look elsewhere for investment opportunities because of lengthy delays in establishing a market for the gas.

Sydney based Orogen Minerals said it was still committed to the project, in which it had a 13 per cent stake, but the development was now at least a year behind schedule. Orogen had expected the pipeline to be up and running by 2004. As the project was now not expected to be transporting gas until late 2005, it had to investigate other investment opportunities with a view to generating an ongoing earnings stream. Orogen was concerned about the very limited dialogue which occurred during the March quarter with the government owned corporations Energex and Ergon, which was mainly due to the state election, but project sponsors have resolved to reinvigorate marketing discussions through the provision of direct company representation. The government needs to be sensitive to the fact that this project needs some entrepreneurial oversight, otherwise the project will be placed in jeopardy.

The industrial future of Cairns and Townsville is being put at risk by the government's inability to deliver energy to north Queensland. Despite the government's boasting that it would deliver the Chevron gas project—that it would have the project signed and sealed within months of coming to office, and we all remember the promises and boasting after the 1998 election—it has not been delivered. It is a timely lesson for the government to stop the bragging, stop the public relations exercise and start delivering on some of the major projects that were initiated under the National-Liberal government from 1996 to 1998.

Though Townsville and Cairns are fuelled by different sorts of economies, they both need major infrastructure injections. One such project that is critical for Townsville is the construction of a baseload power station to provide cheaper energy for the region's expanding minerals processing sector. There is absolutely no doubt that the gas pipeline down the spine of the coast will not only provide cheaper power but also provide all sorts of opportunities for new industries and new businesses to develop in the regional cities of Queensland, many of which have unemployment rates well into double figures. The Burnett area, Rockhampton, Mackay, Maryborough and Gympie are in desperate need of an alternative way of providing cheap and reliable energy which will see the development of additional industries. When the gas pipeline in Western Australia went ahead, the number of new industries which developed and the economic growth that that pipeline brought to that state is evidence of the value of such a pipeline to Queensland.

The second phase of the Sun Metals zinc refinery and major expansion of QNI's nickel refinery are just two projects in the north that hinge on the ability to access competitively priced power and energy. The government made commitments to build a baseload power station powered by natural gas by the year 2003, a time frame silently feared by industry representatives at the time as a little optimistic. As we have witnessed, the fears of those industry representative have become a reality. It is imperative that the government gives energy projects the highest priority to ensure Townsville's energy shortfall is addressed. Consequently, the National Party will provide bipartisan support to this bill, even though its administration has been sloppy, to ensure

that the government is in a position to start making decisions, and making those decisions quickly, to ensure that Queensland industry and Queensland jobs are not constantly being jeopardised by the government's inactivity.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.06 p.m.): I rise to join the debate on the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so, I refer in particular to the home building industry. I have to say at the outset that this industry is worth some \$35 billion to the Australian economy every year and some \$6 billion to the Queensland economy. The \$14,000 First Home Owner Grant Scheme has created a significant impact on this industry, with a 135 per cent increase in the March quarter despite negative response from the federal Labor opposition. The most important thing for any responsible government is to ensure that there are guidelines in place which enable each and every Australian, whether they live in Queensland, Victoria or the Northern Territory, to own their own home. It was a magnificent concept of the federal government to give \$14,000 to anybody to purchase or build their own home whilst at the same time creating productivity in the building sector.

As we have witnessed in the last three years, the Premier and his government have talked about the job creation programs they hope to embark on and their strategy to achieve five per cent unemployment within a certain time frame. However, we on this side of the House recognise the important contribution made by the federal government. The \$14,000 grant has certainly brought about significant change to the building industry in this state. This has enabled the building industry to create jobs. Not only that, the \$14,000 First Home Owner Grant Scheme has created a new way of life for many people who may not have been able to afford to buy their own home. This initiative has had a significant effect not only on the building industry but also on the related industries within the building industry, whether it be suppliers, manufacturers, the transport chain or primary production, including mining and timber. As many of us are aware, for too long the decline in the building industry was being impacted by the GST. However, somebody had to bite the bullet and make that change to our taxation regime. As we know, the rush to build before 30 June 2000 brought approvals forward. I think a lot of the hardship faced by the building industry has to be taken into account.

I think we are all well aware of the fact that most changes do not happen without teething problems. This scheme consists of a taxpayer funded contribution of \$60 million this financial year and \$90 million next financial year. Most importantly, it will be ordinary Queenslanders such as those we represent who will be able to take advantage of this magnificent scheme.

We need to remember that back in the days of the federal Labor government we were experiencing interest rates as high as 18 per cent and 19 per cent. This pushed many young people—and many older people, for that matter—out of the housing market and prevented them from being able to build new houses. This had a negative effect on the construction industry. Now we are seeing responsible business strategies initiated by the Howard-Anderson coalition government in Canberra. That government has blessed this economy with this good management procedure. As a result of that government putting in place low interest rates, we now have a situation whereby people want to buy new homes. They are affordable. Please God, may this government be returned at the election to be held at the end of the year so that interest rates are kept down. Be there a change of government at the end of the year—

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr JOHNSON: If there is, will members opposite ensure that their federal Labor colleagues keep interest rates down? Government members may laugh. In 1990, Mr Goss, as Premier of this state, withdrew the concessional interest rates from the QIDC for many primary producers and other producers. That sent a lot of concessional rates through the roof and virtually sent many people throughout this state broke. I see the member for Logan sitting in the front row of the government benches with a filthy smirk right across his dial. This is no laughing matter. It is a very serious issue and one that has had serious consequences.

Mr Mickel: Get serious about the GST.

Mr JOHNSON: While we are talking about the GST, I have to ask: will the federal Labor government wind back the GST? Is it going to change that taxation regime? Is it going to take away the good things that that regime put in place? Those opposite do not have the answers because the answer is no. I think every man and woman in this chamber knows that the answer is no. The federal Labor opposition does not have a policy because, as is the case with this state

Labor government, it formulates policy on the run. It implements the strategy of standing in front of a TV camera and making a decision without formulating policy by the correct method.

Mr Reynolds: How did you go in Surfers Paradise?

Mr JOHNSON: Actually, I thought we went pretty well in Surfers Paradise. The member for Townsville can laugh all he likes, because I have a few coming for him, too. Has the Labor Party had a look at its vote in Surfers Paradise? No! It does not want to talk about that. Many of the new members who have a very slender margin—18 per cent, 10 per cent, 12 per cent or whatever—will not be here in the next parliament.

I come back to the very important issue we are debating this afternoon. The high interest rates to which this nation was subjected by a federal Labor government back in the late eighties and early nineties certainly were an impost on the building industry and many other construction industries in this nation, let alone in this state. We are on the threshold of a revival in the building industry in this state because of a responsible vision and a responsible monetary decision to keep interest rates low and to inject some funds back into the economy so that people who want to build their own homes can take advantage of the opportunity to do so. We see now young people rushing that cause.

New South Wales has a stamp duty exemption of up to \$200,000 and concessions of up to \$300,000. I heard my colleague the Leader of the Opposition raise this issue earlier. The Deputy Premier and Treasurer certainly did not want to know too much about it. Consideration of those measures would be very difficult for the Treasurer, because he is not really across some of these monetary matters. This is very serious stuff: how can we get business moving, how can we get industry moving, and how can we help the people who really deserve it? The Victorian government abolished stamp duty on all commercial leases and reduced payroll tax by 0.3 per cent from July. I think that is a pretty good start. If the Queensland state government could copy one of those initiatives, I think it would be very advantageous.

Mr Mackenroth: What did they reduce it to?

Mr JOHNSON: I do not know what they reduced it to.

Mr Mackenroth: You don't know?

Mr JOHNSON: No, I do not. I will be very honest with the Treasurer. I do not know the figure off the top of my head.

Mr Mackenroth: To a half a per cent more than we charge.

Mr JOHNSON: Anyway, the point I make here is that Queensland has refused to provide any incentives to the building industry. Is it any wonder that Queensland now has the worst employment record in the nation?

I will talk about capital works programs, in particular the footbridge across the river. Whether the cost is \$18 million or \$25 million, the fact remains that it is not completed. Is there an engineering problem, is there a design problem, or is it a budgetary problem? The Treasurer should tell us the facts. I see the Treasurer chewing his thumbnail. That will not help him find the answer.

We heard about the integrated ticketing project of the Department of Transport. We have been waiting two years for that. What has happened with the inner northern busway? The relevant minister said today that the Premier would make a decision. It is fairly obvious that the Transport Minister no longer controls the implementation program of the Department of Transport and Department of Main Roads. I suppose the same could be said of the Minister for State Development. It seems that the Premier is a one-man show and that the Deputy Premier lends a hand here and there. How could this government have managed a project of the magnitude of the Pacific Motorway, let alone build a footbridge across the Brisbane River—

Mr REEVES: Madam Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order in relation to relevance. This has nothing to do with the bill. The member is talking about the transport portfolio and the Pacific Motorway. It has nothing to do with the bill before the House.

Mr JOHNSON: I think the member should sit down and listen to the facts for a while.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! The member for Gregory will return to the bill.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to the gas pipeline. The fact that an amendment to the Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act is included in the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is a good indication of the mess that the economic development strategy of this

government is in. Whilst we all endorse the gas pipeline project, there are a lot of hidden issues. Everybody in this House hopes that the pipeline comes to fruition. But at the end of the day, if there are anomalies, why can the general public of Queensland not be told about them?

It is absolutely paramount that we have this pipeline established for ongoing viability, for the development of industry, for the creation of jobs and for growth. The creation of jobs and growth in regional centres such as Townsville and Gladstone—good places in which to live—will make it attractive for a lot of people in other areas to live there. Those places will have the social infrastructure, the jobs, the hospitals, the schools and the recreational facilities—the whole bit. If this government is responsible in implementing policy, it will make our lot and the lot of future generations better.

Three years ago, the previous Deputy Premier stood in this House and said that the Chevron gas pipeline would be the major job creation project of the Beattie government. We now have this panicked legislation before the House, because the time for lodging the access principles for the project is running out. The sunset provisions mean that the lodgment is due by Friday. This is yet another example of this government's inability to manage major government infrastructure projects; and I do not say that lightly.

As I said a while ago, this government cannot even manage a project like the footbridge across the Brisbane River. I hope that, if there is an anomaly there, we do get the true facts. That is all people want. They just want the true facts. It costs us nothing to tell the truth. My old man always said, 'The truth will set you free,' but there are a few people here who do not live by that saying.

I will just reflect momentarily again on the issue of the First Home Owner Grant Scheme. I am a firm believer—

Mr Reeves: That would be a change.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member is a pretty smart one! The member for Mansfield certainly will not have a lot of credibility while he talks the rubbish he does. He ought to go back up to the back. He is just trying to show off to some of his new members. His behaviour is really silly.

I believe in giving credit where credit is due. Today I want to put on record some of the great work that the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing is doing for housing in some of our remote communities. Members will be well aware that the cost of housing in remote Queensland is very high. There is a freight component involved that many people in the cities and the coastal areas never experience and do not understand exists. There is also the cost of getting builders and other types of tradesmen to some of those remote areas. As an example, a house that costs, say, \$120,000 or \$130,000 to build in Toowoomba will cost probably \$220,000 or \$230,000 to build in a place like Bedourie or Birdsville.

I repeat, the minister has done some great work. He has been able to make available a lot of homes from places like Blackwater by transporting them to places like Bedourie, Aramac and some of those other western centres so that many people can now own their own home when previously they had not been able to. I want to put on record that I applaud that move and I applaud that policy. It is a damn good policy.

The member for Fitzroy is sitting in the chamber today. He has grave concerns for some of the people who are working in the mining industry in places like Blackwater. I share the concerns of my friend and colleague. I know that a lot of those houses have come out of his electorate. The member for Fitzroy spoke out about this issue before the election. I hope that any misunderstanding that may exist between the member for Fitzroy and the minister over this program can be resolved so that that magnificent program can be continued.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (3.22 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2001. As previously acknowledged in this House, the object of part of this bill is to amend the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 so as to give effect to the temporary extension of the First Home Owner Grant Scheme from 9 March 2001.

The outcome of the Prime Minister's extension of the scheme is that many people will be able to take this important first step and buy their own home. However, I take this opportunity to issue a word of caution to all home buyers, and that is: beware of white ants.

I believe that the control of termites is one of the most important issues that should be considered by anyone contemplating building a new home. Since the banning of organochlorine

insecticides for termite control, white ant infestations have become a major problem throughout this state. This is particularly the case where homes have been built on cement slabs and gardens have been placed right up against the external walls. Some homes have been so badly infected with white ants that they have been rendered uninhabitable.

The sad and sorry situation is that in many cases insurance companies offer little or no support and the owner is left to pick up the tab for repairs, sometimes running into many thousands of dollars. Many people are unaware of this costly and significant problem, which can remain undetected until the walls virtually fall down.

While I do not support the reintroduction of organochlorines, I do urge the government to use all the resources at its disposal to continue research into more effective methods of termite control. The government must also continue to highlight the problems associated with termites to the community via media awareness campaigns, particularly now that more people are expected to enter the new home market.

For many years the standard Queensland home was built on stumps mostly of timber with tin capping at the top of the stumps to prevent the invasion of white ants. This type of home was very suitable to our climate and, most importantly, allowed people to easily inspect the foundation of their home and take immediate preventive action against termite infestation. Over the years, we have seen a move towards the lowset home built on a cement slab which, while much cheaper to build, has become a nightmare to many home owners who are experiencing massive problems caused by the invasion of white ants.

It is almost impossible to monitor the movement of termites in these lowset homes because there is no access to the foundations and, in order to gain access, holes must be drilled through the cement floors. Some simple but effective steps that owners of lowset homes can take to prevent termite infestations in their homes are to ensure gardens are located away from external walls, to stop soil from covering weepholes in house foundations and to ensure that timber is not stored against external house walls and in contact with the ground.

I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (3.25 p.m.): The lack of guidelines provided by the Commonwealth government with regard to the first home owner grant has created enormous divides within the community, and today I bring to the House an illustration of this with the plight of one of my constituents, Carla Lavarini of Clayfield, and the harsh results of the application of the Commonwealth's eligibility rules for the first home owner grant.

Carla's parents died when she was eight years old. Her inheritance consisted of a one-eighth share of the family farm along with her siblings. She held on to her share of the property until 1994, when she sold her interest to her brother who was running the farm.

As a result of this minor interest in the family farm at the age of eight, Carla and her partner, Jamie, are ineligible to receive the first home owner grant of \$7,000. This may sound like a cruel hoax but, no, Carla's one-eighth share of the farm inherited on the death of her parents will prevent her and her partner from getting the helping hand that this grant could provide. I am sure that Carla and Jamie are not alone in this. Because of intestacy, properties are often divided up among siblings. Now this group of people cannot receive any assistance from the Commonwealth government.

I have spoken to the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, on this issue. He has done all he can. Although the state administers the First Home Owner Grant Scheme, its hands are tied by the inflexibility of the Commonwealth eligibility rules.

There is a message in this for the Prime Minister. Mr Howard, while you have had to double the first home owner grant for people building homes to compensate for the economic suffocation of the GST, people like Carla Lavarini are unable to obtain the assistance of the deposit that that first home owner grant can provide. They have to put off the great Australian dream for another few years, paying rent instead of paying off their house. Mr Howard, show some flexibility, compassion and commonsense and change the scheme to cater for cases like Carla Lavarini and James Toyer.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (3.27 p.m.): I rise to contribute briefly to the debate on the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As members are aware, this bill consists of two parts. One part, of course, amends the First Home Owner Grant Act of 2000 to take advantage of the temporary increase to \$14,000 of the first home owner grant introduced by the federal government. The second part, of course, is to amend the Gas Pipelines Access

(Queensland) Act 1998 to allow for an extension for the lodgment of the access principles by the individual producers.

The Commonwealth government has responded to the housing downturn by increasing the first home owner grant from \$7,000 to \$14,000, providing that the second \$7,000 goes towards the construction of a new home. It is already having an impact across the state. In this morning's press we saw that housing approvals have gone up quite substantially. Although housing represents only about six per cent of our gross national product, it does have indirect effects right across the economy. The flow-on impact of any change in housing construction or housing purchases is far greater than the proportion of GDP constituted by dwelling construction.

I think that is interesting, because a moment ago the member for Clayfield—and the Premier this morning—tried to blame any downturn on the impact of the GST. Despite the fact that the particular circumstance that the member for Clayfield mentioned is reprehensible and something ought to be done about it, housing is a cyclical industry.

I refer the member for Clayfield, other members and even the Premier to the April edition of the *Queensland Economic Update*, which is produced by Queensland Treasury and which was published at the beginning of May. In that document, examination is made of the Queensland housing sector. I believe that the Queensland Treasury makes some interesting comments in that document, of which I think members of the House ought to take note.

The first point Queensland Treasury makes in that document is that, historically, housing is a very volatile sector of the economy, far more volatile than any change in what is called gross state product, and a graph in that document indicates that the volatility in the housing sector is significantly greater than any volatility in gross state product. There are a number of factors for that, and I think it is worth while going through some of those factors and referring to some of the historical data. The first factor that Queensland Treasury mentions is something that we have all known for some period: the demand for housing depends very much upon interstate and overseas migration to this state. If that interstate or overseas migration goes up substantially, then, of course, the demand for housing products in this state goes up. When interstate and overseas migration falls, housing falls. Today, those migration levels are significantly lower than they were in the early 1990s or back in the 1980s. Therefore, the demand for housing has fallen substantially.

The second issue, of course, is interest rates. Housing, like many other consumer products, is sensitive to interest rate variations. The third factor is the traditional mismatch between the supply and the demand for housing. Generally, what happens in housing booms is that builders oversupply, and once there is a drop in the demand they tend to undersupply. That activity accentuates the upside of the housing boom and the downside in a slump. It is interesting to note that that historical position has existed independent of other factors, such as the introduction of the GST.

In fact, in that document Queensland Treasury points out that the current downturn, which is about a 45 per cent drop from the peak of the previous 12 months, is not unusual. Queensland Treasury provides documentation to show that a similar decline in dwelling approvals of 45 per cent occurred in 1994-95. Who was in government at that time? The Goss Labor government, of which the Deputy Premier was a minister! Federally, there was also a Labor government, and Mr Keating was in charge of the Australian economy. As the federal Treasurer, he was fond of saying that he used to pull the economic levers of Australia. At that time, he pulled them so badly that the housing sector in Queensland fell by 45 per cent. There are other instances in which housing fell by similar levels. In fact, in the early period of the Goss government—1989-90—housing fell by some 30 per cent.

So it is not unusual for the housing industry to be cyclical. Currently, there is a downturn in the housing sector, and over the past decade or so—11 years—that has occurred twice under a Queensland Labor government and while we have had a federal Labor government in Canberra. The important point to note is that there are cyclical changes in the housing industry and that they occur for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons for the current change may be the pull forward from the introduction of the goods and services tax and the subsequent fall from that. But that is not the only reason for the downturn and, historically, it is not unusual for such a downturn to occur. Again, the important point to note is that the federal government has responded to this downturn in a positive way to encourage people, particularly young people, to build their first home.

The opposition is pleased to support this bill. We hope that this time the government is not as tardy as it was last year when the original housing grant was introduced by the federal government. At that time, one of the things that was of most concern to people in Queensland was the tardiness of the Beattie Labor government in advertising and getting things fixed up for that housing grant. We hope that this time around the government is not tardy and that those who want the \$14,000 grant are not affected. Already I have had some indication that there is some concern that again the Beattie Labor government is not putting its full weight behind this scheme. If it is going to be successful—

Mr Mackenroth: Who gave you that concern?

Dr WATSON: If the grant is going to be operable in Queensland, then the state government needs to make sure that it puts its full weight behind it.

Mr Mackenroth: Who has that concern?

Dr WATSON: It is around.

Mr Mackenroth: Around where? Within Liberal Party quarters?

Dr WATSON: The Minister for Housing was raising the same kind of objections the last time. We will produce the comments that he made then. However, the point is that we do not want to see in Queensland any tardiness on the part of the Queensland Labor government in making sure that this scheme is implemented fully on this occasion.

The other part of the bill relates to the gas pipeline. Earlier this year we were saying that the PNG gas pipeline in Queensland was running into problems, despite the fact that this gas pipeline was the signature project of the previous Deputy Premier. When the government came to power in 1998, one of the things that it said that it was going to do in its term was to make sure that the PNG gas pipeline was put into place, because that was important for job generation in Queensland. That gas pipeline was important to make sure that there was going to be a gas-fired power station in Townsville to create economic development and power stability in Townsville and other parts of north Queensland. That gas pipeline was also going to have important consequences for industrial production right down the coast of Queensland, including Gladstone, which the member for Gladstone so ably represents.

This side of the House agreed with that. We said that the gas pipeline was important for that development to go ahead. But, as usual, the Labor government simply has not been able to perform. The Deputy Premier says that he reassessed the priorities. My understanding is that the first thing he did when he became the Minister for State Development last year was to get rid of the guy who was the department's liaison officer with Chevron. The minister certainly revised the priorities: he revised them down and he kicked out that officer. It is no wonder the process slowed down.

Mr Mackenroth: You've got the wrong information.

Dr WATSON: Have I got the wrong information? That is why I said 'my understanding'.

Mr Mackenroth: It was the works department, and he is on exactly the same level as he used to be.

Dr WATSON: The minister certainly accepts the fact that he revised priorities and kicked somebody out of the department.

Mr Mackenroth: I did revise the priorities. That is why Exxon is trying to do something.

Dr WATSON: The minister certainly did it with Chevron. I agree that Exxon has taken over Chevron's portion of the project and has 30 per cent.

Mr Mackenroth: One of the largest companies in the world came in.

Dr WATSON: I know who Exxon is. It is interesting to note that the minister did not have the same priorities, obviously, as the previous Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development.

The point is, irrespective of whether or not this minister's priorities are the same, better or worse than the previous minister's, the Labor government has been unable to deliver a major project in that area.

Mr Mackenroth: I'm a can-do minister in a can-do government.

Dr WATSON: So far, the government has been unable to deliver it. We are going to see if it does deliver. We will see whether this government and the deputy—

Mr Mackenroth: Didn't you see the major announcement?

Dr WATSON: I saw the announcements, but we are yet to see anything significant coming from the direction of the government.

The opposition supports the bill. We support giving the operators and the producers extra time to make sure that the access regime is put in place and that the principles are there. We would also like to see some performance on the part of the Beattie Labor government.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (3.40 p.m.): The housing issue is extremely important. While we have all heard about the additional \$7,000, or \$14,000 in total, that is being provided to first home buyers, in some parts of rural Queensland that is not a major issue because there are so many houses for sale that building new homes is hardly a concern. That is an indictment on the government. More needs to be done to provide support for rural Queensland because in many places people are doing it particularly tough.

I have proposed a number of initiatives that I believe are extremely important to different industries, but the government has not taken them on board. It is essential that, whether we are talking about rural areas or urban areas, the government acts for all Queenslanders.

The gas pipeline is an extremely important issue. Although it forms only a small part of the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, it is important to north Queensland and, in fact, to industry throughout Queensland as the pipeline was to extend to Gladstone and even further south. The energy requirements of the north, and certainly of the Townsville region, are very important. It is pleasing to see the member for Townsville and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland present in the House. I think that he would agree with me that north Queensland's need for a base load power station is absolutely critical. If we are going to grow and expand our industries, we need a cheaper source of energy. In fact, we need a source of energy full stop.

That is exactly what was proposed over three years ago. I remember the Deputy Premier at the time standing in this parliament and saying how the development of the Chevron gas pipeline was going so well. After almost three years that project has still not come to fruition and it looks as if it will be the year 2005 before any gas will be available. Of course, the pipeline is yet to be built so there is a long way to go.

As I said, north Queensland needs an energy source for a base load power station and for a peak load power station. Gas has the ability to act as a base load and also as a peak load source of energy. It is important that something is done quickly.

We have talked about jobs, jobs, jobs and we have talked about what is happening with Chevron. Of course, it now appears that Exxon has taken over the principal role of developing the whole process. At the end of the day, the viability of the pipeline will be the essential thing. We must get the major users on board quickly, and I will refer to QNI because it was to be a major user.

QNI has already invested something like \$300 million in its Yabulu processing plant. It has to make a decision on the source of heat energy that will be used in the processing plant. Gas is a good option because it does not require the elevators and so on in a new construction to bring the coal to burn and create the heat for the refining process that will be undertaken at Yabulu. Therefore, gas is attractive.

However, the main thing is that QNI wanted to buy gas for \$3 a gigajoule or less, but the cost is still not known. I do not think that the government has any firm quotes on what the likely cost of the gas will be. Companies such as Ergon and Energex have been trying to sell gas to different consumers, but at the end of the day the key is to ensure that we have sufficient users of the gas so the expenditure can be guaranteed and the costs of the pipeline can be brought down. That will be beneficial to industry. The viability of that process will be confirmed only if the government can ensure that the major users are on board.

From what I understand, QNI has reached the point where it has to make a decision very soon. If it cannot get gas as a source of heat energy, which is what it would like to do, it will have no alternative but to use coal. Presently, QNI is using something like 360,000 tonnes of coal. It is a cheaper source of energy, but there will be problems in the future with carbon credits and so on. I understand that QNI's preference is to use gas because of the installation of elevators, the construction, lesser costs and so on. The difficulty that QNI faces is that gas will not be available for another four years at the earliest.

Approximately 250 to 400 jobs will be provided in the construction stage, and 30 to 40 people will be provided with long-term employment at the plant. That plant will be processing from

other areas. In fact, the parent company, Billiton, has invested approximately \$700 million at Ravensthorpe, in Western Australia. Billiton is developing a major mine there, so part of the processing will occur there and the rest will be done at Yabulu. I understand that they will be doing something very similar in other areas of the world. Therefore, Yabulu will be a major resource for the Billiton group, which has merged with BHP. Of course, QNI is prepared to spend quite a substantial amount of money at Yabulu to get the processing plant up and running.

This does not concern just QNI and what it is doing at Yabulu; it also concerns Sun Metals and stage 2 of its zinc processing plant. Sun Metals is now at the point of having to make decisions on the future development of stage 2 of the zinc processing plant south of Townsville. If we are not quick enough in providing a source of energy, approximately 20 petajoules of gas will be lost in relation to the capacity of a pipeline from the Billiton group through QNI. Something similar will be required by Sun Metals.

In the earlier stages of Sun Metals, the Goss government came up with a sweetheart agreement covering power supply and the cost of energy. That agreement cannot continue forever. We have to ensure that they are provided with a source of competitive energy, because they are working in a world trade with zinc and cobalt, and nickel in terms of QNI. They need a source of energy that is reasonably priced.

The difficulty will be that, if both those groups pull out, the major users—the big manufacturers in Townsville—will look elsewhere for energy. Other secondary industries that could develop as a result of a good energy source in Townsville, whether they are using it for heat or generating electricity through gas turbines, will not be as viable as they could have been had those big manufacturers been brought on board now. The government must be very aware of the need to do something about this. Three years ago the government indicated that it had the matter in hand. Now that does not appear to be the case. It will be another four years before we will see anything major happening in terms of gas coming from PNG.

However, there are some other alternatives. I am sure that the Deputy Premier is well aware of what is happening in the Timor Sea and the initiatives that could be put in place there. It is okay to be supporting one particular group, but the race for energy in Townsville, in the northern section of Queensland, is extremely important. If we do not get it soon, we will be getting to a point at which our major consumers will be looking for alternative sources and, as a consequence, the more viable and cheaper sources of energy will no longer be as readily available to us. I can only urge the Deputy Premier to do everything in his power to ensure that we do come up with that source of energy. I know there has been some support for what Chevron and now Exxon are proposing. But at the end of the day, time imposes some real constraints. It is incumbent on the government to do some work and make sure that we get some energy into the northern sector.

One of the issues that I would like to raise in relation to the pipeline coming down from PNG is that we have some major problems with Powerlink wanting to put a transmission line through the El Arish area and linking up with Cairns to give additional capacity to Cairns. If it were possible in the short term—and, of course, time is starting to beat us, too—to put in a gas turbine at, say, Mareeba, it is very likely that we could run additional power down to Cairns and avoid the necessity to increase the capacity of the high-voltage powerline from Tully through El Arish, which was extremely unpopular.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr ROWELL: That is fair enough. I think the minister hit the nail on the head. But there is a transmission line through a World Heritage area. There are some options for an over-canopy type arrangement.

Mr Mackenroth: I said to someone the other day: there is a solution to it—turn the power off.

Mr ROWELL: There are always solutions. The minister should do that in Brisbane and see how well he goes. I guarantee him that the government will not have the seats it has at present. It is important that north Queensland gets this source of energy. It has a lot going for it. The key to this is the government getting this power there as quickly and as cheaply as possible.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (3.52 p.m.): I take this opportunity to congratulate the Howard government on bringing in this \$14,000 grant to assist first home buyers to purchase a new first home. I understand that problems were created as a result of the GST and it is easy to be negative about the whole thing. However, even Mr Keating, before he was Prime Minister, indicated that Australia's tax system needed changing and that we needed something like a GST.

Ironically, when he saw that the initiative was not very popular he changed horses in the middle of the race.

However, it is a fact that our building industry was affected. At least the government has done something to overcome the difficulties that have been created. In many ways, this \$14,000 grant will lead to the construction of more homes than would have been the case if there had been no GST. \$14,000 is a huge help for somebody, particularly in the lower income bracket, in getting into their own home. Home ownership is the great Australian dream. This grant has been an enormous help.

In March the number of loans approved increased by 17.7 per cent. In other words, it has to be working. Incidentally, the increase in Queensland was 12 per cent, so we might have a bit of catching up to do. Nevertheless, that is still a very good figure. Those statistics were recorded in spite of some initial administrative problems. The number of first home loan applications increased from 9,057 in February to 10,706 in March. Peter Osterage, the head of the home owners and builders group, indicated that people were very happy with what had happened. He stated that the confidence that has been engendered by this has meant that people who are shifting home for the third, fourth or fifth time and who would not otherwise be eligible are making the move. He pointed out also that many more people are taking the opportunity, in this environment of renewed confidence and low interest rates—and we remember what they were in the time of Gough Whitlam—to renovate their homes. If someone renovates their home, what does that mean? Obviously, a builder, handyman or someone else somewhere is getting work. This obviously means work for people behind the counter selling nails, screws and planes. We can see from all of this that a positive outlook is developing, and life revolves around being positive.

On the Capricorn Coast we are grateful for what has happened in recent times. In case honourable members have not heard this—and I am sure they have on many occasions—I point out that the Capricorn Coast is increasing its population by approximately 1,400 people per year. Included in that would be many successful applicants for first home owner grants of \$14,000.

I must also express my total amazement at the behaviour of some of the banks, and I know Westpac came in for mention at one point because it chose initially to ostracise people in the country and say that they were not eligible for these loans. The banks are doing very well. Even if it was not quite as profitable for them to assist in this way in country areas, surely they could bear the brunt of a little less profit or perhaps no profit at all in the overall interests of our community. Australians are starting to stand up to the banks. We have reached the point now at which competition is so fierce that the banks are beginning to listen. Westpac and some of the other banks have listened, and these home loans are now available through banks in country areas.

Overall, we have engendered a lot of confidence. People who would not have been able to get into their first home this quickly are now doing so or are in the process of doing so. Again, putting politics aside, I say thank you to the Howard government. It was a bold step, but it has been a step worth taking. This measure will pay for itself. If builders and others are out of work, they have to be supported by the taxpayer. But if these people are working—building houses and selling materials—they are obviously paying tax. Although some of these government initiatives seem costly to the taxpayer, in effect they are not. I would go so far as to say that one would really have to wonder what the balance would be. When it is tipped upside down and worked out, does the government make a slight profit from such an investment? Perhaps not. But they do engender confidence and prevent people from having breakdowns and so on. Across-the-board, given the renewed confidence, which is good for our country, obviously the move is a very good one and well worth while.

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (3.59 p.m.): We have just heard from the honourable member for Keppel, who said that the introduction of the increased first home owners grant was a very bold decision on behalf of the Howard government. It was introduced on 9 March and it finishes on 31 December. What two events coincide with those two dates? One of them, of course, was the Ryan by-election. Far from being a bold initiative, it was one aimed at trying to save the skin of the Liberal Party in the Ryan by-election.

An interesting date is 31 December, because the federal election is due later this year. People will go to the election with this higher first home owners grant which ends soon after the election. It is not a bold decision at all; it is one with political panic written all over it in the face of the Ryan by-election. It was an attempt to hold down the swing and an attempt to keep the

federal government in power after December. I am of the view now that the federal government would hold the election on Christmas Day if it thought it had any hope of hanging on to power.

The member for Keppel tried to gloss over a few problems with this scheme. He said, 'The building industry is doing it a little bit tough at the moment.' A little bit tough! This is the worst downturn in the construction industry in living memory.

Mr Lester: What about Gough Whitlam?

Mr MICKEL: The honourable gentleman seeks to interject now because I have embarrassed him into it. The fact is that it is the worst downturn in the housing industry in living memory. I have builders in my electorate who have not worked for months. They have not worked not because they are lazy but because there is no work for them.

The honourable gentleman also said that he has a bit of population growth up there on the Capricorn Coast. I can tell him that, by population age, I have the second youngest electorate in Queensland. My electorate would love to have a vibrant building industry, but they have the worst downturn in living memory. And the honourable gentleman glosses over it! It is hard to think what would embarrass him. Sure, there has been a bit of a turnaround lately, but it has been off a very low base.

Mr Lester: There's no embarrassment.

Mr MICKEL: The honourable gentleman has been here since 1974. I remember when he used to oppose taxation from Canberra, but he did not oppose the GST. The GST has ruined the cash flows of small business. When we look at the electorates that the government has won, we see that one of the issues was small business. That is why there has been a massive increase in the majority for this government. It has been because of small business and the GST. The GST is an interest-free loan by small business to the Australian Taxation Office. There is not a small businessperson in the building industry in any one of these electorates who would disagree with that. If the honourable gentleman from Keppel thinks that I am wrong, I am sure that any one of the government members here would invite him to their electorate where he will meet builders who oppose the GST. The fact is that the honourable gentleman would do better to go out there and speak to people affected by the downturn in the building industry.

Rather than be completely negative about the First Home Owner Grant Scheme, let me offer a few suggestions that have been offered to me by real estate agents. I represent an electorate that was built largely on the first home owner schemes of various governments. There are a couple of problems with the schemes which I want to bring to the attention of the House. Most of these first home owner schemes rely upon builders who pitch their marketing at that sector. But they never tell people to go out and get a valuation on their house to ensure that the house and land package reflects market value. At the moment, they advertise what the honourable member for Keppel said—a dream, the great Australian dream. We heard him say it.

For a lot of Australians and a lot of people in first home owner territory, that first home owner dream can become a first home owner nightmare. If they rely, and rely solely, on that \$14,000 as their deposit, it takes only a small interest rate rise or a slight downturn in the economy to bump them out of that house. Because the house and land package did not reflect market value, they can find that after living there for 12 months they have negative equity. The house cannot be resold at the price they paid for it, and that is well documented. But nobody from the opposition side has mentioned that today.

I encourage people to seek an independent valuation before they sign up for a new house/land package. We need to ensure that the valuers are professional and independent from the builders. I have no evidence that they are tied to them. However, I encourage people to do two things before they sign on the dotted line: seek an independent valuation and seek independent financial counselling to ensure that that great Australian dream that they are being asked to sign up for is something that they can afford. It is no use saying, as some of the ads say, 'This will replace the rent that you pay,' because it will not. We all know that. They have to consider things such as rates, insurance and maintenance—even on a new property. If any one of those things is greater than the rent that they pay, then they could find themselves in financial difficulty.

The worst thing about these packages for young couples is that they find that this financial pressure impacts upon their marriage. It does not help the building industry if people lose their home because of the First Home Owner Grant Scheme which dazzles them. History has shown that, if they lose their house, they tend to stay out of the housing market for somewhere between

10 and 15 years. They go into the private rental market or, in the more desperate cases, public rental housing. They carry that misery of having either a family break-up behind them or the memory of what the First Home Owner Grant Scheme brought them.

I encourage people to get a termite inspection report done before buying a home. We are finding in some suburbs—and the honourable member for Algeester would know of this occurring in Forest Lake, and I know of it in Regents Park—that the termite problem has resulted in young couples suddenly finding that if a dodgy termite company has treated their block, they are suddenly up for a maintenance bill that they cannot leap over because the place is literally falling down around them. I encourage them to have a termite inspection carried out.

There is a belief in the industry—and it has been put to me by real estate agents—that rather than directing this grant at first home builders, it should have been directed at all first home buyers. If that were done, first home buyers could have bought an established house. Those people selling those established homes might have built another home. The social problems that I have outlined may not necessarily occur when people purchase a home for the second or third time and who, in turn, build a house.

A lot of honourable members have spoken today about the banking industry. I am concerned greatly about what has happened in the banking industry in growth areas like the northern area of the Beaudesert Shire, which I have the honour to represent. When people move into an area and want to build or buy a home, one of the persons they have to see is a bank manager. Just to help them out, in Jimboomba the National Australia Bank has closed its doors and the same thing is about to happen in Marsden! However, last week the National Australia Bank announced a \$2 billion-plus profit for just six months. That is little comfort to the bank's loyal customers in the West Logan area. The National Bank's branch at Jimboomba has closed down and the one at Marsden will close down. This will cause a great deal of inconvenience for small business, families, young home buyers and senior citizens.

The areas I refer to are not areas with diminishing populations or declining business activity. As I said, the Jimboomba area is experiencing rapid housing growth and the West Logan area is one of the main growth corridors in our state. Bank customers of the Jimboomba branch will now have to travel over 20 minutes to the Browns Plains branch. Bank customers at the Marsden branch will have to travel for at least 10 minutes to the nearest branch. There is a perception that only rural and regional communities have been impacted by bank closures. While the impact on rural and regional communities has been devastating, the reality is that closures have actually been greater in metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas. Between 1990 and 1999, the number of bank branches in Australia dropped from 6,575 to 5,358, a decline of 18.5 per cent. The number of metropolitan branches dropped by 19.7 per cent in the same period. The number of rural and regional branches dropped by 16.8 per cent. In the same period the number of bank agencies dropped by 19 per cent, with agencies in metropolitan areas reducing by almost 25 per cent.

The time has come for the nation's banks, which operate under a licence from the federal government, to be made accountable for the service they provide, or are supposed to provide, to their customers. The banks are making record profits. The National Bank of Australia is not alone in making billion-dollar profits. Whilst these record profits may please shareholders, they are being achieved at the expense of customer services and at the expense of the traditional link between the customer and his or her bank. The Jimboomba and Marsden closures will force small business to keep more cash on their premises because they will have to reduce their visits to the bank. The closures will also force staff to carry cash considerable distances, often in busy periods and even at night. At a time when everyone is being encouraged to be proactive to help reduce crime, the action of the National Australia Bank is totally contrary to that goal.

Families and senior citizens in the area will have to use an ATM—people cannot get a bank loan through an ATM—phone banking or travel up to 20 minutes from their own area to Browns Plains just to do their banking. Just as bank closures have affected businesses in country towns, they will have the same impact on businesses and first home buyers in Marsden and Jimboomba. The reality is that the banks do not want to see their customers at all. They want them to use the Net, the phone or ATMs. The traditional contact between the bank manager and his or her customers is all but finished. Senior citizens and families who have greater faith in passbooks and chequebooks rather than cards are being directly penalised and discouraged. But the greatest impact of all is on small business, particularly retailers, who will be asked to carry more cash, to cash cheques for customers and who will then lose business as people travel away from their shopping area to where the banks have a branch. The use of private vehicles to transport large

amounts of cash on the highway to the nearest branch will, as I already indicated, put the security of small businesspeople and their staff at significantly greater risk.

Even though banking has been deregulated, banks still need a licence to operate, a licence issued by the federal Treasurer and supervised by the Reserve Bank. Just as other businesses which operate under a licence, such as hotels and clubs, must meet certain conditions to gain and retain a licence, banks ought to meet the same conditions as well. One condition must relate to planned closures or downgrading of branches. Before a bank makes a final decision to close a branch, it should be required to prepare a community impact statement which would examine in detail the impact of any closure on customers and the wider community.

The bank should be required to invite its customers to participate in the preparation of the community impact statement. That statement should cover the following areas: first, the impact on small business such as the likely cost, inconvenience and safety arising out of a requirement to travel to another centre to undertake banking; second, the impact on senior citizens and families, including the availability of public transport to the area where the banking services will be available; third, whether other banks provide comprehensive services in the affected area; fourth, what impact the closure will have on local businesses, especially retailers, which would result from customers banking and shopping in another centre; fifth, what reduced or alternative banking facilities the bank will offer to the local community such as ATMs, agencies, et cetera; and, sixth, whether the proposed closure is due to a downturn in business at the branch in question or due to overall bank rationalisation policies.

This statement should be available to customers and community leaders. It should be on display in the branch and be completed at least three months before the proposed closure. The statement may not prevent the closure, but it will force greater accountability by the banks and greater consideration for the rights and needs of their customers and the local community. It may well shame the banks into reversing decisions to close branches and it may well lead to community action campaigns based on the impact statement forcing them to do so. A bank is a service provider. It is not just part of a big and profitable business. The community service role of banks is ever diminishing, even when branches are not closed.

The community impact statement may not prevent many closures, but it will force the banks to consult their customers. The closure of banks has caused great hardship in rural towns and communities. It is also causing hardship and inconvenience in rapidly growing communities like mine. I believe the requirement of a community impact statement will slow down closures and force the banks to a level of accountability they have long avoided.

I am pleased to say that the local community I represent is fighting back. Today people are encouraged to join the local community bank in Marsden. I commend the people behind that. Fundamentally, automatic teller machines and the Internet cannot provide first home buyers with the advice they need from a bank manager. Unfortunately, constituents in my electorate serviced by the banks at Jimboomba and Marsden will have to travel a considerable distance and incur additional expenses to access services that are available and taken for granted in other areas of the community. I encourage first home buyers to seek financial counselling and independent valuations before they sign up for this grant. I realise that the state government's hands are largely tied on this very political decision to double the grant, which commenced before the Ryan by-election and which will continue until the federal election when hopefully the Howard government will come to an end.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (4.16 p.m.): In rising to speak to the First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I endorse the comments made by the member for Logan with regard to the obligation on banks for impact assessments prior to bank closures, especially in rural and regional Queensland. Those members with rural areas in their electorates have seen banks close for profit reasons rather than commercial reasons and have seen the resulting impacts on the community. Those impacts include the loss of jobs at the bank and a chain reaction of a loss of jobs in the community in general.

In spite of the comments made by the member for Logan warning first home owners as to the risks of getting themselves into debt by buying a home—and the validity of those warnings is evident—I believe the First Home Owner Grant Scheme will give many couples the opportunity to purchase their own home. Even though many people can afford the repayments after buying a home and the rates, the biggest hurdle many young couples have is acquiring the initial deposit. For many people this scheme will provide an opportunity for them to start paying off their own home.

However, one issue brought to my attention by a number of interested parties in applying for the first home owner grant is the fact that the \$7,000 or the \$14,000 is not assessable as part of the deposit. Many people believe that decision was taken by the federal government. Because many people have been affected negatively by decisions made by the federal coalition government, they thought it was therefore easy to lay that complaint at its feet. However, the banks made the decision not to accept the \$14,000 grant as the deposit. As a result, that excluded many eligible couples from starting the process of purchasing a home.

In deciding whether or not to take part or all of the first home owner grant into consideration as the deposit, the banks have sophisticated models which can easily work out whether a couple, either as a single income or joint income couple, have the ability to pay off the loan in the designated time frame. I think it was really an excuse on the part of the banks. As far as I know, to date Westpac is the only bank that has relaxed that criteria. The banks would have the mechanism to be able to assess whether a couple could service a loan and they should be proceeding along those lines.

The legislation relating to the first home owner grant is retrospective. Historically, not only the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee but also this chamber have been very cautious about retrospective legislation and its use. I notice, however, that the retrospectivity in this case will really benefit many people who may have signed up just after 9 March, and I commend the minister for that retrospectivity and for the benefit it will bring to those people.

The other issue raised by members is that as a result of this grant, particularly the increase to \$14,000, there has been an increase in construction opportunities in all electorates. I know that in my electorate there was a significant downturn in building activity when the GST was introduced. There is no other way to explain it. Builders were confident that people shied away from signing up for the construction of a new home because of the GST. There are builders who went out of business, either voluntarily or forcibly, because of it.

If this grant gives some comfort to builders and increases their opportunity for work—and it has—then it has to be a good move. It will also benefit the suppliers, the subbies and the apprentices who are able to train under the qualified tradesmen. My only concern—I am sure it is not an isolated concern—is that on 31 December, when this grant offer ends, those builders will potentially be faced with a very similar downturn in construction in the new year. That is a hurdle that they will have to get over and one that the incoming government will have to address.

I turn to the other part of the bill, which seeks to amend the Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act. I certainly support the extension of that deadline for the lodgment of access principles. The Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline was always a courageous scheme to undertake, not only because of the sovereign risk issues but also because there was a significant hurdle in relation to the negotiation of native title issues and because of the construction challenges that would face the company as it built across quite differing terrain throughout Queensland.

The people in my electorate and in the electorates to the north are looking forward to the construction of that pipeline. A lot of industries are looking to gas for a cleaner energy source. The sooner construction of the pipeline is commenced, thereby creating jobs, and completed, thereby encouraging greater industrial development with cleaner, greener energy, the better it will be for this state. I wish the proponents every success. They are energetic and enthusiastic every time they visit our electorate, albeit recognising the challenges they have had to face. I certainly commend the minister on the bill.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (4.23 p.m.), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I will address two issues. Firstly, in relation to the implementation of the first home owner grant, I think the Leader of the Opposition said that the government was sloppy. I do not think we could have done anything more than we did.

Mr Horan: I was talking about the pipeline process.

Mr MACKENROTH: The Leader of the Opposition talked about De-Anne Kelly and what she had said, and then he went on to talk about the implementation of the First Home Owner Grant Scheme. People talked about when the scheme was first announced. John Howard announced the scheme on 9 March 2001 and issued the states with a fact sheet on 23 March, some 14 days later. So for 14 days every state in Australia had absolutely no information, other than the Prime Minister's press release announcing this scheme—a scheme we were expected to administer.

The only information we could give to potential applicants was the information contained within that press release. So it made things very difficult for us. I know that—

Mr Horan: My references to that in the last paragraph of my speech were about the process of the pipeline.

Mr MACKENROTH: I accept that, but I will address this issue because it is something for which I know we have been criticised.

The situation then was that in late April the Commonwealth decided to make further changes to include people purchasing homes that had undergone substantial renovations. The Commonwealth government in fact asked Queensland to be the lead jurisdiction for preparing the claim forms, and all the other states adopted the format Queensland drew up for the Commonwealth government—after we received the information from it. So we could not have done things any quicker. At that time we were being criticised for that.

At present, the total number of applications received by state Treasury is 310. Of that total, the number of applications that have been processed and paid is 260 which, as a matter of interest, is more than in any other state in Australia. The state has worked as fast as it can to put in place the Commonwealth's system—and it is its system. We are simply an agent for it in relation to this.

I know that De-Anne Kelly said that she thought Centrelink should take care of it. If the Prime Minister wants to give the matter to Centrelink then it can take it, and the issues raised by members about people who are ineligible for the grants can be addressed by its staff. I get probably two letters a week from members complaining about individuals who do not quite meet the criteria. They could go and complain to Centrelink rather than to me, because all we are doing is implementing a Commonwealth scheme for it—I might add, without getting any commission for doing it.

A number of members mentioned the PNG gas pipeline. It is a project that the government wants to see happen. It is a project that we have talked about and it is one that we still want to see happen. That is why we agreed to this extension—to allow the proponents to put in place their access principles.

I think it was the member for Moggill who mentioned Chevron. Chevron was leading the negotiations in relation to this up until a couple of months ago. I met with the proponents of the PNG gas pipeline when I became the Minister for State Development. I said to them that the government was very supportive of the PNG gas pipeline and that we would do all we could to ensure the gas pipeline succeeded and was able to be built, but that one of the things we were not going to do was underwrite all the gas that was to come from PNG to make the pipeline viable. I think that would be totally irresponsible of the government. At that time Chevron wanted to deal only with the government. It wanted the government to buy the gas and then for us to find customers. I said to it that I believed that was its responsibility. In fact, after those meetings Exxon got involved and took over the lead in relation to the consortia doing the negotiations.

When Exxon came to meet with me, its vice-president for Russia to Australia said to me that he believed the way it could get the gas pipeline to work was for it to take the lead role in selling the gas—exactly what I had said to Chevron a couple of months previously—and that is now what has happened. Exxon has taken the position of dealing with Energex and Ergon, the companies here, in relation to the gas that they can buy and use themselves and then in dealing with companies in relation to how much gas they can take up. At the end of the day the project has to stack up. This government will do all that it can to see this gas pipeline work.

It was interesting at the end of last week to see an announcement by APT in relation to the gas pipeline. Members may have seen it in the *Australian*, the *Courier-Mail* or the *Financial Review*. We talk about the Timor gas pipeline. It may come on prior to PNG, and if that happened it would go down through the Northern Territory. What APT—and AGL are involved with that company—are in fact looking at is building a gas pipeline from the Timor Sea down into Mount Isa, across to Townsville and bringing the gas down from PNG to Townsville. It would then be able to link in to Gladstone and also into south-west Queensland to get into the markets down in Sydney and South Australia. I think it would be a great thing if that did come off, because it would ensure that there is competition in the gas market and we would see a better result.

AGL, who are involved with Petronas in the actual pipeline from PNG, are involved in the announcement that was made last week. They are talking about construction starting at the end of the second quarter or third quarter next year. So once again we will do what we can to ensure

that this sort of project can get up and running, because it will create jobs. However, the thing that we must do as a government is act responsibly. We have done all that we can to see the PNG gas pipeline built and we will continue to be supportive; we will continue to do what is necessary. However, in doing that we will not allow the state to incur a debt that it cannot repay. I think that that would be totally irresponsible and I can assure the House that this government will not do that.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 March (see p. 100).

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (4.34 p.m.): I welcome the chance to speak to this bill nearly six months to the day since the Beattie government first introduced it, without notice, to this parliament and nearly six months and two days since it was shelved when the Premier shut down parliament early for fear of the opposition's scrutiny over the Labor electoral rorts scandal. At the time we were told that the government had completed its legislative agenda for the year and there was no need for parliament to sit any longer. Well, that was not the case. Here we have a bill which is quite important. It is interesting to note that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee only concluded its report on this bill today. We have just received the report of that committee, and yet the bill has been brought on for debate. It was practically on the bottom of the agenda and now it has slipped up to the second bill for the day.

A government member: It's very important.

Mr ROWELL: If it was important, why didn't the government do something about it when it had the opportunity last year? I will explain a few things as we go—

A government member interjected.

Mr ROWELL: We will go through that process. Here we are debating the same bill and the same issues that could have been addressed back then but for the Premier's refusal to face up to public scrutiny. That is really what it was all about. Even the minister's speech was almost exactly the same as the one we heard six months ago, with a couple of notable exceptions which I will refer to in more detail shortly.

Mr Terry Sullivan: He faced up to public scrutiny and there are 66 people here who can attest to that.

Mr ROWELL: Seeing as we have some time to spend on this bill, I might take that interjection. Why didn't the government debate it during the last parliament? It had the opportunity. The bill had come in, we had a sitting date arranged, and what happened? Parliament was prorogued because the government wanted to slip over the fence and make sure that it did not have to face any scrutiny.

Government members interjected.

Mr ROWELL: While the government was trying to bury the Labor Party's entrenched culture of electoral cheating, hardworking Queensland fishermen were left hanging in limbo for another six months—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ROWELL: I cannot even hear myself speaking.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): The House will come to order.

Mr ROWELL: None more so than the spanner crab fishermen. I want to refer to them. They have been waiting for the government to correct its bungled allocation of spanner crab quotas since the management plan was first introduced back in June 1999. If ever there was an example of bureaucratic incompetence and the Beattie government's complete disregard for the impact of its decisions on the financial welfare of hardworking Queenslanders, then this is it. The government's endless delays, excuses, buck-passing and inaction has caused those fishermen—and the government knows who they are—enormous stress and hardship. I can only commend them for their patience.

So it is with some sense of relief that I welcome the fact that the government has finally managed to introduce the bill and we can debate it—if only to fix the government's mistake and finally provide some justice to that family. I think that is quite important.

I said that there were a couple of notable exceptions in the minister's second reading speech this time around. Some honourable members from the 49th Parliament may recall that this bill, when rushed into this House, had to be passed or the federal government would pull its \$10 million contribution to the east coast trawl management plan or take over the administration of the trawl fishery. That was one of the stories that was put around. Surprise, surprise; that was not true. The feds did in fact provide the \$10 million contribution to helping the fishermen adjust to the impact of the plan. Once again, another Beattie government flick pass was exposed for what it was—a grubby attempt by this government to pass the blame for its own failing to the federal government. All the Beattie government's scaremongering—

Mr Palaszczuk: This is the type of nonsense you used to go on with before the last election and look at the result: 66 to 23. Why don't you be constructive?

Mr ROWELL: I am being constructive. The minister did not want to face up to the electorate before the government went to the polls. The bill was brought in, people like the spanner crab fishermen—the minister mucked up their allocations—were hanging by their fingernails and now they have to wait for another three or four months before we do anything about it. It is okay for the minister to pontificate, saying that he is so great because he has the numbers. That is fine; he has.

Mr Palaszczuk: I didn't say that.

Mr ROWELL: I thought that was the message that the minister was trying to give to me.

Mr Palaszczuk: What I am saying is that—

Mr ROWELL: Does the minister want me to go on speaking to the bill?

Mr Palaszczuk: This is the type of nonsense you used to go on with before the last election and the results are plainly there for you to see.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will continue.

Mr ROWELL: The minister was very happy for the spanner crab fishermen to wait nearly eight months altogether for some adjustment to their allocations, which the members opposite had mucked up. Is that what the minister is saying? I do not think so.

The east coast trawl plan has been operating for a little over four months since its introduction on 1 January this year. There was no argument that the fishery needed restructuring to reduce and then cap effort to provide for both the environmentally sustainable management of the fishery and economically sustainable fishing for those operating in the fishery. Certainly, the opposition remains supportive of the broad need to ensure that those objectives are met.

However, it is a matter of public record that we have and continue to hold some serious concerns about the Beattie government's management of the issue and its implementation of the east coast trawl management plan. That view is not confined to this side of the House. As we all know, it has been a long and difficult debate over how best to achieve the restructuring. There are still enormous difficulties for people in the industry and others who depend on the industry for their livelihoods.

On this point, I wish to draw the minister's attention to some problems that have arisen as a result of the implementation of the east coast trawl management plan and ask the minister to address them with a greater degree of urgency than he has shown to date with this legislation. The first issue relates to the adjustment pressures forced upon many in the trawl industry who did not fare as well as they believed they were entitled to in the allocation of effort units. Many of those have struggled and continue to struggle to operate in a financially viable way with the effort units allocated to them. I would like to hear the minister's explanation of what measures, if any,

his government is taking to, firstly, identify hardship among those family operators and, secondly, to provide a way of relieving that hardship.

The second issue relates to the impact of the retirement of fishing licences under the plan on other businesses that service the fishing industry. By that I mean the ice factories, the diesel mechanics, the chandlery businesses and so on. While it is true that the fishermen directly affected by the reduction in fishing effort through the surrender of fishing licences were compensated, the people who run those predominantly family-owned and operated service businesses received no assistance whatsoever. For many of those businesses, the impact has been almost as dramatic as the effect the reduction in fishing has had on the fishing families.

I would like to refer to a letter that I sent to the minister, to which I have not received a response, from a family in Dungeness who have a refrigeration service that they provided to the 13 trawlers in the Dungeness area. Of course, as a result of the buyback package, 11 trawlers have gone. As a result, this family's service, which involved manufacturing ice, keeping the catch cold, and arranging the transport of the catch to the market, is no longer required. That family is in a desperate situation. There was no provision made in the legislation and there is no provision made in the east coast trawl plan for people such as the members of that family. They are finding it extremely difficult to survive. In fact, they have to go to other states to actually get the fish resource that they used to distribute to people in Townsville. That has made it very, very difficult for them. They have the equipment—the coldrooms, the ice-making plants—yet they are rusting away. They are going to be made redundant; there is no support for them; there is nothing to assist those people to really get into some other form of business. There is no prospect, either, of using those coldrooms at Dungeness for some other purpose, because they are some 20 kilometres to 30 kilometres away from the major facilities at Ingham or Halifax.

Those people are finding things extremely tough. I put up a proposal, but I do not think that it is fair and reasonable that I should discuss that proposal here. However, those people are feeling the pinch from the government's east coast trawl plan. They are doing it tough and they could well do with some assistance from the state government.

The third issue arising from the east coast trawl management plan that I would like to draw to the minister's attention is the emerging trend of effort migration across various fisheries—from the trawl fishery to others such as the crab fishery. There are many cases of fishermen who have surrendered their trawl licences moving into other fisheries to maintain their fishing businesses, their livelihoods and their lifestyles. We cannot really blame them for doing that. There are also other cases where fishermen who cannot generate a sufficient income in the trawl fishery with the effort units allocated to them under the east coast trawl plan are increasingly exercising whatever licences they may hold in other fisheries. That is causing quite a problem.

The effect of that cross-fishery effort migration is obvious: an increase—in some cases a significant increase—in the pressure on stocks in those fisheries. In turn, that can also have an impact on the fishermen who have historically based their businesses on those fisheries that are the recipients of this effort migration. I am concerned that, in fixing one problem, the government may well be creating another in another fishery. I have seen that happen with crabbing in the Hinchinbrook Channel. In many cases, the people who once were undertaking trawl operations but who have now surrendered their licences received compensation that was barely enough to pay off their debts. Those people still have a boat and some other equipment. They are now looking at making a living either by line fishing, crabbing or whatever it might be.

So in many cases there is a shift of effort. We cannot blame those people for that. They have to live; they have their houses to maintain and it would probably be very difficult for them to find other occupations. Some of those people are quite old. As a result, they have to try to make ends meet but at the same time they are making themselves unpopular with recreational fishermen. Of course, quite a bit of confusion is being created. So it could be that considerable damage might be done to these other fisheries in the interim.

I hold concerns about this trend. It illustrates the complexity of fisheries management. I ask the minister to explain to the House the known extent of this problem and what action, if any, he is taking to avoid any overfishing in these neighbouring fisheries. It is something that will have to be addressed.

I turn more specifically to the bill before the House. On each of the particular amendments, I offer the following comments. As the minister stated in his second reading speech, the most significant amendment broadens the range of management options available in fisheries management plans, such as the east coast trawl management plan 1999. As I have alluded to

already, there is perhaps no greater need than to ensure that fishery effort in all of Queensland fisheries is contained at an ecologically sustainable level. In doing that, the biodiversity and environmental integrity of our ocean resources can be maintained. The economic contribution of the fishing industry can be maintained, and even enhanced, through greater recognition in the market of the value of the resource and the viability of family fishing businesses and those businesses that depend on them to maintain their presence in the area.

Our tourist industry depends to a great degree on the provision of fresh fish, crabs and so on. It is important that we maintain the presence of the commercial fishermen so as to secure access to that produce. A lot of people come to the coastal regions of Queensland, particularly north Queensland, to fish for barramundi and mud crabs.

There has already been a significant reduction, in the order of 15 per cent, in effort in the east coast trawl fishery through the initial surrender of fishing licences. That has followed the wind back over the years in the ability of fishermen to fish as a result of operation restrictions and the closure of areas to trawling. Basically, the amendment will allow the further reduction of effort in the fisheries if that is deemed necessary. The pros and cons of the initial effort allocation aside, the proposal that such a reduction be made across the board on a pro rata basis—if it is found necessary—is perhaps the fairest method.

Many fishermen in the industry would not welcome the financial impact of any further reduction on that already made, but most fair-minded fishermen would agree that, if it is scientifically based, in the interests of sustaining the fishery and in their best interests, it may be necessary. However, while the opposition does not oppose the intent of maintaining a sustainable fishery, we do issue a strong word of caution regarding this provision and any future use of it.

Basically, this amendment saves the government from coming back to seek parliamentary approval for any further reduction of effort, so it does remove some ability for future decisions to receive appropriate public scrutiny. Therefore, it will be incumbent upon the government of the day to ensure that any decision to adjust effort in a fishery be based on scientific grounds, in full consultation with the fishing industry and the public and, importantly, with full regard for the financial impact on the fishermen and their families.

The human impact must never be neglected. While we have seen the Beattie government fund part of the initial round of restructuring under the east coast trawl plan, albeit by robbing the Department of Primary Industries of \$10 million that had not been budgeted for, we have also seen it neglect other Queenslanders when it is politically convenient to do so. The dairy farmers of this state are a case in point. Despite the fact that they have endured hardship every bit as severe as the commercial fishermen have suffered under the trawl industry restructuring, the Beattie government has refused to provide one cent in compensation or assistance to dairy farmers or their families to assist them in dealing with the impact of its decision to deregulate.

At least to some extent, this amendment asks us to trust the government to do the right thing by the fishermen. Quite frankly, on its track record so far, the opposition has legitimate concerns as to whether, in fact, the Beattie government can be trusted. One example that has already come to light is the release to fishermen on 30 April of a regulatory impact statement and draft fisheries east coast trawl amendment plan. Many fishermen have only just received this advice and some are yet to receive it because they have been operating at sea, but they have been asked to respond to the department by 24 May. They have just copped the introduction of the trawl plan and now they are expected to cop further amendments after just 24 days of so-called consultation. What guarantees do those fishermen have that, if they do bother to access the proposed range of further changes and offer their comments, those comments will be accommodated? Such is the rush job that it only adds to the widespread belief amongst fishing communities that once again the result is a forgone conclusion and the consultation process is a stage-managed sham.

How then can this parliament have any confidence that the government can be trusted with the power that this amendment will provide? As I have highlighted, the opposition and many in the fishing industry have considerable concern over the amendment. I ask the minister to take this opportunity to respond to the concern that a management plan may be adjusted by his department without proper checks and balances. What level of accountability, if any, will there be in any future use of the powers as provided by the amendments?

One of the arguments that the Beattie government used to sell its trawl plan to fishermen was that it could finally provide them with some security. As I alluded to earlier, fishermen have had to adapt to constant change over the best part of the last decade in terms of the rules under

which they operate, the areas they can fish, their catch size and the time that they can fish. The sum of much of this change has been the increasing difficulties that those fishermen now face in generating a livelihood and the growing levels of uncertainty, both in the industry and in those sectors in the wider community that service the industry.

Perhaps no more graphic examples of the demand that this uncertainty has caused has been the ageing of the commercial trawl fishing fleet and the banking sector's reluctance to support investment in the industry. The banks need confidence in an industry before they will invest in it, as do fishermen themselves. However, the uncertainty generated by the government has eroded almost all confidence in the industry. That uncertainty has held back the industry and will continue to hold it back until it is removed. Members can see that the promise of some certainty and security under the east coast trawl management plan held some attraction for many fishermen, yet changes are already planned through the just-released RIS for an amendment to the trawl plan, and here we are debating an amendment to the legislation which will allow the government, through the chief executive officer of the DPI, to further reduce effort in the trawl fishery without coming back to parliament for scrutiny.

Already the promise of security is being eroded and the certainty that the fishermen had hoped for and were relying on has not been provided. Of course, the effect is that new investment will continue to avoid the fishing industry. The banks will not back fishermen, the fishing fleet will continue to age and the productivity of the industry will eventually suffer. Equally as significant is the risk that this ongoing uncertainty poses to the government's east coast trawl management plan itself. While it promised security, to work the plan itself relies on security to a significant degree.

One of the key planks of the plan was its reliance on the trading of fishing licences or effort to retire further effort from the fishery. As the minister would or should know, when each licence is sold or effort is traded a portion of those effort units is retired under the plan so as to achieve the sustainability targets set by the state and federal governments. The point I make is that if there is continued uncertainty in the industry, and the banking sector and the industry itself are discouraged from investing in the industry, trading in effort will be curtailed as will the retirement of further effort from the trawl fishery. In effect, with this amendment the government is undermining its own trawl plan. The upshot of that is that we could well see the government forced into another laborious and dramatic carve-up of the fisheries as we have seen over the last couple of years with the development of the east coast trawl plan.

I would ask the minister: has he really considered the full impact of this amendment? What assurances can he give the House that his trawl plan and these amendments will provide the industry with the certainty it needs and the banking sector with the confidence it needs? What assurance can he give us that we will not have to come back and revisit the trawl plan? What assurance can the minister give us that fishermen will be properly consulted, that their views will be accommodated and that his government will protect their interests? Unless the minister can give us a solid assurance on these issues, the opposition will find it very difficult to support his actions.

The next of the major amendments in this bill relates to the very belated amendment of the spanner crab management plan 1999 to correct the department's mistake in the allocation of individual transferable quotas, or the ITQs, to two unfortunate licence holders. I express again the opposition's absolute disgust with the government's bungled handling of this issue, the delays that have gone on for nearly two years and the complete disregard this government has shown for those people who have been impacted upon. If ever a case study was needed to demonstrate the depths of ineptitude to which public administration can descend if it is allowed, then this is it. All I can say is: thank goodness the minister has finally got his act together and got this simple amendment into the parliament.

The amendment to section 124 of this act to allow the chief executive officer of the DPI to take action reasonably necessary to rehabilitate or restore land, waters, marine plants or a declared fish habitat area is one that will undoubtedly improve the current arrangements as far as the management of important fish habitats is concerned.

We will see situations where levee banks and so on are broken by cyclones. While people have to protect their crops—and I know that sometimes levee banks do protect crops—it is important that we have a mechanism to respond quickly to the needs arising from the destruction of property in the event of a force majeure occurring. From time to time, when we get cyclones, particularly in the north, it is necessary to act quickly. There was a case not too long ago of a

farmer in the Ingham district being taken to court because he acted before he got permission to go ahead with the work necessary to repair his levee banks. We have to have some mechanisms to deal with these quickly so that we do not see the inundation of property due to force majeure cyclones or whatever else may happen from time to time.

With the increasing development of coastal areas there is a corresponding increase in the pressure brought to bear on fish habitats, and the management of those impacts is a delicate balancing act. I acknowledge that and I am sure the minister does, too. The opposition supports these changes, but I take the opportunity again to point out the need to ensure balanced decision making in managing coastal development and the need to ensure that practical and necessary management practices are allowed within reasonable parameters.

One of the issues that I would like to raise is, as I said, drainage. We have got a coastal management plan. And although we are getting away a bit from the bill, I wish to mention this because it is an important issue in the Ingham district. Over time the coastal management plan is being developed and the Department of Primary Industries will be part of that. But I think commonsense has to prevail with respect to this plan, otherwise we will see enormous difficulties raised by people. There is SIIP money waiting to be spent, but we cannot get the planning done and, as a consequence, people are suffering.

The remainder of the amendments in this bill are fairly procedural in nature and the opposition has no objection to the passage of these. I would say, however, with regard to the amendment relating to the development of the management plans for the aquaculture industry, how important the opposition regards the development of this industry. Very quickly we are seeing substantial growth in the industry. Planning is necessary. We have to be mindful of the discharge waters from aquaculture ventures, particularly on the coast. This industry could be worth a billion dollars to Queensland. We have to enable the people who want to invest money to do so properly and get on with it. Some of these projects have been substantial. There is no doubt about that. But there is a realisation throughout the aquaculture industry that, although there is the prospect of making a fair return from it, they are also responsible for actions with respect to the discharge of water.

It is absolutely essential that, where investment occurs in this type of development, we be supportive of it. If we are going to restrict the taking of fish from the wild we have to substitute it with something else, and the aquaculture industry has an enormous capacity to do that. And that ranges through barra, crustaceans, clams and a whole range of other fish products that could be provided through the aquaculture industry. As I said, as many of our wild fisheries have reached their potential or in some cases have been exploited in excess of their ability to sustain catch levels, aquaculture will make an increasing and significant contribution to the supply of seafood products domestically and internationally.

As I said, the industry has enormous potential. Currently, the industry has to grapple with myriad authorities at all levels of government in the regulation of its activity and in the development of new ventures. On behalf of the industry, I call on the Beattie government to target the mass of red tape and cost that is holding back the development of this industry and the subsequent creation of a much-needed economic return and jobs for regional areas in the state as a whole. The aquaculture industry has a lot to offer this state, and it is up to the Beattie government to help realise that potential. In conclusion, I look forward to the minister's response to the issues I have raised.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (5.08 p.m.): I have much pleasure in making a few brief comments in support of the comments made by my colleague the shadow minister in relation to the Fisheries Amendment Bill. At the outset I support the comments that the shadow minister made in relation to the delay in dealing with this piece of legislation. Some members of the 49th Parliament—the parliament before the last election—had some doubt and scepticism about the reasons that parliament was closed down when it was, when this piece of legislation and so many others were on the list to be debated. The fact that this piece of legislation and most of the others have been introduced so early in this parliament bears out the doubts and scepticism that we had about why the parliament was closed down. The fact that we are debating this legislation today is in itself an illustration of the falsehoods and misinformation perpetuated by that callous move to close down the parliament when this legislation was previously on the list for debate.

As the shadow minister has indicated, we certainly support the concept of management plans that have integrity and that ensure sustainable fisheries. I think everyone in this House supports that concept. I think everyone in the industry and in the general community in

Queensland supports the concept of a well managed, sustainable fishery. I do not think there is any doubt that action needs to be taken to achieve a well managed, sustainable fishery in terms of all the commercial catches that are the basis of Queensland's fishing industry. Almost without exception achieving that is going to require a reduction in the effort that is involved in fishing those fisheries at the moment. Almost without exception every one of those fisheries is going to have to have a reduction in the fishing effort. That is going to mean that, without exception, people's livelihoods are going to be impacted upon and that the amount of money that individuals can earn from the businesses they have built up is going to be reduced.

There is a principle at stake here that needs to be reinforced today, and that principle is the reason that I chose to enter this debate. It is the same principle that applies in a whole range of other legislation—a whole range of legislation in terms of resource management that was introduced in the previous parliament by the then Minister for Natural Resources, who is now the Attorney-General. The principle has never been acknowledged by this government. It was never acknowledged by the then Minister for Natural Resources. It has not been acknowledged now by the Minister for Primary Industries. It has not been acknowledged by this government, but it is a principle which I will argue for and I will defend whenever I am in this place and whenever I get to speak in any forum in Queensland.

When a government makes a decision for the greater good which impacts on an individual's ability to sustain their business or to sustain their living, that government has an ironclad obligation to compensate those people. Sometimes it is necessary for individuals to be impacted upon for the greater community good, and in this case that is to reduce the effort they are allowed to make in the fishery to make their living—and we support that; the effort has to be reduced for the greater good, for the purpose of sustaining a fishery.

In the case of the legislation that the disgraced former Minister for Natural Resources introduced into this House, once again, there was an argument that individuals had to be impacted upon for the greater good. Whether or not that argument was sustainable and whether or not it was right is open for debate. But the argument was upheld simply because of the numbers in the House. In upholding that argument and in impacting upon those individuals, the responsibility to compensate them for their individual loss was totally ignored by the Minister for Natural Resources, as he was in that particular instance.

I implore this parliament today and I implore the Minister for Primary Industries, who I know is a fairer man than the disgraced former Minister for Natural Resources, today to recognise that principle of fairness and justice so that if individuals are going to be impacted upon for the greater good, if businesses are going to be impacted upon, or if what people rely upon for their living is going to be reduced or taken away from them, then we as a community have a responsibility to make sure that they are compensated. This legislation certainly has the potential to do that. In fact, to be successful, it has to impact on individuals and established businesses because the effort has to be reduced, otherwise it is not going to achieve anything. We have to reduce the effort that is being applied to fisheries that are unsustainable. We have to reduce that effort, and that is going to impact upon people—on families and on people who in some cases have been in that business for generations.

I am not arguing that that should not be done. As I said at the beginning, most fair-minded people support the concept of sustainable management of natural resources of all types. In this case most fair-minded people will support the concept of a sustainable fishery but, equally, every fair-minded person must support the principle of compensating those who suffer to achieve that. That was totally ignored by the former Minister for Natural Resources. I implore the Minister for Primary Industries today to make sure that he demonstrates to the people of Queensland that he has an understanding of the fairness and the justice that is implicit in the recognition of that principle.

It is worth putting on record today the importance of recreational fishing. I guess that is one of the reasons why every fair-minded person would support a management plan that guarantees a sustainable fishery. Recreational fishing is very important to a range of people from all parts of the socioeconomic strata. Recreational fishing presents great opportunities for quality family time together. An implicit part of the management plans for these fisheries should be the recognition of the incredibly important part that recreational fishing plays in the social fabric and the way of life of so many Queensland families. An important part of that recreational fishing industry is more and more the put and take fisheries of the inland impoundments. I have some great examples of that in my electorate.

Last weekend the Australian Bass Fishing Championship was held at Cania Dam, just north of where I live. It is a great fishing spot. I invite the Minister for Primary Industries quite genuinely—if he ever gets the chance to visit Monto and Cania Dam—to come with me. We will go fishing and I will ensure that the Minister for Primary Industries understands the great benefits—

Mr Purcell: You wouldn't be able to bait a hook.

Mr SEENEY: If I took the honourable member fishing, I would use him as bait, but even the fish would not take him.

I would like an opportunity to get across the enormous importance of these put and take fisheries. They are incredibly important. Cania Dam is not the only one. In my electorate there are the Callide Dam, Boondooma Dam and the Bjelke-Petersen Dam. They are great fisheries. As the fishing comes under more and more pressure on the coast, the importance of those types of fisheries increases proportionately. In terms of the state budget, they cost a pittance to maintain, but what they contribute to the way of life of the people who live in those areas and what they contribute to the economic activity in those areas in terms of attracting tourists and adding to other tourist attractions is something that cannot be underestimated. I have spoken about this subject in this parliament before and I take the opportunity of the debate on this legislation to speak about it again today.

I urge the minister to use whatever influence he has with the Treasurer in the upcoming budget negotiations to make sure that there is an adequate allocation in the budget not only to maintain these fisheries but also to expand them into other areas, because they are a great asset to the Queensland lifestyle. I hope that we can have some bipartisan support on that. If the price of that bipartisan support is taking the minister fishing, then I am quite prepared to pay that price any time at all. I extend that invitation to him quite genuinely.

I think I have made all the points that I need to make so far as this legislation is concerned. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the time.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.18 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Fisheries Amendment Bill. In the minister's second reading speech, he identified that one of the most significant effects of the bill is to broaden the range of management options available in the management of our fisheries. For the government's new method of managing our fisheries to be effective, it is imperative that the vessel monitoring system, otherwise known as the VMS or black box, operates with accurate monitoring of fishing boats by the authority.

Approximately three years ago, all commercial trawl fishing vessels were required to have a vessel monitoring system installed at a cost of approximately \$4,500. On 5 May this year, I spoke in this House about serious safety concerns that many fishing families have about the vessel monitoring system. Another real concern that many fishing families have about this system is that there is no accurate and effective transfer of all information between many fishing boats and the authority. I understand that some staff in the authority have privately agreed that 'dead spots' exist in fisheries and associated areas, which leads to inaccurate information being communicated to the authority. What concerns me greatly is that, while it appears that some staff in the authority agree privately that there are problems with the system, many fishermen do not appear to have a simple method of rectifying these problems with the authority. These problems are not new. I understand that the independent trawlers association, currently with a membership of almost 300 fishing families, shares these real concerns. In an attempt to highlight the seriousness of these simple concerns raised by the independent trawlers association, I intend to vote against this bill.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.20 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Fisheries Amendment Bill, I want to raise a number of issues that have already been raised with the minister in various venues. Because of the seriousness of the concerns of commercial fishermen in my electorate, these issues deserve to be raised again. In the minister's second reading speech, he said that changes have been made to the way the commercial fishing industry currently operates, including additional closures, by-catch reduction devices and turtle exclusion devices. There are other imposts on fishermen, and the previous speaker, the member for Nicklin, talked about VMSs. They have caused a considerable headache to commercial fishermen because they were demonstrated as beneficial to fishermen prior to their introduction but have failed to live up to those expectations and, because of that failure, have put fishermen's lives at risk in some instances.

Commercial fishermen affected by the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan have said to me and anyone who will listen to them that they have adopted and accepted the additional closures, the by-catch reduction devices, the TEDs and the VMS on the understanding that the survival of the fishery is paramount to the survival of their industry and their income. They have accepted those constraints on their industry. However, without exception, the commercial fishermen and their families in my electorate remain aggrieved by the process that was used to decide on the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan.

In his second reading speech, the minister talked about stakeholder working groups and consultation with the stakeholders and the fact that the consultation process went on for a number of years. At the end of last year, I attended a meeting of this industry at the Rocky Glen Hotel. I expected it to go from 9 o'clock in the morning until just after lunch. However, it went until 10 o'clock at night. There were a significant number of fishermen in attendance at that meeting, as well as representatives of the department. When confronted by longstanding concerns of the commercial fishermen in my region, particularly relating to night efforts, officers from the department said, 'This is a valid issue. You need to put that in writing for the minister's consideration.'

That answer was the same as the answer that these fishermen had been given two and three years earlier. I am not a commercial fisherman, but even I was frustrated with the answer, because they were not saying anything new. Two years down the track the same response was being given to them. In fact, a couple of fishermen became very irate because of the continued statement by a representative of the department who said, 'That's a very valid concern. Put it in writing and get it to the department.' I will not use the adjectives that they used, but the response was, 'We've been saying this for years and no-one is listening!' They still feel the same way.

I would not say that trying to adjudicate a reduction in any person's livelihood is easy; rather, it is very difficult. There is a big divide in the fishing industry between those who own larger vessels and those who own smaller vessels. The major grievance is the fact that fishing efforts during the mid-1990s are being relied upon to determine how the new night efforts are to be allocated. Smaller fishing vessels are constrained by things such as weather, and that in itself reduces the effort they can put into the industry. Larger vessels are not constrained as greatly by things such as weather. If it is being run by a contract skipper, the owner will want the boat out for a particular number of nights irrespective of the risk to the fishermen, to a degree. Operators of smaller vessels are dissatisfied with the fact that the final allocation was made on the mid-1990s efforts and no weight was given to a formula that would recognise the constraints on smaller vessels compared with larger vessels. They are still angry about that. Smaller vessel operators have said to me in meetings that they will accept, albeit begrudgingly, the night efforts if they have to but that it should at least be fair.

The fishing industry has also said that the QCFO, which was previously the organisation established to represent it, sold it out. That organisation, as the representative group, failed to convey to the minister the true concerns of the fishing community. I do not know how many phone calls my office has received—and I am sure the minister's office has also received many phone calls—relating to the disparity between the results of meetings up and down the coast, referred to by the minister, and the actuality that there was not consensus in the industry. Senator Hill has a lot to answer for in this process, and it is not positive. He has forced the hand of the state government in areas where the Commonwealth historically has not been involved. Because it has the big stick, it has forced the Queensland government to take measures that, for Queensland fishermen, may not be beneficial in the long term.

I echo the comments of the member for Callide—that is, it is in a fisherman's best interests that fishing habitats be sustainable and that the effort in the fishing industry be sustainable. A fishing family would cut their own throat if they did other than ensure the sustainability of the area in which they fish, because most of them pass on their licences to their sons. They have an interest in ensuring the sustainability of the fishing grounds. However, Senator Hill used part of a CSIRO report on fish habitat to flog the fishing industry in Queensland around the ears and failed to use the full report. That is a disservice to the fishing industry now and into the future.

The other issue I want to raise relates to the fact that this act will introduce a lack of scrutiny by this parliament of future changes to management plans that will affect the fishing industry. It is my understanding that the legislation will give a greater administrative role to the department and departmental heads whereas previously these matters, particularly changes to the fishing industry relating to the effort fishermen are able to give to that industry, came to the parliament for consideration. That is always a retrograde step. Because of the amount of work that most

members have to get through in a week, a month or a year, we often rely on matters coming before this House to ensure that we can alert members in our community to potential impacts.

The member for Callide talked about the recreational fishing industry and the sustainability of all fishing industries, and I endorse those comments. However, the least acceptable thing that can occur as a result of changes to this legislation is that in 10 or 15 years time Australia, a continent surrounded by water, purchases its fish and seafood products from overseas. That pattern is fast approaching if we do not recognise sound management of the fisheries in tandem with the essential nature of our fishing industry getting a fair go.

One of the anomalies I raise before I conclude is that, in our Queensland fishery, there are closures to which fishermen in my electorate must adhere. They cannot fish for six weeks, so people in the gulf, with gulf licences, come down and fish our areas during their closures. And then, when our closures are on, they go back and fish their areas. This is a source of infinite frustration for our fishermen, who do not have licences to go up north. These other fishermen do not have to sit out any closures. When their closures are on, they come down here; when our closures are on, they go back up there. If that information is wrong, I am sure that the minister will correct me. But at a meeting not two months ago, our fishermen raised with me the fact that the northern gulf fishermen are exempt because they have both licences; they more or less commute according to the fishing closures.

There is one other aspect I want to put on the record. Those of us on the non-government side are faced with a significant challenge in terms of understanding legislation as it is laid on the table. Peter Wellington and I previously had researchers, but they have been removed and that assistance is gone. It is a great disappointment when, at the ninth hour, what I presume are significant amendments are circulated in this chamber without any time being allowed for members to understand the magnitude of the changes—whether they are substantive or minor amendments that are being proposed. In relation to the amendments that have been circulated, I know that a couple of pages are just lists of licences. However, because of the lateness of the tabling, it is difficult to know what they will really do to the legislation. So I register my disappointment with the process that has been employed.

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (5.32 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I will go through a number of issues raised by various members, but in the first instance I will go through the relevant amendments to this bill and explain why the government is introducing them.

I will not dwell on some of the more nasty statements made by the first two speakers from the National Party, simply because it is just a matter of sour grapes on their part. At the end of the day, the way they carried on in the previous parliament was reflected in the recent election results, such that there are now 66 government members and 23 members on the opposite side. I will not dwell on that. It is not really my nature to do that sort of thing. I will get on to the real issues.

As the honourable member for Hinchinbrook has rightly said, this bill does make a number of amendments to our Fisheries Act—10 as a matter of fact. The most important of these is the one that the honourable members for Hinchinbrook, Gladstone, Nicklin and Callide discussed at length. That, of course, is the very contentious and controversial east coast trawl management plan. There is no need to go back over the history of the east coast trawl management plan. This issue has been around since about 1980. The plan has taken a heck of a long time to put together. On a number of occasions it almost reached the floor of the parliament but, through some means or other, it was always taken out. Last year, this government had the intestinal fortitude to work with the fishing industry to ensure that we put together a sustainable fishery plan that could become a model not only for other fisheries in Australia but also for fisheries worldwide.

I understand many of the concerns that have been expressed by honourable members opposite. I share their concerns. Of course, whenever there is a structural adjustment, when there is a reduction in effort, some people are going to be hurt. That is why the state government, together with the federal government, put in place a structural adjustment scheme. The federal government and the state government contributed \$10 million each towards this adjustment. Of course, the state government kicked in an additional \$10 million, to be made available to those people who wanted to access concessional loans.

In common with the members for Gladstone and Nicklin, I have dealt with members of the independent trawlers association quite regularly, and they have raised some very serious concerns with me. I believe many of their concerns were addressed, in that an additional 5,000

nights were set aside by the government in hardship cases. Those additional nights are to be decided by an independent tribunal.

Our only problem in this whole process has been that it has always been the Commonwealth government that threatened the unilateral implementation of legislative controls in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area, including restrictive permits for entry to the park and additional by-catch controls. In order to avoid this heavy-handed approach by the Commonwealth government, our government ensured that the amendments to the east coast trawl management plan were in place and operational by 1 January this year. As a component of this exercise, certain amendments to the Fisheries Act 1994 are required to provide for an across-the-board reduction in the cap on fishing effort as part of the new allocation system of effort units in the East Coast Trawl Fishery. A number of these amendments have been identified and should be made while the Fisheries Act is being opened to these other amendments.

The honourable member for Hinchinbrook spoke at length about the spanner crab fishery. He did raise a number of very important concerns and, of course, the government is addressing these concerns. The most important of these is an amendment to the act to facilitate the amendment of the Fisheries (Spanner Crab) Management Plan 1999 to allow for an adjustment in individual transferable quotas where further licence transfers have occurred and to ensure that the allocation of ITQ units occurs in accordance with the intended government policy position. The adjustment is to apply for license transfers where a change in ownership has been effected but where special circumstances exist such that the effective operation and control of the licences in question remains the same.

The honourable member also quite rightly mentioned that there are only two licence transfers that will be affected, but it is important that the rights of licence holders are protected whether there are two or 200. Whilst the amendments are retrospective, this can be defended on the grounds that the amendments will not detract from the rights of the licence holders and, indeed, will ensure that the intended outcome of the management plan is achieved without detriment to the parties concerned.

A number of issues were raised by various members. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook raised the issue relating to spanner crabs. I think I have explained to the House that there is no new adjustment to allocations already made. What I understand is actually occurring is confirmation of the allocations made in accordance with the intended policy, as I mentioned earlier. This will, in fact, provide certainty to spanner crab fishers and remove legal doubts about the validity of the allocation. Fishers were not stopped in conducting their fishing activities this year.

The other issue raised by the honourable member related to the trawl buyback scheme, which I understand affected a number of his trawl operators in the Lucinda area. The honourable member indicated that he has written to me in relation to some hardships that are being felt by a local small businessperson with the buy-out of those licences by the Queensland Fisheries Service. I have not seen the letter yet, but I will certainly make sure that I do see it, and I will correspond with the honourable member post haste. The honourable member raised a very valid point. Once we take a number of licences out of an area, the consequences can be quite devastating. From what the honourable member has said—and I believe what he has said—it is something that really needs to be looked at, and I will certainly do that. I understand that. The honourable member is a truthful person, and most of the time I do believe what he says.

I turn now to the member for Callide. It is a welcome change to see the honourable member for Callide being a very constructive person and contributing some substance to the debate. I would suggest that the honourable member, if he continues in this vein, might progress a little further than he did in the previous parliament. The honourable member did mention—

Mr Seeney: I always appreciate good advice.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I will always give it to him. Whenever he asks for it, he always receives some well-meaning advice.

The honourable member did discuss the issue of well-managed sustainable fisheries. That is what the east coast trawl management plan is all about. It does mean reduced effort. That is why we as a government have introduced the structural adjustment scheme.

Then the honourable member spoke at length on recreational fishing. I am very proud to be the minister who last year introduced the new Queensland Fisheries Service which, for the first

time ever, was able to have within its organisation a recreational fishing unit, which certainly caters for the needs of recreational fishers Queenslandwide.

As a minister, I have been passionate about recreational fishing. As a consequence, the new Fishing Industry Development Council will meet for the first time next week under the capable chairmanship of Linda Lavarch. I am quite sure that the advice that we get from that council will go a long way to assisting the government in being able to formulate further far-reaching fisheries initiatives.

The honourable member for Callide is a passionate person when it comes to recreational fishing, especially recreational fishing in the inland areas and especially when we talk about some of the dams and the impoundments that the honourable member has in his electorate.

We all know how important recreational fishing is along the eastern seaboard, but just like the honourable member opposite I am of the opinion that we have just turned the corner in encouraging recreational fishers to turn their cars away from the coast towards the inland and take advantage of the great freshwater fishing that is available to us throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, whether it be outside of Warwick or Toowoomba, or around Monto—all across the state. The recreational fishing is first class. If we can educate our recreational fishers to enjoy freshwater fish, that will open up more opportunities for our aquaculture industries to produce fish in the inland for consumption by people who live in the cities. That is what the government is doing.

Last week I was in Richmond with the honourable member for Charters Towers. We opened a new trial aquaculture centre. I believe that at the end of the day that will be a marvellous initiative for Richmond, together with the tourism that it brings and the cotton growing. The same thing is being done by the government in Longreach. There are more aquaculture trials and developments there.

We are also supporting a very good cotton grower in Dalby, Paul McVeigh. He really is a leader in his industry. He is using aquaculture in his own ring tanks to produce fish. He has a vision—a dream—and at the end of the day if he can achieve an extra million dollars per year out of his fish from his ring tanks, good luck to him. I certainly hope that not only cotton growers in the Dalby area but also people in other areas will follow him.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Yes. Finally, the honourable member for Callide has invited me to visit Monto. I intend to go there as soon as I can because—just to digress, Madam Deputy Speaker—I believe that his electorate and the Monto area, although it is undergoing dreadful times now with the closure of the milk processing plant and so on, holds the potential for pork production. I will certainly be working with the member to see if we can achieve some results for the Monto area. I do not know whether we will go fishing together when I do go there—I presume we will—but I certainly hope that the honourable member does not produce a leaky boat.

The honourable member for Nicklin spoke with some passion about the independent trawl association. I can understand where he is coming from. No matter where I as minister met with the independent trawl association the member for Nicklin was always there supporting it.

I think as a minister and as a government we have done a heck of a lot to address some of the concerns of the independent operators—the small trawl operators, the small family operators. We have tried our best and I do not think there is too much more that we can do to assist them. I say the same to the honourable member for Gladstone, who has also been a very strong supporter of the small family operators. With those few words, I would like to thank all honourable members for their contributions.

Question—That the bill be read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 76—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Copeland, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, Edmond, English, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hayward, Hobbs, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lingard, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, Male, Malone, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Quinn, Reeves, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Rowell, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Seeney, Sheldon, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Watson, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Lester.

NOES, 8—Flynn, Hopper, Kingston, Lee Long, Pratt, E. Roberts. Tellers: E. Cunningham, Wellington.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Committee

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) in charge of the bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr PALASZCZUK (5.57 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 4—

At page 4, after line 14—

insert—

'(1A) Section 4—

insert—

' "renew" an authority (other than a permit) includes the renewal of a former authority made because of an application under section 56(2).'

2 Clause 4—

At page 4, line 15, after 'definitions'—

insert—

', as amended by this section'.

The government moves an amendment to clause 4 of the bill. Clause 4 creates a dictionary of defined terms used throughout the legislation. The amendment will amplify the existing definition of a renewed authority so as to include an authority renewed under section 56(2) of the act as amended by this bill.

It is intended to allow fishers to apply for authorities on the same terms as recently expired authorities in certain circumstances. If the application is granted, these authorities will be regarded as a renewal of the former authority rather than as a new authority. This amendment is necessary to ensure that an authority renewed under this process falls within the meaning of the term 'renew' as defined in the dictionary created by clause 4.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I rise to acknowledge what the minister has just said, although it was a bureaucratic explanation. It is still unclear what the impact of that amendment will be. I again register my disappointment at the lateness of the amendments.

Mr SEENEY: I want to place on the record my support for the sentiments that have been expressed by the member for Gladstone. During the second reading debate, the shadow minister and I spoke about the length of time this legislation has been on the Notice Paper. We have well and truly discussed the length of time that this legislation has been in the formulation stages. It is quite incomprehensible to me how we can come into this parliament at this stage in the debate and have this many amendments presented by the minister.

I do not know whether these amendments are worthy of support or not. We had from the minister a straight-out reading of some bureaucratic gobbledegook that I did not understand. I challenge anyone else in this chamber to stand up and explain in simple English what the minister said in his explanation of these amendments. I defy anybody to do that. I did not understand it, and I do not think I am that stupid. What I do think is stupid is for the minister to come into this place with this legislation after all this time, after this tortuous process, and to put on the table a series of amendments and be so stupid as to expect us to rubber-stamp them. That is stupid and it should be condemned by everyone. It should not be accepted as the norm and it should not be allowed to happen without any comment.

I fully endorse the comments that were made by the member for Gladstone. She is absolutely right. These amendments are an indication of a government that cannot control its own business. These amendments are an indication of a minister who cannot get the legislation right, even given the length of time that this piece of legislation has been in the preparatory process.

It is simply unacceptable to ask us to consider these amendments in the way in which they have been presented to this chamber. I place on record my support for what the member for Gladstone said. I challenge the minister, in the opportunity that he will get in the consideration of these amendments, to stand up without the briefing note that has been supplied to him, without the bureaucratic nonsense, and look me in the eye, look the member for Gladstone in the eye, and explain to us what these amendments are about. If he does that, then we may support the amendments.

Mr LESTER: I put on record my disgust at amendments such as these being introduced in this fashion, especially following the debacle that we saw in only the previous sitting week when an amendment to the industrial relations bill was rushed into the House. I can understand that, from time to time, amendments to bills must be moved, but surely to goodness it would be an act of courtesy to at least give the opposition parties plenty of notice that amendments were coming. In that way, our people would have sufficient time to discuss and digest them.

Quite obviously, this government is unable to cope, it is inept or it is arrogant—probably a combination of all three. I put on record that this sort of behaviour really has to stop. It is not good enough. The government has been given a large majority and it is starting to treat this House as a place where it can do what it wishes and to hell with everybody else. It is not good enough. I ask the government to wake up.

Mr ROWELL: I support what has been said by members on this side of the House. This is an absolute disgrace. While making my contribution to the second reading debate, the amendments were slipped under the lectern that I was using.

Mr Palaszczuk: Isn't that normal practice?

Mr ROWELL: The minister should let me have an opportunity to speak. No, it is not normal practice. Previously, the amendments were distributed well before the debate came on so that everybody had a full appreciation of what was going on. These are the new rules of the new Queensland government. The people opposite are becoming extremely arrogant. They are doing exactly what they like. They berate us and tell us that we are not doing the right thing when we speak on bills, yet they have brought in a whole range of amendments—about five pages altogether—that we have to go through and hope to understand and comprehend. Is this what the new government of Queensland is all about?

Mr Welford: Oh!

Mr ROWELL: 'Oh!', he says, with a big yawn. The fellow opposite is a big sook.

It is important that we raise these issues if this is how parliamentary sessions are going to be conducted, with amendments coming in at the eleventh hour, even as the shadow minister is speaking. It is not as if this bill is a new bill. It was introduced before the proroguing of the last parliament. We have seen a lot of this legislation before. Why did the government not adjust the legislation in accordance with what was necessary? Why did it take a matter of only two weeks for adjustments to occur from the time it was introduced? Of course, the bill rose from second from the bottom of the agenda to second from the top.

The minister has made every effort to confuse the opposition, with the intention of having this amending legislation passed. That is an absolute disgrace. We need to take this issue to the committees that are involved in deciding how we conduct parliament so that the opposition can get a better deal. Yes, we are thin on the ground; yes, government members have said that we have been naughty boys; yes, we are a small number of people. However, I assure the minister that we will have our day in this parliament. He should make no mistake about that. The sort of rot that is going on with the implementation of legislation and the introduction of amendments at the last minute—in fact, even as the process of debate is occurring—is totally unfair and unreasonable.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—

Mr ROWELL (6.08 p.m.): I would like the minister to give us a full explanation of what the management plan may deal with, because certain examples are given of the way that changes will occur from time to time. The whole essence of this legislation was to create some certainty in the fishing industry. If, once again at the eleventh hour, we are to make changes that impact on the management of the fishery, I hope that they will be minimal changes. I would like some guarantee from the minister as to the intention of clause 9 of the amendment bill. I could go through and read out sections of the amendment, but instead I ask the minister to explain exactly what the intention of the clause is. I would very much appreciate that explanation.

Mr PALASZCZUK: All this basically does is extend the terms of the management plan by introducing paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d). But the most important part is (e), 'for their cancellation

or suspension or for how the chief executive may cancel or suspend them'. That is the crux of the matter. The others are just additions to the management plans there.

Mrs SHELDON: This has been an issue in my electorate as well, and I am sure the minister is aware of that. There is some genuine concern amongst some of the trawler operators about their livelihood and what will happen. I share the concerns about what those changes would be, and I hear what the minister said, but could he be a little more specific as to what changes he thinks may need to occur in the future and when that would be likely to occur?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Basically, this is getting at the reduction of the effort within the trawl fleet. That is all it is. I think the honourable member hinted at that when she spoke previously.

Mrs SHELDON: Yes, I appreciate what the bill is about, what the trawl management plan was and why it was being put in place. But my concern relates more to changes that may occur in the future—as I understand it, a provision that this amendment makes—and what those changes could be. There must be some envisaged or this amendment would not be put in the bill. When would they be likely to be put into place?

Mr SEENEY: I think the minister deliberately or otherwise has completely missed the point of the concern expressed by the shadow minister about this clause. The point is, once again, the extent to which in relation to this piece of legislation consultation has taken place with industry, the tortuous process by which this legislation has arrived at this House and the tortuous process from which these management plans will be derived. On first reading, clause 9, about which the shadow minister has expressed concern, at least gives the chief executive basically the power to change anything. So why go through the process? What was the point?

The argument that is being put forward to justify this whole process is that it is to give the industry some surety and to give the people involved in the industry some security. On a layman's interpretation of clause 9, there is no security or surety if everything is at the discretion of the chief executive. Paragraphs 3(c) and 3(d) state that the chief executive may cancel or suspend, amend, renew or transfer. The chief executive may do anything he likes. That is the point on which we are seeking clarification.

Mr Palaszczuk: You'll get that on clause 10.

Mr SEENEY: The minister will get his chance to clarify this. I note he did not take the chance that he had before to clarify his amendments. I put that on the record. He did not take the chance—and yet he wants to interject on me—he had earlier when he had 10 minutes to explain his amendments. The best he could do was read the note that the bureaucrats wrote. The best he could do was read the bureaucratic gobbledegook that he did not understand and that nobody else understood, either. The minister will get his opportunity.

I am reinforcing the point made by the shadow minister that that is the concern. I repeat: the concern is that the security and surety that the industry seeks, deserves and has been promised as a result of this whole tortuous process seems to be contradicted by clause 9. That is the point we are asking the minister to respond to. That is the point that, as minister, he should be able to stand up and respond to.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Quite simply, if we look at paragraph (e), 'for their cancellation or suspension or for how the chief executive may cancel or suspend them', that will occur only after consultation with industry. All this clause is doing is giving the head of power. In relation to the chief executive in paragraph (e), that can be done only after consultation with industry. It is as simple as that.

Mr ROWELL: I hear what the minister is saying. But it really does not say that. It does not talk about consultation. I cannot read that into it. There is an intent there in relation to the cancellation of issues and conditions, whether they can or cannot amend, renew or transfer, if they can be amended, renewed or transferred, and conditions for the amendment, renewal or transfer. Those conditions are critical to fishermen. They are the people putting their money up front, spending money on diesel and a whole range of other items—for example, motors—and yet the chief executive officer can cancel or suspend these conditions. That seems pretty harsh. It does not mention consultation. I think that is a bit of a by-line that has been thrown in.

There may be good intention to do it, but the minister may not be the minister at the time when something goes wrong and the chief executive officer says, 'We will go out and cancel these licences. We won't allow transfers and a whole range of things to happen which are important to those people who are operating the trawlers.' That is what I am concerned about. Although the minister might be a good guy to deal with, the problem is that the legislation does

not reflect the intention that he is putting into it. It does not talk about consultation. Where is it mentioned there?

Mr Palaszczuk: Look at section 39, 'Amendment of management plan'.

Mr ROWELL: We will deal with 39 after. That is in the next clause.

Mr Palaszczuk: That is your answer.

Mr ROWELL: We are going to go through the whole damned process again if we look at proposed section 39, which states 'prepared a draft amending management plan and taken reasonable steps to engage in consultation'.

Mr Palaszczuk: That is what I'm saying.

Mr ROWELL: Yes. But goodness gracious, in this section we are going to say, 'Look, fellas, if we don't like it'—

Mr Palaszczuk: That is the head of power. Section 39 explains to you what the chief executive has to go through.

Mr ROWELL: But I do not want to take section 39 out of context with the rest of what is in this. I really cannot speak on clause 10 until we get to it, either. I believe what the minister is proposing is certainly very draconian for the industry. After all the problems it has gone through we are going to have another round of talks.

Primary industries people and fishermen in particular are getting fed up with the talk process. They want some certainty. We supported the second reading speech, although it was not the most popular thing to do. A lot of people have been affected. I have spoken with the independent trawl association. It is not happy with the distribution of the nights that it receives. I understand that. The minister is not going to please everybody. I want to take a responsible attitude to coming to grips with what is needed to be done for sustainable fishing. That is why I supported the second reading speech. The minister has thrown the whole damned thing in, with additional amendments to clauses 4, 10, the spanner crab fisheries and so on. It gets to be pretty heavy going.

Mrs SHELDON: I have two specific questions for the minister. Under this clause, can the chief executive cancel a licence and effect a licence? Also, in relation to the minister's claim that consultation would occur with the industry, will that consultation occur with the specific licence holder or just with the industry body?

Mr PALASZCZUK: The chief executive cannot cancel a licence. It has to be within the management plan. So he cannot cancel a licence.

Mrs Sheldon: But you have given him power to change the plan.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Yes, that is right.

Mrs Sheldon: So effectively I cannot cancel the licence consequent thereof.

Mr PALASZCZUK: You cannot cancel the licence.

Mr SEENEY: I have to place on record my deep concern. It is a concern that arises every time I hear anyone from this government say that something will happen only after there has been consultation, as though that consultation in itself will guarantee a fair result. I have seen the results of the consultation. I have seen the process of consultation that this government goes through. They are experts at it. They are good at it. They go out there with a preconceived result and they get together a group of people and they go through this little charade, this process, with these very clever management people—the spin doctors. At the end of the day after they have filled in a whole heap of butchers paper and worn out a few felt pens, they end up with the same result that they went there with in the morning. That is the sort of consultation that everybody in Queensland is starting to recognise as being characteristic of this government.

It is an absolute joke for the minister to stand up and say that the concerns that I and the shadow minister expressed are groundless and that we should not worry about it because there is going to be consultation. Anybody who has seen any of those consultation processes, anybody who has seen the way those processes are manipulated and the way they are controlled and managed by people who, I concede, are very good at it, and anyone who has seen that process in action and has come to recognise it as a characteristic of the Beattie Labor government will share my view that it is a joke to suggest that anyone should be reassured by the guarantee of consultation. What rubbish! That is just not going to wash with us and it is not going to wash with the people out there in the industry.

We supported this bill in the second reading debate. We supported it because we believed, as the shadow minister said, that directionally at least it is the way to go. However, it is causing a degree of angst to a lot of people in the industry. It is causing a degree of quite understandable angst. The people in the industry have been sold this whole process on the basis that it is going to give them security, that it is going to give them surety. Yet we have in this clause—clause 9—something which seems on any reasonable reading to threaten that security and surety.

When we raised that concern here in this Committee, which is the right and proper place, to seek reassurance that the clause does not threaten the surety and the security that is the very basis of this whole process, what did we get? We were told, 'Don't worry about it. There will be consultation.' That is an absolute joke! We know what consultation means. The fishing industry knows what consultation means. The dairy farmers know what consultation means. Every industry in Queensland that has been through this process knows what consultation means. It means you get shafted by some clever people who come up from the city with butchers paper and felt pens and you get manipulated and shoved into some result that you never wanted and you did not understand. You go through some sort of a process that they teach people out at the university about people management and group dynamics and all the other clever little techniques that are used to get the result that the government wants. All the members opposite know that that is the process. The member for Mansfield knows it. Look at him sitting there smirking. He knows full well how these processes can be manipulated and how these results can be obtained.

I say to the minister very genuinely that to see him trying to reassure us by standing up and saying that he is going to consult with the industry worries me more. I am more worried now than I was before he responded. I am more worried now than I was before he started to explain clause 9. When the shadow minister raised it, I expected an explanation from the minister. I expected a pretty straightforward explanation of what the facts are so that we could be reassured and we could continue to support this legislation. To hear the minister stand up and try to reassure us with a promise of consultation and say, 'Don't worry about the very tenets of this whole process being threatened by clause 9 because there is going to be consultation,' leaves me cold. I think the minister should do better.

Question—That clause 9, as read, be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 62—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, Edmond, English, Fenlon, Foley, Hayward, Hollis, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

NOES, 23—Bell, Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 10—

Mr PALASZCZUK (6.32 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 10—

At page 7, after line 10—

insert—

' 10A Amendment of s 56 (Application for renewal of authority (other than permit))

'(1) Section 56—

insert—

'(1A) Also, a person may apply to renew an expired former authority if—

(a) the person held the former authority immediately before its expiry; and

(b) the application is—

(i) for an authority of the same type, and on substantially the same terms, as the former authority; and

(ii) made within 3 months after the expiry.

'(1B) However, the chief executive may, at any time, extend the period for applying to renew an expired former authority.'

'(2) Section 56(2), 'The application'—

omit, insert—

'An application under this section'.

'(3) Section 56(3), 'holder'—

omit, insert—

'applicant'.

'(4) Section 56(1A) to (3)—

renumber as section 56(2) to (5).

' 10B Amendment of s 58 (Consideration of application for renewal of authority (other than permit))

'Section 58—

insert—

'(3) If the application is an application under section 56(2) to renew an expired former authority and the chief executive decides to renew it—

(a) the chief executive must fix the term of the renewed authority from the day after the former authority expired; but

(b) the renewed authority takes effect only from the day the renewed authority is issued.'.

Clause 10 will amend section 56 of the act by introducing a statutory grace period in which applications to renew expired fishing authorities may be made. Many management plans for Queensland fisheries prevent the issue of new authorities to commercial operators. This is often a critical means of securing the ecological sustainability of those fisheries. However, the government recognises that some of these fishers may inadvertently fail to apply for their renewal before the expiry date or by the end of the term of their current authority. For example, they could be at sea for a long time and be unable to get back to reapply for their authority. This amendment will allow a grace period of three months in which applications from holders of authorities which have expired will be accepted as being applications for the renewal of that authority.

In addition, there will be a general discretionary period to allow applications outside of that period. The amendment provides that the application must be made by the same fisher, be for the same type of authority and be made on substantially the same terms as the expired authority. This amendment will ensure commercial fishers are not excluded from earning their livelihoods due to an oversight in managing their own business affairs.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: In addressing this amendment, I have a question relating to clause 10B(3), which states—

If the application is an application under section 56(2) to renew an expired former authority and the chief executive decides to renew it—

So an authority has expired and presumably the person has applied within three months of its expiry for it to be renewed. The principle being espoused is sound, because many fishermen do get caught out at sea and it slips past them. The clause goes on to state—

(a) the chief executive must fix the term of the renewed authority from the day after the former authority expired; but

Say it expired yesterday and I apply in two months time. I assume the renewal document will show tomorrow's date. The clause goes on to state—

(b) the renewed authority takes effect only from the day the renewed authority is issued.

If I am right, on paper at least it takes effect two months after the day that it was renewed.

This parliament often deals with retrospective legislation for curative purposes, that is, because there has been a legislative oversight. Decisions have been made by either this parliament or departmental officers or actions have been taken by individuals in the belief that they are covered legislatively, and we pass retrospective legislation to cover the period when the action was taken to ensure that no illegal action is undertaken and therefore there are no repercussions for the individual. I may misunderstand it, but it appears to me that if, in two months time, I renew this authority, it will be backdated two months. But there is a two-month gap before the authority is approved on paper, and the amendment says that it will not take effect until then. I want to know why there is that contradiction.

My second question relates to the bill. It may be covered by this amendment, but if it is I cannot find it. Section 39(2) of the bill states—

... subsection (1) does not apply if, under the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 ... a regulatory impact statement is not required to be prepared for the amending management plan.

Is there something in the amendments just moved by the minister to address subsection (2), because historically RISs have been carried out on a lot of legislation? The vast majority of departments excuse themselves under some obscure interpretation of the Statutory Instruments Act so that very few RISs occur. Is the minister saying that if an RIS is required, even though there is an exemption that can be manufactured under the Statutory Instruments Act, the consultation has to occur? However, if it can be exempted under either the direct act or some interpretation of the act, will that consultation then not occur?

These amendments will affect fishermen. They affect the basic tenet under which they operate, that is, their authority to operate. I do not understand some of the minister's earlier comments in which he more or less brushed aside the concerns of the members for Callide, Hinchinbrook and Caloundra by saying that nothing can occur without consultation. I know about the consultation that occurred on the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan. Fishermen in my electorate just about became mental cases because they were talked to but ignored. That frustration is going to transfer into administrative arrangement powers given to directors-general to significantly impact on whether a fisherman can operate, where he can operate and how that fisheries resource is managed. Yet the minister is saying it will not affect the fishermen. I would be interested in the minister's response.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The member for Gladstone raised a couple of issues. In the first instance, she referred to amendment 10B relating to the amendment of section 58: 'Consideration of application for renewal of authority (other than permit)'. Her specific queries related to (3)(a) and (b), which state—

... the chief executive must fix the term of the renewed authority from the day after the former authority expired; but

(b) the renewed authority takes effect only from the day the renewed authority is issued.

I take it that the member's concern is about what happens between when the authority expires and when it is renewed again and whether in fact that term is validated.

Mrs Liz Cunningham: There is a gap.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I am talking about the gap.

Mrs Liz Cunningham: Yes. What has happened to that?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Well, the authority is to be taken out on a certain date. What the government is doing here is giving a period of grace of up to three months for the fisher to renew the authority. However, under the terms of the act—this has happened previously—we cannot validate that term between the expiry date and the new date of issue. That is what this is saying.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: In that case, I have to object strenuously to it. The minister's explanation for putting this in was a very practical one—that fishermen get caught out on their boats. They might be out for the period the authority expires, slip straight over the top and two months later say, 'Struth, my licence has expired. I better see if they will let me renew it.'

The minister is saying that the government will allow a three-month grace period but says, 'By the way, it will be renewed from the day after it expires but it will not take effect until the day you wake up to it and it is actually processed.' On the basis of what the minister has already said, his expectation is that the fishermen have been out there fishing. Are they going to get prosecuted for two months of illegal fishing? With the gap that paragraph (b) creates, there will be a situation whereby the fishermen can be prosecuted for illegal fishing. That is nonsensical. The premise for the clause is sound. It allows for oversights because of the nature of their business. Paragraph 3(b) is unsound because it leaves the fishermen vulnerable to prosecution for an oversight that the minister has already recognised in this amendment.

Mr PALASZCZUK: At the end of the day, fishers do need to take some responsibility for their action. At the end of the day, if this subsection is not included in the act it will be very difficult for the fishers to be able to renew the same licence they had previously. That is the whole point behind it. We are giving them some grace—three months in fact, plus a bit more in exceptional circumstances—but the commercial fishers really have to take some responsibility for their actions. We are going to validate their authorities, but we cannot validate them in the period of time between when the authority expires and when they take out the new authority.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I am sorry, but we have on numerous occasions in this chamber done exactly that. We have validated retrospectively actions taken by people when for a period of time they were acting external to legislation. That amendment could operate very effectively, achieving what the minister is intending to achieve, if (3)(b) were left out. Paragraph 3(b) contradicts the logic of what the minister is doing. If he wants to make fishermen responsible for renewing their licences on time, then—I say this with some caution—he could add a cost penalty to a late renewal. But he should not say to them, 'For the period of time that you forgot to renew we will give you the licence, backdated to the appropriate date, but you will have a period of time during this grace period when you did not have a licence for the fish you have caught and sold.' They potentially will face a penalty. If the minister is using paragraph 3(b) as a big stick to wipe out the validity of the rest of the amendment, then that is a tragedy. It is a legal stick that will cause a

lot of fishermen a great deal of heartburn. The minister should impose a cost penalty; he should not impose a penalty that includes prosecution.

Mr PALASZCZUK: As minister I am not going to move away from subsection (3)(b). Let me just explain it this way.

Mr Johnson: Do you understand it, Henry?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Let us look at the transport act. Of course, the member for Gregory would know quite a deal about the transport act. Let us say a person is late in renewing their own driver licence. It is the same thing. It is just a standard provision that is within the transport act in relation to late licence renewals. There is no difference between this provision and the transport act in relation to late licence renewals. I think the member for Gregory would agree with that.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I have to disagree with the minister, because the only time a driver who renews his licence late is at risk of the same sort of reaction as these clauses will generate is if he has an accident during the period that his licence was not valid. Because this is a fishing industry bill—the minister has already acknowledged that the majority of the fishermen are going to forget to renew their authorities because they are probably out on the water—they are doing precisely what will put them at risk of prosecution. The driver licence analogy is only accurate where the driver has some sort of an incident occur during the period that the licence was invalid.

Mr Palaszczuk: I take your point.

Mr ROWELL: We have been through some of the processes governed by clause 9. The whole intention of the east coast trawl plan is to give the industry some certainty for a period of time. There were not going to be changes. The industry thought it could settle down and go ahead with some reinvestment. It needed the backing of its financiers for that to happen.

I think it is important for the buyback scheme to include the buying back of other licences and the renewal of boats and gear that were in a state of disrepair because of the fact that the industry was getting to the point where the fishery was getting exhausted. That is part of the reason it was supported to a large extent by the industry. The whole process of night issues is another matter I do not really want to go through.

Members of the opposition have talked about section 39 of the act and the consultation process. We have been consulting with the industry since 1980. Are we going to go through the same rigmarole again? Is there any need to go through that type of a process? In relation to the RIS the government is giving fishermen from only 30 April to 24 May to respond. Apparently it is all right to go on ad infinitum with the butcher's paper and all the rest of it, but when it comes to fishermen having some input they have to respond within a month. They are given very little time.

We need to get investment back into the industry. We need better boats and better gear. Of course, we can talk about the by-catch reduction devices and the VMSs, which the minister wants to take credit for, but I know damned well where they all came from.

Mr Palaszczuk: You can take the credit for the VMSs now.

Mr ROWELL: When it gets a bit sticky, give it the flick. The minister and the Premier do that all the time. The point is that they were mechanisms to improve the fishery. I know that we worked very hard in the short time we were in government. In fact, I know that we even supported the industry to the extent that if they wanted to improve the by-catch reduction devices a grant was given to enable them to travel overseas to do exactly that. We as a government were absolutely determined and responsible to improve the fishery.

The minister has tried to explain the government's amendment to clause 10. Some concerns have been raised by the member for Gladstone and there are some technical issues relating to the licences. We are concerned that we will not get the security that we wanted so badly, that we will not get the new boats being built, that we will not get refinancing. There are big investments to be made. Sometimes it is half a million dollars, sometimes a million dollars and sometimes even more.

What the minister has done with clause 10, and certainly with clause 9, has made the industry concerned that another process is starting up again and that they will be put through the wringer once again, after all the trauma they have gone through over the last 20 years. That is what concerns me very greatly. From talking to industry people I know that they are extremely concerned about it. They thought they had some security. They thought this was a positive step by the government. Money was being invested both at state and federal level to the tune of \$20 million. They also forewent some of their nights because they did not have the capacity to pay the

\$10 million. That was a very exhaustive process that caused a lot of trauma. Yet here we will reinvent the whole damn thing and there is a likelihood within a very short period—it does not provide any time period in which the consultation process may occur and the butcher's paper and so all this will go on again without doubt within a very short period. I cannot say that, but we can only surmise if it has been put into legislation there is an intent to do it again soon. The industry does not want it. It wanted that security, and that security was promised if they would support the conditions of the east coast trawl plan.

Mr SEENEY: I want to place on record my support for the comments that have been made by my colleague the shadow minister, but I also want to pursue the line of argument that the member for Gladstone pursued. I do not think the minister responded adequately. I think the member for Gladstone has highlighted an issue in these amendments which is very valid.

Can I say that this is one of the results of having such amendments dropped on the table of the chamber at this stage of the debate. It is clear from the minister's response that even the minister does not understand what these amendments mean. I think the member for Gladstone has, to her credit, identified something that warrants explanation. In the very short time that has been available to all of us she has identified something that should be explained, that should be clarified, before these amendments are rubber stamped through the Committee.

It is regrettable that these amendments get dropped in here with the clear expectation that nobody will object to them, that they will just go through the House—bang. The government has the attitude, 'And if they do object, well, we'll use the majority that we've got and all these dumb backbenchers up here will vote for us whether they understand it or not and it will just go through.' That is not the right attitude. Irrespective of the size of the majority that a government has, irrespective of the mandate that a government has, every minister has a responsibility to come into this House and to subject his legislation to the scrutiny of the House. That is what this place is for. That is why we are here.

The member for Gladstone has raised a very valid point about clause 10B(3)(b). I think that the minister has a responsibility to provide some explanations. He said that he took the point of the member for Gladstone. Does that mean that clause 10B(3)(b) will be withdrawn? I would recommend to the minister that that would be a wise course of action, to stand up and say that he accepts the argument that has been put forward by the member for Gladstone and he withdraws clause 10B(3)(b) from his amendment.

That would be a clever thing to do, but I fear that he will not do that. I fear that he has just accepted the argument that has been put forward as a way of wriggling out of any further scrutiny of this particular issue. It is an issue that deserves further scrutiny because, as the member for Gladstone said, we still do not know whether the minister intends to prosecute those people who have been fishing without a licence for a month or two months or theoretically three months. They could have been fishing for three months without a valid licence. Then when they go to get their licence, their licence is validated from that date forward. But are they going to be prosecuted for the activities that they undertook for the previous three months? If not, why not validate those actions in the issue of the licence? Why not validate those actions by issuing the licence from the date that it expired?

We need an explanation. We need to know why there is that seeming double standard there. As the member for Gladstone quite rightly pointed out, in this House we pass retrospective legislation to validate past actions that we accept as being legitimate. It is probably the only reason we should ever consider retrospective legislation, but we do it, and quite rightly so.

Why isn't the minister prepared to do it in this case? That is the question that has been left hanging. That is the question that the minister has not been able to respond to simply because he does not understand the amendments that he has been sent in here with, simply because he does not understand what these amendments entail. He does not understand what these amendments mean because of the way this whole process has been approached and because of the contemptible and arrogant way that this whole process has been conducted, because of the contemptible and arrogant way that parliament itself is being run by a government that is obviously becoming arrogant and contemptible towards the responsibility that it holds to the people of Queensland.

Before I can support this amendment, I want an explanation from the minister. I want a reply to the valid points that were raised by the member for Gladstone. That is not too much to ask. That is not being unreasonable. That is ensuring that this House fulfils its purpose. It is ensuring

that the legislation that comes in here under the control of the minister is scrutinised and explained in a reasonable way.

If we do not do that, then every one of us is failing in the job that we have, every one of us is failing the people who elected us, and I am not prepared to do that.

Mrs PRATT: The member for Gladstone made a very valid point. The member for Callide has recommended what he believes should be done. I would like to directly ask the minister whether, having taken the point—as he said he did—will he withdraw that section of the legislation?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Let me just say this: first of all, there is criticism of the Department of Primary Industries for overconsulting. This amendment bill—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. That comment was obviously aimed at me.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr SEENEY: I find it offensive. That was not what I said. The minister is deliberately and knowingly misleading the House. I find that offensive.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Callide to resume his seat. There is no point of order. I call the minister.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Some people have very glass jaws. The issue was raised by a couple of members on the opposite side in relation to consultation—overconsultation. I do not take a backward step from that. The government consulted widely with industry on this amendment bill and the amendments. That is why these four amendments are here today—after consultation with industry.

Let me just clear up the issue that was raised by the member for Gladstone. Industry has agreed totally with this amendment. At the end of the day what we have to decide is whether we are going to allow our fishers to fish without a licence.

Question—That the minister's amendment be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 62—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, Edmond, English, Fenlon, Foley, Hayward, Hollis, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves.

NOES, 22—Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

Mr PALASZCZUK (7.04 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 19—

At page 11, lines 1 to 8—

omit, insert—

' 19 Insertion of new pt 11A

'After part 11—

insert—

' PART 11A—SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CERTAIN MANAGEMENT PLANS

' Division 1—Fisheries (Spanner Crab) Management Plan 1999

' 223A Definition for div 1

'In this division—

"part 10" means part 10 of the plan.

"plan" means the Fisheries (Spanner Crab) Management Plan 1999.

' 223B Additional eligible licence

'(1) The primary commercial fishing boat licence numbered QFV09644J is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible licence under part 10.

'(2) The first holder of the licence after the notification day under the plan is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible person under part 10 in relation to the licence.

' 223C Additional reported catch for certain eligible licences

'For part 10, a reference to the reported catch under each eligible licence as follows for a stated period is taken to also include, and to have always included, the reported catch for the period under each previous licence stated opposite the eligible licence—

Number for eligible licence	Numbers for previous licences
QFV10865K	QFV01253J
QFV11507J	QFV10072B and QFV08595B
QFV11812E	QFV10489B and QFV08428J
QFV10956H	QFV09486B and QFV09257F
QFV08370D	QFV10151F and QFV05045H
QFV10419A	QFV12373K and QFV06656G
QFV10521J	QFV10487F, QFV09438B and QFV09315G
QFV10587B	QFV12000F and QFV08654A
QFV12292K	QFV11891E and QFV09583D
QFV10829D	QFV12300E, QFV10797B and QFV06128J
QFV12531H	QFV08218J
QFV11660B	QFV11921K, QFV11783H, QFV06895K, QFV11577K, QFV11306I and QFV07819K
QFV11803F	QFV10857J and QFV00664E
QFV11689K	QFV12419B and QFV07768B
QFV11928H	QFV12152E, QFV10459K and QFV09879E
QFV10846D	QFV10309H and QFV08685A
QFV10038B	QFV10740I and QFV07883B
QFV12223H	QFV12093F, QFV09839F and QFV07516G
QFV10472H	QFV12566K, QFV12128B and QFV06285E
QFV10873A	QFV12350A, QFV11856G and QFV06669I.

' 223D Changes to ITQ formula for certain eligible licences

'(1) This section changes, for certain eligible licences under part 10, the figure '0.5' in the formula under section 91(1) of the plan.¹

'(2) The change is taken to apply, and to have always applied, for the licences.

'(3) For the eligible licences numbered as follows, the figure is changed to '1.0'—

- QFV10865K
- QFV11507J
- QFV11812E
- QFV10956H
- QFV08370D
- QFV10419A
- QFV10521J
- QFV10587B
- QFV12292K
- QFV10829D
- QFV12531H
- QFV11803F
- QFV11689K
- QFV11928H
- QFV10846D
- QFV10038B
- QFV12223H
- QFV10472H
- QFV10873A.

'(4) For the eligible licence numbered QFV11660B, the figure is changed to '1.5'.

' 223E Application of s 94 of plan to certain eligible licences

'Section 94 of the plan² is taken to apply, and to have always applied, to the eligible licences under part 10 numbered QFV10865K and QFV11689K.

'Division 2—Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 1999

' 223F Additional eligible licence

'(1) The primary commercial fishing boat licence numbered QFV08424G is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible licence under the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 1999.

'(2) The first holder of the licence after midday on 15 December 2000 is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible person under the plan in relation to the licence.

' Division 3—Miscellaneous provisions

' 223G Part does not affect amendment of management plans

'A provision of a management plan mentioned in, or affected by, this part may be amended by an amending management plan.

' 223H Expiry of pt 11A

'(1) This part expires the day after it commences.

'(2) This part is declared to be a law to which the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, section 20A³ applies.'

' 19A Insertion of new pt 12, div 3

'Part 12, after section 238—

insert—

' Division 3—Transitional provision for Fisheries Amendment Act 2001

' 239 Validation of renewals of expired former authorities

'(1) This section applies if, under former section 58, a fisheries agency renewed, or purported to renew, an expired former authority (other than a permit) that expired before the relevant renewal application was made.

'(2) The renewal, or purported renewal, is taken to be, and to have always been, validly made under this Act whether or not it could lawfully have been made under former section 58.

'(3) In this section—

"fisheries agency" means the chief executive or the former Queensland Fisheries Management Authority.

"former section 58" means section 58 of this Act, as in force from time to time before the Fisheries Amendment Act 2001 commenced.'.

1 Section 91 (Formula for amount) of the plan

2 Section 94 (Adjustments for transfers from 1990 to 21 January 1994) of the plan

3 Acts Interpretation Act 1954, section 20A (Repeal does not end saving, transitional, or validating effect etc.)

This amendment relates to a number of issues. First of all, the government has moved this amendment to clause 19 of the bill because the amendment inserts a new part 11A, which contains special provisions in relation to the spanner crab management plan and the east coast trawl management plan.

In relation to the spanner crab plan, the clause inserts a new section 223A, which states that section 94 of the management plan, which provides for an adjustment of a reported catch in special circumstances, is taken to have always applied to the two particular eligible licences under the management plan. As was the intention of the original bill—the amendments to the management plan—the purpose of these amendments is to ensure that the initial policy objectives of the plan are achieved. These amendments also ensure that there is a high degree of certainty and a continuum of established management—both necessary ingredients that underpin the success of the fishery.

Since the introduction to the chamber of the Fisheries Amendment Bill 2001, it has become apparent that some inadvertent administrative errors occurred when the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority allocation of individual transferable quotas to fishers under the management plan was made. These have been identified through the general administration of the management plan and in the course of conducting a series of fisheries tribunal matters. That is why this bill has received the priority that it has today. It means that the rectification of ITQ allocations is now an urgent matter, as the fisheries tribunal has directed the Queensland Fisheries Service to remake the decision to allocate under the management plan before 1 June 2001. Without these amendments, a number of licence holders will be adversely affected. It is a priority to ensure that these fishers are allocated units in accordance with the intended and considered policy of the government. For those licences the subject of these amendments, the Fisheries Amendment Bill 2001 will represent surety that their intended allocation is guaranteed. Importantly, the amendments do not remove appeal rights for the remaining individual licence holders in respect of an eligible licence's reported catch.

Secondly, in relation to the trawl plan, the clause inserts a new section that declares that a certain licence was eligible to receive an allocation of effort units; an allocation was made to the holder of this licence under the trawl plan. Unfortunately, at the relevant date, the licence in question had technically expired. This retrospective amendment will ensure that the allocation made to the licence holder is valid. This conforms to the original intent of the trawl plan and ensures that the licence holder is not disadvantaged due to what is essentially a technicality.

Also, clause 19 inserts a new division 3 into part 12 of the bill, which concerns certain transitional matters. It has been the administrative practice of the Queensland Fisheries Service, as it was the practice of the former QFMA, to accept applications from holders of authorities that have expired as being applications for renewal of the expired authority. However, in a strict legal sense, there may be questions as to the validity of renewal applications made after the expiry date. To put the matter beyond doubt and to avoid an overly bureaucratic approach to the licensing of fisheries, the government has moved an amendment to clause 10 of this bill that will introduce a statutory grace period in which licence renewal applications can be made in respect of expired authorities.

To ensure that there is no room for uncertainty in relation to authorities previously renewed in these circumstances, new clause 239 will work in concert with clause 11 by providing that renewals approved in the past by the QFS or by its predecessors were validly made. Basically,

what I am saying is that clause 19 attends to a number of irregularities that had occurred through drafting and so on in the previous plan.

Mr ROWELL: It is totally unreasonable that the minister has put all of these amendments together in this new section 223A. I do not know how, for goodness' sake, we can ever check out what the minister is saying. I believe in all frankness that the minister is probably doing the right thing, but it is a serious issue. There were some difficulties in relation to two of the licences.

First of all, on page 11 of the Fisheries Amendment Bill we have the insertion of new section 223A, which relates to two licences. Now, all of a sudden, it appears that the whole lot of them are there. Is that what the minister is saying? At this time, I have no mechanism by which I can check out what the minister is saying.

Mr Horan: Pages and pages of it.

Mr ROWELL: There are six pages altogether. Is this the way that the minister will introduce amendments in the future? How in goodness' name is the opposition to deal with issues of great importance if this is how the government is going to conduct the committee stages of parliamentary debates? The first I saw of these amendments was when I sat down, having made my contribution to the second reading debate. A couple of others spoke, although virtually nobody from the government spoke. The opposition and the Independents now have to go through these amendments and hope to goodness that we have it all right.

The minister is asking us to trust him when he made a mess of it before. A couple of licence holders missed out. They had to wait for a considerable period because the minister did not introduce the bill last year. Now he comes up with a whole range of amendments, a lot of which are retrospective, and we have no way of checking what he says. This is totally unreasonable. The minister is saying to the opposition and other members in the House, 'Trust me. We're doing the right thing. We mucked it up before, but we'll fix it.' That is great. But in all fairness to the opposition, the way that this has been done is totally unreasonable.

The bill came on unexpectedly, although we always have to be ready for legislation. We are not complaining about that. It sat on the table of the House for the required time—it just got through, and that is all. Then, of course, we had to look at the first amendments that were given to us. It is the role of the opposition to check those out. However, how can we possibly have a proper understanding of these amendments when we are presented with six pages of numbers, knowing full well that, in the past, errors have been made. We have no real opportunity to check it.

What the minister is doing is totally unreasonable. I would like to make sure that that is placed on the record of the parliament. This government, with its large majority, is becoming absolutely arrogant about the way that it presents—

A government member interjected.

Mr ROWELL: If the government is not arrogant, what is it? Why has it done this?

Mr Palaszczuk: It has to be done before 1 June.

Mr ROWELL: Why did the minister not present this two or three weeks ago? Why wait till now to introduce it? What is going wrong with the mechanism involved in the drafting of legislation? It was drafted back in November last year and was presented to us. Six months have passed since then. Because of the way that we have to do things here, it looks as though the government introduces things and we have to cop it. Is that what is happening?

The government has the hide to say, 'It is the same old National Party, responding to legislation in the same old way.' What does it really want from us? Does it want us to be reasonable? We supported the minister during the second reading debate. We thought that he would listen to what we had to say about the amendments that have been brought in. He is creating uncertainty for the fisheries. The last thing that people want is to invest money when they are unsure for a short period about their future. Tomorrow, when the legislation is passed, the minister can make changes to the east coast trawl management plan. How do those people go to their banks and say, 'We want another half a million dollars to refurbish our gear' or 'We want \$1 million to buy a new boat,' when we are reducing the effort in the fishery? That is the intention of the legislation. The minister can change that. Now changes are being made that will affect the spanner crab fisheries.

Previously, mistakes have been made; yet we have to accept what the minister says. I find it pretty hard to do that. I am not being derogatory about the minister himself. I am simply saying that the way that this legislation has been presented is an absolute disgrace.

Mr HORAN: I wish to comment on this issue. We have set out to be a responsible opposition and to address these issues accurately. However, it is becoming all too common that these sorts of amendments are being dropped in our laps after the shadow ministers have spoken. For example, at the last sitting of the parliament a substantive change was made to the industrial relations legislation. This place was used like a dirty doormat, and the government's arrogance was absolutely unbearable. With the industrial relations legislation, the government came in and rammed stuff through without providing any notice whatsoever. It was not part of the bill. It was a substantive change to the amendments.

In this case, the amendments were suddenly dropped in the lap of the shadow minister as he was making his contribution to the debate. When one looks at the pages and pages of licence numbers and the numbers for previous licences and so on, it is only reasonable that the shadow minister wants to do a good job, check it all out, ring someone, make contact and ensure that he knows what the industry's point of view is. Then the minister says whatever he wants to say and the shadow minister can question him. That has not been done tonight.

My point is that this place is being run like a cowboy outfit. If we are not being held to ransom with a pair of six guns, as we were over the industrial relations legislation at the last sitting, we are faced with an administrative oversight resulting in pages and pages of amendments. The minister has hundreds of staff members. All the ministers have been given all the staff in the world. The Premier's department is chock-a-block with everything that he could want, yet the government still cannot get it right. If we are not careful, Queensland will end up with a parliament that is run like amateur hour—a cowboy outfit—or used as a bullyboys' yard to ram things through at the last minute, as happened with the industrial relations legislation.

I make the point tonight that this parliament represents the people of Queensland. Shadow ministers have put in some time, some decent effort and some genuineness in the way that they approach these issues so that they can represent their constituents properly. Speakers like the member for Gladstone and other independents who have spoken in this debate want to speak with accuracy. We want to do that fairly on behalf of the people we, as the opposition, represent. When substantive changes are made or, in this case, when massive administrative stuff-ups get dropped in our laps—pages and pages of them—we are not given the chance to fix them up. I am not necessarily directing this at the minister. As the leader, the Premier is the boss. He should start to see that this place functions properly, that departments run properly and that this place is treated with a bit of respect.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: In rising to speak on this amendment, I seek some clarification from the minister. The amendment deals predominantly with spanner crab licences. However, page 6 refers to the east coast trawl management plan and clause 223F—additional eligible licence. There is one licence number: QFV08424G. I ask the minister: who operates under this licence? Is it a small family operator or a large major trawler?

Secondly, clause 223F(2) validates that the first holder of the licence after midday on 15 December 2000—about six months ago—is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible person'. That is a huge retrospectivity. Why is the depth of that retrospectivity needed? Why is it not just backdated to 15 December 2000?

On page 7, proposed section 239 is headed 'Validation of renewals of expired former authorities' and goes on to validate actions taken by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority. I have not had time to check, but the QFMA changed to the QFS at the end of last year—about six or eight months ago. So the minister is validating actions taken by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority six or so months ago. The minister is validating that action and saying that the renewal, or purported renewal—this explains the clause that gave three months grace or whatever; the department made a mistake—is taken to be, and to have always been, validly made under this Act whether or not it could lawfully have been made under former section 58'. Please explain to us why this one licence holder under the east coast trawl management plan has got such largess from the department. Is it a small operator or a big operator?

Mrs Pratt: Who are they?

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: And who are they? Secondly, why did that validation have to be always valid? This is not just backdating it to when the licence was issued after midday on

15 December; it is always. Why was that necessary? What other mistakes have been made when validating decisions and actions taken by the QFMA when it became the QFS about six months ago?

Mr PALASZCZUK: The honourable member has raised some important issues. I really thought that I explained them earlier on. In relation to this licence holder that the member has referred to, basically what happened was that an allocation was made to the holder under the trawl plan. Unfortunately, at the relevant date the licence in question had technically expired. Therefore, we had to put in this retrospective amendment to ensure that the allocation made to that licence holder is valid. This basically now conforms to the original intent of the trawl plan and ensures that the licence holder is not disadvantaged due to what is essentially a technicality. We have to put an amendment through to validate that allocation to that licence holder.

Mr ROWELL: Previously, did not section 223A do exactly that? I am speaking about the earlier amendments. Do these new amendments apply to every trawler? I am confused. I do not understand why all of those others have had to be listed. Weren't these the trawlers that were in question—QFV10865K and QFV11869K? Are they the trawlers that had the difficulty or is it one? What does it mean? Could you explain?

Mr Palaszczuk: No, I won't.

Mr ROWELL: You can't?

Mr Palaszczuk: I won't.

Mr ROWELL: You won't explain?

Mrs SHELDON: I think this raises rather grave questions. Firstly, why had the licence expired? Whose fault was it that it had? Why isn't this House being told who this licence holder is? Exceptional provision has been made for him/her or this body. Can other licence holders in the future who find their licence has expired and they may not now come under their allocated provision expect similar treatment in this chamber? It is quite unusual to say the least.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I take it the minister is not intending to identify who that licence holder is?

Mr Palaszczuk: I will take it on notice and I will let you know tomorrow. All right?

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Except the bill will have been passed. I would be interested to know who it is. I would appreciate the minister advising the Committee who that licence holder is. I would also like clarified in proposed subsection (2) why it is being validated retrospectively past midday on 15 December 2000. It says the first holder of the licence after midday on 15 December is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible person. So there has been a licence name change. It changed on 15 December and now the minister is saying that whoever took over on 15 December is going to be deemed to have always been an eligible person. Why is that necessary? The other question that has not been answered yet is why the QFMA is having decisions validated when the QFMA ceased to be an entity some time ago and the QFS took its place. It talks about the expiration of licences and relevant renewals. You are validating this, but not too long ago you would not retrospectively for two or three months validate licences that were expired and renewed after the date of expiration. You are validating the QFMA's actions in much the same way.

Mr PALASZCZUK: In relation to 15 December, for the benefit of the honourable member I point out that that was the date when all effort units were allocated in the management plan. The other issue the honourable member raised was in relation to the QFMA. The QFMA is mentioned here for one reason. That is because the spanner crab management plan was made by the QFMA, but now we have the QFS. That is why the QFMA has been mentioned.

Mr ROWELL: Under the new amendments to division 2, on page 6 there is an additional eligible licence. The primary commercial fishing boat licence No. QFV08424G is taken to be as having always been an eligible licence under the fisheries management plan. That does not line up with the licences that I see here—QFV10865K and QFV11689K. Why are these people getting an additional licence? I thought the department had a difficulty through not doing the right thing by this group some time ago and this was the reason for the retrospectivity that is being brought into it?

Mr Palaszczuk: I have been informed that it is not an additional licence at all.

Mr ROWELL: But that is what it says here—'Additional eligible licence'.

Mr Palaszczuk: The explanation for that is quite simple.

Opposition members: Stand up.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The answer to that is quite simple: it is not an additional licence. That is the way Parliamentary Counsel had requested that it be drafted.

Mr ROWELL: They use a different language to us, it seems. Really, they must be using—

The CHAIRMAN: The member has spoken three times on this amendment.

Mr Rowell: Somebody else might like to take it up.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure somebody can.

Mrs SHELDON: I think the point raised by the shadow minister is very valid and I do not see why Parliamentary Counsel would be advising words that seem pretty clear if in fact that is not the true meaning of the words. An explanation does need to come from the minister on this. I am also very concerned that he has said both to myself and the member for Gladstone that he can inform us tomorrow who the licence holder is, yet I guess very shortly this amendment is to be put to the Committee and will be won on the government numbers even if we vote against it. I believe that is unacceptable in parliamentary practice in this chamber and I ask the minister: will he adjourn the debate on this bill until he can give the Committee an answer to the question that has been very legitimately asked?

Mr SEENEY: I would like to support the comments that have been made by the member for Caloundra. I think that debate on this legislation should definitely be adjourned. It would be quite improper for the minister to proceed with this legislation any further. He has quite obviously been unable to answer in this House the most basic of queries.

This is legislation that is very specific. These amendments that have been tabled in this House tonight contain some very specific references to individuals, groups or who knows what. We are entitled to know who these particular benefits are being handed out to or what effect these particular amendments are having on individuals, businesses or whatever. We are entitled to know those things. The suggestion that has been made that the debate on this legislation be adjourned is a very valid one.

We certainly have not had an explanation of the validation that is contained in this particular amendment that the minister has put before the House. The minister refused point-blank in a most unbelievable way to explain the reason why he was not prepared to give that validation to the holders of fishing licences in the previous amendment, even though he was asked the question by a number of people on this side of the House. He was given a number of opportunities to explain why that validation was not available, why the holders of those particular fishing licences were going to be left in a position in which they were subject to litigation for the activities that they carried on.

I think in this particular amendment we have a situation that is somewhat similar. I have had only a very short time to read this and, like every member of this House, I am struggling to understand it. I know that the members of the government backbench are all struggling to understand it as well. They are all studying the amendments, trying desperately to get their heads around the detail of this and what it means. Perhaps some of them might like to stand up and explain it to the House. Perhaps some of them might like to get up and explain this validation provision and why it is proper to have it in this amendment when the minister could not explain it in the previous amendment. Perhaps the member for Fitzroy, who has been here for a while, could get up and explain this to the House, because obviously the minister cannot. That is the reason why this legislation should not be forced through this House in an arrogant way tonight.

The question has been raised quite validly by a number of people who are representing constituents who have an obvious interest in this legislation. The members on this side of the House are representing constituents who have a very obvious interest in what this legislation means. They are here representing their constituents, trying to find out what effect this legislation is going to have on them. That is our job. That is what we are here for. But we have not been able to get those answers.

We were prepared to support this legislation. We did so in the second reading debate in a spirit of genuine cooperation because we believed in the direction that this legislation was taking the fishing industry and we believed in those principles that are behind that direction. When we see a series of amendments forced into the House at this late stage—slipped onto the desk, as the shadow minister said, while he was making his speech to the second reading debate—it calls into question whether or not we should continue to support this legislation.

But it gets worse. When we stand up here and very genuinely, one after another, question the minister about what these amendments mean, about what effect they will have and about who these amendments refer to, we cannot get an answer. What sort of representatives would we be if we did not ask these questions when we see an amendment that refers to a whole list of licence numbers, when we see another amendment that refers to two specific licence numbers and when we see two amendments that are apparently in complete conflict with respect to the concept of validation of past actions? We would be pretty poor representatives. What sort of a minister is it who cannot answer those questions? What sort of a minister is it who makes no attempt to answer those questions—no attempt at all? The answer is obvious. It is a pretty poor minister.

What sort of legislation is it that does not make that information clear and available not just to this parliament but to the whole of Queensland? It is pretty poor legislation. This legislation has been on the Notice Paper for six or eight months. It was on the Notice Paper in the last parliament before it was unceremoniously closed down. It has been on the Notice Paper in this parliament. It has been shoved up the list without any explanation as to why and it has been saddled with a whole series of amendments that no-one can explain to this House. Given all that has happened here tonight, the suggestion that has been made by the member for Caloundra is the only one that can save the government any face at all. It is the only course of action open to this House if the Minister for Primary Industries is going to have any integrity left at all. I congratulate the member for Caloundra on the suggestion she has made. It is the only option open to this House.

Debate on this bill should be adjourned until these answers are available, until the questions that we have quite legitimately and properly asked here tonight can be answered. Each and every question that has been asked has been asked from a genuine basis, and not one of them has been genuinely answered. We have had the minister stand up and read some bureaucratic notes and gobbledegook that he quite clearly does not understand. He quite clearly does not understand the words that he is reading. Nobody else has been prepared to support him. Even with all these members that the government has, the loneliest man in this House tonight is the Minister for Primary Industries. He sits over there completely unsupported. Nobody is prepared to get up and support the minister. He is the loneliest man in this parliament tonight. He has been abandoned by all his colleagues. He has been sold a pup by the departmental people who sent him in here unprepared and obviously not understanding the legislation, expecting it to just go through because we had at that stage indicated that we were going to support it. We were prepared to support it because its direction was right.

But the whole thing ran off the rails when the minister slipped in five or six pages of amendments that cannot be explained, that the minister does not understand and which he makes no attempt to explain to this House. It is worse to sit there and refuse to try to give an explanation than to stand up and be unable to do it. At least if the minister got up and tried to explain and tried to answer the questions that have been asked by the member for Gladstone and the shadow minister he would earn some respect from this side of the House and from his colleagues. But he has not done that. He sits there, shakes his head and says, 'I won't explain.' He did not say, 'I can't explain'; he said, 'I won't explain.' It is an indictment on the approach that this government has taken to its legislative program that we have come to this tonight with this piece of legislation.

Unless the minister takes the opportunities that are available to him from this point forward to explain some of these issues, to answer some of these questions, the only valid course of action open to this House is to adjourn the debate on this legislation.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (7.38 p.m.): Mr Chairman, I move—

That you do now leave the chair, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

During the discussion here tonight there has been a very genuine effort by members on this side of the House to address this very important fishing issue. We have noticed that not one of the 66 members of the Labor Party has had the courage or the interest to stand up and speak on this very important issue, despite the fact that Labor has members representing electorates up and down the coast on the waterfront.

We have had these seven or eight pages of complicated amendments dropped in our lap. There is a genuine desire on this side of the House to do the right thing by this bill and to scrutinise it properly, honestly, openly and accurately, but we cannot. Every time we ask the

minister a question on something that is not in the notes, he looks at us like a stunned mullet and says, 'I will get back to you tomorrow,' or something like that. That is not doing the right thing by us. Legitimate questions were asked to which people wanted an answer. If we were to make a decision tonight on how we vote on these particular amendments, we needed answers. It is too late to receive the answer tomorrow if that answer would have influenced us to vote another way for whatever reason.

If we are to do the right thing by the fishing industry, we need a proper explanation of these issues. Some of the amendments to this legislation have been brought to the House at the last minute. The minister is able to get information on some of those issues tonight. In relation to other issues, our people could contact people in the fishing industry to get some answers. It might be that this situation could be resolved in five minutes in the morning with just a little bit more information. However, at the moment we on this side of the House are not being treated right. We want to argue the case correctly and accurately for the fishing industry. I cannot believe that all these amendments have been dropped into the House tonight when this bill was first brought into parliament in November last year; its passage was interrupted by the election. There have been months and months and months to get the administration right. It is six months since November, and still they cannot get it right! At five minutes to midnight they drop pages and pages of licence numbers on our laps.

The shadow minister raised the issue of additional eligible licences. First the minister said they were not additional, then he said they were and then he said it was Parliamentary Counsel speak. We just want an accurate answer to these issues. If this motion is carried tonight and we come back at 11.30 in the morning to debate this legislation again, it might be all finished in 10 or 15 minutes. This House has an obligation to accept this motion and ensure the proper principles relating to the running of this parliament and to ensure that we can get the information we need to deal with the legislation accurately. We can deal with it properly tomorrow and make the right decisions as to how we vote on it.

Question—That the Chairman report progress and seek leave to sit again—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 23—Bell, Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg

NOES, 61—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Foley, Hayward, Hollis, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I have one final question to the minister on proposed new section 223F relating to additional eligible licences. The minister has given an undertaking that he will advise the parliament tomorrow as to the holder of QFV08424G. That is too late, but nevertheless it would still be advice. I have a question to the minister for clarification. Proposed new section 223F(2) states—

The first holder of the licence after midday on 15 December 2000 is taken to be, and to have always been, an eligible person under the plan in relation to the licence.

The allocation of the effort of the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan was on the basis of the fishing history of either the vessel or operator in a period in the early 1990s. Is it the case that the current licensee who took ownership of the licence after 15 December 2000 was not operating during that assessed period—that is, in the early 1990s—or the vessel was not operating then to have effort assessed for the purpose of effort units being allocated to them? Is that why the amendments retrospectively validated the licence holder well past the transfer date of the licence? If it is not, what is the reason for the extended validation past the period when the licence was transferred, apparently on 15 December?

Mr PALASZCZUK: It was an oversight by the Queensland Fisheries Service. This is a correction to a problem because the Queensland Fisheries Service had not issued the allocations. That was basically it. Because his licence was not valid when it was originally issued, this amendment corrects an oversight created by the Queensland Fisheries Service.

Mr HORAN: I want to make a final comment on this clause. We have come here today in good faith. A heap of amendments have been dropped in our laps at the last minute. We purposely moved the motion that the Chairman report progress to the House in order to get proper explanations in the morning and new information from the minister to enable the shadow

minister to check that everything is right. We were considering voting for this amendment in good faith. We have received so many mixed messages from the minister. He is prepared to give us certain information tomorrow.

Had our motion to report progress to the House been passed, I think we could have solved the whole issue. We would have known exactly how we should vote tomorrow morning and we could have dealt with things in that manner. In all honesty, we cannot vote on something about which we cannot get the right explanations. I have before me a note that states there has been six months to prepare administrative oversights, yet the administrative oversight has been found halfway through the afternoon on which we are debating the bill, and the first bill was introduced to the House six months ago! We cannot cop that sort of amateur treatment of this House and Her Majesty's opposition. For that reason and that reason only we will be voting against this, because we have to have the information in order to make the right decisions.

Question—That the minister's amendment be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 60—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Foley, Hayward, Hollis, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

NOES, 22—Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 and 21, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (7.59 p.m.), by leave: I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (7.59 p.m.): I am extremely disappointed with the way this debate has turned out. As I indicated, we came here with the full intention of supporting the legislation. There were things we were concerned about, with the variety of amendments. Of course, we received a whole host of amendments which I, quite honestly, did not comprehend fully. I think it is an indictment on the government that it brings legislation forward in this manner and that it goes about pushing it through parliament with the massive majority it has.

It does not give me any great joy not to be supporting this legislation. I know that there are some hooks and barbs for the people who have to deal with the legislation—people who have lost some of the effort they had formerly, who feel they were unjustly dealt with. We want to see some security for the industry. We want it to be able to continue without any further intrusion by government. We thought we had got to a point where the industry knew exactly where it was going for some time, but the amendments put forward certainly cast some doubt on whether that was going to occur.

I cannot recall whether some of the amendments we have opposed were in the legislation when it was presented to the House. Whether they were or not is immaterial in light of what we saw today. The minister brought along some amendments and said that that was what we would be dealing with, and then at the eleventh hour a whole range of other issues came through that we could not get a reasonable explanation of.

I think it is incumbent on the government in the future, if it wants cooperation from the opposition, to deal with issues in a different manner. If it is going to amend legislation it should try, for goodness sake, to get it right the first time and not have another massive go at it later on—that causes us a great deal of difficulty in comprehension—and be prepared so that we are not sitting here trying to go through legislation at the last minute in order to make some rational comments on it. So for that reason I am extremely disappointed with what has happened here tonight and I just wanted that recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.02 p.m.): I would like to support my shadow minister in speaking to this matter. It is a pretty serious issue when this parliament gets treated the way it has been treated today. We saw another example of that in the

last sitting week when the government passed substantial amendments relating to the Industrial Relations Commission.

We came here today to accurately debate this issue. We came here in good faith. In his speech, the shadow minister has gone through the problems in detail. We voted for the second reading. We knew there were some prickles and problems, but we felt that on balance the legislation was endeavouring to do the right thing by the fishing industry, by the fishermen and by everybody who has been through the long process. Funds have been made available for compensation and it was working towards something for the common good.

Then we come to the Committee stage. We got all these amendments dropped in our lap at the last minute. As I said previously, this legislation was in the House back in November. In all that time the government could not get the administrative stuff-ups, or whatever else it was that the minister made excuses for, right until about 3 o'clock this afternoon when they dropped the amendments in our laps after our shadow minister had actually spoken.

It is about time that the members of the Beattie government started to realise that parliament is an important place. It is not a kids' sandpit; it is a place where we are dealing with very important issues for the state. We are dealing with the fishing industry, one of the major industries of the state. The people involved in that industry work so hard on their boats in all sorts of weather with their winches and all their heavy tackle and gear. They all have debts for their gear and mortgages to pay off, and they have to pay for the replacement and maintenance of equipment.

It is an important issue. This is an industry that covers the length of our vast coastline, yet when we come to deal with these important amendments we get them at the last minute, which means that they cannot be properly scrutinised by our people and that we do not have the time to ring up people in the late hours of the night or late afternoon to try to find out what the six or seven pages of licences, replaced licences and additional licences and everything else mean.

The minister says that he will explain one issue tomorrow once the bill is passed. I do not know why he cannot tell us tonight. Generally speaking, we cannot get any further explanation than the one paragraph written by one of the bureaucrats. That is the limit. We have had that for the last three years. The minister has had three years of experience. We want some detailed explanation of these issues from the minister, not just something out of a book or something that has been typed up for him by the people in the department.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr HORAN: The additional eligible licence, which is dealt with in proposed new section 223—we did not find out what that was.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition is being repetitious.

Mr HORAN: I will get to the point because it is important. I do not want to go over and over it. I think it is a very important point to make.

Mr Speaker—and this is important for you because you sit there as the elected head of this parliament—let us make this place work properly. Just because you have got a huge majority, do not start to treat us like dirt because you will find us a bit tougher to work with than you think. We will not wear that sort of treatment. There is a lot of strength over here, a lot of determination to do things right, and we are going to do it right. All we ask for is a little bit of respect. We represent the people of Queensland as much as government members do. It is time that this parliament had amendments presented in a timely fashion, particularly complicated amendments, and particularly amendments that substantially change legislation.

We can understand a typing error or two or some other little minor change; that is fair enough. But we need an adequate time period in which to scrutinise and evaluate amendments before we make a value judgment and vote for or against them. We need sufficient time to get a proper briefing to be able to do that properly.

The Labor Party is starting to treat this House like dirt. I warn them that we will be letting everybody know what is happening. I would have thought that there would have been a bit of leadership from the top that said, 'Get things right. Do not use your dangerous majority in a slipshod way.' All we are asking for is to have the information provided to this parliament in a timely manner and for this parliament to be treated with respect. For that reason, we opposed the previous clause. We did not particularly want to oppose it, but we were not sure of the information. We will vote against this third reading because this place is being treated with disrespect. The process is undemocratic.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (8.08 p.m.): I am not going to repeat everything that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister have said, but let me put on record that I agree with it and that, if they had not said it, I would have.

However, I cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing my deep and sincere regret at the way that this debate has been conducted this afternoon and at the way the minister has handled this piece of legislation.

I say quite genuinely that I feel a bit sorry for the minister. He has obviously been sent in here unprepared by his staff. He has been totally abandoned—

Mr SPEAKER: We have heard this about eight or 10 times now. If you have not got anything new to say—

Mr SEENEY: I am expressing my sympathy for the minister.

Mr SPEAKER: I know, but we have heard that a number of times.

Mr SEENEY: I am expressing my sympathy for the minister. I have not done that before, but I think it is a genuine point to make.

The government has not elected to support one of its own in a situation in which he should have expected that he would have got that support. It is another example of the way in which the government is treating this parliament with contempt. I wanted to put that on record in this third reading debate, which I appreciate is not an opportunity to repeat everything that we said before.

I want to record my sincere disappointment and I hope that in the future legislation will be introduced into this parliament with more respect and that this parliament will be treated with more respect than has been the case this afternoon.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.10 p.m.): I rise to speak in relation to the third reading of this bill, and I do not do this easily. I say to the minister that this is not democracy; this is a dictatorship. If the minister wants to continue in this vein, he will certainly lose the stewardship and the responsibility of his department. I just asked the minister from across the chamber: 'Do you know what these amendments are about?' He shook his head and said, 'No, I don't.' Why does the minister not show leadership and guts this evening and stand up and move to adjourn this debate until tomorrow so as to give the opposition spokesman, the other members of the opposition and other members of the government the opportunity to find out precisely what he is trying to achieve?

As the Leader of the Opposition just said—and very rightly so—there are livelihoods at stake: those of professional operators who have invested tens of thousands of dollars in the fishing industry and other related industries along the coast. This evening, the minister is showing no responsibility at all towards the situation with which they are confronted. I again say to the minister: please adjourn the debate and let the opposition have a full and fruitful input into this legislation tomorrow after we have scrutinised properly what these amendments are all about.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (8.11 p.m.): There has been a pattern of contempt developing in this parliament. It concerns me that tonight we have seen seven or eight pages of amendments dropped into the House. I wish to remind the House—

Mr REEVES: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Standing Order 141, which states that the Speaker may refer to continued irrelevance or tedious repetition.

Mr Horan: She hasn't even started. You haven't heard what she has said yet.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will listen to the point of order.

Mr REEVES: Standing Order 141 states—

... repetition on the part of a Member, either of his own arguments or the arguments used by other Members, and may after such warning direct the Member to discontinue his speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on that matter with the Leader of the Opposition. I was waiting to hear what the member for Maroochydore has to say.

Miss SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I accept that there is some validity in the member's point of order, and I ask the member for Maroochydore to bring new matters into the debate or resume her seat.

Miss SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I had only started to speak, I think that it would have been pertinent for the member to actually listen to what I was going to say.

I remind the House that it was only a matter of weeks ago that the government came to this place and, once again, just before the committee stage of a bill—significant industrial relations legislation—some seven pages of amendments were dropped into the chamber without prior scrutiny. I also remind this parliament of the pattern of contempt that this government showed in the previous 49th Parliament. That pattern of contempt has continued tonight.

These are complex amendments that will affect a very important industry. We are trying to canvass in this bill difficult issues. We then find more significant issues dropped into the parliament at the last minute without proper consultation. I do not believe that this parliament should be gagged from speaking about the contempt of this government and the fact that we have not had the opportunity to consult with the people in our areas. My constituency includes people who operate out of the port at Mooloolaba, and they are potentially affected by the amendments to this bill. I have not had the opportunity to consult with those people. This bill relates to their livelihoods. Yet the people who sit opposite us in this parliament would like to gag this debate and stop us from having the opportunity to conduct proper consultation in relation to these amendments that have been put before the parliament.

I want it to be recorded that this bill is difficult legislation. Members of the opposition indicated previously, when debating the bill, that they wanted to see security of tenure, that they recognised that not all the issues were perfect and that there were some grave concerns. There will be major anger when the people in the industry realise that this government has taken the further step of treating this parliament with contempt.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (8.14 p.m.): I have already taken part in the debate on this bill today. This issue affects some of my constituents. The essence of the bill is very important. I voted with the government that the bill be read a second time, because it is a fact that people in the fishing industry need security. They need to know where they will go in the future.

This bill has been dragged out for far too long. It was placed on the notice paper before the last election. Why it was not brought on earlier in its proper order and why the opposition was not given a proper length of time to look at the amendments, to ask valid questions and to receive answers is beyond me. What is the government really about and what is it really trying to do?

I would have supported the third reading of this bill, but I cannot, because it was actually I who suggested that the minister consider seriously adjourning the debate until tomorrow, when he could give us the answers to the very legitimate questions that we asked. He was unable to do that. He said that he did not know, although he really must be fully briefed before he comes into the House. So on that basis, there is no way that I can support this third reading.

Many people's livelihoods depend on what this bill puts in place. There is no doubt that a lot of very genuine fishers have been disadvantaged, have not been allocated licences and have had to agree to the minimisation of the number of nights and hours that they are able to fish. They genuinely are concerned, as anyone would be if their business and their own income was involved. It is all right to sit afar and say, 'This has to happen for the good of the majority.' That does not help much if a person is one of the minority who is being adversely affected. Those people must see that justice has been done tonight and, really, it has not been.

I think we are seeing arrogance on the part of this government, which has unfettered numbers, and government and parliament being run by executive government. That is unacceptable. In fact, it is in direct contravention of the doctrine of the separation of powers. This is the second time recently that we have seen that happen in this House. The first time was in relation to the amendments to the industrial relations legislation. This is the second time that it has occurred. It is unacceptable, and it is a practice that I believe no-one can condone.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (8.17 p.m.): This debate is very, very important. Some of the consequences will cause huge trauma to many of the people concerned. When the parliament has to deliberate on important issues that affect families' livelihoods, to have amendments thrown down after—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Keppel is being repetitious, as well. We have had this argument from, I think, five speakers now. Does the member have anything new to offer?

Mr LESTER: Yes. I am speaking on behalf of the people of the Capricorn Coast. Their voice needs to be heard.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think that the member is splitting hairs. We have to be a little bit sensible about this. We have heard that argument.

Mr LESTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will just change tack. I am being sensible when I speak on behalf of the people of the Capricorn Coast. After all, they put me here. So I have to represent their views. I have to say to those in the ALP: for goodness' sake, surely you are not going to cop this, too, from your minister, are you? Surely you are not going to take being dictated to? Each and every one of them won their seats by saying that they are going to listen, that they are going to consult and that they are going to do all of these things. When the maiden speeches were given, I heard that over and over again. Yet here we are, put to the test for the second time, and the members opposite have gone to water. They have crumpled. Quite frankly, their efforts as members of parliament, in standing up for what is fair and what is right, are very dismal.

It needs to be recorded in the parliament that members opposite are not independently standing up for what is right. They are going to allow issues to be steamrolled. The minister himself, poor fellow, said that he does not understand the amendments, so how on earth can one defend what members opposite have done tonight? As members of parliament, those opposite have sold out the fishing industry. They should have gone to the minister and said, 'We are not going to wear this.' They are all independent in various ways. They have not stood up for the real issues. Quite frankly, I think that their behaviour all round is quite disgraceful. At least we in the opposition have stood up for what is right. We still put the plea: it is not too late; give us a go; let us study this a little more overnight and get the information we need. Then we will be in a position to talk about it tomorrow.

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—Ind) (8.20 p.m.): This issue is of great importance to my electorate, to the Cooloola area and to the electorate of Hervey Bay. It is of importance because there is a predominance of small family-owned trawlers in those electorates and it is the small family-owned trawlers that are most affected by this legislation.

When this discussion first started with the QCFO, the minister was honest with the QCFO members. He told them that he did not understand the fishing industry. He told them that he did not understand the existing legislation. He asked the QCFO to help him, and they have.

The vice-president of the QCFO actually fishes from my property. His home base is on my property, so I talk to him at least once a week. He has reported to me that the QCFO has bent over backwards trying to ensure that the department and the minister understand their position. I rang the vice-president yesterday and he reported to me that they had considerable concerns.

I rang the president of the QCFO this morning and he sent me a large amount of paper, which I cannot read in the time available, listing his concerns. The minister was honest and I congratulate him for that. He admitted that he did not know and he asked for help. He was given that help in a friendly way. However, I do not think that he has honoured that friendship tonight.

Question—That the bill be read a third time—put; and the committee divided—

AYES, 59—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Briskey, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hayward, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rodgers, Rose, Schwarten, C. Scott, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Stone, Strong, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

NOES, 22—Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (8.29 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Water Licences

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—Ind) (8.29 p.m.): I bring to the attention of the House the issue of water licences in my electorate of the Darling Downs. As members are probably aware, the downs covers one of the richest agricultural belts in Australia. Through the middle of that belt runs the precious Condamine River, the head of the Murray-Darling catchment system. Our river provides one of the best irrigation sources around.

The town of Dalby supplies the resources and needs of the farmers who are heavily involved in agriculture. Each property has a huge cash flow turnover, mostly in excess of \$1 million per

year. Those farms have cash flow budgets and quite a few of the farmers service a massive debt load. They pay big taxes and are real Australians. They are a credit to this nation and they are the wealth creators.

The point I make is that there is talk of cutting water allocations. This will be disastrous to our farmers and the town of Dalby. The flow-on effects will be disastrous. Already one of our shires is selling blocks of dirt for \$1 to try to encourage people to come and live in the bush.

I realise that we have to look after our river system, but we have to look after Queensland. We are the Queensland government and I thought that it was our job, that that is why we are here. Victoria and New South Wales want our water. That is what this is about. I say: let us look after Queensland first. New South Wales and Victoria sure looked after our dairy industry in Queensland. I say: let them find their own water.

The allocations that have been issued must stay. Under no circumstances are we to let this government or any government change existing water licences. If you feed the neighbour's family before you feed your own, your family flies apart. Put Queensland first and leave our water allocations alone.

Centenary of Federation Celebrations

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (9.00 p.m.): On Wednesday, 9 May, I visited seven primary schools in my electorate to take part in their celebrations for the Centenary of Federation. I considered that the occasion warranted an extra special effort on my part, which led me to dress up in a period costume for my visits. I am told that I created quite a stir in my federation outfit and fluffy hat.

Each school that I visited commemorated the centenary differently, with activities ranging from a formal school assembly to an afternoon of federation games. In the morning I visited the Redeemer Lutheran College at Rochedale and addressed the year 6 and 7 students on the history of the Australian federation, just before their service celebrating the federation.

My second stop was St Peters Primary School, also in Rochedale. St Peters had organised a comprehensive program of activities and celebrations, with students dressing up as Edmond Barton, Samuel Griffith, Henry Parkes and other fathers of federation for a role-playing exercise.

I particularly enjoyed listening to the student body singing *We are Australians* and the celebration of multicultural Australia that was signified by students wearing the traditional costumes of a variety of nationalities. St Peters Primary School was able to capture in the short time of 20 minutes the whole meaning of the Centenary of Federation, and it was well worth being there.

The next stop was the Christian Outreach College in Mansfield. At COC I addressed the school assembly about the Centenary of Federation, my costume and my role as a parliamentarian. Interest was so significant that the school has asked for parliamentary teaching guides and a tour of this great building later in the year. I will be more than happy to show the students around Parliament House.

Following the Christian Outreach Centre I also called into the Wishart State School and addressed a special student assembly. The Wishart State School decided to plant federation trees near the school entrance to mark this occasion.

One of the highlights of the day was my next visit, which was to the Rochedale South State School. Here I was lucky enough to join the students for a school picnic and singalong. The students were each asked to come to school dressed up as their favourite famous Aussie and, in my opinion, Big Kev stole the show with his enthusiastic cries, 'I'm excited.'

Mount Petrie State School was not put to shame, either, hosting a day of events to celebrate the centenary. I joined in the passing of the Olympic torch between the generations—a symbolic ceremony that included representatives born in each decade of the 20th century.

My final stop of the day was a visit to the Mount Gravatt East State School. Here the activities culminated with the unveiling of a new student-made Federation Wall. Following the formalities, it was down to the oval where I declared the 2001 federation games open. I was happy that Ailsa Scurr, the first teacher at Mount Gravatt East, from the famous Scurr family of Mount Gravatt, was there to open the Federation Wall. My heartfelt congratulations go to all the teachers, students and parents who put so much effort into making the Centenary of Federation real for the schools and great for the community.

Murray-Darling 2001 Initiative

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (8.33 p.m.): Last week, I was very pleased to be able to attend the opening by the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines of the new Department of Natural Resources office in Toowoomba. Following the opening, the minister also presented a number of cheques from the National Heritage Trust Fund to various groups which are doing excellent environmental work throughout the Cunningham electorate. However, concern has been expressed by the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee about funding of the Murray-Darling 2001 initiative for the 2001-02 round of Natural Heritage Trust funding.

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee is a community and government partnership that provides an overview of the Queensland portion of the Murray-Darling Basin. The Cunningham electorate falls within this basin. The committee is doing excellent work in meeting its goal to have a healthy basin through the equitable use of water, land and other environmental resources of the basin. Unfortunately, despite the excellent work being done by the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee, the state government is yet to commit funds to match the federal government's commitment for the 2001-02 round of NHT funding for the Murray-Darling 2001 initiative.

The federal government has already committed approximately \$2.1 million. However, this is contingent on the funds being matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the state. To date, it is my understanding that the state has committed only \$500,000 for the year. This means that the pool available from federal and state governments for 2000-01 is \$1 million, rather than the \$4.2 million that it would be if the state were to match the federal government funds. For those projects that are two-year or three-year projects needing recurrent funding, approximately \$1 million is required to enable those projects to continue. This means, at this stage, with the available funding no further projects can proceed.

There is also a real concern now that the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality has been announced—with approximately \$3 million—and that there will be no net increase in funding and, therefore, no extra benefit obtained. The further concern is developing that this plan will polarise natural resource management activities to only those dealing with salinity and water quality and only in those areas targeted by the plan. This concern is prevalent regardless of commitments given by the Prime Minister, the Premier and the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee. If the state does not provide matching funds to the Murray-Darling 2001 initiative, it will only serve to fuel those concerns.

A lot of important projects have been recommended for funding under the 2001-02 round of the initiative. The project to fund the four catchment management associations is one of these projects. I know it is consistent with the aims of the minister, and I urge him and the government to match the federal funding commitment dollar for dollar so that any concerns about the future of this project can be dispelled but, more importantly, so that the excellent work that they are doing can continue.

Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Skills Development Project

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (8.36 p.m.): Recently, I had the pleasure of launching the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Skills Development Project in Bundaberg on behalf of the Minister for Employment and Training, Matt Foley. I acknowledge the support for this project by the Minister for Local Government and Planning and member for Bundaberg, Nita Cunningham, and the member for Burnett, Trevor Strong, who attended the launch.

This project, funded under the Community Training Partnerships Program, will help Bundaberg's horticultural workers retrain to meet the demands of a globalised market. The government is contributing \$220,800, aimed at improving the area's standing in the world fruit and vegetable trade. Community Training Partnerships is a component of the state government's Smart State initiative. A well-skilled work force is essential to compete globally and to maintain economic growth and high levels of employment. The Community Training Partnerships Program provides opportunities for communities to identify their current and future employment needs and to purchase the appropriate training.

The Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association determined that its industry's survival and growth depended on supplying high-quality, quality assured, fresh and uniquely valued food products. To adjust to the change, 247 horticultural businesses would need up to 1,000 workers to obtain new skills. They would need to achieve formal skills and qualifications in

the next three to five years in order to address international customer needs for quality assured products as local markets expand nationally and internationally. This funding will help local workers meet that demand. The association has also estimated that continued growth of the businesses would result in an additional 500 to 1,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

The Community Training Partnerships Program builds training strategies between government, industry and the community using local expertise to identify local needs. In July last year, the Department of Employment and Training brought together regional stakeholders to discuss the training and employment programs best suited to the requirements of food production in the Wide Bay area, and the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE identified the skills and options for achieving them. Through the regional forum held in July and the skills survey undertaken by TAFE, the region's training needs have been identified. This funding will be paid to the Wide Bay Group Training Scheme. The organisation will work with both existing horticultural workers without qualifications and long-term unemployed people who may enter the industry. The organisation will provide participants with a mix of accredited training and formal recognition of their existing skills, and the training will be delivered at several farms around the area.

This is just one more example of the government working in close partnership with the regional community to improve the skill levels of workers, help create and sustain jobs and improve the viability of an important local industry.

Ambulance Service

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (8.39 p.m.): On 2 May, I relayed my concerns in parliament regarding ambulance staffing levels and stated that staff funding had been reduced to the QAS south-western region. On 3 May, the minister replied by letter—

All stations continue to be appropriately staffed and the community can be fully assured that there has been no reduction in the availability of emergency responses in the South Western Region or elsewhere.

I wonder if this is really true. How can this possibly be correct when, not one day later, the ambulance officers' own union, the Ambulance Employees Association, circulated a campaign newsletter which stated, 'Enough is enough—No more band-aids for QAS'? That newsletter was sent to all its members. The union has identified an eight-point plan which identifies inadequate staffing levels, poor quality of patient care, workplace stress and organisational funding as major issues within the QAS. I wonder who is telling lies. It is either the minister or the fine officers whom he always mentions make up Australia's best Ambulance Service.

I also have an official document dated 11 April from the south-western region which raises concerns that ambulance staffing is inadequate in the bush and that the QAS can fulfil all of its community service obligations only at a personal cost to its local paramedics. It also states that the staff have raised staffing issues time and time again only to have them disregarded by QAS management. The *Courier-Mail* also seems to think there is a major problem with staffing within the QAS. Its article of 11 May even unearthed a range of statements from a QAS manager in central Queensland, which have been supported by the regional executive director, that indicate low staff numbers were causing 'significant concern'.

Within the last 12 months, the combined stations of Toowoomba and Fairview have had a reduced operational response from eight officers rostered daily on weekends to only six officers now available. The Tara and Crows Nest stations have been reduced to two officers from three, leaving only one officer to respond alone on weekends instead of two officers, with these locations being advised that the position will not be immediately replaced. The officer in charge at the mining town of Middlemount is not replaced on days off, with cover undertaken by a lone, unpaid honorary ambulance officer of lesser qualifications and experience.

When the minister said on 3 May that 'there has been absolutely no reduction in service delivery within the south-western region or elsewhere', I believe that was purely and simply a statement made to mislead this parliament and the people of Queensland on the true goings-on within the department. The union has produced a bumper sticker that depicts a bandaid across a bleeding wound on the QAS badge. I wonder if the minister would be proud to see that on cars around Queensland.

Mr Terry Sullivan: Oh come on! Stop being so negative.

Mr MALONE: That is a fact.

Time expired.

Yarrabah Seahawks

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (8.42 p.m.): On Sunday, 29 April 2001 the people of the Yarrabah community realised a dream they had nurtured for nearly 25 years. On that day they hosted their champion club's first home game on recently established facilities. To say this achievement was hard won is a monumental understatement. For more than two decades Rugby League players from the Yarrabah community had donned the jerseys of many of the other Cairns clubs and proved themselves week in and week out in one of the strongest leagues in country Queensland.

The Cairns and District Rugby League rejected the pleas from the Yarrabah community to field their own teams. Issues such as crowd control, inability to attract sponsorship and lack of demonstrated administrative ability were all paraded as mere excuses to deny them their place in the competition. A change of administration of the CDRL in 1999 brought to the executive team the duo of Nigel Tillet as president and the dynamic Pat Bailey as secretary.

This was good news for Yarrabah as, with the demise of the Babinda club, they worked closely with the Seahawks Rugby League Club and its energetic committee under the leadership of James Canuto to prepare the groundwork for admission to the 10-team competition. Leon Yeatman, a key figure in the Yarrabah Community Council, proved of immense value as the fledgling club prepared its business plan and provided answers to the many selection criteria placed on it by the CDRL. No other club in the history of Rugby League in Cairns has been the subject of such scrutiny.

The Seahawks passed muster with flying colours and entered the CDRL competition in 2000, playing all of their home games at away or neutral venues. The first season was—as to be expected—one of finding their way both on and off the field. Coach Darren Miller did a wonderful job in introducing his players to the weekly grind of a tough competition. One of the club's strongest points was the near fanatical following it enjoyed, with supporters willing to travel all over the far north to support their team.

The Yarrabah Seahawks so impressed the Rugby League public and its administrators that they were successful in earning home and away status for the 2001 season. The Queensland government, which had supplied funds for a business plan in the early stages, again came good and provided further funds to complement the considerable investment of the Yarrabah Community Council to construct a new club facility which boasts clubrooms, amenities, a kiosk and a well-formed playing surface.

I had the pleasure of being present at the first home game, appropriately against the Innisfail Leprechauns—a sister club that had been unstinting in its support of the Seahawks in their quest for admission. The day went off magnificently, complete with cheer girls, a rendition of the national anthem by local musical identity Barry Cedric and the blessing of the field by Bishop Arthur Malcolm, the club's patron and No. 1 supporter. After making a short speech to acknowledge the significance of the occasion, I was honoured to be given the task of kicking off for the first home game of the club. The Cairns print media and local TV stations, along with indigenous radio station Bama Bipperra, turned up in force and covered the proceedings for posterity.

The people of Yarrabah love their Rugby League. They are justifiably proud of what their community has achieved. Above all, the Yarrabah Seahawks are a unifying force within that community. Their current and future success is a positive for the Yarrabah community.

Kenilworth Veterinary Clinic

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.45 p.m.): The Kenilworth veterinary clinic currently operated by the Queensland University as a training facility for veterinary students is facing an uncertain future. Many veterinary students attending the Queensland University, including the University of Queensland Student Union, support my community's opposition to the proposed changes to the operation of this clinic.

This Saturday a protest meeting will be held in Kenilworth to protest against the university's proposed changes to the operation of this clinic. I invite all honourable members to join me at the meeting. I have invited a representative from the Queensland University to visit Kenilworth this Saturday to listen to my constituents' concerns. I understand that many university students will also be travelling by bus to join us at the protest meeting so that they can be clearly seen to be opposed to the proposed changes.

If the proposed changes go ahead, there will be a reduction of 50 per cent in the current amount of dairy clinical experience available to our training vets, and the fifth year students will have a substandard program. Many dairy farmers will also be hard hit by this decision. Today dairy farmers are battling unbelievable pressures as a result of the deregulation of the dairy industry, and this proposed change will simply be another kick in the guts to them. I understand that the national president of the Australian Veterinary Association, Dr Geoff Niethe, has publicly stated that the decision to proceed with the relocation defies all logic.

I also seek leave to table a copy of a letter of protest from a full fee paying international veterinary student, William Gartrell, which captures the sentiment of many of the university students in their opposition to the university's proposed changes.

Logan Employment, Education and Training Support Program

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (8.47 p.m.): As I have travelled around my electorate, I have met with many dedicated workers who are involved in a wide range of services and support networks for our community. Some of these receive little recognition but, nonetheless, are making a tremendous impact on a considerable section of our community. I wish to outline the work of one of these services working intensively with young offenders.

I recently had the opportunity to meet Wendy Lynch and Sue Powrie, who constitute the entire staff of the Logan Employment, Education and Training Support Program. The young clients are referred through the Youth Justice Service or Centrelink and undertake this intensive program on a voluntary basis. They are young offenders aged between 14 and 17 who are on juvenile justice orders. Some of the activities may include goal setting, career counselling, assistance with resumes and mock interviews, literacy and numeracy tuition, referral to educational and vocational training programs with ongoing support, homework assistance, additional tuition, personal development activities, and gaining access to community resources. To spend one-on-one time with a youngster who suddenly is able to grasp literacy skills for the first time is like releasing them from prison. Suddenly a new world opens up to them.

Both Sue and Wendy are very hands-on workers. They build a rapport with their young clients and this is at times the first positive experience they have had to identify their strengths and interests. To date, 24 young people are now in either full-time or part-time employment. Some have experienced improved family relationships while others have been able to return to school or training programs.

This program is unique in its ability to accommodate a wide scope of needs and to seek a strategy tailor made for each individual, many of whom are marginalised and difficult to engage. I commend their very positive strategies and hope that their good work will be able to continue.

Underground Powerlines

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (8.49 p.m.): When electricity is distributed through suburbs into ordinary households via power poles, it is easy to determine whether there is a safety issue, such as a rotten power pole or a fallen line. But it is not so easy to determine whether there is a safety issue if power arrives at a household via underground powerlines.

Recently in my electorate a constituent had a safety issue involving the underground power coming into her house. When she arrived home, the power was interrupted to her house, so she went out to look at the meter box. When she touched the meter box, she was jolted backwards and received a shock of approximately 180 volts of electricity. She immediately called Energex—as anyone would. On arriving, the safety officer found that the plastic box outside her front gate contained a corroded wire, which had forced the electricity to seek an earth. Of course, the nearest point was through her house. One can imagine her surprise at finding this out! Imagine my surprise when she reported to me that Energex does not carry out inspection and maintenance on power boxes outside individual houses. Energex subsequently carried out an audit in the area and found no other power pillars, as they are called, to be similarly faulty.

My major concern is that some underground power supplies in suburbs around Queensland are over 20 years old, and there is no regular maintenance and inspection service on them, as there is on wooden power poles in the distribution system. How are householders to know whether or not the power coming into their houses is safe? I am not encouraged by the fact that, over the past couple of years, Energex has been forced or required to provide 95 per cent of its after-tax profits to Treasury, leaving a minimal amount of money for maintenance procedures on

the distribution system, nor am I encouraged by the fact that, at the moment, the minister is dealing with a report on safety in terms of the electricity industry in Queensland.

The fact that incidents such as this can occur does not inspire in me or the constituent involved confidence that we have a safe electricity distribution system. My plea to the relevant minister is that we ought to be spending more money on the inspection and maintenance of the distribution system—and not only the visible distribution system, but the underground distribution system, as well. The experience of my constituent indicates that there is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed.

Time expired.

Noosa Electorate, Schools

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (8.52 p.m.): There are many great schools in my electorate. Tonight I want to introduce the House to four of those schools and, at a later date, the other very good schools.

The Coolum State School is situated near the emu farm and adjacent to a light industrial area. This school is headed by a principal of vision and dedication, Pat Cavanagh, who has a terrific team of intelligent, caring professionals. The teachers, the teachers aides, the tuckshop mums and dads, cleaners and groundspeople are all professionals. The Coolum Primary School is presently awaiting the arrival of a much-needed demountable to house the ever-increasing number of delightful children. I must thank the minister, Anna Bligh, for her assistance in securing this extra space. I believe that school is an excellent example of how the Coolum community is developing a wonderful community spirit. The children are blossoming in the school due to the care, concern and leadership that I have personally witnessed. But the school is not without its problems, and I will discuss those issues at a later time.

The Coolum State High School is also an example of the dedication of principals and teachers in this state. I commend the principal and teachers for their vision, the care they demonstrate and their expertise in teaching these young people. As a parent of teenagers, I know it is often a labour of love to give direction and stay on track when coping with feisty young people. Coolum High has been displaying excellent outcomes not only academically but also at a social level in educating holistically and supporting the families of our very young people.

Sunshine Beach State School is also a delightful school which my youngest child, Bonnie, attends. The principal, Sue Pearce, is truly a woman whom I respect and admire. Sue is well known throughout the region for her excellence in education and academic outcomes. Both Melanie and Bonnie Molloy have blossomed under the tutelage of the great teachers at the Sunshine Beach Primary School. The wider school community, the P&C, the tuckshop mums and dads, the teachers aides and Sid all make the Sunshine Beach Primary School the lovely place that it is today.

The Sunshine Beach State High School has recently built a new music block to be opened soon—another great Labor government initiative. I know the outcomes of this school, the excellence of leadership in Mr Stevens, the principal, and the excellence in teaching. I know how grounding and supportive this environment is because Honorlee, my eldest daughter, graduated from there and has gone on to university. Melanie still enjoys being a student there. She is being well educated holistically by a remarkable team and is developing into a lovely young woman. All of these schools are working hard to bring about the best social and academic outcomes, and I applaud their hard work.

Mr S. Perry; Workskills Australia

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (8.55 p.m.): I bring to the attention of this House the success of a young Queensland, Steven Perry. Steven is a gold medallist in the Workskills Australia 2001 National Finals for Detailed Joinery and Shopfitting. Steven completed year 12 in 1995 at the Toogoolawah State High School. The following year, he enrolled in a Certificate of Construction, Fitout and Finish—Carpentry at Bremer TAFE in Bundamba. On finishing his prevocational course, Ingrams Fine Joinery, located in Bundamba, offered Steven the opportunity to begin an apprenticeship in detailed joinery and shopfitting. Steven grabbed that chance with both hands and completed his apprenticeship on 13 July 2000, when he was 21 years of age. Later that year, Steven competed in the regional Workskills Australia Foundation for Detailed Joinery. He won. That success led to an invitation to compete in the Workskills Australia national

finals held from 14 to 16 March 2001 in Adelaide. Steven scored 79.15 out of 100. His closest rival was five and a half points behind him. The rest is history. Steven claimed the gold hands down. He competed against other students throughout Australia and won.

The Bundamba TAFE, which offers prevocational training, is assisting all young people who are desirous of gaining apprenticeships. Steven Perry is a shining example of what can be achieved through hard work and dedication. The system that the opposition so often sneers at and turns up its nose at delivered the goods. Education Queensland delivered for Steven. The TAFE system delivered, and the apprenticeship system delivered.

Steven Perry has a bright future ahead of him. I wish him all the best in the future. He has made all of Queensland proud, especially Betty, his mum, and Ernie Harrison, his stepfather.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.