TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2001

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

PRIVILEGE

Speed Limits

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.31 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. In a report in the *Courier-Mail* today the newspaper implies the state government is considering reducing the speed limit on all urban roads to 50 kilometres per hour. Two weeks ago I announced a proposal to extend the 50 kilometres per hour speed limit to local streets in regional Queensland but not including major arterial and urban links. The state government has no intention of changing its current position and will only apply the new speed limit to local residential streets.

PRIVILEGE

Queensland Principal Club; Allegations by Member for Southport

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (9.31 a.m.): Last week the member for Southport accused me of misleading the House. He alleged that the correspondence I tabled from the Queensland Principal Club was a forgery. I wish to assure members the letter is a genuine working document prepared by direction of the Queensland Principal Club board and, as the member for Southport confirmed—and I quote his words—

These are most serious allegations.

This document outlined a number of questions arising out of an audit of expenses of the Chairman of the Toowoomba Turf Club, Neville Stewart. It is immaterial whether the letter was signed by Mr Bredhauer, Phar Lap or, in fact, not signed at all. It is the contents of that working document that are of importance. For the member for Southport to imply in this House that the letter is a forgery is misleading and does the member no credit. It is a desperate attempt to cover up the minister's attempt to influence the outcome of an inquiry into her friend. The member for Southport should also remember that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

ASSENT TO BILLS

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

6 December 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 Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 6 December 2001:

"A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay an amount from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial year starting 1 July 2000"

"A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial year starting 1 July 2000"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1980".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison

Governor

ASSENT TO BILLS

Appropriation Parliament Bill (No. 2)
Appropriation Bill (No. 2)

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that on Thursday, 6 December 2001 I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) for royal assent and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

PETITION

Noise and Dust Emissions, Rockhampton

Mr Lester from 42 petitioners, requesting the House to appoint an officer, who will address and resolve the complaints to the Environmental Protection Agency Rockhampton, relating to noise and serious dust emissions emanating from a specific local industry, thus providing residents and the environment with the protection they deserve.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

7 December 2001—

Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2000-2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) regarding the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation Annual Report 2000-2001

10 December 2001—

Director of Public Prosecutions—Annual Report 2000-2001

Office of the Public Advocate Queensland—Annual Report 2000-2001

Queensland Law Reform Commission—Annual Report and Statement of Affairs 2000-2001

National Australia Trustees Limited and its Controlled Entity—Annual Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2001

Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited—Annual Report 2000-2001

Perpetual Trustees Queensland Limited—Annual Financial Report 2000-2001

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

Government Owned Corporations (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 243

Health Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 244

Food Act 1981—

Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 245

Prostitution Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 246

Hay Point Harbour (Ratification of Agreements) Act 1987—

Hay Point Harbour (Ratification of Amended Agreements) Regulation 2001, No. 247 and Explanatory Notes for No. 247

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Registration) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2001, No. 248

Drugs Misuse Act 1986—

Drugs Misuse Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2001, No. 249

Consumer Credit (Queensland) Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 250

Consumer Credit (Queensland) Act 1994—

Consumer Credit Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 251

Cooperatives Act 1997, Motor Vehicles Securities Act 1986, Trade Measurement Administration Act 1990—

Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 252

Local Government Act 1993—

Local Government Finance Amendment Standard (No. 2) 2001, No. 253

Keno Act 1996—

Keno Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2001, No. 254

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The following responses to petitions, received during the recess, were tabled by The Clerk—

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by the Honourable J Cunningham from 6 petitioners, regarding access to personal records by Mr William Van Oostveen—

6 DEC 2001

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

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter dated 1 November 2001, regarding a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly from Mr William Van Oostveen, being the principal petitioner.

I note that Mr Van Oostveen's petition appears, primarily, to be in relation to his experiences in seeking access to his own health records, as held by Queensland Health.

Queensland Health staff have investigated the claims by Mr Van Oostveen and I am able to provide the following advice in respect of this matter:

On 5 October 1999, Queensland Health received an application under the Freedom of Information Act 1992 (the FOI Act) from Mr Van Oostveen for access to his "complete file/files". While Mr Van Oostveen did not provide details of the health facilities he had attended, Queensland Health staff conducted searches to locate relevant documents and so were able to process the application.

Given the various health facilities Mr Van Oostveen has attended, the application required processing of documents within Corporate Office, Queensland Health and various Health Service Districts.

During November 1999, Mr Van Oostveen was granted full access to his health records, with the exception of a small number of folios within Corporate Office, Queensland Health. These folios were determined to be exempt, in accordance with various exemption provisions within the FOI Act.

At the time Mr Van Oostveen was notified of the decisions (being decisions by FOI Decision-makers within Corporate Office and the relevant Health Service Districts) in relation to his FOI application, he was also advised of his appeal rights and that if he chose to exercise them, he must do so within 28 days of the decisions.

On 6 August 2001, Corporate Office, Queensland Health received an application for internal review from Mr Van Oostveen. Despite not being required to do so (given the significant length of time since the expiry of his appeal rights), Queensland Health processed his application for internal review, with a decision being made on 21 August 2001. Mr Van Oostveen was granted access to further material as a result of the internal review decision (that is, some matter that had previously been considered exempt was disclosed).

Within the internal review decision, Mr Van Oostveen was advised of his external review rights. As yet, he has not chosen to exercise them.

On 12 January 2001, Queensland Health responded to a representation by Ms Nita Cunningham MP (Member for Bundaberg), on Mr Van Oostveen's behalf, and provided advice on the process to be followed in seeking amendment of health records (that is, lodging an amendment application in accordance with the FOI Act). To date, Queensland Health has not received an amendment application from Mr Van Oostveen.

Unfortunately, section 63 of the Health Services Act 1991 (the confidentiality provision that extends to all health information held by Queensland Health) prevents me from discussing the specific details of Mr Van Oostveen's applications for access to his health records.

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

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Wendy Edmond MP
Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy

Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) to a petition presented by Mrs E Cunningham from 187 petitioners, regarding testing of the Stuart pilot plant—

4 DEC 2001

Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 19 October 2001 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly seeking the prevention of further testing of the Stuart pilot plant.

The Stuart Oil Shale Project is a major strategic development for the State. Over $300 million has been spent on this project to date, and if successful has the potential to make both Queensland and Australia more oil self sufficient and not increasingly reliant on imports.

Early this year the Premier announced an independent environmental and technical evaluation of the Stuart pilot plant as an election commitment. An amount of $200,000 is to be made available through the Department of State Development to conduct this evaluation.

Officers of my Department are continuing to jointly monitor operations of the plant with officers from the Environmental Protection Agency who monitor the environmental issues.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian Airlines, Cairns; State Government Achievements

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: I am delighted to inform the House that leading Australian airline Qantas has chosen Cairns as the hub for its new low-cost international leisure air service, Australian Airlines. This is great news for Cairns, north Queensland and all of the state. It is the start of a golden new era for tourism in Queensland and, in particular, Cairns and north Queensland. This announcement will provide a significant tourism boost, not only for north Queensland but for the whole of the state and the whole of Australia. The Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, and the Minister for Tourism, Merri Rose, who have each played major roles in securing this decision, are currently on their way to Cairns to join with Australian Airlines chief executive Denis Adams to make the formal announcement in Cairns today. I cannot overestimate what this decision will mean for the Australian tourism industry and for the Queensland tourism industry in particular. We are talking about 350 new jobs over the next four years in Cairns alone. Australian Airlines estimates it will create around 10,000 tourism-related jobs—many of them in Queensland—and bring 350,000 tourists to Cairns in the first year—yes, 350,000 tourists a year.

The tragic events of 11 September and the demise of Ansett have dealt a sharp blow to the tourism industry, and that has been felt particularly here in Queensland where tourism is our second-largest industry and employs 150,000 Queenslanders. That is why my government made it a priority to capture Qantas' new economy air service Australian Airlines. And the decision by Qantas to locate its Australian Airlines hub in Cairns is ample reward for the efforts of the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Tourism. Cairns has been chosen over other Australian centres to be the hub for this low-cost economy air travel service for the Australian tourism market to Asian ports. The first phase will have three planes servicing Nagoya and Osaka daily, and Fukuoka, Hong Kong and Singapore three times a week. The second phase with four planes will take in Taipei. The third phase with five planes will add services to Seoul and Shanghai. The airline model is for five Boeing 767-300 aircraft in a 270 all economy seat configuration. The Cairns operation base will include maintenance support, cabin crew, technical support, aircraft engineers, engineering support and crew support.

The government has provided incentives to Qantas to establish Australian Airlines in Cairns. Cabinet approved that package yesterday. While I will not discuss the quantum of the package, it involves forgoing payroll tax, some assistance with regard to marketing activities and training. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that the Auditor-General indicated to the government that it was appropriate for us to release the details of where the package was going but not the amount. But I should say the incentives are modest. In the circumstances they are modest when one weighs them against the advantages to this state and to Australia. The flow-on benefits from Australian Airlines choosing Cairns as its hub will be significant and in time will go beyond Cairns airport and the runway apron to the front doors of businesses in Cairns and north Queensland.

Today's announcement provides the single biggest boost to Queensland inbound tourism. The important thing here is that there are direct flights. They do not go via Sydney, Melbourne or Auckland. They fly directly into Cairns—directly into Queensland. Today's decision will result in the revitalisation of inbound tourism, not just in the tropical north but throughout Queensland and Australia. It is estimated that the net result of Australian Airlines using Cairns as its hub would be at least 30 new services into Cairns every week by the end of year one. Australian Airlines estimates it will create around 10,000 tourism-related jobs—many of them in Queensland—and

bring, as I said, 350,000 tourists to Cairns in the first year. The new services will generate an estimated $500 million in tourism expenditure.

Today's announcement follows on from the recent decision for Singapore Airlines to establish its advanced training facility at Maroochydore. Today's Qantas announcement is clear evidence that this government's decision to grow the aviation industry is returning dividends for the state. Queensland is becoming the aviation centre of Australia. Santa is about to arrive in Cairns in a 767. I am sure all in this place will join me in thanking all for their support and in wishing the new venture every good fortune.

While I am talking about the achievements of this government, I should say that in 2001 the government continued to deliver on its Smart State vision to create long-term new age jobs for Queenslanders and develop education and training schemes which give Queensland and Queenslanders the skills they need to gain those jobs. I want to table for the information of the House a report which highlights just some of the government's major achievements for 2001. It includes just a few of the main achievements from the 19 portfolios. It is not exhaustive but, even so, it extends to more than 30 pages. I table a copy of that report and I seek to incorporate into *Hansard* some remarks I made in relation to it.

Leave granted.

In 2001 the Beattie Government has continued to deliver on its Smart State vision to create long-term, new age jobs for Queenslanders and to develop education and training systems which give young Queenslanders the skills they need to gain those jobs.

It has continued to improve the services it delivers to Queenslanders, especially in quality-of-life areas such as health, families, disabilities and police.

Final jobs figures for the year are due on December 13 but the November figures showed that jobs were being created in Queensland at double the national rate.

They showed that employment had grown in Queensland over the previous 12 months at a rate of 1.3 per cent compared to only 0.6 per cent in the country as a whole. Unemployment was continuing to fall in Queensland, despite an increase in the national jobless rate. This was an outstanding result in the face of the Ansett collapse and its impact on our tourism industry, and the international threat of terrorism.

The Government has also been successful in bringing major employment projects to reality—projects such as the $1.5 billion Comalco alumina refinery and the $1.3 billion Australian Magnesium Corporation magnesium metal plant in Central Queensland.

We announced a $100 million Smart State Research Facility Fund to drive the development of world class innovation, science and technology infrastructure in Queensland.

Key projects include:

A $15 million Queensland Biodiscovery Fund

Up to $20 million toward the establishment of a $50 million Institute for Nano Applications and Biomaterials

The creation of a $40 million Food for Life Centre of Excellence

Queensland continues to lead the nation in the number of students taking advantage of the opportunity to enter apprenticeships and traineeships while still at school.

In March this year a significant milestone in the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative was achieved when its four-year target of 24,500 jobs was reached 18 months ahead of schedule.

I have drawn up a report which highlights just some of my Government's major achievements for 2001.

It includes just a few of the main achievements from the 19 portfolios but even so it extends to more than 30 pages.

I table a copy of the report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: The good news has not ended. This afternoon I will join the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Professor John Hay, and Paul Lucas, the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, to sign a heads of agreement to establish the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology on the university's St Lucia campus.

This is a new $50 million institute. It is a joint initiative between the state government and the University of Queensland. It is being established with the support of an overseas philanthropic organisation. I gave a commitment at BIO2001 in San Diego to establish a nanotechnology institute, and today Paul Lucas and I are delivering this on behalf of the government and the people of Queensland.

This is a first for Australia and the first major project to proceed under the $100 million Smart State Research Facilities Fund, which was established in this year's state budget by the Treasurer. It is another important landmark decision in the drive to make Queensland the Smart State, and it ensures that Queensland plays a pioneering role in one of the booming sciences of the 21st century.

The Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, Paul Lucas, and his department have played a pivotal role in bringing this about. They have worked in collaboration with the University of Queensland, sectors of government and other potential stakeholders. I congratulate the minister on his efforts. It is a day that John Hay and his team at the University of Queensland have also striven hard to achieve. They are as excited about this initiative as I am, because it capitalises on the enormous energy and momentum here in Queensland for our Smart State strategies.

Nanotechnology is an emerging technology that already involves world trade worth an estimated $US45 billion a year. That trade is expected to grow to $US225 billion a year by 2005. Today's announcement ensures that Queensland is at the forefront of this emerging science. Nanotechnology is about building structures at the molecular level, atom by atom. This has extensive application for products and services in health, manufacturing, IT, mining and energy and the environment. There are also many applications in medicine, as this technology can be used together with biomaterials to develop compounds that are less likely to be rejected by the body when used in tissue or organ replacement. The technology can also be applied to tissue regeneration, neuroscience and cellular therapies.

The institute will be recognised globally. It will promote Queensland as the Smart State and attract world-class researchers with leading edge projects. It is yet another example of the momentum we are building in Queensland for biotechnology and adds support to Queensland's proposal to the federal government to base its $46.5 million biotechnology centre of excellence in this state.

Nanotechnology is an emerging area of biotechnology that involves manipulating atoms and molecules as small as one-billionth of a metre across. Twenty-eight million of them could be placed in a line across a 20c coin. It is exciting, it is dynamic, it is leading edge and it is happening here in Queensland. The state government is contributing up to $20 million towards the cost of establishing the institute, the University of Queensland will contribute $12.5 million plus the land on its St Lucia campus, and an overseas philanthropic organisation will contribute $17.5 million. The CSIRO will also play a role in the new institute. It is in discussion with the University of Queensland about its level of involvement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Royal Visit

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: The good news continues. What a can-do government!

Mr Mackenroth: What a can-do Premier!

Mr BEATTIE: I am too modest to accept that. It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is to visit Queensland. It was confirmed on Friday that the Queen will visit Brisbane, Coolum, Cairns and Kuranda during her visit to Queensland at the beginning of March. It was also announced that the Duke of Edinburgh is to accompany her and that he will make a special trip to Roma as well.

One of the downsides of the 11 September tragedy and the subsequent postponed CHOGM was that Her Majesty's royal visit to Queensland was also postponed. It is now excellent news that another royal visit has been rescheduled, even if slightly reduced. I am delighted that, even though the royal visit has had to be cut from four days to three, each of the communities that was on the original itinerary for October will receive a visit.

In addition to the royal visit to Queensland, the Queen will also be here in her role as head of the Commonwealth to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Coolum on Saturday, 2 March. While Her Majesty is at Coolum the Duke of Edinburgh will visit Roma. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are due to visit Cairns on Friday, 1 March and Brisbane on Sunday, 3 March.

I am delighted that, despite the duration of the royal visit having to be curtailed due to the rescheduling of CHOGM and Her Majesty's existing commitments, none of the communities that

were expecting a visit have been disappointed. It means that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will be able to experience very different parts of Queensland and that people from those regions will have an opportunity to welcome them personally.

The royal party is scheduled to arrive in Brisbane on the evening of Thursday, 28 February and depart late in the afternoon of Sunday, 3 March. I am advised that the final program is still subject to confirmation by Buckingham Palace and many of the details have yet to be finalised, but the highlights include a people's reception at Roma Street Parkland on Sunday, 3 March, a ride on the Skyrail from Kuranda and the launch of a new Royal Flying Doctor Service plane in Cairns. We are holding a people's reception instead of an indoor state reception because it gives everyone a chance to come along instead of limiting the invitations to a privileged few. We expect carriages from the Great South Pacific Express will be available to carry the royal party from Freshwater station to Kuranda.

Further details will be announced as they become available. It is indeed an exciting time, and I am sure that all present will join with me in extending a typical warm and friendly Queensland welcome to the Queen and Duke.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Priorities in Progress Report

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: As required under the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility, each year the state government must release a report on the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities in meeting our objectives for the community.

The Priorities in Progress report is the second report of its kind to be tabled in Queensland. This year's report informs the community about the impact of the Beattie government's policies and initiatives in the 2000-01 financial year. It is based on the state government's five priorities and also includes comprehensive information on fiscal objectives and accountability. It highlights the outcomes of program evaluations undertaken last year and for the first time outlines significant new legislation and policies introduced during the year.

The report recognises that social performance is often more difficult to measure than most economic and fiscal results, but a significant amount of effort has been made to strengthen the report's coverage of social indicators to provide more information on the wellbeing and living standards of individuals and their communities.

As with last year's report, there are many areas where results are clearly commendable—for example, year 12 retention rates, solid economic growth, exports growth, labour productivity, crime rates and immunisation rates, to name a few. The report also identifies, openly and fairly, areas for improvement. One of the most significant areas of concern is improving the wellbeing and quality of life for indigenous Queenslanders. To ensure that these improvements occur, the Queensland government is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to try to solve long-standing problems.

While the results of strategies like these take years to emerge, future Priorities in Progress reports will track our path towards a stronger, brighter future for all Queenslanders. This and future reports will continue to guide decisions about policy and resource allocation at a whole-of-government and agency level to improve service delivery.

The Premier and I will present the report this afternoon to representatives of community and stakeholder organisations. The report opens an important dialogue between the government and the people of Queensland and demonstrates that the government is prepared to be held accountable. I table a copy of the report for the information of all members.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Millennium Arts Project

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: This year has seen Queensland move to the cutting edge of an exciting new era in the development of arts and cultural facilities. In fact, in just four short years from now Queensland will rightfully be able to boast that it has among the best arts and cultural facilities in Australia. Under the Millennium Arts Project we will lead the way in artistic and cultural practice, underpinned by magnificent architecture in our cultural buildings.

The Millennium Arts Project is not just about upgrading and expanding arts facilities throughout Queensland; it is about research and learning—all important in our Smart State. It is about breaking new ground to allow the community to explore its artistic and cultural life. It is also about jobs. More than 2,900 jobs will be created throughout Queensland, particularly in the construction industry. Regional areas will benefit from an injection of $15 million into 16 projects across the length and breadth of the state—from a new wing for the Gladstone Museum and Art Gallery to a Mining Heritage Project in Mount Isa—

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr FOLEY: I thank the member for Mount Isa and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services for his strong advocacy for that project.

Mr McGrady: And support.

Mr FOLEY: And support, yes. It will also include a Cultural and Entertainment Centre in Logan City. When coupled with the $110 million Heritage Trails Network, this is a huge investment in regional facilities. The Millennium Arts Project is moving forward very quickly. The Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Fortitude Valley opened in October and has positioned itself as a leader in the contemporary arts scene. The short-listed architects for both the redevelopment of the State Library of Queensland and the new Gallery of Modern Art, both of which I announced recently, have started working on the detailed designs for these landmark buildings. I expect to be in a position to announce the preferred architect for each project early in the new year. The redeveloped Queensland Cultural Centre on the South Bank, of which the gallery and the library are a major part, is set to become a vibrant and exciting cultural destination for all Queenslanders. Its hallmarks will be more public space to enjoy our relaxed lifestyle, improved access to our cultural buildings and closer links with the magnificent Brisbane River.

Construction on the Musgrave Park Indigenous Cultural Centre in South Brisbane will start in the middle of next year. This centre will provide the indigenous community of Brisbane with a meeting place and the opportunity to showcase their culture to the people of Queensland. The Millennium Arts Project exemplifies vision and innovation. I have no doubt that in the years to come the Millennium Arts Project will be applauded for positioning Queensland as a world-standard centre for arts and learning.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Picture Archiving and Communication System

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (9.51 a.m.), by leave: This is even more good news. Today I wish to inform the House of yet another great Smart State initiative that has been developed by Queensland Health and will today be launched at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. QPACS, the Queensland Picture Archiving and Communication System, is revolutionising our radiology services and further cementing Queensland as the Smart State. QPACS, a Queensland Health project using software developed by Agfa, is a computer based radiology system which replaces film. The system has the capacity of providing diagnostic-quality images of patient X-rays onto a computer screen, together with the online ability to view radiology reports.

For many years we have used film which provided us with a static image. However, the new technology has paved the way forward and allows dynamic interaction with the image and results in many benefits for patients and staff, including immediate and simultaneous availability of images on computer screens in wards, outpatient clinics, and operating theatres; clinicians being able to call up on the screen all available images of a patient in sequence; clinicians being able to manipulate images in order to obtain improved diagnostic information; images cannot be lost; and significant cost savings in producing images of up to $1.5 million per year. At Queensland Health our ultimate aim is to improve patient care, and the benefits will be significant. Clinicians will be able to get a much clearer view of tumours, fractures and other pathology which may help conditions to be detected earlier, improving treatment and a patient's prognosis. Ultimately and importantly, this could even save lives.

This technology will also enable specialists from a range of disciplines and areas to see images at the same time, resulting in time savings and improved continuity of care. Clinicians will have immediate availability of patient images on computer screens across the campus—in wards, outpatient clinics and operating theatres. The Royal Brisbane and Royal Women's Hospitals are the first major institutions in Queensland to switch their entire systems to this new technology. The

Royal Women's Hospital was PACS enabled on 9 August 2000 and the Royal Brisbane Hospital in August 2001. This site has been established as a prime site for the Asia-Pacific area as it is one of the most modern and progressive systems of its type in the southern hemisphere. The world will be watching our success, and of that we can be proud—proud knowing that we are leading the world in cutting-edge technology which will ultimately improve patient care.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: The Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre is one of two correctional centres in Queensland that is privately operated. It is the only remand centre in south-east Queensland for male prisoners. The management contract for the centre is due to expire next year. I wish to inform the House that a process to let a new five-year contract for the management and operation of the centre has been established. The objectives of the tender process are to select the most appropriate, qualified, innovative and cost-effective service provider for the future management and operation of the centre and to form a contract with a service provider that promotes the highest level of accountability, performance measurement and innovation.

The Beattie Labor government's policy is to ensure that prisons remain publicly owned with a limited number of privately operated prisons. This tender process is entirely consistent with this policy. I might say that our policy contrasts with the approach of the National Party when it was last in power. It wanted to increase the number of privately run prisons and had plans to sell infrastructure off to private concerns. If it had achieved this, then control of the corrective services system would have been forever taken out of the hands of government.

When open and competitive tender processes such as this are established, existing staff naturally become nervous about their future. I want to assure the current permanent staff working at Arthur Gorrie that the new contract will guarantee their employment, except for the senior management team. All accrued leave and entitlements such as sick leave, long service leave and annual leave will be preserved if the operator happens to change. To ensure the best possible outcomes, the tender process will be overseen by two committees responsible for steering the project and evaluating the tenders. These committees will comprise senior officers from State Purchasing, Queensland Treasury and the Department of Corrective Services. Given the nature of this tender, a probity auditor, KPMG, has been appointed.

Expressions of interest for the tender were advertised on 27 October this year and closed on 16 November. The next stage will be that a selection of suitable organisations from the expressions of interest round will be invited to tender. It is anticipated that invitations to tender will be released early next year and the evaluations completed in the middle of next year. It is also anticipated that operations under the new contract will commence by the end of next year.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian Airlines, Cairns

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to be able to add my support today for the establishment of the Australian Airlines base in Cairns. The Cairns region is the third biggest holiday destination in Australia for international visitors and has an increasing level of domestic visitors. There were over two million domestic passenger movements into Cairns airport in the year ended 2000-01. Importantly, there were also over one million international passenger movements through the Cairns airport. The introduction of a new passenger airline servicing Asia and using Cairns as the hub can only enhance the position of Cairns and the tropical north as one of Australia's premier tourist destinations. The value of tourism to tropical north Queensland is estimated at $1.2 billion per annum which makes it by far the biggest industry, employer and driver of the north Queensland economy.

This initiative by Qantas, supported by the Queensland government, can only add to the economic and social benefits for all of Queensland and certainly assists the Cairns region in maintaining momentum after the Ansett collapse and the events of 11 September. Even before the announcement of the Australian Airlines decision, the Cairns airport was directly responsible for the creation of 2,200 jobs and the flow-on effects support thousands of other jobs in the

community. This announcement today is expected to lead to another 350 direct new jobs in Cairns and thousands of additional associated jobs in the tourism industry in Queensland and elsewhere. This will increase over time as the airline expands its services to meet growing demand. Significantly, many of the associated services such as training of staff, provisioning and maintenance will add more employment into the region.

Through the state's ownership of Cairns airport, the state government has been able to provide additional incentives to attract this project to Queensland. These incentives include reduced airport charges, construction of essential infrastructure including provision of a hangar and office accommodation, and rental concessions. The Cairns Port Authority will also contribute to promotion and marketing, which will have a major benefit not just for the new Australian Airlines but in promoting Cairns and the tropical north as a destination.

In September I established a task force to work closely with the Cairns Port Authority to examine the financial and operational issues at the airport, including the possibility of a single integrated terminal. This task force is close to finishing its report, and I look forward to considering its recommendations in the new year. This investment by the state government through its ownership of the Cairns Port Authority will reap long-term dividends at the port authority, in the region and throughout the state.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kelvin Grove Urban Village

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (10.00 a.m.), by leave: One of the major initiatives undertaken by the Beattie government has been the development of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village in Brisbane in the Honourable the Premier's electorate. As honourable members would be aware, the state government, through the Department of Housing, is working with QUT to develop the village on 17 hectares of land incorporating the former Gona Barracks.

As part of preparations for development of the site, a number of old buildings on the barracks site have been recycled for community purposes. Groups from throughout south-east Queensland have received an assortment of 14 huts and sheds previously used as army offices at Gona Barracks. The huts were made available for free with each group carrying the cost of removal and relocation. The groups include: the Silkwood Steiner School at Nerang; the Turrbal Association at Redcliffe, which is in the Honourable Speaker's electorate; Loganlea State High School; Bundamba Cricket Club; Stoney Pinch Pony Club at Tamborine; St Edmund's College at Ipswich; and the Queensland Amateur Pistol Shooting Association at Belmont. The huts are planned to be used for a variety of activities including indigenous education facilities, facilities for children with special needs, a sporting clubhouse and an extension to an existing clubhouse. It is good to know these local groups have benefited from the urban village development and not only have new facilities but also own a piece of our state's history.

Other structures on site at the old Gona Barracks are also being recycled. Some of the timber from larger huts is being retained for incorporation on the site as part of street furniture, landscaping or artwork. Where possible, the large concrete slabs under some of the buildings are being crushed for use on site as road base or fill. All unwanted glass, aluminium and corrugated iron has been scrapped for general recycling. Even before the urban village takes shape, the Beattie government is maximising benefits to the community from its development.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Relief and Supported Accommodation Funding

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government is providing more than $1.4 million in one-off emergency relief funding for Queenslanders leading into the Christmas period. One hundred and three organisations providing support from 151 service locations across the state have received funding to help alleviate the financial strain that many families and individuals face at this time of year. This money helps struggling Queenslanders to pay bills, pay rent or buy food.

This government acknowledges that many major charities and community groups are under pressure as poverty and homelessness increases. New Centrelink breaching practices have also increased the demand for emergency funding. It is time the Commonwealth government increased funding across the human services sector and reviewed its Centrelink breaching practices.

I am also pleased to inform the House that consistent lobbying by the Beattie government has paid dividends for supported accommodation services in Queensland. This week I will be signing off on additional funding to assist 128 services to meet their obligations under the Crisis Assistance Supported Housing (CASH) Award. The funds will help cover employee entitlements for public holidays and overtime, which is a significant issue for many of these 24-hour services. This year services will share $589,500, of which $196,500 will be recurrent from next year. The Beattie government has fully met its obligations on the implementation of the award, and this new funding will help reduce the Commonwealth shortfall, which is currently $944,500 every year. This government will continue to put pressure on the Howard government to fully meet its obligations.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) workers provide front-line assistance and support to homeless Queenslanders, including women and children escaping domestic violence, young people in youth refuges and single men and families in transitional housing. The program supports some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our society, and full and proper funding to meet workers' wages and entitlements is crucial to the ongoing viability of SAAP services. We will continue to put pressure on the Commonwealth to meet its obligations.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pork Industry

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Three and a half years ago the Australian pork industry was in crisis. The downward pressure on prices following the decision to provide greater access for pig meat imports from Canada and Denmark was very severe. There were some people who predicted the Australian pork industry was doomed, paying the price for its predominant focus on the domestic market. But this government put in place a number of measures, including support for local processors, to develop the export focus of the state's pork industry and build on the industry's reputation as a quality, clean and safe producer. So when the outbreak of Nipah virus occurred in Malaysia in the late 1990s, the Queensland industry was well positioned to serve overseas markets such as Singapore.

In 1996-97, 600 tonnes of Queensland pig meat was exported. In 2000-01, that figure had grown to 7,800 tonnes. The fact is there is even greater export potential for the Australian pork industry. Earlier this year I led a trade mission to Japan and Taiwan, and there are very good opportunities for increased trade. The comparatively small production base in Queensland has meant that our ability to service major markets such as Japan has been limited. There is the potential to treble the state's pork production.

The Queensland pork industry is undergoing a major expansion. In 1999-2000, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated the state's pig herd to be 554,000. According to the DPI, approvals for piggeries above 5,000 standard pig units alone in the last 12 months have included 50,000 standard pig units in new piggeries and 126,000 standard pig units in existing piggery expansions. In addition, a further 120,000 standard pig units are under assessment in the form of new piggery and expansion applications. The standard pig units approved by DPI for larger piggeries alone provide a 30 per cent increase on the 1999-2000 figures. There has also been significant growth in smaller piggeries.

The new investment in the pork industry through the establishment of additional piggeries and increased processing capacity has provided and will continue to provide further economic and employment opportunities. The state government's Queensland Pig Industry Development Strategy, aimed at supporting significant and competitive industry expansion, is assisting this. The DPI in particular has given a lot of attention to efforts to streamline the process for assessment of applications, the criteria for approvals and the conditions attaching to those approvals. The DPI has allocated more funding and additional staff to the new Intensive Livestock Systems Unit. Now almost four years later, after a severe crisis, we have a far more confident and export-focused industry readying itself for the festive season and the traditional peak in demand for pork and Christmas hams.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

1080 Poison

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: Last week the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals—NRA—announced it was conducting a review into the future of the poison 1080. The Department of Natural Resources will support the review. However, we will also argue strongly for the state's continued use of 1080 for the control of pest animals like wild dogs and feral pigs.

The poison 1080 is an important management tool for rural Queenslanders and has proven to be a very effective and target-specific tool in the control of wild animal populations. Banning use of 1080 without an equally effective predator-control poison would have only negative impacts for Queensland. Land-holders know the importance of this chemical in controlling the damage to their properties, and my department will continue to assist land-holders and local government in coordinating baiting programs. My department will make a submission to the NRA to reinforce this support and reflect the interests of concerned land-holders, who stand to lose thousands of animals if 1080 cannot be used to minimise damage to livestock.

My department is also taking proactive steps to keep 1080 as an important and effective tool for the control of animal pests. Natural Resources and Mines and the Rural Lands Protection Board recently established a 1080 management committee in response to the growing number of increasingly complex issues associated with the long-term availability and use of 1080 as a pest animal management tool in Queensland.

The committee is made up of representatives from the Wildlife Preservation Society, the Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Health, local government and environmental representatives, and will report to my Rural Lands Protection Board. Natural Resources and Mines also intends to establish an internal working group to address the array of issues identified by the committee, carry out investigations and implement programs that deal with high-priority issues.

Stringent guidelines are already in place to control usage of 1080 for pest animal control. Natural Resources and Mines' baiting techniques are consistent with best practice and care is taken to minimise impacts on non-target species. Natural Resources and Mines is the custodian of the state's 1080 stocks and controls the supply through appropriately licensed operators, who are trained by the department and authorised through Queensland Health.

Australia's native mammals, birds and reptiles generally have a higher tolerance to 1080 than feral animals because 1080 is a naturally occurring poison found in some native plants. The loss or severe restriction of 1080 would seriously affect the department's ability to deliver pest and animal control services as well as have a negative impact on the ability of land-holders and local authorities to control pest animals. That is why Queensland will argue for the continued use of 1080 as an important and effective tool for the control of pest animals.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Ambulance Service

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.11 a.m.), by leave: I am proud to announce that the Queensland Ambulance Service has won the national Community Services and Health Industry Award at the prestigious Australian Training Awards announced recently in Canberra. I would like to congratulate the Queensland Ambulance Service on their win as it was richly deserved.

The Queensland Ambulance Service delivers services to the public from more than 240 locations across the state and employs around 2,200 staff. Training, of course, underpins everything that the QAS does. By providing a high level of training services to QAS staff, we are providing a very high level of patient care to the Queensland community. We have a very good team of educators across the state that lead by example and ensure that the training is of the highest quality.

This commitment to training has assisted the service to evolve from a provider of first aid on wheels into a highly technical, tertiary trained, prehospital patient care service, with a patient satisfaction level of 97 per cent.

Mr Johnson: Do you need an ambulance, Minister?

Mr REYNOLDS: I am sure that they would do a good job if they came.

This satisfaction rating proves that QAS managers and staff are exceptional ambassadors not just for training but for the state as a whole. This award reveals to other public sector organisations the enormous benefits of dedication to training and staff development.

The Queensland Ambulance Service contested the national awards after being a finalist for TAFE Queensland Large Employer of the Year at the Queensland Training Awards in September. Queensland Ambulance training and development is coordinated and managed by its service education centre in Brisbane. The education centre analyses, designs, develops, conducts and validates all off-the-job training and supervises and also assists with regional on-the-job training.

The Queensland Ambulance Service is committed to the training and development of all of its personnel. The organisation provides a wide range of accredited, non-accredited and external courses to staff and the community. To complement its education programs, the QAS also provides training and support in oral and written communication skills to those of our staff who need them.

Because of the nature of the business, the beneficial effects of Queensland Ambulance Service's training affect both the organisation and, of course, its clients. The fact that the QAS has won this prestigious national award and has such a high patient satisfaction rating shows that our training program is really paying huge dividends.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart State Programs

Hon. P. T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Information Economy) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: Since my portfolio was created, members will have seen me displaying different technology that has been developed in this Smart State. Queensland has the talent and the ability to take on new technology, but the bottom line is the people and communities. All the technology in the world is useless unless there are people to take advantage of it. That is why I am so pleased today to be able to tell members about the latest round of funding announcements.

I have a list of more than half a million dollars worth of projects that I seek leave to table—money that this government has allocated for programs designed to help skill Queenslanders for the information economy. We have two major programs to do this. There is the IT&T Skills Training and Role Model—i-STAR—program, which provides grants to industry, educational and training institutions and local authorities for projects that help overcome the ICT skills shortage, especially in regional Queensland. The first round provided $180,000 to 19 projects for more than 5,000 Queenslanders. Half were outside the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor and they included events like ICT holiday camps, career information evenings and specific programs to increase women's participation in ICT. The other is the Community Skills Development Program—CSDP—for rural and regional communities with populations under 10,000.

In the first round, 24 applicants received $170,000 for training activities such as basic computer and Internet use, and developing databases and web sites. I launched round 2 of both programs at the Ekka this year and while both were heavily subscribed, the CSDP received more than twice the applications from the first round.

In the past two weeks I have approved 16 proposals worth almost $230,000 under the i-STAR program and 27 projects worth more than $340,000 through the CSDP. For example, my colleague Barbara Stone in Springwood will be pleased to know that $11,500 has been allocated to the Shailer Park State School council's self-paced IT skills development for women project. This project is designed to attract women to flexible training in ICT. Christine Scott will be happy to hear that four Charters Towers programs have received funding under the Community Skills Development Program, including $13,000 to the Clermont Youth and Housing Association to increase the computer skills and competencies of the employees and voluntary committee. $3,050 will go to the Hughenden-Yumba Community Cooperative Society Ltd to train the local indigenous community in Internet use and web site development. The member for Warrego will be pleased to note that the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health received $7,500 to provide training for staff in electronic information filing management systems. The member for Darling Downs will be pleased to know that some $15,000 went to the Crows Nest and District Tourist and Progress Association to host a series of workshops.

Mr Johnson: Did you forget about Gregory?

Mr LUCAS: There is plenty for Gregory, but I have run out of time. The member wants to have his two-minute speeches. The member for Callide will be pleased to know that some $14,896 went to the Monto Community Development Council to make effective and efficient current publishing software to produce their monthly newsletter and other training.

All up, both rounds of these projects will have seen this government put more than $900,000 into improving the IT&T skills of Queenslanders across the state. That is because the Smart State is not just about the south-east corner; it is about all Queenslanders becoming better and smarter at what they do and enabling them to participate in the opportunities of the new economy. I will be announcing a third round of i-STAR and CSDP in the new year and I urge members to get their local communities involved.

SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.17 a.m.): I advise honourable members that the House will continue to meet past 7.30 p.m. this day. The House can break for dinner at 7 p.m. and resume its sitting at 8.30 p.m. Government business will take precedence for the remainder of the day's sitting except for a 30-minute adjournment debate.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.18 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 9* of 2001 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Royal Brisbane Hospital, Ms W. Erglis

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.18 a.m.): Queensland has become the secret state, but after last week's episode involving the Health Minister, it is now also the standover state. Today I bring to the attention of the House that a letter from whistleblower Wendy Erglis seeking a citizen's right of reply to comments made by the Health Minister will be delivered to the Speaker.

Last week, the Health Minister seriously defamed Ms Erglis in a blatant misuse of parliamentary privilege. As a private citizen, her only recourse is to seek leave from the Speaker to reply to these allegations. The Health Minister impugned Ms Erglis' personal and professional reputation in an attack that must send a shiver down the spines of any potential Queensland whistleblowers.

Protection of whistleblowers who expose corruption and mismanagement in the public sector was one of the cornerstones of the Fitzgerald recommendations. The Health Minister has done enormous damage to the process of accountability in a government that is increasingly demonstrating the dangers of a huge parliamentary majority and the arrogance that goes with that majority.

I also give notice this morning that I will be referring the matter of the letter defaming Ms Erglis, tabled in this House last week by the Health Minister, to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I will express my serious concerns to the Crime and Misconduct Commission about the circumstances in which that letter was written and the manner in which it was signed by staff, some of whom do not even know Ms Erglis, let alone have had the opportunity to work with her.

The Health Minister was seated at the end of the ward with senior management, while staff were forced to sign that particular letter. That was an act of reprisal by the Health Minister and by senior management. That is completely outlawed under the Whistleblowers Act, which provides protection for people like the courageous nurse Ms Erglis, who had the courage to stand up and speak about mismanagement and the legacy left by that mismanagement in damaging staff morale and staff recruitment opportunities. We not only have a secret state; we now have a standover state.

Time expired.

Charters Towers Meals on Wheels

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (10.20 a.m.): In this, the International Year of the Volunteer, it is vitally important for us to look at some of the organisations which have made such huge gifts of time and effort to their communities. One such organisation is Charters Towers Meals on Wheels Inc. and it is this group I wish to speak about in parliament today.

Charters Towers Meals on Wheels operates from a well-appointed kitchen in the grounds of the Dalrymple shire in Charters Towers and has been providing a quality service to our community for many years. We can never give them enough credit for that. Our Meals on Wheels caters for anyone requiring meals where formerly a medical certificate was necessary. This has opened it up to a wider range of users whose reasons may be either medical or social. Meals on Wheels is not a charity; people pay for their meals. New clients vital to the survival of this wonderful organisation are encouraged to make contact.

Special dietary requirements are catered for. Diabetics' meals are available, as are vegetarian meals and meals prepared to comply with religious requirements. All meals are delivered directly to the client's home. The service provides good, cheap and nutritious fare. For example, a three-course meal consisting of orange juice, soup, a main course and a dessert costs just $4.50 and is available three times a week or may be accessed seven days per week on request.

Organisations like Meals on Wheels are vitally important to the mechanism of our society, providing services we could ill afford to lose. They form part of that great army of volunteers who toil away tirelessly on behalf of the community. It is, therefore, beholden on us, as elected members of a democratic government with a social conscience, not only to honour the work of these organisations but also to support them in every way we can. I will be helping deliver meals for this organisation on Christmas Eve because it is a day on which I know the volunteers could be short-staffed and ask the parliament to join with me today in thanking Charters Towers Meals on Wheels for the fine work it has done and continues to do for our community.

Domestic Violence

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (10.22 a.m.): On Thursday, 8 November I asked a question of the Minister for Families regarding issues of domestic violence in this state and I received the answer yesterday. My question was: how many cases were reported to the minister's department? The answer was 13,249 for 1999-2000 and approximately 14,200 for 2000-01. I also requested details of the numbers relevant to women, children, the elderly and people with mental or physical disabilities. The answer I got back was—

This information is not available based on current data collection system.

I also asked, 'How many cases received counselling and help?' I received the same answer—

This information is not available based on current data collection system.

My next question was, 'How many cases required and were able to access crisis care?'

The answer was—

This information is not available based on current data collection system.

Based on this information, I wonder how the minister can possibly provide adequate services to the community and to the victims of domestic violence. Obviously, she does not. I know these issues are a matter of complaint within the community.

I also asked about the number of cases that were reported on the Sunshine Coast. Last year, the number was nearly 1,000. The questions I had asked the minister generally regarding the whole state, I also asked specifically in relation to the Sunshine Coast. The answer I received was that none of that data was collected. The minister has no idea how many cases required crisis care and what help was given.

In her answer the minister acknowledged that approximately seven per cent of reported cases were on the Sunshine Coast, but over the past two years the provision of funding for crisis and support services remained steady at 3.2 per cent. In other words, the Sunshine Coast receives less than half the funding it should be getting for the percentage of reported cases. I wonder which other regions are in exactly the same position. All I can say is this minister should be condemned for the lack of knowledge she has about her own department and this issue in particular.

Time expired.

Bus It Safe Program

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP)(10.24 a.m.): I would like to speak on a positive initiative in my area. In October I launched the Bus It Safe Program in Caboolture. A local bus company, Caboolture Bus Lines, has developed a 45-minute bus safety program which is aimed at reinforcing safe practices in and around buses, and approximately 800 students will participate in the program next year. Grant and Janette Craike, the owners of Caboolture Bus Lines, identified a need to provide additional road safety awareness to our young students, some of our most vulnerable road users. Grant and Janette then spent their own time and energy in developing an effective program. They worked in closely with Queensland Transport to ensure the Bus It Safe Program reflects bus safety guidelines.

The program includes an introductory session to broadly canvass road safety issues; a hands-on session where students are taken to a stationary bus and shown safety procedures, including understanding blind spots; and then an in-class lesson where students view a video as well as reinforce the safety procedures shown at the bus earlier. Queensland Transport provided almost $4,700 for some groovy posters, stickers and bookmarks which reinforce the road safety message.

Last month I attended a session at the Tullawong State School with the year 4 students. I was impressed to see how easily the students could understand the material and how enjoyable the learning was. The program is designed to run three times in a student's school life in years 2, 4 and 6. By providing repeat sessions and the follow-up material for students to talk to their parents about, the road safety message has an excellent chance to become embedded in the students' minds. A safer school and bus environment will be the very positive result.

It should be noted that Caboolture Bus Lines are delivering the program at no cost to students or to the schools and there is potential for the Bus It Safe Program to be promoted to other bus companies throughout Queensland as a viable and practical community education initiative, and I would encourage them to do so. I congratulate Grant and Janette Craike in recognising and then acting on providing an important road safety community service and wish Caboolture Bus Lines every success. This truly shows how governments, school communities and local business can work together to address and accomplish specific community issues.

Time expired.

Cloning of Humans Legislation

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.26 a.m.): I believe we all support good ethical medical research and are keen to see science used for the benefit of humankind to achieve better outcomes for health and wellbeing. But does this mean anything goes, that the end justifies the means and that no statutory regulation is necessary? Can we trust codes of conduct and goodwill to provide the necessary protections for society against the huge and cashed-up biotechnology industry? Certainly not! There are complex ethical issues, not only in research on human genetic material and embryos but also on animals and plants. If the wider community feels strongly about genetically modified food, it cannot be assumed that they would feel less strongly about genetically altered humans.

I am strongly critical that this government has, in reality, done next to nothing to address these issues in legislation and certainly has not consulted the community and encouraged an informed public discourse. There are no laws in Queensland, on the statute books or on the table of parliament for debate, which would prevent cross-species research and the mixing of animal and human DNA. Already in Australia there has been research mixing human and pig DNA. Does Queensland want to follow suit and have a smart pig as the mascot for the state's biotechnology boom? Or maybe it would be a dumb pig, depending on whose human DNA you used. The all-party Commonwealth parliamentary committee made recommendations that states such as Queensland which have no legislation regulating embryo research should introduce legislation to limit research in human embryos according to the principles set out in the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines—guidelines such as banning the mixing of human and animal gametes to produce hybrid embryos or banning the commercial trading in gametes or embryos.

I am urging the government to refer this issue and the currently totally inadequate Cloning of Humans (Prohibition) Bill to an all-party parliamentary committee to consult with the public and the scientific community as the alternative does not promote a Smart State. The use of stem cells is a promising area of scientific research. Stem cells also can be sourced from other areas, but these

matters must be dealt with together and they must be dealt with by an all-party parliamentary committee in a way which involves proper consultation.

Time expired.

Mature-age Employment

Ms STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): A very disturbing message is coming from many employers, that is: if you are over 45 years, we are not really interested in you. I am meeting far too many men and women over 45 in my local area who are struggling to find secure work. They feel that they are not even being considered for interviews despite having confidence in their skills and the quality of their applications. An OECD report found that in 1960 the typical working man devoted 50 of his 68 years of life to work. In the 1990s the typical working man lived to 76 but devoted only half his life—38 years—to work.

The Experience Pays Program and the Back to Work Program are very significant new program initiatives introduced this year by the minister, Matt Foley, to assist older job seekers. More than 20 mature-age job seekers have also gained training and work placement through the Community Employment Assistance Program funded locally at Acacia Ridge, in my area. Our state government must continue to expand these projects and progress the Experience Pays and Back to Work initiatives.

International researcher on mature-age employment Dr Phil Taylor is in Brisbane next week to speak at forums hosted by Dr Margaret Steinberg, QCOSS and the Department of Employment and Training. This will provide some much-needed public debate and attention on the plight of mature-age job seekers. All employers must get rid of the early use-by date attitude with which they are unfairly branding mature-age job seekers. They must give them a go. A lot of talent is being overlooked.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Royal Brisbane Hospital, Ms W. Erglis

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Minister for Health to her attack in this House on nurse Wendy Erglis and the clear message she has delivered to whistleblowers that anyone who dares raise allegations of public sector mismanagement in Queensland will suffer personal and professional abuse under the cloak of parliament, and I ask: will she apologise to this person, whose only sin was to approach her managers for assistance with a complaint and then follow due process, which should have guaranteed her protection under whistleblower legislation?

Mrs EDMOND: Clearly, there are a few different opinions on this issue. It probably has more facets than a Tiffany diamond. I think they have all been aired well and truly by staff and those who left the Royal Brisbane Hospital as a result of the claims and counterclaims. I do not think it is constructive in the slightest to continue airing and debating those various claims from either side in this place.

It is a well-known and indisputable fact that there is a shortage of nurses in that unit. The only person who does not seem to know that is the Leader of the Opposition. He did not know it when he was the Minister for Health and he does not know it now. For his benefit, I will table the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showing an oncology nursing shortage in every state of Australia along with a generalised shortage of nurses right across Australia.

As Health Minister, I have put most of my effort into addressing those issues—the nursing recruitment and retention issues and giving cancer treatment the priority it did not have under the coalition government. The government's $25 million Radiation Oncology Services Plan is a far-reaching and comprehensive strategy for enhancing and delivering cancer treatment services and radiation oncology throughout this state in a way that has never been seen before. It involves the supply and installation of nine new linear accelerators at the Royal Brisbane, Townsville and Mater Hospitals and a new radiation oncology unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, which will be taking its first patients in January next year. The new technology is in addition to more than $2.5 million in extra cancer services announced in the 2000-01 state budget, including an extra 13 new permanent staff positions.

We have implemented practical measures to prevent cancer, including the Tobacco Action Plan, the new passive smoking legislation, a Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy and funding for health promotion and healthy lifestyles programs throughout Queensland through Health Promotion Queensland. We have provided more funding for breast and cervical cancer screening programs, including an extra $600,000 this year. We have also increased state funding for community palliative care from what was it under members opposite?—$500,000 under the coalition to $5.1 million.

Our expanded and improved palliative care options for Queensland also include support such as a 24-hour state-wide 1800 number and a Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education at the Royal Brisbane Hospital to advance the expertise and skills of those who look after the terminally ill. It is a whole package.

Royal Brisbane Hospital, Ms W. Erglis

Mr HORAN: I refer the Premier to the Health Minister's blatant misuse of parliamentary privilege in her attack in this House on whistleblower Wendy Erglis. Since that attack, the media and the opposition office have received numerous calls from Queensland Health staff supporting Wendy Erglis but expressing their fear in speaking out. I ask: will the Premier give the House an assurance that Queensland Health staff members who come forward with issues critical of Queensland Health management will not be victimised and will not jeopardise their jobs?

Mr BEATTIE: If everybody behaves in an appropriate way, they are treated with courtesy and respect. It is that simple. My government has always had that view and will continue to.

This issue, as the Minister for Health has indicated, has been aired in a considerable way over a period of time. We believe that everyone has had their 50c worth. What we are concerned about is patients. We are concerned about ensuring that Queenslanders get lifesaving opportunities throughout the health system to have another chance. I want to move on. The government wants to move on. We believe that the patients and the community want to move on. Indeed, I am sure the staff want to move on also.

I have given a clear position on what the government's view is. However, let me refer to a letter written by Ronald Middleton, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Ward 9D, which simply goes through the circumstances of the minister's visit. As the member would appreciate, the minister has briefed me on these matters. I think that letter sets out the circumstances of the day and answers the questions. It is not a provocative letter. It is simply informative. I hope that will settle this issue, because I want to focus, as does the government, on patients. I want to make it very clear that patients are more important than any politician on either side of the House, more important than Mike Horan, Peter Beattie, the Health Minister or anyone else. We want to put patients first.

Mr Horan: What about the staff?

Mr BEATTIE: I will talk about the staff.

Mr Horan: Victimising them in the parliament.

Mr BEATTIE: I ask the Leader of the Opposition not to be rude. Let me go through this. If the member wants to talk about staff, let me go through the circumstances of the day to which he referred. The letter states

The Minister arranged to visit Ward 9D on Wednesday afternoon (5/12/01). A time of 2.30pm was arranged with ward staff to coincide with both morning and evening shifts. Those present included Doctors, Nurses and hospital administration. The Minister arrived at approximately 2.30pm and staff were organised to meet with her. An informal meeting was held, where the Health Minister listened to the issues that ward staff had with previous questions and responses in Parliament and the media conference conducted by Wendy Erglis. The staff had already sent a letter that morning—

and there is reference to a copy—

in response to Mr Horan's Parliamentary Statements.

The Health Minister, after discussions with the staff, asked what she could do to show and provide support for the unit. The nursing staff at the meeting asked if they could write a letter in response to these previous conferences and questions. The letter was written by the CNC, Acting Nurse Manager, Ward Clinical Nurses, Ward Acting Clinical Nurses and the Ward Registered Nurses. Senior Medical and Nursing staff were given the letter for information only, but the content of the letter came from nursing staff of the unit. The letter was circulated among staff ...

I table a copy for the information of the House, because it includes other matters of interest.

I know that in politics political argy-bargy is very tempting, but what is important here is patients. Let me make the point that we want to put patients first. They are the most important people in this. Let us move on.

Goodwill Bridge

Mr REEVES: I refer the Premier to the fact that, as I catch the bus on the world-class South East Busway into this magnificent city, I am taken by the sight of the Goodwill Bridge. However, I am more taken by the number of people using it. I ask: would the Premier be in a position to outline the number of people using the city's new pedestrian bridge?

Mr BEATTIE: In fact, in early November a count of trips across the bridge was conducted—and things have improved since then. The study involved stationing a person on the bridge from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to count each hour the number of cyclists and pedestrians crossing the bridge. Over that two-week period, there was a total of 103,461 trips across the bridge. Yes, that is right: more than 100,000 trips in two weeks. This represented 83,925, or 81.1 per cent, pedestrians and 19,536, or 18.9 per cent, cyclists. What a popular bridge!

A government member: What a smart idea.

Mr BEATTIE: What a very smart idea.

In week one, 53,300 trips were counted, made up of 82.2 per cent pedestrians and 17.8 per cent cyclists. Week two was slightly less, at 50,158 trips, consisting of 80 per cent pedestrians and 20 per cent cyclists. The highest usage was on the Sunday, with 17,256 trips in week one and 12,664 trips in week two. This represented 32 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of the total week's usage. The bottom line is that weekends are very popular. The weekends combined represented 45 per cent of total usage over the 14 days. Cyclists represented 18.4 per cent of weekend usage.

On the first Sunday the combined pedestrian-cycle usage reached 1,017 at 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and progressively increased, reaching a peak of 2,087 at 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. from which it trended down, reaching 1,018 combined users at 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. What an extraordinarily popular bridge! A similar trend was recorded on the second Sunday, with the busiest times recorded from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. and remaining busy throughout the day, dropping off at 5 p.m. The busiest times on the first Saturday were at 11 a.m. to 12 noon and again from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., peaking at 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., with 948 combined pedestrian-cycle trips across the bridge in that hour. On the second Saturday the peak once again was recorded at 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., with 1,009 combined pedestrian-cycle trips.

Cyclists' usage of the bridge on the weekend was highest from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., when they represented over 30 per cent of all users. In general, on Saturday users of the bridge had strong representation from people exercising whereas Sunday was mainly families out enjoying the day, which is exactly what we said the bridge would be used for. The midweek figures are interesting. Midweek peak usage times were 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. for early morning exercisers, 12 noon to 1 p.m. for lunchtime walkers and runners, and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. with people leaving work or education facilities. Busiest times for cyclists midweek were 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The study clearly demonstrates that the Goodwill Bridge is being extensively used by pedestrians and cyclists and is clearly establishing itself as a major access point between the city and South Bank. Although it is early days this indicative data is very promising. The bridge is set to become an icon.

Suncorp Metway Stadium

Mr JOHNSON: I direct a question to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport. I refer to the answer to a question on notice of 17 October this year which I directed to the Minister for Transport in relation to the impact of the Lang Park redevelopment project on transport infrastructure. In particular, I asked him whether there was a proposal for a fourth and fifth rail track through to Roma Street station from the Ipswich line. In answer, the Minister for Transport advised that the transport infrastructure servicing the new stadium allows for the provision of these extra freight tracks in that area and I seek leave to table the plans.

Leave granted.

Mr JOHNSON: Given the Minister for Transport's answer, why was this infrastructure not included in the Treasurer's answer to me on 18 October in which he purported to put on the public

record all of the transport infrastructure associated with the Lang Park redevelopment? Who is misleading the parliament, the Treasurer or the Minister for Transport? Are these rail extensions included in the Lang Park redevelopment or not? If so, how much will they cost? The Treasurer knows about the maps. He has seen the maps.

Mr MACKENROTH: The only freight that we will need to bring into the Suncorp Metway Stadium development will be the soft drinks, beer and the food that people will consume. We will bring it all in by truck. So we will not be building a freight line into the Suncorp Metway Stadium to enable Queensland Rail to bring it in. We are not building a freight line because we are building a stadium. I know that the member is trying to find something that is not there, but I think that this question has really taken it to the ridiculous. Two months ago I tabled in the parliament all of the infrastructure associated with the Suncorp Metway Stadium redevelopment.

Mr Johnson: You didn't mention that.

Mr MACKENROTH: No, because it is not involved with it.

Mr Johnson: It is involved.

Mr MACKENROTH: It is not. Let me assure the member—and if I cannot convince him perhaps his leader can; and if he cannot we will have to go to the brains trust and get Lawrence to do it. We are definitely not building a freight line for the Suncorp Metway Stadium. I have no intention to do that and, no matter how much the member tries to make me do it, I will not.

Events Regional Development Program; RSPCA Christmas Appeal

Mr CUMMINS: I direct a question to the Premier. The regional communities of Queensland, including the Sunshine Coast, have a proud tradition of hosting magnificent regional events. These are vital for our social fabric and economic stability. Is the state government undertaking any proactive measures to ensure that they continue?

Mr BEATTIE: I am calling on all present to advise their regional events organisers that the second round of the Queensland Events Regional Development Program is now seeking support. My suggestion is that they get in now to ensure they do not miss the February 2002 cut-off date. The first round of this was hugely successful. There were 84 applicants in the first round, with 16 being successful in sharing more than $330,000. We want to do the same or better next time. Again, local event managers, businesses, organisers and associations who have an event with the potential to showcase their region are encouraged to contact the Queensland Events Regional Development Program secretariat in Townsville—which is where it is located—for an application kit.

The program is about assisting Queensland's tourism economy through regional events. We all know that events and tourism are directly linked. The member represents a tourism area. That is why he is expressing the interest that he is. Applicants must show that the event generates local economic activity and enhances the appeal of the destination and the visitor experience. The Queensland Events Regional Development Program secretariat will work closely with local authorities and regional tourist organisations to identify events and celebrations with the potential to create tourism and jobs.

In the coming year the Queensland government through Queensland Events will support a calendar of some 50 events, the majority of which will be staged outside of Brisbane. That is important. With the second round of announcements under the program, Queensland will have the largest portfolio of supported events of any state in Australia. To better support those seeking support or intending to apply for later rounds we have planned a series of information workshops designed to assist local event managers, businesses, organisers and associations to fully understand the program before applying for funding. They will be staged in January. Hosted by Queensland Events Regional Development Manager, David Lloyd, the sessions will in held in Rockhampton on 14 January; Emerald, 15 January; Kingaroy, 16 January; Gympie, 17 January; and Maroochydore, 18 January—just down the road. Topics will cover the criteria required, application forms, budgeting and program management. Round two of the three-year $3 million Queensland Events Regional Development Program closes on 8 February, with the successful announcements to be made in April. My suggestion to the member is to support the regional events groups and have them make application as soon as possible. I thank the member for his support.

While I am talking about other events, I should mention that later today Henry Palaszczuk, the Minister for Primary Industries, and I are going to support the RSPCA's Christmas appeal.

Santa Paws is going to turn up, and he is going to help to try to raise $100,000 towards the care of the sick, injured, homeless, abandoned or cruelly treated animals over the festive season.

Mrs Edmond: Is Rusty going?

Mr BEATTIE: More than 4,000 animals are expected to arrive at the RSPCA's Fairfield refuge alone during now and the end of January. Rusty will be making a guest appearance. Rusty has been in retirement for some time. The RSPCA asked him if he would made a guest appearance today, and he has agreed, only because Henry Palaszczuk will be there.

Royal Brisbane Hospital, Surgery Cancellation

Mrs PRATT: I direct a question to the Health Minister. Mr Whitbread had an appointment with RBH to undergo surgery on 21 November 2001. He was told to be at the hospital at 7.45 a.m. on the 20th to comply. Mr Whitbread had to rise at 4 a.m. to travel to Brisbane. At 9 a.m. the doctor realised no beds were available, but no message was received by Mr Whitbread to save him an eight-hour wait before being told at 4.20 p.m. to go home and come back the next day. This is an unacceptable imposition to put on people, especially the elderly, and this is not an isolated incident but one repeated often. Will the minister consider a coordination system to liaise between the hospitals, doctors and patients to ensure that patients, especially those who travel extremely long distances, are not inconvenienced unduly, and will the minister apologise to Mr Whitbread and other for their inconvenience?

Mrs EDMOND: I am quite happy to say that I apologise for any inconvenience. Of course, in the course of a day at a busy hospital they have to deal with priorities that cannot always be planned. In the winter months the Royal Brisbane Hospital was under extreme pressure. There was a huge number of medical patients admitted who stayed in hospital longer than usual and had to be dealt with.

We also have patient coordinators, whose role is to try to ensure that the situation the member has just described does not happen or happens as infrequently as possible. Sometimes it cannot be avoided. The patient may have left before the hospital tried to contact them. We certainly indicate to the hospitals that they should give priority and concern, where possible, to people who have come a long way for their care at the Royal Brisbane Hospital because that care unfortunately cannot be provided closer to where they live.

This is an issue. It can become an issue in the winter months, when we have a very high level of demand. In recent months we have seen around Australia evidence that private hospitals have been pushing more of their medical patients into the public system—that has created extra pressure in the public system—as they have been focusing on elective surgery, since people have finished their year's waiting time for private health cover and are undergoing elective surgery, which is far more remunerative for the private hospitals. This issue has been put forward by the health ministers around Australia to the Commonwealth government to review. It is certainly something that we will be pursuing at the next meeting.

We apologise for any inconvenience—we try to manage without it—but at the end of the day the patient with the highest priority must be dealt with first.

Drug Courts

Mr LAWLOR: I refer the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to the drug court trials at Southport, Ipswich and Beenleigh Magistrates Courts, and I ask: what progress has there been in rehabilitating drug addicted offenders?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the honourable member for Southport for his question. He has been an outstanding advocate for the drug courts and the rehabilitation of drug offenders in his electorate.

I am delighted to advise the House that Queensland's drug courts have continued their record of success, with three more young people overcoming drug addiction after intensive rehabilitation. Three young women have graduated from the drug courts after spending between 12 and 18 months fighting their addictions. Two of the women appeared before the Southport Magistrates Court on break and enter, stealing and receiving charges. They were addicted to heroin, and these crimes were perpetrated to fund their drug habits. In accordance with the principles of our drug courts program, the magistrate gave them a chance to undergo rehabilitation instead of going to jail. Both young women, who are raising young children, fought

hard over 17 months to kick their habits and reclaim their lives. The third young woman appeared before the Beenleigh Magistrates Court last year charged with stealing. She was addicted to amphetamines. The drug court gave her an opportunity to undertake rehabilitation and, despite some setbacks, after 14 months she is now drug free.

The use of illicit drugs is a major concern for the government, and the drug courts provide a realistic initiative to break the cycle of drug dependence. There have now been six graduations from the drug courts trial. These successes demonstrate that the program can make a difference in breaking the cycle of drug related crime and steadily working towards reducing crime in our communities.

The drug courts program gives offenders a chance to overcome their drug habit and their criminal activity. That is good for them and good for the community. More than 100 offenders have been placed on intensive drug rehabilitation orders since the drug courts trial began in June last year. The length of rehabilitation depends on the extent of the addiction, but most offenders are required to undergo a 12-month program. We believe that the drug courts program is worth pursuing, and these recent successes reinforce our government's commitment to planning the extension of the trial to Cairns and Townsville.

Logan Hospital, Intensive Care Unit

Miss SIMPSON: I refer the Minister for Health to the closure of the intensive care ward at the Logan Hospital due to the failure of Queensland Health to recruit a replacement specialist. Given that there have been two resignations over recent months, is the failure to keep a specialist and to recruit a replacement not just another example of the department's lack of resourcing in this unit which has impacted on staff? Does the minister agree with the comments of the Australian Medical Association's Queensland President, Bill Glasson, who said that he 'was not aware of a specialist shortage of intensive care specialists'? What is the minister doing to ensure that Queenslanders' lives are not going to be placed in danger because of a lack of a fully operational intensive care unit at Logan Hospital?

Mrs EDMOND: I am always concerned when a unit is not fully operational. However, people should be aware that intensive care units are networked in the south-east corner. When there is pressure on one, patients are moved around. When one is full patients are moved, because of the unpredictable nature of the call on intensive care units.

I have been assured that everything that can be done to recruit new staff is being done at Logan Hospital. It has been advertising since the time of the resignation. It has also informed me that it has made arrangements with Princess Alexandra Hospital to cover higher level cases where necessary. The hospitals are working in an unprecedented cooperative way as a result of the zonal structure. Everything is being done to maximise the care of patients and prevent any inconvenience to patients or their families. Staff are being informed if patients have to be looked after at another hospital.

Woree Caravan Park

Mr PITT: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to last week's sudden closure of the Woree Caravan Park in Cairns after power to the site was cut. I also refer to the need for alternative accommodation for many former residents, and I ask: what steps has the Department of Housing taken to assist former residents of the Woree Caravan Park?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for the question and note in passing that Scrooge is alive and well and still in the Cairns area. These people have been turfed into homelessness as a result of the closure of the Woree Caravan Park. I know that the honourable member was contacted about this situation, and I congratulate him and other members from the Cairns area on their efforts in trying to help those families.

We can contrast the behaviour of the people who turned off the power on these hapless residents with the behaviour of staff of the Department of Housing, the Department of Families and the Cairns City Council, who put their shoulders to the wheel immediately the plight of these people became known. I did not think I would live long enough to see people thrown out onto the street in such a callous way but, unfortunately, it is becoming a trend. Something like 430 caravan units of accommodation have been closed in Queensland in each year over the last three years. It is a very worrying trend.

The fact is that the Department of Housing was able to help 20 families that were in desperate straits. Eleven of them secured bond loans immediately. One family in which the father had some health issues was put up in a motel and subsequently transferred to Bowen. Five were transferred straight into priority housing and public housing. I guess this shows what a caring government we are and how fortunate we are that we have public servants out there on the ground who put in place the views of this government.

That is in sharp contrast, of course, to what we heard in this House last week. A gentleman opposite said that these sorts of people would be relieved of their plight by a $14,000 first home owners grant. That comment highlights the contrast between the attitude which exists on this side of the House and that which exists on the other side of the House. There is clearly no understanding over there, and certainly none in Canberra, of how we will assist people in this plight in the future. Believe you me, this is going to get worse.

There are 24,000 people in Queensland who live in caravan parks at the moment. They are the types of people who are vulnerable in these sorts of situations—when somebody sells the site out from under them or the receivers move in, turn off the power and chuck them out into the street even though they have nowhere to go. We were fortunate in this set of circumstances that we were able to respond with housing options. The more the Howard government strangles housing funds to the state, the less capability we as a state will have to respond to that.

I note that there have been no interjections today about $14,000 grants. Those opposite now know, since they have done their homework, that that is not an option for people in these sorts of circumstances. We might as well offer them $50,000. That still would not help them.

Auction of Glover Painting, Art Gallery Collusion

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Minister for the Arts to recent media reports that allege that Australia's respective art galleries colluded to bring down the price of an oil painting by John Glover, which was recently sold to the Australian National Gallery for $1.5 million, and I ask: does the minister have any knowledge of such events? Given that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chairman has announced he will be investigating the allegations, can the minister clarify what action he has taken to establish which galleries were involved and the extent of any alleged involvement?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am not aware of any improper or unlawful collusion on the part of the Queensland Art Gallery in relation to the matter in question. I am aware that the National Competition Authority is investigating that matter. In fact, the concern on the part of the Queensland Art Gallery is entirely of a different kind. The concern on its part has been with the conduct of the National Gallery in Canberra and the National Gallery of Victoria with respect to a different matter—not of collusion but of a lack of cooperation amongst the galleries, in particular for the exhibition of the Italian Masterpieces which is to be shown in Canberra but not, it would appear at this stage, in Brisbane, notwithstanding the attempts of cooperation amongst the other galleries that were quite concerned when they were effectively gazumped by the public announcement.

When one comes to analyse issues of collusion or cooperation amongst art galleries, one has to do it not only from the narrow point of competition in a commercial marketplace but also from the point of view of the public interest and the public benefit. My concern is to ensure that the voice of Queensland is heard in those negotiations. My concern is also to ensure that the public of Queensland gets access to art exhibitions and to the opportunity to purchase and acquire artworks that are in the interests of the public of Queensland. This is all the more important because, under the national coalition government, Queensland continues to receive the lowest per capita arts funding of any Australian state.

I look forward to the day in this chamber when the honourable member for Caloundra, the Liberal Party and the National Party join with me in standing up to the Commonwealth government and demanding a fair go, demanding at least that Queensland receive the average per capita funding for the arts. At the moment, what we see in today's newspaper is yet further evidence that the money being spent hand over fist by the Commonwealth in Sydney, Melbourne and the other states is reaping rewards through increased audience numbers in the performing arts and yet Queensland is facing difficulties. Why? Because we continue to receive the lowest per capita Commonwealth arts funding, and there are no indications at this stage that the Commonwealth coalition government intends to do anything to remedy that injustice.

Female Apprentices and Trainees

Mrs REILLY: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts: can he say whether women are getting a fair go in terms of the numbers of apprenticeships and traineeships entered into in Queensland?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. They are not getting enough of a fair go, but we are working on it. Whether it is the Supreme Court or whether it is the parliament of Queensland, the institutions of our democracy should not be dominated by the old boys club, and that applies with equal force to the apprenticeship and traineeship system. The number of female apprentices and trainees engaged in training in this state has increased by 12 per cent in the year to September. Since 1997 the percentage of females in apprenticeships and traineeships has leapt from 29.25 per cent to 34.4 per cent in 2001. When it comes to the number of people involved, the figures are just as dramatic. There were 18,800 females in training in September this year, up from 16,710 in September last year. It is also a positive indicator for the future of job training in Queensland right across-the-board.

The latest figures are an encouraging sign that Queensland is well on track to reach its target of 55,300 apprentices and trainees in training by July next year. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research released these figures as part of the Australian apprentice and trainee statistics for the September quarter of 2001. They give a snapshot of how the work force of the future is taking shape. The trades and related workers occupational group continues to represent the largest occupational group of apprentices and trainees, accounting for almost 46 per cent of the total number of Queenslanders in training. Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers—for example, childcare workers and sales representatives—make up the next largest occupational group at 20.9 per cent. They were followed by elementary clerical, sales and service workers such as sales assistants and office trainees, along with labourers and people working in areas like commercial cleaning and freight handling. I am not sure they will need freight handling services in the rail at Lang Park, but—

Mr Mackenroth: Suncorp Metway.

Mr FOLEY: At Suncorp Metway, but I salute the novelty of the honourable member's earlier question.

The estimated number of people commencing apprenticeships and traineeships increased by 39,400 over the 12 months to September this year. This represented a growth of 7.1 per cent. In relation to the estimated number successfully completing their apprenticeship or traineeship—and we are putting increasing efforts into making sure that people not only start apprenticeships but also complete them—it has also increased by nine per cent to 20,600 over the 12 months to September 2001. The Beattie government gives a high priority to encouraging young people to gain skills that assist them into employment. Frankly, we as a community cannot afford the waste of so much female talent being denied opportunities. We need to ensure that our apprenticeship and traineeship system is available for all the community, including women and girls.

Roofing Traineeships

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth to his decision to withdraw support for metal roofing and fabrication roofing traineeships, resulting in the immediate loss of 28 jobs at one Brisbane training group and the possible loss of hundreds of other jobs before Christmas. The decision came after pressure from the plumbers union, which withdrew its support for the program, despite the successful completion of roofing traineeships since 1998. I ask: why has the minister buckled to union bully tactics and allowed hundreds of jobs held by young people to be jeopardised at a time when Queensland has a high breakdown in traineeships and the highest unemployment rate on mainland Australia?

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member's question is based on so many false premises, on so many untruths and on so many profound misunderstandings of the facts that—

Mr Mackenroth: You could drive a freight train through it.

Mr FOLEY: Yes, we could drive a freight train through it. I thank the minister for his penetrating insight. He moves through the back line as Wally Lewis did.

Let me deal with the facts. The facts are that this government puts the jobs and training of those trainees right at the very top of the flagpole. That is why last week I pulled together the parties who were in dispute in relation to this matter and had a meeting right here in this building.

I brought together the East Coast Training and Employment group organisation and the CEPU, the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, with my department and with local members who are affected. The issue was that there were a number of trainees—36 of them—who are performing facia, guttering and metal roofing work on building and construction sites. The issue in question was whether or not they were properly covered under an appropriate traineeship. There was a dispute in relation to that and it would seem that an error had been made by the group training company in entering into that.

The question then was how that situation was to be remedied. One way of remedying it would have been for the group training company to have paid them the full relevant award wage and backdate it. That would have resulted, as the honourable member surmised, in job losses and enormous financial difficulties for the group training company, with knock-on effects to other apprentices and trainees. What we got out of that meeting was a positive, cooperative, commonsense, practical approach by the trade union involved, the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, to put together an industrial package which would enable appropriate industrial entitlements to apply which would not break the bank so far as the group training company was concerned. May I say that the spirit of cooperation which was forthcoming at that meeting as a result of representations made to me by the member for Kurwongbah—

Mr Lingard: Some 28 people lost their jobs.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member is simply wrong. Those jobs have been put on a secure basis. There is, however, a further matter over and above that which concerns Group Training Australia and which is still the subject of discussions with my department. It is true that a number of trainees have been stood down for a period of a fortnight. That is the only sliver of truth in an otherwise total array of fabrication on the part of the honourable member opposite. That has been brought about because the group training scheme in question is not attracted to the solution that has been arrived at between the other group training scheme and the CEPU. Let me assure the member that I and my department will be doing all in our power to resolve that as we resolved the other matter.

Police Facilities, Remote Areas

Ms JARRATT: I ask the Minister for Police and Corrective Services: can he inform the parliament what is being done to improve facilities for police in isolated communities like Cape York?

Mr McGRADY: I first of all thank the member for the question. Indeed, it is a timely one, because work has just started on some new police accommodation at Aurukun, which, as we all know, is in Cape York and in the electorate of my colleague the Minister for Transport.

From time to time I hear people making comments about police housing. There have been great advances made in recent times, but there is still a long way to go. When I first became the minister, I gave a commitment that I would do all in my power to improve housing for our police men and women who live in the remote parts of the state because I and other members of this House understand the problems faced by men and women who work in remote Queensland.

In addition to our regular maintenance budget, I was provided with $100,000 by my ministerial colleague and great friend the Minister for Public Works. That $100,000 was for maintenance on police houses in the far north. Not being content with the $100,000 for the far north, my colleague came further to the rescue and gave us $100,000 for maintenance on houses in the north-west. So one could say that we are trying to provide maintenance throughout the length and breadth of Queensland for our police officers. Some of the $100,000 will be spent on work in Malanda, Mount Surprise, Croydon, Kowanyama, Forsayth and many other places.

In addition to the $200,000 that we are spending on maintenance, we will spend some money on a project in Aurukun which will build duplex accommodation for the officers serving in that community. This project will consist of two self-contained two-bedroom residences with lounge/dining room, kitchen and bathroom facilities. This project is worth just under half a million dollars. Construction started on this project at the end of November and it is due to be completed in the early months of next year, factoring in the wet season. This new facility will greatly improve the living environment of police officers living in Aurukun. They do a great job working in such an isolated community. The Beattie Labor government recognises the important role that police officers play in these remote parts of Queensland, and we will continue to do all that we can to improve the living conditions of these fine men and women.

Port Pilotage

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. Last week in a ministerial statement he outlined proposed changes to pilotage services in Queensland. Concerns have been expressed to me that the intention is to return pilots back under departmental control while pilot vessels will remain with the port authorities. Both the pilots, pilot vessels and staff should remain together given their interdependency. Pilot vessel staff in my electorate have been told that their jobs are now at risk because of these changes. Will the minister give the pilot vessel staff an assurance that their jobs will not be lost and that they will remain linked with pilots in any reviewed structure?

Mr BREDHAUER: I do not know who is telling the people on these pilot launch vessels that their jobs are at risk, but they are not doing anybody any favours by saying that because it is simply untrue. When I made the statement in parliament a week or so ago, it was to announce that Queensland Transport would undertake consultation with the port authorities in relation to pilotage services. That is in response to a situation which arose in the port of Cairns in my home town. We indicated in our initial position that we were interested in working with the pilots under an agency arrangement with Queensland Transport.

We did not anticipate at that stage that we would take over the pilot launch services because they are well established. The land-based facilities and the vessels are owned by the port authorities. Quite frankly, it was my view that the port authorities would not want to relinquish those. So we were happy to work with the port authorities on that basis. But if any port authority, especially the Gladstone Port Authority, has decided that it does not want to operate those services, then I have had discussions with my department and we can have discussions with the relevant authority about taking over those services so that we can ensure security of employment for the people who work there and also security for their conditions of employment. Those are the two issues that are first and foremost in my mind.

In moving to these new arrangements, I want to assure people that security of employment is a key issue both for the pilots and the associated staff, but securing their conditions of employment is also important to us. It is in the consultation phase—and I need to stress that for the benefit of the honourable member and people in her electorate who might have expressed these concerns to her—so no final decisions have been made, but they are two of the key foundation stones of the approach that I have taken. We need to make sure that the actual employment and the conditions of employment for people working in the pilotage area are not placed under any threat. I give that assurance.

I make the point that people who are going around claiming that their jobs are at risk are not doing anybody any favours at all. I would be very disappointed to hear that people were behaving in that way. Queensland Transport is now consulting with the port authorities in an open and honest way to try to resolve the issues that have arisen in relation to pilotage and we will progress that through to its conclusion, but we will do it in a way which does not put at risk the security of employment or the conditions of employment of anyone associated with pilotage.

Nundah Bypass; Port Motorway

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the transport challenges facing south-east Queensland and I ask: will he advise what progress the Beattie government is making in delivering significant transport infrastructure projects in this region?

Mr BREDHAUER: I thank the honourable member for Stafford for the question. Last Friday I joined him, the member for Nudgee and the member for Clayfield at the opening of the Nundah bypass and tunnel project, which is a great thing for the people of Nundah. It brings to an end a 35-year battle by the people of Nundah to try to resolve the issues in relation to the bottleneck in that suburb. In fact, the member for Stafford, when he was the member for Nundah, was on the original local consultative group that we set up in order to help resolve these issues. It was a great day out there. People celebrated the community involvement in finding a successful solution to this problem. I think that was the feature of the day. The cooperation between the three levels of government and their representatives was also an important feature. As I mentioned in my speech at the opening of the Nundah bypass, the support and cooperation of the community was integral to us being able to resolve some of the issues related to that project. I am sure it will serve the needs of the community well into the future and enable Nundah to develop as a

community, as it will now no longer be riven by that major traffic artery through the centre of the community.

Yesterday, the Premier and I took the opportunity to go to the Port Motorway project for a special ceremony to mark the start of construction on the project. We were joined by Senator Ron Boswell, the parliamentary secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Beattie: It was a good day, too.

Mr BREDHAUER: It was a good day, and I thank Ron for coming along to that ceremony yesterday to mark the contribution that the federal government has made to that important project. The member for Bulimba and the member for Lytton, as the local members, were also in attendance. It is a very important project for that area. It is part of building Queensland's regions. We are linking that Australia TradeCoast area, and especially the port of Brisbane, to our major industries and our major road arteries—the Gateway, the Pacific Motorway and various other things—which will have a benefit not just for the port and industries in south-east Queensland—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BREDHAUER: No, there will be no freight trains to Lang Park. The project has significance for industries throughout the state.

An important feature of this is the alliance agreement with Queensland Motorways Limited and our alliance partners. I want to thank the Premier for taking the opportunity to come out yesterday with Senator Boswell and me for this occasion. It will be one of the most important pieces of economic infrastructure built not just in south-east Queensland but in Queensland for the next decade or so. I think the opportunity that we took yesterday to mark the commencement of construction is another demonstration of this government getting on with the job of providing infrastructure that will secure employment and provide 800 new jobs during the construction period.

Abolition of Research and Development Institutes, Department of Primary Industries

Mr ROWELL: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities to a newsletter titled *Welcome to AFFS on-line No. 7* by Rosemary Clarkson, an executive director within the minister's department, in which she reveals that the research and development institutes are to be abolished. I ask: did the minister consult industry groups before making this decision? Given that Ms Clarkson acknowledges that the institute model has been successful, is this not just another move to shut industry out of any decision-making role and make DPI even less accountable to primary producers?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let me go back to late 1999 when the government went through the process of establishing the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences, which basically brought together all of that research strength that existed within the Department of Primary Industries under one umbrella. Currently, within the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences we have around about 1,500 people working together on projects of great importance to our rural sector. No-one can deny that.

However, since then, basically what has happened is this: the Department of Primary Industries is looking at stage 2 of the process of streamlining the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences to make it a lot more relevant to our producers. In undertaking these improvements, the Department of Primary Industries is consulting with its clients and industry to ensure that the best outcomes are delivered. Being smart means keeping up with the times, keeping ahead of the competition and not standing flat-footed, as we have done over previous years. I refer to Agforce Chief Executive Officer, Mick O'Neill, who stated recently—

Agriculture welcomes the Smart State concept and all that goes with it.

As an example of what is actually happening within the Department of Primary Industries' Agency for Food and Fibre Science, I refer to the horticulture industry, which is worth $1.5 billion to the Queensland economy and employs around 30,000 people. Up until a couple of years ago, there was absolutely no research at all being done in that area. It is happening now at Redlands. I advise any member of the House to go to Redlands to look at the research that is being conducted there.

In relation to Rosemary Clarkson, basically the member is referring to a discussion paper that is out there among all DPI staff, among industry people and among our clients.

Recommendations will come to me as minister in the new year. As minister, I will make a determination in conjunction with my cabinet colleagues.

Ethanol

Ms KEECH: I direct a question to the Minister for Environment. I note that yesterday he and the Minister for Public Works, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, announced a new ethanol initiative. Apart from the important fact that ethanol is manufactured in my electorate of Albert, I ask: what benefits will this initiative bring to Queensland?

Mr WELLS: Yesterday, the Honourable Minister for Public Works unveiled the first E10 bowser in Queensland. Indeed, the first E10 bowser that will be flowing in a few weeks time will be providing E10 to the government fleet. By doing this, the Minister for Public Works has kick-started an ethanol industry in Queensland. This is the first time that a government in Australia has taken the lead in this way. There have been places in Australia where bus lines have been running on E10 and there have been places in Australia where industries have used E10. But this is the first time that a government has taken that kind of initiative. I would like to thank the Minister for Public Works for the inspiration and the leadership that he has given by turning the government fleet into this kind of trailblazer.

E10 will provide tremendous benefits to Queensland—tremendous benefits to the environment and tremendous benefits to industry. In terms of the environment, the benefits will be immediate. If people have 10 per cent ethanol in their cars' petrol, they will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases—particularly the most important ones, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide—by much more than 10 per cent; it will be something between 13 per cent and 23 per cent, depending on all the other circumstances. There will be a significant effect. Any car that is configured for unleaded petrol more or less can use ethanol. So if every car that was configured for unleaded petrol in Queensland was running on E10, the consequences would be a massive reduction in greenhouse gases. The reduction would be in the order of one million tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. That would be a significant benefit to the environment.

At the same time, we would lessen our dependence on fossil fuels by 10 per cent. Occasionally, the fossil fuels that we use have to be imported. Generally, the fossil fuels that we import are more harmful to the environment than fuel that we produce ourselves. So again, there is an additional flow-on benefit. By using ethanol, we are replacing our fossil fuels with renewable energy, because the cane harvest is renewable. Obviously, there will be environmental consequences that the government will need to attend to. Obviously, the growing of cane—

Mr Rowell: That's what we need—your support.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member opposite and I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support for the ethanol initiative, because this contains benefits—not immediate windfalls but long-term benefits—for the farmers of Queensland, and it contains benefits for Queenslanders generally. In fact, it is great news for the environment, for industry, and for Queensland families.

Gaming Machines

Dr WATSON: I refer the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to the statements by his predecessor that the $20 note limit on gambling machines was introduced because the Beattie government was trying to stop excessive use of machines and that a small proportion of the population, who are the real problem gamblers, make extensive use of machines with note acceptors. This allows people to stay at the machines longer and churn the money over. I ask: given that the Treasurer has now scrapped this limit and is now allowing up to five $20 notes to be accepted at any one time—the equivalent of a $100 note—can he clarify whether his decision to abandon problem gamblers was motivated by a fall in state government revenue from poker machines and a desire to maximise funding avenues to finance the Lang Park redevelopment? In other words, has the Treasurer not abandoned problem gamblers on the altar of Lang Park?

Mr MACKENROTH: Firstly, in relation to the decision last week to interpret the policy in the same way for clubs and hotels as it had been interpreted for casinos being based on the premise of having a drop in revenue, might I say that at the time that the decision was made I did not have any information from Treasury in relation to whether there was an effect on revenue and at this stage I still do not have that information. So the premise that that information was available is incorrect.

In relation to the decision made last week, it was brought to my notice that the interpretation of the government's decision in relation to $20 note acceptors was interpreted differently for casinos and for hotels and clubs. On Tuesday afternoon, I asked for the papers in relation to that matter from the previous term of this government when I was not the Treasurer. I received the cabinet submission, the cabinet decision and the papers in relation to the implementation of the policy. Indeed, cabinet's decision was that in relation to hotels, clubs and casinos, a policy of a $20 note acceptor would be implemented, that is, that no $50 notes or $100 notes would be accepted.

The interpretation for hotels and clubs is that their machines could accept only one $20, but that casinos could accept a number of $20 notes. I believe it is inappropriate for the different establishments to interpret a policy implemented by the government, in a different way. On Wednesday, after I had been through all of those documents, the decision was made that hotels and clubs should be treated in exactly the same manner as casinos in relation to the acceptance of $20 notes, but not in relation to the limit, because there has always been a difference in the amount of limits—

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Beattie Government Performance

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): As we come into the last week of parliament for the year 2001 it is time to hold the Beattie government accountable for its appalling record of incompetence, mismanagement and the non-delivery of services to the people of Queensland. It has shown itself to be a government with no vision and no purpose. More than that, it has shown itself to be a government of fearful standover tactics, a government which has put in place the secret state regime. This government's record is based on the arrogance that comes from a massive parliamentary majority. It is characterised by financial mismanagement and under-achievement, especially in important services to the community such as family services, health care, police protection and the lowering of crime rates.

After the events of last week, it is quite clear that this government is one that leads the way in workplace bullying. The Health Minister has abused the privileges of parliament in order to damage the reputation and good standing of a former Royal Brisbane Hospital nurse who dared to speak out about mismanagement and bullying. Reprisals are the order of the day under the Beattie Labor government; that is the message being sent to public servants. The community knows about these events and will judge the Beattie government accordingly. For her efforts, this courageous nurse has been vilified by the minister in the House. Who would be a whistleblower in this, the standover state?

We have constantly seen highlights of the Beattie government's lack of commitment to the delivery of services across most departments, but especially those of Families and Health. The Premier has single-handedly turned the state's strong financial position under the National Party-led state government on its ear. The National-Liberal coalition left the state with a $1 billion surplus for the year 1999. In just four state budgets, Mr Beattie has sent the state plummeting into the red by clocking up an $820 million operating deficit.

Capital works spending has dropped. The government underspent on its capital works budget last year by $280 million. For the first time in its history, the Police Service has been forced to borrow $22 million to pay for new police stations and for upgrades to existing stations in the year ahead. Queensland prison debts have soared to $226 million after the Beattie government slashed a $100 million equity injection from the Department of Corrective Services budget. Police families are living in appalling conditions in departmental housing, despite months of complaints to Q-Build to fix the problem.

There is still no progress on the installation of seat belts in school buses. Hanging in the balance of the cost of this very important program is our children's lives. A report has come back from the government committee. We do not need more reports, we need action—a plan and a program by which seat belts will progressively be installed into the buses used by schoolchildren. This government appears to have very little regard for the future of Queensland's children, and its sad history on funding family services is proof of that.

The case loads for child protection officers are at an all time high rate due to the lack of front-line staff. More than 700 priority one child abuse cases went unassessed from July last year to

March this year. The unassessed cases at the next level of priorities rose from 323 to 2,029. Staff from the Department of Families are forced to handle up to 50 cases each. Compare this with Victoria, where a workload cap of 15 cases is the order of the day. One of the greatest reflections on a government is the way it treats the state's children. It is truly a very sad state of affairs that in this state we have such a long waiting list of children at high risk of sexual and physical abuse waiting for assessment so that they can get the care and protection they deserve.

The non-delivery does not stop there. In regional and rural Queensland there is no funding commitment on the capping of bores and there is also the mismanagement of national parks. There is a drop in numbers of Queensland Rail wagons available for transporting cattle. Farmers are frequently forced to use trucks and road trains because there are simply not the trains and wagons available for major cattle sales.

Port authorities up and down the coast have also suffered at the hands of Mr Beattie's cash grab. The sum of 95 per cent of after-tax profits are to be stripped from Queensland port authorities. In order to face up to its shortage of cash, the government has been forced into asset sales of the Brisbane Markets and Dalrymple Bay terminal. The DPI has been forced to sell off assets such as the DPI research stations to fund the government's unbudgeted $10 million contribution to the east coast trawl management plan. Finally, there are the cuts to DPI staffing in general across Queensland; through jobs cut or promised jobs not being delivered some 550 positions have been lost since the Beattie government came to power. This has had a huge impact on businesses in regional and rural Queensland.

But perhaps the biggest cash grab of all for very little return for the people of Queensland is the new pub tax being imposed on hoteliers to pay for Lang Park. It now appears that further cost blow-outs, which are the hallmark of this government, will occur with the Lang Park redevelopment. By the time it is completed and all the associated infrastructure has been put into place, we are looking at not $280 million, but more than $500 million.

It seems to be the case that no-one—parliamentarians or members of the public—can question this government without being labelled a whinger or told not to waste the government's precious time. That is the arrogance of this government. But just look at the list of taxation increases that the government has put in place. There is the pub tax, the accountability tax that the government is now going to levy on access to FOI and there are the new and increased levies on law-abiding firearm owners. On top of them there is the great backflip on petrol. In June last year the Premier promised that if petrol prices were still unfair in 18 months time he would establish the royal commission that the National Party had been calling for. Once again, we have seen a backflip because it is all too hard. It is very easy and convenient to use petrol in the lead-up to an election, but once the election is over and won and the big dangerous majority is there, the Premier is absolutely no longer interested in standing by his promise to have a royal commission and do something about petrol prices. Because it is too hard, he just cannot do it. Meanwhile, we see Queenslanders not getting the benefit of the 8.35c subsidy that motorists should be getting. Fuel prices in this state are only about 4c under the prices in New South Wales and Victoria. We are seeing price differentials of 8c and 9c in locations only 30 kilometres apart.

On top of that, there has also been the continual call by the National Party for changes and improvements to the insurance system so we can provide some decent and appropriate pricing of insurance coverage for communities—particularly those running carnivals and festivals—sports clubs, community organisations and so on. Absolutely nothing is happening about that.

Open and accountable government is something that we are just not seeing under this government. We are seeing a refusal to release details of the performance bonuses to public service chiefs or even the targets that they were set in order to receive their bonuses. In that way we could have some knowledge of whether director-generals are reaching the targets that have been set and accountability over the payment of these massive bonus. We are seeing the refusal to release documents under FOI and now, of course, the accountability tax on FOI which has been introduced in the last couple of weeks of parliament.

What the government is doing is removing from the reach of community groups and most members of the public the opportunity to make it accountable and to find out the sort of information people need as we move into this secret state mentality. This is a government that is obsessed with publicity but only when it suits it. When embarrassed by a monumental backflip, such as the Smart State numberplates, it did not consult or do market research; it just made a decision itself and did a backflip when there was a huge community backlash.

It is becoming plainly obvious that the Community Engagement Division in the Premier's Department is simply a propaganda outlet for the government's PR machine. How often do we see ministers giving an answer to the media? When it gets tough, the ministers always send their spokesman. Ministers are never prepared to state their opinion, be accountable and be the person where the buck stops. All we are seeing out of this propaganda outlet of the Premier's Department is more and more brochures, schematic diagrams, launches, parties, celebrations and so forth when we have people who cannot get a bed in a hospital, an escalating crime rate, children who cannot be assessed for care and protection, and throughout the state an urgent need for projects that will deliver jobs and get us out of having the worst unemployment levels in mainland Australia.

That is probably the biggest condemnation of the Beattie government. In spite of the propaganda, gloss and bluster, Queensland continues to have the worst unemployment levels in Australia. Would we not think that Queensland could achieve more than that? That is the report card for this state in a poor first year—Queensland left with the worst unemployment, a secret state, a standover state, major projects not started that could have delivered jobs, declining levels of service in hospitals and family services, while the government spends millions and millions on its own glossy and self-serving publicity.

Third World Debt

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): I wish to address the debt crisis of developing nations. The model of borrow, invest, export and repay states that a nation wishing to develop will borrow funds and invest these in agricultural or industrial projects and infrastructure development. Goods can then be exported and the surplus revenue used to repay the capital loan, with the country ending up in an improved position with a more highly developed economy. This is a flawed model because no Third World nation has ever succeeded in restoring solvency once funds have been borrowed from the World Bank and the IMF.

Third World debt is inherently unrepayable. History has been marked by countries being drawn deeper and deeper into crisis. As a consequence, these countries have been obliged to submit to the demands of free market deregulatory economic policies, forced to cut or abandon spending on education, health and welfare, to end support for domestic industry, to produce food for export instead of home consumption, and to sell their businesses and factories to Western buyers. Honourable members should contrast this with the recent events in the USA, where quotas will be placed on steel imports and a $340 billion 10-year program for agricultural subsidies is being debated in the Congress. America, the champion of free trade, says one thing and does another.

The theory of free trade is almost a religion amongst economists. However, free trade produces inequality. The neoclassical doctrine of convergence predicts that as a consequence of trade the disparities between trading nations should disappear over time. This is not so. The permanent capital flows both through trade imbalances and debt remission inevitably confer an increasing advantage on creditor nations, whilst debtor nations find themselves progressively impoverished. Third World countries continue to experience declining commodity prices and declining terms of trade, currency instability and the wholesale transfer of wealth to developed countries. The pittance paid to Third World nations for their exports and assets is an international disgrace. The continual issue of loans and constant foreign investment buy-outs has become the normal state of affairs. However, this massive transfer of wealth to foreign investors is not accounted as a loss to debtor nations. Foreign owned assets and their output are accounted as part of the capital base of developing nations. As a consequence, economists regard a heavily indebted nation as prosperous, disregarding that the output is exported and the profits repatriated.

The World Bank and the IMF do not want to address the fact that the wealth created by foreign buy-outs fails to improve the lot of the poor majority, which continues to grow while the true domestic economy contracts as it is progressively sold off. The world debt is growing exponentially. It is now over $US2.33 trillion. Argentina has been in the news lately, with nervous investors queuing at banks to withdraw their savings. In 1971, Argentina owed $2.3 billion. In 1998 the debt was $133 billion. Recently, the IMF has demanded structural adjustments such as reducing the budget deficit at a time when unemployment rates are approaching 20 per cent.

In 1998 South Korea was offered a $56 billion package by the IMF and commercial banks to recover from the Asian crisis. In 1999 Korean exports totalled $133 billion while imports were only

$94 billion—a trade surplus of $39 billion. One could thus presume that this surplus would allow South Korea to significantly decrease its $154 billion debt. Wrong! International debts have been paid off by government taxation, collected by the difference between tax receipts and expenditure. In 1999 the Korean government did not manage a tax surplus for any debt repayments despite this massive $39 billion trade surplus. That is because this surplus accrued to private business and much was repatriated abroad.

Jubilee 2000 resulted in the forgiving of less than one per cent of Third World debt, yet people gave it great praise. The current levels of debt are inherently unrepayable. This indicates the broad failure of the economic institutions involved in the accounting of world trade, such as the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation.

The need for further cancellation of world debt is an issue that will not go away. In relation to the pressures from economic migration and refugees because of this debt crisis, I think the developed world will have to come to terms with that crisis, because it will not go away. This unrepayable debt will be something that we will live with day by day in the future.

Migrant Work Experience Program Pilot

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): On Friday, 30 November I presented graduation certificates to 18 migrant work experience program graduates. To say that I was pleased to be able to do so is an understatement. I would be happy to present graduation certificates to people like those I met on that day every day of the year. What is being done by this government for these people is a truly wonderful thing. It is something of which I am supremely proud. It is something that makes me proud to be a part of this Beattie Labor government. Programs such as this are what sets this government, a Labor government, apart from those on the opposition benches.

I take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Matt Foley, Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts for his leadership and for ensuring that this program, which is so important to unemployed migrants, continues to assist the participants who are enrolled in it.

This program began following a successful pilot run in March 2000 by Multicultural Affairs Queensland and the then Office of the Public Service Commissioner. That migrant work experience project pilot was aimed at addressing some of the unemployment barriers facing migrants. The Department of Employment and Training assumed lead agency status in November 2000. This involves managing the program, recruitment, training, placement and the case management of program participants. The first intake of this program graduated on 18 May this year. I was very proud to be part of that graduation ceremony as well.

Practical programs such as this demonstrate the Beattie Labor government's commitment to creating a diverse work force. While many people experience barriers in finding work, evidence suggests that people of non-English-speaking background are the least successful equity group in gaining Queensland public sector jobs, especially traineeships. The migrant work experience program addresses many of those barriers. It aims to overcome some of the difficulties faced by this section of our community by offering valuable local work experience. It also recognises the strong links between securing sound employment and social, economic and emotional wellbeing.

The program provides four weeks training in office skills at the Southbank Institute of TAFE, followed by six weeks practical on-the-job work experience in a Queensland government department. The overwhelming interest from government agencies in participating in the current intake of the program is evidence of the government's commitment to diversity. The fact that each agency had sponsored a participant to the extent of $2,500 is further evidence of this commitment. I am pleased to advise that 16 of the 18 participants of the Department of Employment and Training's first intake now have some form of ongoing work. Eight have secured traineeships and eight have temporary placements in other government agencies. Our next challenge is to expand the program to involve local authorities and government agencies, both state and federal, in regional areas as soon as possible. Preliminary and positive discussions have taken place with the Gold Coast City Council for the proposed roll-out of the program in this region early next year.

I thank the directors-general of sponsoring agencies of the current program for demonstrating their support for the Beattie Labor government's commitment to giving all people a fair go and embracing a truly multicultural work force. I also want to thank all supervisors for the considerable energy, time and commitment that they have provided in allowing participants an opportunity to fulfil their desire to contribute to Australian society through employment. To the 18

graduates on 30 January I say: congratulations, you represent the changing nature and future of the Australian work force. Most of them have tertiary qualifications from their homeland, and I am sure that the program has given them the motivation and confidence to search for a job that matches their skills.

The Migrant Work Experience Program is, and will continue to be, a significant government initiative in addressing access to Queensland public service employment. The graduates came from a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Columbia, Fiji, India, Iran, Nigeria, the Philippines, Russia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sudan and the various republics that once made up Yugoslavia. I take this opportunity to wish them every success in their future careers.

Time expired.

Kilcoy Pastoral Company

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.51 a.m.): Twelve October 1953 was the day Kilcoy Pastoral Company killed its first beast. This Friday, on 14 December, the workers will vote to decide if KPC has a future. I have watched, listened and participated in the discussions and seen the pain suffered by the whole town when the realisation hit that KPC would close its doors. I have sought help and guidance from the ministers and I thank them for that assistance. Minister Barton's call for workers to vote yes so that the government can put its resources behind the company is very significant.

Because Friday the 14th will be such a significant day in the history of Kilcoy and the vote will inevitably impact on the entire town, I feel I must report as to how I have seen the situation unfold. During the months of July through October KPC met with workers to discuss the need of restructuring the workplace to ensure not only its competitiveness in the marketplace but also workers' jobs. KPC is not a charity; it is a place of employment. Such places must be profitable to exist and employ. Meatworks throughout the country have had to restructure to be competitive, and KPC is no different. Its processing cost per bullock was $210 whilst its competitors after restructuring achieved $180 per beast. At that rate KPC cannot continue without restructuring.

I am not lying when I stand here and say that every indication and conversation I have had assures me that a no vote on Friday will see the doors of KPC remain closed. I cannot emphasise enough that this is not a rehearsal, that it is the real thing. The workers asked for this chance to re-vote to get those 340 jobs back. KPC has given it. Please do not waste it. This is the last chance to get the message to all the workers that no-one can help them now. On Friday the final outcome will be in their own hands.

This company has operated for over 48 years and had an honest relationship with its employees and union, and it must be acknowledged that both management and workers have worked very hard to ensure that the works has stayed in business. The company was not lying to the employees. In fact, it was being brutally honest about the future of the works if some agreement could not be reached. The reports I have received from the meetings between the workers and KPC were that they were positive, and the employees I spoke to felt sure the first vote on the EBA would be a positive one, too. The day before the vote was taken a union meeting was held and the result was that 82 per cent voted against the EBA the next day. What changed their minds? I would like to read some excerpts from just one of the letters to the editor—

> From February 2001 until 10.30 pm November 16th I was employed as a cleaner with KPC, most happily employed I must add ... I attended a meeting a few weeks ago which was chaired by Mr. D where he advised myself and fellow workers that it was in his opinion ... the company was holding a gun to our heads, but I didn't feel that it was loaded.

He was wrong to assume that. The letter continues—

> How does it feel to know that ... your peers are unemployed. How does it feel that Kilcoy the town and its businesses will suffer as a direct result of Friday the 16th's outcome?

It continues—

> Not to worry, we won't blame ourselves we'll blame Mr Kennedy, the KPC Board of Directors and Management. We'll disregard that they offered us a chance to work through our grievances. We'll disregard their plea for understanding and help to allow KPC to become more competitively viable in a cut-throat industry.

The letter goes on but I will end the quote there. He was wrong when he said that the gun was not loaded. It was loaded with the truth. The doors of KPC were shut and 340 people became unemployed because they trusted and believed him. The union representative, Mr Ross Richardson, also revealed only too well his plans not to negotiate a yes vote when he stated on ABC radio—

Announcer: So you're supporting a no vote yet again?

Richardson: Yes we would be at this stage.

Announcer: Even if that means the plant will close and they ... these people lose their jobs?

Richardson: A no vote does not mean the plant will close. A no vote will mean that further negotiation should take place.

He repeats this again and again. How can a negotiation take place if there is no negotiation table to go back to? There would not have been a second chance to vote on the EBA nor on the additional clause stating that if the workers did not like the agreement after six months it could be reviewed. If Mr Richardson pursues the course that he has publicly stated, it will be on his instruction that a no vote will be recorded and 340 workers and their families will be facing an even more depressing Christmas and an unemployed future in the new year. Mr Richardson need not concern himself with his future because he still has a job with the union.

On Thursday the 13th a union meeting is to be called, and the fear is that there will be pressure brought to bear again to ensure that a no vote is recorded. I believe, as many others do, that Mr Richardson will employ whatever measures are necessary to entrench his own opinions, to save face not only for himself but, misguidedly, for the union, too. Both Richardson and Mr D. made an error in judgment at the beginning of this situation, but it can be rectified. It is not too late. But a repeat of that error will be pure negligence. Both have stated their intention publicly and in so doing have placed doubts over their impartiality.

Change is always frightening, and it took real courage for the 153 workers to sign the petition to have the agreement resubmitted. It will take greater courage to vote yes on Friday and save not only their jobs but also those of the businesses and workers of Kilcoy who rely on KPC. This is it. The workers must realise that their future is in their hands.

Time expired.

AccessEd, Coorparoo; *When I Was 15* Book Launch

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.56 a.m.): I wish to speak about some great news for the Greenslopes electorate and Coorparoo in particular. I am referring to the opening of AccessEd at Coorparoo on 15 November this year. The AccessEd component of the Coorparoo education precinct has now opened as a major education initiative and community centre. The Coorparoo education precinct vision consists of the new AccessEd complex, the Queen Alexandra Home community centre and the Coorparoo State School. The precinct will regenerate the educational, community and business foundations of our local suburbs.

The $9 million AccessEd part of the precinct has been operating since the September-October school holidays as a centre for the production of school curriculum materials and a range of other exciting functions. Spaces for community use within the Queen Alexandra Home are now reopened as a community centre with full disabled access, airconditioning and noise reduction measures. Past and new users of the centre are now enjoying these refurbishments.

AccessEd is a boon to the local schools as it has a national reputation for developing educational resources of excellent quality. It will produce a range of resources for schools in the form of CD-ROM software, web-based resources, games, print, audio tape and videotape. Some highlights of those services include the development and production service. This includes state-of-the-art audio and visual production facilities for use by AccessEd and for hire and design and maintenance of web sites.

In terms of library services, there is the corporate library with a collection of over 100,000 books and journals, professional exchange, online computer reference of various educational resources and texts, a school curriculum library consisting of 60,000 titles in various formats, a periodical centre for schools with a nationwide journal photocopying service, a video library with 30,000 videos with high quality and suitability for curriculum. In terms of training services, it also includes various Internet training services for educators from beginners to experienced users. Also, in terms of education research, it includes various projects in virtual schooling and education over the Internet. In terms of access services, it allows teachers throughout Queensland to pick up useful ideas, strategies and activities for the classroom and gain computer access to Australian and international references and provides access to hundreds of quality Internet sites for students and teachers.

I place on record my thanks to the officers of AccessEd and, in particular, Gary Barnes for the sensitive way in which he and his colleagues have introduced the changes and brought the

AccessEd facility into our area and worked closely with the local community. I also thank the past Minister for Education and current Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, for their great support for this project in terms of balancing a heritage facility—the Queen Alexandra Home—with the regeneration of a defunct and moribund shell left by the TAFE college after it departed Coorparoo.

I report on the launch a couple of weeks ago of a great book entitled *When I was 15*, formally launched by Police Commissioner Atkinson. I joined him at that launch at which we were both asked to tell those gathered what it was like for us when we were 15. It was a once-only performance, not to be missed. The book was part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations and projects. It is a celebration of Queensland's youth over the past 100 years. It gives a unique insight into the development of Queensland, our young people and communities since Federation as seen through the eyes of 15 year olds.

It was great to see that so many of the 70 young researchers who took part in the state-wide project were present. Their dedication and commitment to this project have resulted in a distinct historical overview of what it was like to be a teenager in Queensland throughout the past 100 years. While this project shows that there have been a lot of changes in technology, modes of transport and communications over 100 years, one thing that has not changed is the hope all participants share for a bright and prosperous future.

The book provides us with a personal history of Queensland over the past 100 years as experienced by different generations of 15 year olds. Even more importantly, it provides our young people with the valuable social and academic skills learned in the process of interviewing their subjects for this book. I congratulate Senior Sergeant Bob Fiedler of the Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association, who initially proposed the concept of the book. I also acknowledge the schools and numerous other people who were involved in the project.

I am proud that the Beattie government was also part of this project. It provided $41,000 in financial assistance towards the project through the Centenary of Federation Queensland grants scheme. This project is a long-lasting legacy for youth of the past 100 years. Once again I congratulate all those involved in the project. It was a pleasure to be part of the launch.

Time expired.

Logan Hospital, Intensive Care Unit

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.01 p.m.): The closure of the ICU at Logan Hospital is a blow to the community and the level of services the hospital is able to provide. The Health Minister has not provided an adequate answer for why there have been a number of staff resignations from this job and why there has been a failure to attract new staff. If the minister blames a shortage of intensivists she will be in conflict with her department, which argued that there was not a shortage any more—an argument I am told it used to justify not renewing the special intensivist salary package, which finished about a year ago. For the information of the House, that package was very successful in attracting intensivists to work in Queensland. I think it is time to look at incentive packages for more highly qualified specialist nurses, particularly in critical areas of need.

What is clear is that Logan Hospital's intensive care unit is closing and patients who require this type of care are being put on bypass to Princess Alexandra Hospital. The hospital that the government boasted would be delivering this kind of service in Logan and district does not have the funds to adequately address the resources necessary to maintain this unit.

I have long been on record as being critical of the fact that this government espoused the policy of reverse flow of patients without also sending the resources to these hospitals to do the job. I support the treatment of patients at the appropriate clinical level as close to where they live as possible. However, after about five years of Logan Hospital's operation, the closure of its intensive care unit is a downgrade of local services.

The minister needs to say what the impact will be on the types and amount of surgery at the hospital. She needs to say what the impacts will be upon the Princess Alexandra Hospital and how that hospital's capacity in ICU will be expanded, if at all. Princess Alexandra Hospital—in particular its ICU—is well known to be an extremely busy hospital, usually operating at full capacity for its funded beds.

I also call on the Health Minister to explain how often surgery is cancelled due to higher emergencies and transplants at Princess Alexandra Hospital and in the rest of the state. We

understand that more critical surgery and emergency surgery must have priority over scheduled elective surgery; however, it is also important that cancellations be minimised and that emergencies are not used as an excuse for poor capacity and poor planning. It is extremely distressing for patients to have surgery cancelled. It is also of great inconvenience, particularly if the patient has relatives who take time off work and fly interstate to be with them, only to find that it was all in vain and their expense was wasted. An example of this was raised only recently with the minister.

Logan Hospital's ICU needs the resources to not only attract but also maintain staff. Intensivists as well as ICU nurses need to know that if they take on a job they will have proper backfill for days off, training and holidays, to ensure they can do their job at the standard they wish to perform. This is also true for other specialist medical nursing positions. There are highly qualified registered nurses who do not want to work in the public hospital system until they know that other vacant positions will be quickly advertised, as opposed to Queensland Health's strategy of vacancy management and staff caps, causing unsustainable workloads for those who remain on staff. These nurses want to know that Queensland Health will support their training to higher levels, even with paid time off for training which would be appropriate, and will ensure that there will be a backfill of relief staff to fill their positions while they are away.

Only a year ago I raised in parliament the issue of a cutback in ICU beds. I spoke of a patient who had had surgery at Princess Alexandra Hospital cancelled four times before getting it the fifth time it was scheduled. There had been cutbacks in the number of funded and operational beds in the intensive care areas of Royal Brisbane Hospital, from 22 to 14, and Princess Alexandra Hospital, from 20 to 14. The government tried to slip and slide around the issue. The numbers the government gave related to the physical beds, not to the funded and operational beds that patients could go into.

After we raised that issue the government did put extra funds into the last budget, which I acknowledge, and that has addressed some of the issues to do with some—not all—of the refusals of admission to ICU. Certainly we see that those funds have not flowed through adequately to a hospital such as Logan, where we know there are not enough adequately funded positions to keep and maintain staff in a facility which is needed in the community.

Time expired.

Centenary of Federation Celebrations, Noosa Electorate

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (12.06 p.m.): I rise to tell members of parliament about the upcoming Centenary of Federation celebrations in the Noosa shire. The last two weeks have seen the Noosa shire 2001 celebration of the Centenary of Federation, starting on 30 November at Lake Cootharaba, Boreen Point. The evening was indeed memorable, with a full moon shining across the lake. We as a community turned out in hundreds to enjoy one another, socialise and be entertained by much-loved local and international entertainers. This evening set the stage for the whole festival—the music, the food, the art. The kids, the street entertainers, dogs, cats, locals and visitors partied to the early hours of the morning. A glorious night fell upon Boreen Point.

Representatives of the Gubi Gubi welcomed the crowd, as did Mayor Bob Abbott and I. In my community address, whilst I wished everyone well and congratulated everyone on their remarkable efforts, I noted that we are still not a republic and are perhaps still as divided as we were 100 years ago, at the time of Federation. I suppose we still have some growing up to do.

Our festival has had three major programs—the Noosa Town Celebrate program, the Kids Art program and the Floating Land program. All these programs have been of the highest quality. The Noosa Regional Gallery has been a key leader in this whole program. The festival itself has incorporated the talents, commitment, leadership and participation of people right across our community.

Noosa council is to be congratulated on its degree of excellence in supporting and underpinning this festival, one of the most impressive aspects being our children and youth, who have participated in art workshops, visiting the gallery and being totally embraced by this community event. Our gallery took our culture to our community. Some aspects of the festival were the children's festival site, Hot Lanterns, Build a Ship and Make a Book, the Noosa art food sculpture trail, the unveiling of the Pomona federation sculpture and the sunrise event at Peregian Beach, followed by something for everyone at Peregian Beach. As an aside, I invite

members to come to Peregian Beach to enjoy a well-earned break and from there visit our glorious hinterland, because there is more to Noosa than a beach.

Kin Kin showcased a primary school play *Federation—Past, Present and Future*. Well done, Kin Kin. You star again. The children were wonderful and their mums and dads should be feeling really proud. The Cooroy community came together at the butter factory with a very indigenous flavour. They staged a talking circle program consisting of bush tucker with Dale Scott, elders yarning, the Murri women's choir and the list goes on. Kin Kin staged a centenary horse ride and more, finishing with a country ball. Tewantin enjoyed Flick the Switch, a light installation program in the main street of Tewantin. Noosaville will be the site of the grand finale. Premier Peter Beattie will address the community, which we are thrilled about.

On Sunday, 16 December there will be a floating parade, a flotilla on Noosa River and a pageant of life, an artist vehicular parade with marching groups, bands and funky salsa. I will be in the parade with friends showcasing local pollie participation with state-of-the-art politics. Noosaville traders will be feeling proud of their unity, their participation and terrific efforts to help bring this festival to a close. Congratulations! Thank you again to the Noosa Regional Gallery, the Noosa council, community organisations, the SES—which has been on stand-by for the past two weeks standing for many long hours in the very hot sun—the Sunshine Beach Nippers and all the children who participated in the art activities. Thanks must also go to individuals and others, too numerous to name, and the traditional owners of the land.

On a closing note, this has been a wonderful boost to our local towns. The benefits of the festival are multi-dimensional and great in breadth and depth. I am sure the journey will not stop here.

Tourism Industry

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (12.11 p.m.): I wish to draw the attention of this House to the perilous predicament that Queensland's tourism industry finds itself in. The consequences of the 11 September attacks, preceded by a slowing in the Asian economy and coupled with the collapse of Ansett, have plunged our tourist industry into a state of uncertainty and financial loss. It is normal under extraordinary circumstances for governments at all levels and of all political persuasions to provide assistance to the tourist industry in the form of rescue packages. But it is not normal for Queensland—a state where tourism revenue is the mainstay of so many of our local economies—to offer the lowest levels of assistance of anywhere in Australia. On 1 October the Beattie government, to much fanfare, announced that it would introduce a $3.3 million tourism rescue package aimed at redirecting moneys into new marketing campaigns. The government was also forced to admit that of this $3.3 million package just $1 million was new funding.

This assistance package is the lowest of any state and pales into insignificance when compared with the rescue packages offered by our main tourist competitors, Victoria and New South Wales. By comparison to the $1 million in new funding offered by the Beattie Labor government in Queensland, the Carr Labor government in New South Wales has announced a $15 million tourist rescue package over two years. Of this funding, $4 million is new money and will be provided each year—that is, $4 million in new funding compared to Queensland's paltry $1 million in new funding. In addition, on 18 September the Bracks Labor government in Victoria announced that its tourism rescue package would contain a marketing boost of $10 million in new funding—that is, ten times the new money being offered by the Beattie government in Queensland. Only two weeks ago, even the Western Australian government announced that its tourism rescue package contained $5 million in new funding that would be directed into an extensive marketing campaign.

The Beattie Labor government's failure to properly fund our tourist industry is akin to squandering away the massive tourism edge that our state enjoys over places such as Victoria and New South Wales. Queensland's peak marketing authority, Tourism Queensland, will this year operate with an annual budget of $43.4 million. This compares woefully against the $53.2 million the Bracks Labor government has provided Tourism Victoria and the $55.1 million the Carr Labor government has provided to Tourism New South Wales. With the Beattie government currently involved in its mid-year budget review, I call on the Premier and his Tourism Minister, who I note comes from the Gold Coast, to urgently reassess the inadequate level of assistance on offer to the Queensland tourist industry. Queensland simply must be the nation's

leader when it comes to promoting our tourist destinations. We cannot achieve this status while our two main competitors are outspending us by more than $10 million each.

The Beattie Labor government's failure to act is simply compounding the problems being experienced by tourism operators across the length and breadth of our state. It is time to stop the rhetoric. It is time to realistically look at how we have positioned ourselves against our main competitors. It is also time to address this massive funding shortfall—a massive shortfall at a time of massive uncertainty for our valuable tourism industry. The inadequacy of this funding comes at a time when the Beattie government has already exposed itself as showing unprecedented disregard for our tourist industry. Earlier this week in response to a question on notice, the Minister for Tourism admitted that her department had not been involved at all—not even consulted—when the Premier decided to dump the state's popular tourist slogan 'The Sunshine State' and replace it with the 'Smart State' logo. It amazes me, as it amazes tourist operators across Queensland, that the tourist industry, its department or its minister were not even consulted before a decision was made to drop a most successful tourist slogan.

Tourism is also a major earner of dollars and a major provider of jobs in my electorate, especially the Sunshine Coast. I ask the minister and the Premier to give more money to the Sunshine Coast tourism industry to help with promotion, because people can travel by car to the Sunshine Coast. They do not need to get a plane, and many people are now electing not to go by plane. This can increase our dollars and increase our jobs, but we need more money.

Senator J. Herron; Westhaven Nursing Home

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): The Queensland Liberal hierarchy may not realise it, but there was a general federal election, including a half-Senate election, in Australia on 10 November. The No. 2 on the Senate ticket for the Queensland Liberals was Senator John Herron. Within just 72 hours of election day and well before the Senate count had even been completed, there was speculation in the media that Senator Herron was lobbying for one of the plum ambassadorial posts, that of Australian Ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See. Senator Herron put his name forward for a six-year Senate term to which he was elected. This term does not commence until 1 July next year. If he gets out now, then he will be safely ensconced in the ambassador's residence in Dublin on the day he is supposed to be sworn in for his six-year term.

This is the second time Senator Herron has tried to take flight from the ruin that is the modern Queensland Liberal Party. Honourable members may recall that when John Moore resigned earlier this year Senator Herron was being openly touted for the post of ambassador to Canada. The trouble was that the story hit the media before the Prime Minister had even considered it. After the Ryan debacle, the appointment was cancelled, much to Senator Herron's annoyance. Now he has his bags packed again, his passport is up to date, the visas are organised, the travellers cheques are in the wallet and he is at the starting gate, but the Prime Minister should intervene again and pull the rug from under him. It is simply indecent to stand for a six-year term, be elected and quit before you have even been sworn in.

If Senator Herron wants to be a diplomat, that is fine. Former politicians from both sides of politics have acquitted themselves very well and served Australia well in that capacity. However, Senator Herron should have retired at the recent election and awaited the call for his appointment. He should now do the right thing and keep faith with the people of Queensland and serve the bulk of his term. He should not shirk from his responsibilities as he has done as Liberal Party President in Queensland. He has performed so poorly in cleaning up the party that the federal sections of the Liberal Party are again ready to intervene in the Queensland branch.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. This is another fabrication by the member for Logan.

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

Mrs SHELDON: There has been a litany of them.

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

Mrs SHELDON: There is a point of order, because he is misrepresenting Senator Herron, who has done a great job as president and in reforming the party. I ask him to withdraw his slanderous comments.

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

Mr MICKEL: Thank you for your protection from that violent attack against me, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Senator Herron has done nothing to address the outrageous branch stacking that gave Michael Johnson the leg up in Ryan. There is some good news in all of this for the Labor Party, however. Senator Herron's departure paves the way for the return of Bob Carroll. The honourable member for Caloundra would speak with some affection of Bob Carroll, because he was the party president who helped her depart as Treasurer in 1995 with his clever One Nation strategy. He was also the one who helped the former honourable member for Clayfield depart this place at the last election. But I would be negligent if I did not draw members' attention to the ad that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* last Saturday for the position of horticulturist at the Carroll property at Mount Alford, which no doubt paves the way for his return to the Liberal Party presidency and for Senator Herron's disgraceful departure as ambassador to Ireland.

I also want to remind members about the Westhaven Nursing Home. I recently tabled a petition from the Friends of the Westhaven Nursing Home which called upon the government to have the home attached to the Roma Hospital. The staff at the home are concerned about their jobs, and previously gained and I understand received an assurance that the home would remain under the control of the state government. The union involved, the Australian Workers Union, has brought to my attention that its members believe Westhaven should be rebuilt within the Roma Hospital grounds so that the residents would remain within close proximity to all the services currently being provided by the Roma Hospital staff.

On their behalf and on behalf of the Friends of Westhaven, I hope that no final decision is reached by the state government until there has been widespread community consultation on the options that may be available for the future of this home. It is important to us. I know the Australian Workers Union asked the member for Toowoomba North to make representations on its behalf but, in his absence, I firmly want to put the case to the state government to listen to the concerns of those people so that they do not feel left out of the decision-making processes in Brisbane. I hope that the Minister for Health will listen to and take heed of their concerns.

Nerimbera Quarry

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (12.21 p.m.): This morning I tabled a petition dealing with issues at the Nerimbera quarry and the concerns people have in that regard. I have been asked by those petitioners, through former councillor Glenda Mather, to read to the parliament a letter to accompany that petition. It states—

Glenda Mather
PO Box 5186
C.Q.M.C. 4702

10 December 2001

Hon V P Lester MLA
Member for Keppel
Parliament House
Brisbane Q 4000

Re: Petition 42 signatures from Nerimbera residents, over inaction by officers at Environmental Protection Agency Rockhampton.

Dear Mr Lester,

On behalf of the residents of Nerimbera, I thank you most sincerely for taking this plea for help to our State Parliament.

It is a sad state indeed when our very well paid public servants fail or refuse to carry out the will of the Parliament and its state laws.

For many years now, the Rockhampton EPA has displayed a blatant disregard for the people of Nerimbera, and their perpetual suffering, caused by the operations of the adjacent CSR quarry.

Let me assure you, this company, despite its big name, has no regard for anyone or anything, outside its own profits. Wittenoom is living proof of this, and despite the Court's findings against the company for damages in those cases, very little has changed.

The local residents at Nerimbera have suffered chronic ill health, both physical and emotional, from quarry fallout. The company's history of environmental vandalism is well documented—and that vandalism is continuing at the once-pristine community of Nerimbera.

The failure of senior EPA staff at Rockhampton to both acknowledge or address legitimate complaints has caused the residents to lose confidence in the department, as well as the government. They are thoroughly sick of "lip-service".

To heighten the anxiety of these people, the Livingstone Shire Council has indicated that it intends to approve an application next week for the company to extend its operations to new areas of adjacent land.

I cannot sit back and allow these good people to be assaulted by both the company, as well as EPA neglect and incompetence.

The petitioners are desperately trying to protect their lives and their environment. Is there no-one in authority with the power, *and the will*, to assist them?

I trust our state representatives will grant the people's request, and remove the "dead wood" from the Rockhampton EPA.

Thank you once again for your assistance, and I trust the Nerimbera residents will receive some good news for Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

Glenda Mather.

Then it has written down the bottom—

Mr Lester, is it possible for you to read this to the House please? Regards, Glenda Mather.

There has been a continuing problem at Nerimbera. It will not get any better as the eastern part of Rockhampton grows. Although in my early days of representing the area this did not appear to be a huge issue, it is baring its teeth more and more every day. The time has come for the government, the shire and the company to work out a realistic way of handling this quarry site. Just how that is done, I am not in a position to answer in this place. These days, people expect the environment to be preserved in a pristine state. I call on the department to do what it can to work with the people and the quarry operator, CSR, to resolve this problem. It will only get worse. More people will get angry. More letters like this will be read to the parliament. If this problem did not exist, everyone would be a lot better off and much more healthy.

Queensland Irish Association

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (12.26 p.m.): The Queensland Irish Association has been the home of Irish culture, interest and heritage in our state for more than 100 years. In excess of 8,000 members from diverse religious and political backgrounds, both working class and professional people, have a special place in their heart for Tara House, the heritage-listed home of the QIA. The Irish Club has served the interests of Queenslanders of Irish descent and those with an interest in Irish culture since 1898.

Earlier this year we saw publicity surrounding the sale of land owned by the QIA next to Tara House in Elizabeth Street. Following reports of that sale, I heard adverse comments from a few members and supporters of the club. Some questioned whether the then board of directors, leadership team and management of the QIA were running the affairs of the club properly. Today I would like to place on the public record a number of facts which confirm our confidence in past and present leaders of the QIA. Members of the association can be reassured that the club was, and is, in good hands, and that the club is on a sound financial footing.

I am confident that, earlier this year, the board of directors followed correct and proper practice in pursuing the sale of the land. The only factor regarding the sale about which I have any concern is the so-called second bid, which I am informed was ill prepared, poorly planned and based on incomplete or inaccurate information. I reject completely the suggestion that, because the then president did not clear his letterbox, the club missed out on $400,000 from the sale of the land. The so-called second bid was never a legitimate bid and could not legally have been considered by the general membership at the special meeting called on Tuesday, 12 June 2001 to confirm the sale of the land.

Some background to the sale of the land may be helpful in understanding what occurred. The QIA purchased the vacant land adjacent to Tara House in 1991. Over the ensuing decade, because the club carried out a major refurbishment of Tara House, the development of the vacant land was put on hold. Eventually, early in 2001, the board of directors decided to sell the property.

In a letter dated 1 March 2001, the QIA board wrote to one of Queensland's largest and most experienced property managers, CB Richard Ellis (B) Pty Ltd, instructing it to act on behalf of the QIA to offer the aforementioned site for sale by public auction. Having been advertised widely for some time, the property was put up for auction on Tuesday, 10 April 2001. When bidding did not reach the reserve price, the agents followed the usual practice of pursuing matters with the underbidders. CB Richard Ellis successfully concluded negotiations with First State Developments, conditional upon satisfactory due diligence.

At the meeting of Wednesday, 18 April 2001, the QIA board agreed unanimously to accept the offer which CB Richard Ellis had negotiated. At this same meeting, in accordance with the QIA rules the directors called for the special general meeting to be held on 12 June. This special general meeting of the members would either confirm or reject that directors' recommendation. To this end, a notice of meeting was sent to all financial members, and I table a copy of that notice. All QIA members were invited to Tara House at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 June 2001—the day after the Queen's Birthday holiday weekend—to vote on two motions. The first motion was to confirm the sale of the land for $1.4 million. The second was to allow the board of directors, if the conditional contract fell through, 12 months to sell the land for a price of not less than $1.4 million.

This is where the story takes an unusual twist. A few minutes before this special meeting, someone mentioned to the then president, Pat Brennan, that they had heard about a second bid for the land and that a letter had been delivered to the club. Pat checked his mailbox to find a simple envelope, with no markings or notation regarding the sale of the property. On opening the letter, Pat found a covering note from a real estate agent, acting on behalf of another buyer, and an offer of $1.8 million for the property.

The president spoke with the QIA solicitor who was present. The president was informed that, because a conditional contract already existed, normal commercial practice meant that this second bid could not be legally considered. Every member of this House, together with every Queenslander, knows that if they have signed a contract to sell their property, they cannot consider another contract for the same property until the first contract has been properly dealt with. This is exactly what the board of directors of the QIA rightly did.

Let us consider for a moment what anyone with a genuine interest in the land would do if he were considering purchasing the land. The first thing would be to contact the real estate agent whose name appeared on the for sale sign located on street level on the vacant land. He might also speak to the general manager of the club or the president or treasurer of the QIA. We know that the second bidder did none of these things. Rather, ignoring normal commercial practice, he sidestepped the Richard Ellis group and went to a small unknown real estate agent, who left a letter with someone at the club. The letter was not registered mail, nor was it delivered by a courier who could produce a receipt to show acceptance of official mail.

Contrary to accepted real estate practice, a second contract was delivered just two working days before a special general meeting considered the conditional contract that had already been signed. The circumstances surrounding the second bid just do not make sense. Somewhere along the line, the so-called second bidder did not find out about the steps being taken to sell the land. He did not know that the rules of the QIA required the board to make a recommendation to the general membership and he did not contact the large, well-known real estate firm that was conducting the sale. This so-called second bid was rushed, half-baked and ill prepared. Because it fell outside the due and proper process, it could not be considered a legitimate bid and could not legally or morally have been put before the members.

We must remember that the special general meeting called for 12 June was not an auction, nor was it a meeting to consider a range of tenders. Under the rules of the association, it was specifically called to consider the two resolutions of which members had been notified. From all that I have learned about this matter, I am confident that the board of directors and the president at the time carried out their duty in a proper, just and ethical manner. They followed the law of the land and abided by the rules of the association. What the board of directors did was correct and according to the rules of the association. There was no way that the supposed second bid could have been put to the special general meeting of the members and there was no way that the process followed by the second bidder could have been considered normal business process.

At no stage did the club miss out on extra money for the sale of the land because of the actions, or lack of action, by any club member. The so-called second bid could not have meant more money for the club, because it did not follow due process and did not comply with the rules of the club regarding the disposal of the land.

I have the utmost confidence in the past management of the QIA and continue to have confidence in the new board of directors. I encourage all members to continue to support the QIA, which is the envy of other Irish associations in Australia.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

LAND PROTECTION (PEST AND STOCK ROUTE MANAGEMENT) BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act about the management of particular pests on land and the management of the stock route network, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.32 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Rural Lands Protection Act 1985 has been the subject of a review that commenced in 1994, which has highlighted the need for a more modern legislative approach to pest and stock route management. Such an approach should take advantage of new consultative planning approaches and partnerships and provide better guidance for communities, industries, the state and local governments within Queensland. The bill proposes to achieve that desired legislative approach and replaces the Rural Lands Protection Act 1985.

Pest plants and animals cost Queensland over $600 million annually in lost production and in control costs. These pests also threaten the environment, impact adversely on recreation, amenity and ecotourism, and some affect human health. Weeds are one of the greatest causes of biodiversity loss. Pests affect the whole community and the long-term consequences of not controlling them effectively will harm every one of us in many ways.

The stock route network in Queensland is a substantial public asset and consists of approximately 72,000 kilometres of land corridor traversing many of Queensland's biogeographical regions. There is a pressing need to manage the natural resources on the network for future generations while continuing to cater for the current needs of travelling stock. Other public purposes of stock routes, such as road transport, utilities and communications, must also be serviced. The bill establishes a management framework for the network that preserves its existing functionality and biodiversity and ensures its sustainability for future generations.

The bill deals with weed and pest management within Queensland above the high-water mark and the purpose is to protect the resources of the state. The bill, like its predecessor legislation, does not deal with every pest. Pest plants and animals covered by the bill include exotic invasive weeds, exotic pest animals—including wild dogs and dingoes—and indigenous species of locusts.

The focus of the bill changes from solely pests of primary production under the Rural Lands Protection Act to include those that have adverse impacts on the environment, society or other economic activities, such as ecotourism. The problems caused by environmental weeds are specifically addressed for the first time. The sale of certain invasive plants will be able to be banned. The bill also protects environmentally significant areas threatened by pests on adjacent private land. The bill establishes principles to provide direction for future pest and stock route management.

State strategies will be developed for weeds, pest animals and the stock route network. The principles are also to be considered in the planning and policy processes to be undertaken by state departments for land they control and by local governments for their administrative areas. The bill establishes a framework that is designed to achieve effective pest management and effective management of the stock route network.

The bill introduces local government area pest management planning already practised by some of our most forward looking councils and which will bring community knowledge and participation into the process of tackling important local pest issues. The same planning process is introduced for those councils with stock routes. Increased community participation is another feature of this bill. Plans benefit from community input and generate support and resources. They order priorities and actions, set targets and performance measures and lead to more accountability.

Community involvement should also ensure increased knowledge of pest and stock route management issues, more effective implementation of plans and better reporting on performance. The bill provides an opportunity for partnerships in pest and stock route management for more effective action on the issues of greatest concern in the community. Local government area plans must also take account of state, regional or catchment level natural resource management plans and those developed by neighbouring local governments.

Prevention is a key principle in pest management. A policy objective is to minimise the introduction, keeping and sale of pests and to prevent their spread, including by human activity. Many weeds are extremely invasive and are spread by water, wind and animals, including birds. The process to declare a pest species will be by a regulation. The effect of declaration will be to ban the sale or keeping of the pest in most circumstances, to create obligations for landowners and to create offences relating to spreading pests. These obligations will vary according to the category of declaration and those guidelines specifying the management requirements for the pest that have been published by the department.

If a product is contaminated with a weed pest specified by regulation, the seller must declare this risk in writing to the purchaser. There will be a requirement to wash down or clean vehicles or machinery, which are leaving pest infested sites, and to contain products against spillage or release of seeds or reproductive material of declared pests.

To cope with new incursions into Queensland, an emergency declaration of a new pest may be made for up to three months and this will give a range of powers to control the pest upon private land. Property quarantine powers will be available for serious pest infestations. Natural resource management upon the stock route network will be improved through local government area stock route management plans as well as through monitoring the condition of pasture, using controlled grazing and the burning of pasture and rehabilitating degraded sites on the network.

Permits for agistment on stock routes will be available only when pasture and water is more than sufficient for travelling stock and the management plan supports grazing of the area. The owners of the stock must meet eligibility criteria: for example, the owner's land might be affected by drought, fire or flood. Permits can only be issued on the same land for the permit holder for a period up to two months.

The bill seeks to continue the partnership in pest and stock route management between the state and local government. It has been developed with an extensive process of consultation and stakeholder input, especially from local governments. That process included a legislation reference panel established to propose solutions to particular issues of concerns. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (12.40 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 and the Local Government Act 1993.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (12.41 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2001. As a result of the Childers backpacker hostel fire on 23 June 2000, which resulted in the tragic loss of 15 lives, a task force was formed to review fire safety standards for budget accommodation buildings in Queensland. This review included backpacker hostels, boarding houses, hotels and other similar

shared accommodation style buildings. The task force found that many of these buildings contained inadequate fire safety standards. It subsequently recommended a minimum standard of building fire safety be imposed for budget accommodation buildings in line with current requirements for new buildings under the Building Code of Australia.

The budget accommodation sector provides lodgings for a variety of persons. They range from international tourists—in the case of backpacker hostels—to people who, because of their low income or disability, have no choice but to reside in boarding houses. The Queensland economy has benefited enormously over the past 20 years from the growth in the number of visiting backpacker tourists, which adds $480 million dollars to the economy each year. The government will therefore ensure these buildings are made safe so as to protect our reputation as a safe destination for backpackers, as well as to protect the vulnerable people in our community.

Following the task force report, a regulatory impact statement was prepared for public discussion to fully assess the costs, benefits and implications of different regulatory options. The work to complete the regulatory impact statement involved detailed research into different building types and upgrade options, and extensive consultation. While this took some time, it was important these investigations were carried out thoroughly. Public comments on the regulatory impact statement demonstrate there is clear support for improving fire safety measures, with strong support for smoke alarms. However, building owners called for consistent statewide fire safety standards which are performance based, allowing each building to be individually assessed on its design and ability for people to evacuate safely. As a result, the proposals were revised to ensure the proposed legislation will provide the most cost effective standards possible without compromising occupant safety.

The bill will amend the Building Act 1975 to ensure that budget accommodation buildings meet minimum standards of fire safety. It will ensure the occupants of hostels—whether they are tourists, itinerant workers, people on low incomes or those with disabilities—are provided with the same standards of safety the rest of us take for granted, and can safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire. The bill allows a Fire Safety Standard to be adopted under the Standard Building Regulation 1993. All budget accommodation buildings will need to comply with this standard. The bill requires that smoke alarms and emergency lighting required by the standard be installed in all budget accommodation buildings within one year. Smoke alarms will ensure occupants are provided with early warning of a fire, while emergency lighting will guide them safely out of the building.

However, even with alarms and emergency lighting, some accommodation buildings, due to their age, design and occupancy, will still not meet all of the provisions of the standard as they will not allow for the safe evacuation of occupants. These higher risk buildings may require further upgrading or enhanced management procedures. The bill ensures these buildings will meet the standard within a period of three years. In addition, local governments will be responsible for assessing these applications, as they already have statutory powers and responsibilities under the Building Act 1975 in respect of buildings. Many local governments have local laws addressing the standards of these buildings. Owners will also be able to apply to local governments for an extended compliance time on the grounds of undue hardship.

In a small number of cases the bill anticipates that because of the design of the building, it may not be viable or cost effective to alter the fabric of a building. In these cases, the proposed standard will allow alternative solutions such as a management system which outlines staff procedures to be implemented to evacuate people when a fire occurs. In these situations, the bill will require councils to undertake annual inspections to ensure these procedural systems remain operational. This inspection could be carried out in conjunction with those required under a local government local law.

Improvements in budget accommodation building fire safety standards will not be effective unless there also is continued compliance with the standard. To complement construction improvements, owners of existing buildings will be required under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 to prepare within one year a Fire Safety Management Plan. For any new buildings, a Fire Safety Management Plan will be required to be submitted with the development application for building work. The plan must comply with the Fire Safety Standard called up by the Standard Building Regulation 1993 under the Building Act 1975. The plan will require owners to identify the number of occupants allowed in the building, the maintenance schedule of fire equipment, evacuation procedures and training programs for staff. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service will undertake random audits to ensure owners comply with these plans.

To further ensure owners comply with the plan, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and local government officers will be given increased powers of entry to inspect the living areas of budget accommodation buildings. Currently, these officers are denied access to these parts of a residential building, but it is critical that compliance inspections are made. This will also enhance the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service current random fire safety audits.

It will be an offence for an owner to not upgrade their building in accordance with the Fire Safety Standard. The penalty will be up to 165 penalty units. Failure to implement a Fire Safety Management Plan will attract a penalty of up to 100 penalty units. The plan must also be kept available for inspection by the public. Failure to do this will attract a penalty of up to 20 penalty units. As I have previously mentioned, the bill refers to a Fire Safety Standard which will be called up by the Standard Building Regulation 1993 made under the Building Act 1975. I table a copy of the draft standard so that members, owners of budget accommodation and the public will have an understanding of what criteria may be applied to budget accommodation buildings. The standard will be called up by the regulation once the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2002 has been proclaimed.

The bill follows detailed research into the safety of budget accommodation buildings and extensive consultation with stakeholders. The standards and compliance mechanisms proposed are the bare minimum to ensure the occupants of budget accommodation buildings are safe, and that any upgrade costs faced by building owners are reasonable. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

CO-OPERATIVE SCHEMES (ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 November (see p. 3802).

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (12.50 p.m.): At the outset, I indicate that the opposition will be supporting the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill 2001. As I have said in the parliament over the past couple of years on numerous occasions, this is another piece of legislation in respect of which we are putting forward legislative mechanisms and resolutions to a decision by the High Court which has invalidated certain actions put in place by various Australian jurisdictions, namely, the states, territories and the Commonwealth.

Over the past decade or so, we have seen a number of cooperative schemes and cross-vesting initiatives that have been to the benefit not only of the citizens of this state but also those right across Australia, whether they are under Commonwealth or territory jurisdiction. I believe it makes great sense to ensure that we preserve the original bipartisan and good intent of those schemes.

What we are dealing with today is an amendment that will address a couple of deficiencies identified by the High Court, one of which deals with the agricultural and veterinary chemicals cooperative arrangement and also potentially impacts on the operation of the National Crime Authority. The next bill we will be debating in the parliament will be complementary to this bill, which will be handled very capably by the member for Hinchinbrook, the shadow Minister for Primary Industries.

I believe it was always envisaged when the cooperative arrangements were put in place that are mentioned in the bill in respect of which we are seeking to validate the actions of Commonwealth officers that the Commonwealth officers who are involved in enforcing and ensuring that these schemes are carried out would have the same effect as if they were a state officer, because it is a cooperative scheme right across the country. That makes enormous sense for the reasons that I outlined earlier on. This will basically make sure that the agvet cooperative relationships in place in the scheme Australiawide will have full effect and also that there will be a retrospective validation of any of those matters that may have been invalidated potentially by the decision of the court that we are addressing today.

The other issue of concern is the potential impact on the National Crime Authority and also the effect that it might have on invalidating the actions of officers of the NCA with regard to cooperative schemes under that arrangement. It makes good commonsense to make sure that we have these cooperative schemes Australiawide. What this legislation does today is ensure that the status quo is preserved and reinstated and that there is proper validation of the decisions

made previously with good intent based on the intention and the best wishes for the scheme when it was put in place.

I commend the Attorney-General for bringing this validating and clarifying legislation before the parliament today. The opposition has great pleasure in supporting its passage through the parliament.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (12.52 p.m.): Today I have great pleasure in rising to speak, albeit briefly, on the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill 2001. This is a bill designed to clean up some of the uncertainty in this area that has resulted as a direct consequence of the High Court's decision in the Queen v. Hughes in the year 2000. The Hughes decision had a direct impact upon the ability of Commonwealth authorities or officers to exercise powers and to perform functions and duties under state laws in relation to intergovernmental legislative schemes such as the cooperative scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals and the cooperative scheme for the operation of the National Crime Authority.

Also, the bill will ensure that functions or powers are not imposed upon Commonwealth authorities and officers in connection with administrative actions under the schemes if their imposition would exceed the legislative powers of the state. The bill validates any such previous invalid administrative action.

The bill represents a legislative response to the Hughes decision and will validate any previous invalid administrative actions, notably those under the agvet registration scheme and the National Crime Authority scheme. The bill has been consulted widely in the community and has achieved a great deal of support. However, today I wish to note in particular part 2 of the bill, which validates past invalid administrative actions. There has been a potential for a breach of a fundamental legislative principle, which was that legislation should not be applied retrospectively. However, in this case we have a very real situation where the application of the bill retrospectively will actually work towards removing a great deal of community uncertainty. I feel that is essential to the functioning of things such as the NRS and the NCA.

The national NRS and the NCA cooperative schemes have been operating for several years on the assumption that these schemes have a sound constitutional footing. It was only as a direct result of the Hughes decision that it was discovered that they did not, and this bill is very necessary to overcome what are some quite significant consequences that might otherwise result from a potential determination that administrative actions of Commonwealth authorities and officers under the schemes might be invalid. Further, clause 8 provides that the bill has no effect on the rights or liabilities of parties to proceedings that have been heard and determined. For these reasons, I commend the state Attorney for bringing this bill into the House and I am very glad to support it.

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.56 p.m.), in reply: I thank the opposition for its support, and the opposition spokesperson and the member for Indooroopilly for their comments. As I indicated in my second reading speech made when the bill was introduced, it is of a machinery nature but it performs a very important function, namely, it addresses a constitutional problem that arose in the High Court case of the Crown v. Hughes. There have been a number of cases since where constitutional challenges have been raised in respect of the exercise by Commonwealth officers of powers under state legislation. This legislation provides the legal foundation for the continuation of those cooperative schemes, that is, national legal regimes established by each state and the Commonwealth all passing what are in effect identical laws.

Until the Hughes case, it was assumed that the authority of Commonwealth officers and state officers was mutual, but that was clearly found not to be the case under the Commonwealth Constitution. Therefore, legislation to remedy that situation has needed to be introduced not only in this state but in all states. The two particular elements of Commonwealth cooperative schemes that this legislation supports include the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, as the member for Southern Downs and member for Indooroopilly mentioned, but more importantly, in respect of my portfolio relating to criminal justice matters, the role of the National Crime Authority.

The National Crime Authority frequently is involved in joint operations with Queensland law enforcement authorities. It would be ludicrous for those joint operations to be jeopardised by virtue of the outcome of the High Court case or for any actions undertaken to date by National Crime Authority officers in conjunction with Queensland crime fighters to be set aside in any subsequent proceedings.

This legislation validates the actions, administrative and otherwise, that have been taken by authorities to date. In that respect, it is relatively straightforward legislation, but in the national scheme of things it is a very important piece of legislation. For that reason, the government has not only brought this forward but is also most grateful that the opposition has recognised the importance of restoring the situation that existed previously.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mr WELFORD: Before lunch I was concluding my remarks in relation to the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill 2001. The matters in relation to this bill have been canvassed by other members and myself. Once again I thank opposition members for their cooperation on this matter. I am always comforted by the assistance of the member for Southern Downs in passing good law. I hope he keeps up his record. In fact, it is so common now that I am starting to wonder whether I am doing the right thing. That concludes my comments on the second reading of this bill.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS (QUEENSLAND) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 November (see p. 3805).

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (2.33 p.m.): The National Party will be supporting the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. As we understand it, the objectives of the bill are to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 to achieve a number of aims. These include: to validate things done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers under the National Registration Scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals that are potentially invalid following the decision of the High Court in the Queen v. Hughes 2000; to validate things done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers that are potentially invalid due to certain gaps in the NRS legislative scheme that have arisen independently of the decision in Hughes; and to ensure that things done or omitted to be done in the future by Commonwealth authorities or officers under the NRS have a constitutionally sound basis.

The National Registration Authority for Registration of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, the NRA, in an intergovernmental legislative scheme with the states and territories operates a uniform national system for evaluation, registration and the regulation of agricultural and veterinary chemicals known as the National Registration Scheme. In Queensland, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 adopts the schedule to the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994, the Commonwealth act, as the Agvet Code of Queensland. Other states and territories have adopted the Agvet Code in a similar way as the minister alluded to in his second reading speech. Therefore, the National Registration Scheme provides for the National Registration Authority to control agricultural and veterinary chemicals up to and including the point of sale.

Registration is required for a large range of products that, in broad terms, kill pests and control diseases. Again, as the minister has noted, to ensure that the Agvet Code operates uniformly throughout Australia, the adopting legislation of each jurisdiction provides that certain Commonwealth administrative laws and prosecution arrangements apply to the National Registration Scheme. However, as it is explained in detail in the explanatory notes, the decision of the High Court in Hughes cast doubt on the ability of the relevant Commonwealth authorities and officers to exercise the powers and required functions under state laws with regard to several intergovernmental legislative schemes. Further, the High Court on this occasion indicated that,

where a state gave a Commonwealth authority or officer a power to undertake a function under state law together with a duty to exercise the function, there must be a clear line drawn between the exercise of the function and one or more of the legislative heads of power of the Commonwealth parliament set out in the Commonwealth Constitution.

To again tie the High Court case back to the proposed bill, as we understand it, the decision in Hughes affected the NRS by casting doubts on the validity of the exercise of powers in relation to the NRS by the National Registration Authority for agricultural and veterinary chemicals, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal and Commonwealth inspectors, as well as analysts.

A couple of months ago, the opposition supported the passage of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2001 which amended the act that members are debating today with regard to clarifying particular definitions across national legislation. This provided for clarifying labelling laws and a rule of exception for either a primary producer or a veterinary surgeon that may, for very specific purposes under a regulation, need to use a certain chemical product. The need to ensure that we have a unified Agvet Code is of the highest importance for a state such as Queensland, which is a significant interstate and international trader in primary industries. I would like to elaborate on that a little, because we are very dependent on primary industries and the use of chemicals in this state, and it would be a great travesty if we were not able to use chemicals that would aid many primary industries.

The value of Queensland's total beef exports in 2000-01 was estimated at around $2.6 billion, making it one of this state's largest export industries. Further, Queensland's cotton exports, according to 1999 figures provided by the Department of State Development, are valued at $619 million. These figures, along with the export value of other crucial industries, are more than enough evidence of how important it is to have a unified national registration scheme administered by the National Registration Authority. The National Party opposition has advocated and will continue to advocate strong support for this issue.

The explanatory notes outline that consultation has been conducted with a number of departments and standing committees as well as the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand. It is important to mention that the Department of Primary Industries has not been noted as a department that was consulted. Given that this bill is covering state legislation, this would seem to be a flaw in the consultation process. Perhaps it is simply poor drafting.

The first of the amendments this bill deals with is the commencement of the amendment act immediately before clause 4(1) of the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill. Clause 4(1) of that bill refers to the legislation as a relevant state act for the purposes of the cooperative schemes bill, which was passed by the House only a few minutes ago. As members would be aware, the effective operation of the amendments proposed in this bill is dependent on the amendments included in the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill.

The opposition supports the insertion of clause 2, which is obviously important to ensure that the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 is operating under its original intention, which will provide against the sort of High Court challenge that questioned the legislation. The intention of clause 4, to insert a definition of 'confer' into the act that relates to duties as well as functions, which is already noted, is also something we support as it will more appropriately define what an officer does and hopefully not cause the sort of problem that has been questioned and could again arise in relation to the power of a Commonwealth officer under state laws.

As the explanatory notes detail, clause 5, which would repeal and re-enact section 16, may be considered a potential breach of fundamental legislative principles. A re-enacted section 16(5) effectively allows amendment of the act by way of a regulation. However, this provision, as the minister said, is necessary to ensure that the Queensland legislation remains uniform with the Commonwealth as well as the other states and territories. As I understand, enacting this will also complement the express authorisation of conferral provisions in the Commonwealth's Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Act 2001.

I refer to the doubt that is raised in the explanatory notes about the effectiveness of the previous conferral of functions and powers. I think it would be useful if the minister could outline in his speech in reply to the second reading debate whether this doubt cast over the legislation was expressed only in the High Court case or whether it has been raised in other examples.

The next part of the bill I want to briefly discuss is the insertion of new sections 28A and 28B into the act. Again, whether these sections are consistent with the Legislative Standards Act 1992 has been raised as they could be considered to adversely affect the rights and liberties of individuals retrospectively. However, the opposition supports the need to ensure that these sections apply to avoid any further deficiencies that could arise from the decision in the Hughes case.

Section 28A, which refers to inspectors and analysts, confers functions and powers on Commonwealth inspectors and analysts. As we understand, this closes the gap in the national registration scheme, which previously looked at these matters as being impliedly conferred or already understood without necessarily being referred to in a part of the act. As a result, it would be hoped that this amendment will clarify any further line of questioning over the intent of the legislation.

Section 28B, which refers to the validation of actions of inspectors and analysts, intends to be retrospective and therefore validate things done or omitted to be done by inspectors and analysts before the commencement of the newly proposed section 28A. Although this is a breach of fundamental legislative principles, the opposition agrees that this will overcome the serious consequences that could flow from the gap that existed in the previous legislation that basically failed to recognise the administrative actions of Commonwealth authorities and officers under the national registration scheme.

The final amendment to the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001 deals with the insertion of section 36, which is a transitional provision for the act as amended. This would allow it to apply retrospectively, on or after the repeal and re-enactment of clause 5 in the original legislation.

I wish to point out the concern that the National Party opposition has with regard to the progress of the review into amending the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966. The review of this legislation has been on the agenda for a couple of years now and it deals with some very relevant issues, including chemical control, buffer zones and record keeping within this area. It is important that the review of this act is progressed and not left to lie on the agenda as it again deals with a number of critical issues in chemical usage and distribution.

The National Party opposition is supporting the objectives put forward in the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. It is critical that we have a unified national registration scheme in which Commonwealth authorities or officers are able to exercise their duties and perform the functions they need to under state laws without the risk of future litigation. Ensuring that this legislation is on a more secure footing is also important for Queensland's agricultural trade within Australia and overseas.

A uniform arrangement to deal with agricultural and veterinary chemicals throughout Australia means a great deal to many industries in this country. Not only do the states trade between each other; importantly, we also trade on the international market. With a unified scheme, exporters will be able to confidently say that they meet the requirements relating to chemicals based on the types of arrangements they have adopted. Those markets will be fully aware of how we use those chemicals.

There is trade across state borders. Under the old legislation, each state had particular requirements relating to chemicals. As a result, not all of the requirements of the individual states necessarily lined up with the needs of the state being traded with. Of course, there was some confusion as to how chemicals could be used. When we adopted a unified scheme in 1994 and although we forwent state rights relating to the use of chemicals, it was a far better situation for many primary producers who had to trade across state borders. This scheme is necessary. The amendments that have been moved to the current scheme will be of benefit and should iron out any deficiencies or any doubt that has existed previously with the national registration scheme. The opposition supports this bill.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.50 p.m.): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill. At the outset, I echo the final comments of the member for Hinchinbrook regarding the need for uniform arrangements relating to the application of chemicals. The proposed amendments contained in this bill are a case of good housekeeping—that is, cleaning up potential problem areas in the bill before they can arise. In the past, Commonwealth officers have exercised powers under the act without specific legislative power to do so. This means that the power has always been implicit or tacitly approved. However, the need for the legislation now arises as a result of the High Court's decision

in the case of the Crown v. Hughes. In this case, the High Court cast some doubt on the constitutional framework supporting state-Commonwealth cooperative schemes such as the national registration scheme which evaluates, registers and regulates the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. As a result of the decision in that case, it has now become necessary for every Australian jurisdiction to provide for the specific referral of powers, in this case to NRA inspectors.

It is important to remember that the current amendments before the House, while legally technical, are of a minor nature and do not in any way alter the intent of the existing legislation. As was mentioned by the minister, this legislation is vital in warding off any potential challenge to the legality of the Commonwealth exercising powers and performing functions conferred by state laws in relation to intergovernmental legislative schemes. In particular, the High Court indicated a need for the Commonwealth parliament to authorise the conferral of duties, powers or functions by a state on Commonwealth authorities and officers. Acting on this advice, a meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General determined the model legislation to be prepared in each jurisdiction. This legislation is the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill 2001, which was debated and passed earlier today.

This bill complements the CSAA legislation by seeking to address gaps within the scheme which have arisen both independently and as a result of the High Court's decision. By closing the gaps and removing the ambiguity surrounding the conferral of duties, functions and powers on Commonwealth authorities and officers, the national registration scheme will have a more secure constitutional footing. It is then vital that we clear up any ambiguity within the existing legislation and allow the National Registration Authority to continue to administer the scheme in this state. By amending the legislation, we can assure the effective evaluation and control of agricultural veterinary chemicals used within Queensland. I therefore commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (2.53 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill, there is one matter I want to raise with the minister. Over the years we have seen a bell curve relating to the use of chemicals—that is, there was a steep increase in not only the availability of toxic chemicals but also the effectiveness of those chemicals in managing quite worrisome agricultural and veterinary problems. Over time the negative side of the use of those chemicals also became evident and hence the introduction of more stringent controls. However, there remains a problem for local governments. Quite a number of years ago the Health Department used to accept chemicals from local authorities that had been handed in by landowners. They may have been agricultural chemicals or chemicals purchased for veterinary purposes, particularly herd management, and smaller amounts of chemicals for veterinary or agricultural use. As a result, they were disposed of in an appropriate and safe manner.

In the early 1990s the Health Department stopped accepting those chemicals for many reasons. At the time the Willawong toxic waste dump was being closed and the Gurulmundi facility was in the process of being established. It also is now closed. However, whilst this bill implements some Commonwealth initiatives on the handling of chemicals, I ask that the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities gives some consideration to the situation that local authorities and residents will find themselves in if they have a stock of unwanted chemicals. Nowadays most chemicals are identified, but there are still those that have been in sheds for 20 years where the label has dropped off. I ask the minister to give some consideration for the department being a depot or recipient or receptacle, if you like, in order to provide that service.

There is the need for such a service for a number of reasons, not to create a problem for the Department of Primary Industries but to remove the possibility of unwanted chemicals of various toxicity finding their way into municipal tips. Many tips nowadays are located away from areas of leachate and those sorts of things. They are fairly stringently controlled but not completely. I am not saying that local authorities that put land management sites in areas where leachate can get into watercourses or into other areas are irresponsible. They are not. Many landfill sites are historic, particularly in country Queensland. My experience has shown that most landowners are responsible. If a depot were available, they would certainly take advantage of it. This gives local authorities and landowners the opportunity to dispose of those chemicals in a responsible manner. I ask for the minister's consideration of that.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (2.56 p.m.): I rise in support of the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. The National Registration Authority, or the NRA as it is known, plays a vital role within rural and regional Queensland. The passage of this bill through parliament will ensure the safe use of all agvet

chemical products in Queensland. Prior to March 1995, the Commonwealth held responsibility for the evaluation and assessment of selected agvet chemical products as well as their clearance for registration. The states and territories were responsible for the registration and control of use of all agvet chemical products. Initially, the Commonwealth's involvement in the clearance process was informal until arrangements were put on a legislative basis in 1989. Then in July 1991 the Commonwealth, states and territories agreed to establish the national registration scheme, or the NRS, for agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

The development of the NRS sought to place under one national umbrella the assessment and registration of all agvet chemical products previously undertaken independently by the Commonwealth and each of the states and territories. Under this partnership, the NRA operates as a statutory authority with responsibility for the evaluation, the registration and the review of agricultural and veterinary chemicals and their control up to the point of retail sale. However, the states and territories retain responsibility for control of use activities, such as licensing of pest control operators and aerial spraying. Under these arrangements, the Commonwealth implements the legislative powers and functions provided to it under the legislation on behalf of all jurisdictions.

As my colleague the member for Mulgrave pointed out, the minor amendments the bill is seeking do not in any way change the intent of the legislation but rather ensure that there can be no challenge to the legislative basis for Commonwealth inspectors to enforce our legislation. The changes also ensure that, in the case of a breach of NRA regulations, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions is empowered to prosecute for any offences against the legislation even though such offences are offences against the laws of the state.

The work of the NRA in administering and enforcing the national registration scheme is essential to preserving Queensland's environment and infrastructure. This government is committed to catchment management, restoration and development. The announcement earlier this year of $3 million of investment over three years for the Burdekin rangelands-reef initiative was very welcome in my electorate and is indicative of our commitment to sustainable development and maximised productive capacity of the complex catchment from the rangelands to the Great Barrier Reef.

The purchase of an aquatic weed harvester for the Burdekin catchment will drive social and economic development within that catchment area. Indeed it was, I believe, an initiative of the local regional community forum. I saw a presentation about that weed machine when I was a member of that forum. The aquatic weed harvester physically removes weed from the system without having to resort to herbicide based solutions, which can cause further water quality and infrastructure problems during flooding.

The NRA must be able to administer the NRS, knowing that cases they prosecute can withstand the test of law. Allowing companies and individuals to escape prosecution because of a mere technical gap in the legislation could have a detrimental effect on our environment. This bill seeks to clear up any potential for this to occur. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (3.01 p.m.): I rise today to speak in support of the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. As was said by the previous speaker, the member for Charters Towers, one of the things that is helping us to make a success of the Burdekin area is the aquatic weed harvester which recently arrived in the area.

As the minister indicated in his second reading speech, this bill seeks to remove the doubt caused by the recent High Court decision. In essence, the High Court decision has made it necessary for every Australian jurisdiction, including Queensland, to provide for the special conferral of powers to Commonwealth officers of the National Registration Authority, the NRA, for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The NRA is responsible for administering a single national registration scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The NRA evaluates, approves and controls the supply of active constituents for the manufacture and supply of agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

The NRA received its full powers with the passage of Commonwealth legislation in the early 1990s, and complementary state and territory legislation enabled the commencement of the national registration scheme. The national registration scheme provides for the NRA to control agricultural and veterinary chemicals up to and including the point of sale. Recent approvals by the NRA for chemical usage in Queensland include the issue of emergency permits for the use of three new ant bait products as part of a fire ant eradication campaign. The chemicals are applied as a bait which is carried back to the nest by worker ants and fed to the queen for larvae. It

includes the issue of an emergency permit for the use of new chemical fungicides in the eradication campaign of the black sigatoka disease found in banana plants in the Tully Valley in far-north Queensland. It also includes the issue of an emergency use permit for the pesticide Confidor to help control Australia's worst sugarcane pest, the greyback cane grub. In my electorate of Burdekin it has impacted on the crops quite dramatically. Confidor has helped to contain that to a certain extent but still does not resolve the issue.

Indeed, as the NRA annual report in 2001 says, 'The work of the NRA safeguards the health of the people, animals and the environment, and international trade.' This bill will ensure that the national registration scheme is on a more secure constitutional footing in the wake of the High Court decision. The bill will do this by ensuring that no duty, function or power conferred on a Commonwealth authority or officer is beyond the legislative power of the state. Therefore, this bill is in the best interests of the industry and the wider community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.04 p.m.): I rise eagerly to support the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. As most members should realise, the legislation is required to prevent the threat of a legal challenge to actions and decisions by the Commonwealth authorities and officers operating under the national registration scheme. The bill also signifies our government's continued commitment to an effective uniform national registration system for agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

While speaking of chemicals, I applaud the government for continuing to pursue for future use more natural herbicides and pesticides. Everyone who is environmentally conscious realises that the days of using chemicals unaware of the possible hazards and dangers to our environment should be gone. We do have to acknowledge that mother nature has many natural herbicides and pesticides. Only in recent years have many of us been made aware of how effective these things can be, whether it be in our own gardens at home or whether it be in a commercial way. This negates the need for some chemicals used in herbicides and pesticides.

In the late eighties to early nineties I was lucky enough to venture back to my family's homeland of Ireland—in fact, the parish of Rathcannon in the county of Tipperary. I realise that many of us on both sides of the House do have Irish heritage. The reason I mention this is because my cousins who still live on the Cummins family property are, in fact, dairy farmers. They spoke to me about the way they use many of the by-products and slurry from the animals. They use them as a fertiliser.

My cousin John Ryan, who still resides on the family property, talked to me about the rotation of the various paddocks. The winters in Ireland can be quite severe and they have to bring the animals indoors. At the end of the season they have quite an amount of effluent which they put back on the paddocks. Then they rest those paddocks. Over a period of time it acts as a nutrient in a naturally occurring way and refertilises the ground. In coming years they go back and use that paddock as grazing areas.

John Ryan's brother is Father Dan Ryan, who is one of the local parish priests. When he comes out here to visit he tells us about how Ireland is forging ahead. Many years ago the Irish were criticised, I suppose. It was commonly held that one of their biggest exports was people. They took on this challenge—

Mr Lee: One of their best exports, too.

Mr CUMMINS: I take the interjection of an exported Irishman, the member for Indooroopilly. He, like many others, left that country. Now we find that they have taken up the challenge.

While I was there they explained to me that, as they had to enter into markets through Europe, it became a very competitive environment. No doubt our agricultural industry has faced that right across Australia, as has the entire world. To be more competitive, we not only have to work harder; we also have to work smarter. The Irish people faced the challenge that was issued by Europe and embraced technology. They also embraced an incredible amount of natural pesticides and herbicides, thereby limiting their use of chemicals. Nowadays, natural food stores are popping up everywhere because people are preferring to consume food that is free of pesticides, herbicides, or other chemicals.

Previously, when I was a councillor, I became quite aware of the issues that face our water bodies and our water storage areas. When a catchment is dammed, or a dam or similar type of water body is constructed, the run-off can be full of nutrients. Often weeds—and one that comes to mind is cabomba—can thrive on those nutrients and, in fact, become overgrown in some areas. We cannot use pesticides and herbicides to kill these weeds. More often than not, these weeds are not native to our area. In fact, they can be introduced by people throwing out the water

from their fish tank. When the non-native or exotic weed species that we tend to put in fish tanks hit these big water bodies, they spread like wildfire.

While I was a member of the Caloundra City Council, I became aware of such issues in relation to the Ewen Maddock Dam at Landsborough in the electorate of Glass House. In past years, the Ewen Maddock Dam provided a water supply for the Caloundra City Council. It has been off line for a while now, but it may have to come back on line in coming years. It had a very large weed problem. In the past decade it was thought that if the dam was drained completely and all the weed was removed, when the dam was refilled the weed would be gone. Unfortunately, that was not the case, because if a piece of cabomba as small as a thumbnail was left in the dam it would reproduce and grow. Within a few years that weed again took over the dam. As I say, the council could not use herbicides or pesticides to control weeds in that water body.

We have to address these issues. That is why I applaud the government for seeking more natural ways in which to find weeds in the future. Water weeds in our water bodies are always going to be of concern to our local authorities. I am aware of some circumstances in which a weed harvester is used. In fact, I remember that for many years the Deputy Mayor of the Maroochy Shire Council, Councillor Trevor Thompson, was besotted by this weed harvester. He fought and fought to have it. Whether the council rented it or bought it, he just knew that the Maroochy Shire Council needed a weed harvester. When the weeds are harvested, they are found to be very high in nutrients. So although the weeds are quite a nuisance, they also remove high levels of nutrient from the water. Quite often we receive those high levels of nutrient from upstream in the catchment area where animals may be grazing. They naturally produce the effluent which is on the ground, and it is then taken into our water catchment area. So although weeds such as cabomba are a nuisance, they can be useful in removing some of the nutrients and reducing the costs of chemically treating the water.

While I was a member of the Caloundra City Council, I was a member of the Caloundra and Maroochy water board. The chairman, another Maroochy councillor, Herman Schwabe, was a very, very able chairman. We oversaw the Baroon Pocket Dam, which is in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. It was quite interesting to learn about the various problems that can be experienced with dams. We have to be very wary of the chemicals with which we treat our water bodies, because at the end of the day those chemicals will be coming through our taps.

The general manager of the Caloundra and Maroochy water board is Phil Aldrich. He was very helpful to the board members, of whom I was one, by giving very informative presentations on algae blooms. This is a very serious issue for many people right across Queensland. Over the years we become used to just turning on a tap, but there are some grave issues throughout this country with respect to the treatment of our water catchments and water storage facilities. The algae blooms can be a naturally occurring phenomena. They are caused by various things, such as water temperature, the run-off, and nutrient levels in the area.

While I was a member of the Caloundra City Council, the hydro-electric scheme was introduced. It was a very positive initiative. It used water from the dam upstream. Where the dam came through the hill, instead of having a large valve at the end of it, we tapped into it and put in a hydro-electric generator. It can power the entire treatment plant. It also puts power back into the electricity grid. That is a naturally occurring, environmentally friendly initiative that should be encouraged.

I know that the debate is still raging on the recycling of sewage water into potable or drinking water. The Caloundra City Council wanted to be part of a pilot project to find out whether the water was going to be politically acceptable. I am happy to say that, when I was a member of that council, we threw out the proposal, because we should be very wary of unwanted chemicals within our water supply, such as hormone disrupters. Herbicides and pesticides can be quite damaging to our environment. We should always look at how we can control them naturally.

While I was chairman of the mosquito and midge board, we were continually looking at the possibility of runnelling, which cut down on the breeding environments of mosquitoes and midges instead of using chemicals to keep the numbers down. As our communities grow and develop, we move into naturally mosquito-breeding or midge-breeding areas. Runnelling was considered for those areas, although it has not been as successful as it was thought it would be.

I applaud the government for taking the steps contained in this bill. I will continue to encourage the government to consider ways of reducing the use of chemicals that can have

effects on our society. I hope that more naturally occurring chemicals will be used in the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Suncorp Metway Stadium

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the National Party) (3.19 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I refer the Treasurer to an answer I received from the Minister for Transport in response to my question on notice of him on 17 October this year. I asked the Minister for Transport whether, as part of the transport and infrastructure associated with the Lang Park redevelopment project, there was a proposal for an additional rail track through the Roma Street Station from the Ipswich line as a consequence of the Lang Park redevelopment. In his answer dated 21 November the Minister for Transport states—

Planning for the stadium transport infrastructure therefore allows for the provision for extra tracks.

In answer to my question without notice, the Treasurer stated—

We are not building—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole): Order! I do not agree that this is a matter suddenly arising.

Mr JOHNSON: I believe it is.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest you write to the Speaker.

Mr JOHNSON: I believe it is.

Mr Terry Sullivan: Table the advice.

Mr JOHNSON: I will table it. I seek leave to table it.

Leave granted.

AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS (QUEENSLAND) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (3.20 p.m.): The member for Kawana has risen significantly in my estimation now that I am aware that he was chairman of the Mosquito and Midge Board on the Sunshine Coast. I am very impressed. I was also impressed by the passion with which he spoke about his relatives in Ireland—a proud agricultural country. I grew up in farming country in the Republic of Ireland in a small town of about 600 people called Ballyjamesduff in County Cavan. It might have been a small town or village, but the hinterland was filled with farms and farmers. On mart day, thousands of people would visit the town.

The main industry in the area was dairy farming, mainly with Friesian cows, but there were quite a significant number of piggeries, some sheep, and some cropping. It is fair to say that farming and the processing of agricultural products formed the basis of industry in Ballyjamesduff. When one has had that sort of a background, one realises how difficult farmers lives can be. They live and work in a very uncertain industry, an industry which is affected by the weather like no other. The industry is also affected by not only the national economy but also the international economy; it is affected by interest rates; it is affected by exchange rates; and, in terms of the production of food, it is affected by people's tastes.

For that reason that I am pleased to rise in the House today and support the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001, a bill that will work towards removing a little bit of the uncertainty in primary industries. I concur with the statements made by the member for Kawana about bringing the animals indoors in Ireland in the winter. Farmers had to; it was so cold. They could not leave cows and sheep outside; they took them inside. You then had to find a use for or a way of disposing of quite significant quantities of effluent. People felt that putting it onto the fields was a very simple way of recycling the effluent and making a practical use of it.

However, we had a problem in County Cavan. With the large amounts of rain that fell, quite large amounts of effluent would run off. We held the record in Ireland for the most number of lakes in a county. We had 365—one for every day of the year. During the 1960s we had perhaps the best fishing lakes in Europe. However, because of effluent run-off throughout the 1970s and

the 1980s, we ended up with significant amounts of water pollution and, sadly, a lot of the fishing lakes really do not fall into the category of fishing lakes anymore.

I was involved with a wonderful group back home called the Lough Shellin Anti-pollution Group. In about 1964-1965, Lough Shellin was listed among the top 10 fishing lakes in Europe, mainly for trout fishing. By the mid 1980s it did not make the top 1,000 list. The Lough Shellin Anti-pollution Group had as its basis an education program. They sought to educate local children, mainly children of farmers, and they sought to educate them as to ways of better looking after local lakes. Their idea was that if the kids who would eventually inherit the farms were taught about pollution, the problems that might occur would be solved.

My mother's family were the farming side of my family in Ireland. It is fitting to speak of this today because I was recently sent a number of photographs from her family. They all went to a small school in Drumshambo called Authagrana National School. The school is now closed, unfortunately, but both my mother Mary Lee nee Baron and her sister Valerie, brothers Noel, Aiden, Brendan and Gerard all went to Authagrana National School. I mention this because while Ireland is an agricultural country, it is also a country that in recent decades has acknowledged that education has to form the basis of any decent economy.

Mr English interjected.

Mr LEE: I take the interjection from the member for Redlands. I was actually going to talk about the Smart State. I actually think that Ireland was perhaps the first Smart State because what Ireland did was acknowledge that the guts of its economy was based on agriculture which, by its nature, is uncertain and they felt that the best way of stopping the brain drain out of the country was to educate people. I think that Ireland lost so many good people through lack of jobs. That has been reversed now.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I draw the member for Indooroopilly to the attention of the House. I ask: how is this relevant to the legislation we are debating here? Mr Deputy Speaker, we are going to sit late tonight, and I ask you to make a ruling on this in relation to the legislation before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole): There is no point of order.

Mr LEE: In my own way I am trying to explain to the House, by comparing some of the agricultural issues in Australia to those with which I grew up in Ireland. I would have thought it was fairly straight forward to understand that in a bill that is called the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001 I was discussing a water pollution issue; namely, the pollution of a lake in Ireland called Lough Shellin, polluted by effluent from agriculture. I am aghast that the member cannot see the relevance of that. Perhaps it would be better if I talked—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Indooroopilly will speak through the Chair and bring some relevance into his debate.

Mr LEE: I beg your pardon, Mr Deputy Speaker. I guess I was put off my game there for a minute. Perhaps it would be better for some members of the House if I talked about the fact that my County Cavan not only did not have a freight railway but did not have any railways at all.

There are numerous examples of how agricultural issues have arisen in Ireland from which we can learn, just as there are numerous examples in Australia that they could learn from us. But I think it is relevant and I think it is very important that as a government and as a state we acknowledge that we actually can learn from other people and from other countries. As a member of this House, I would be very disappointed that I could not raise what I believed were some very pertinent agricultural issues purely because they were issues in Ireland first.

The objectives of the bill, which I am so pleased to support, are to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994. It will validate things that were done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers under the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, or the NRS, that are potentially invalid following the almost infamous Hughes decision of the High Court. The bill will also validate things done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers that are potentially invalid due to certain gaps in the NRS legislative scheme that have arisen independently of the Hughes decision. The decision in Hughes affects the NRS by casting doubts on the validity of the exercise of powers in relation to the NRS by the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal and Commonwealth inspectors and analysts. I am very pleased

also because there are absolutely no administrative costs to the government in the bill's implementation.

It is also worth noting that, as with another bill discussed already today, while this bill does retrospectively impose some legislation upon the state, it is legislation that will have no adverse effect on anyone and will in fact be of great benefit to the people of Queensland by way of clarifying some important things. I am pleased also that the bill has been the subject of comprehensive consultation with the community and that it is supported by those who participated in that consultation process. I am very pleased to support the bill. I commend the minister for putting it together. I would also like to commend the department, which played a significant role in that.

Mr English: 'Consultation' is the minister's middle name.

Mr LEE: 'Consultation' is very much the minister's middle name, whether in relation to his dealings with the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill, the fire ants or even those little critters the crazy ants. I am very pleased and proud to support such a fine bill.

Mr HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (3.32 p.m.): This afternoon I rise in the parliament to speak on the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Amendment Bill 2001. As I think we have heard previously, it is part of a legislative response to a decision in the High Court of Australia. As the minister said in his speech, the decision of that court cast doubt on the validity of the exercise of powers in relation to the national registration scheme by the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals. The amendment bill makes changes to the national registration scheme to place it on a more secure constitutional footing and closes certain gaps in the conferral of duties, functions and powers on the Commonwealth authorities and officers related to the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal and inspectors and analysts appointed under the Commonwealth law.

The National Registration Authority operates the Australian system which evaluates, registers and regulates agricultural and veterinary chemicals. Before an agricultural or veterinary product can enter the Australian market, it must go through the National Registration Authority's rigorous assessment process to ensure that it meets high standards of safety and effectiveness. Any changes to a product which is already on the market must also be referred to the National Registration Authority. Under the national registration scheme, companies must supply the National Registration Authority with extensive data about the product. These are independently evaluated to ensure that the product is safe for people, animals and the environment, and that it will not pose an unacceptable risk to trade, importantly, with other countries. If the product meets the National Registration Authority standards, it may be registered for use in Australia.

The National Registration Authority also reviews products which have been on the market for many years to ensure that they meet contemporary standards. Members might recall that this morning in the parliament in a ministerial statement the Minister for Natural Resources made reference to the poison 1080. He commented that last week the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals announced that it was conducting a review into the future of the poison 1080. He went on to say that the department will support this review, but that it would argue strongly for the state's continued use of 1080 for the control of pest animals such as wild dogs and feral pigs. He then went on to talk about how effective 1080 has been for rural Queenslanders and how it has proven to be very effective and, importantly, target specific in the control of animal populations. He then said that banning of the use of 1080 without an equally effective predator control poison would have only negative effects on Queensland.

The point is that the NRA has the power to review existing products to ensure that they meet contemporary standards. Obviously, 1080 is one of the products that it is in the process of having a look at at this time. The NRA also manages a national compliance program to ensure that products supplied in Australia continue to meet the conditions of registration, in other words, once they are registered, those products should continue to comply with their original registration purpose.

Basically, in respect of someone applying for registration with the National Registration Authority, the applicant is the name of the company applying for label registration approval. For instance, in relation to a product such as glyphosate, which is a herbicide, or weed killer, a name would be given to the holder of the technical grade active constituents, which is the TGAC and there would be a register of active material—for instance, as I said before, glyphosate and the percentage of glyphosate in the particular product. The applicant would also apply for label

approval with the NRA in conjunction with a formulator, who would be the person who is going to supply the NRA with the formulation. Each of these chemical products has a formulation and those formulations, to a great extent, are very tightly held. That company would also provide a letter of support with regard to the active material which comprised the base of a product, for instance, such as glyphosate.

From my experience with the operations of the National Registration Authority, the main problem that people tend to have with the NRA is the waiting time for registration approvals. If a company has a particular insecticide or herbicide that it is required to register, there is certainly a feeling on the part of a company wanting to sell that product that there is a significant time delay in going through this approval process. Although this is not an issue specifically for the minister to address, he certainly would have heard about some of the perceived problems in that area.

The important thing about this bill is that it provides certainty, because it deals with what is called the Hughes case and maintains the national registration scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. Why is it important that this scheme should be maintained? It is important because it provides for the control of agricultural and veterinary chemicals up to and including the point of sale. It guarantees a standard and the particular constitution of a chemical, insecticide or herbicide and, I believe, provides certainty for farmers who use that chemical. It details the application required and provides them with some certainty—given that it has been registered and has been through the process—that it does what it is supposed to do in relation to the particular agricultural products for which it is registered.

When talking about insecticides or herbicides, it is important to consider a number of issues which are addressed in the registration process of a particular herbicide such as glyphosate and its effect on crops. In the case of an insecticide, it would specify the particular crops in relation to which application should be proceeded with. If rigorous testing has not been undertaken with regard to some crops, it is simply not appropriate to use that material on crops for which it has not been registered

Another issue in relation to the importance of the National Registration Authority is that it provides some level of safety for the workers and other people involved in the application of a particular insecticide so that, provided they stick to the requirements, the application procedures and the safety procedures, they will be safe in the application of that particular chemical. I said that it provides some certainty for the farmers who use the chemicals. By registering a chemical as set out on the particular product label, the National Registration Authority establishes a chain of authority from the manufacturer to the wholesaler, the retailer and the end user—the farmer. So the registration process is important because it assists the product guarantee and, I think, provides some certainty that, when a person applies it in the way required, that person is not going to become unnecessarily ill, and that it also does what it says it does because of the rigorous testing that has been carried out.

Chemicals are of enormous importance in cotton and wheat growing areas. With the high cost of diesel and the necessary farming equipment, we have moved to a situation of minimum till in farming procedures. That necessitates the use of particular herbicides and other chemicals in order to grow crops. Insecticides are important, too, because they guarantee that, if used properly, they are able to destroy bugs which are going to affect whether or not a crop can be produced and, secondly, the quality of that crop.

As I said, this bill is extremely important because it overcomes some of the problems that occurred through that High Court case. It emphasises and provides certainty for farmers and other people who work on farms that, firstly, a product is going to do what it says it does and that it is going to be safe provided that directions are followed in the application of that product.

I have spoken previously in this parliament about activities at the Narangba Industrial Estate adjoining my electorate. That industrial estate is a major employment generator in the local area. It is important that two major chemical formulators operate on that estate: A & C Chemicals and Binary Chemicals. Previously, the formulation of the agricultural chemicals they produce there was undertaken in New South Wales and Victoria. Secondly, as the patents are expiring on a number of chemicals, the opportunity exists to apply to the National Registration Authority to take on those particular products and their formulation for various companies under different labels. So when a patent has expired, this has led to better competition for agricultural chemicals. The benefits of that are obvious. It has opened up those chemicals to more farmers, because it has had the effect of price reduction and greater competition. By reducing the price to the actual grower of a product—which is usually the farmer—this can result in a cheaper and better quality product for the end consumer.

I think that this bill has great significance. It provides certainty in the application of actions taken under the national registration scheme. It is important that this bill pass through the parliament today to ensure that certainty is maintained, because the application of chemicals under that scheme is very important in Queensland, particularly in the rural areas.

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (3.47 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. Whereas the bill is of a rather technical nature and basically mirrors legislation that has been enacted state-wide through all the jurisdictions in Australia and the Commonwealth, it is a very important piece of legislation for Queensland. I note the opposition's support for the bill, as I have noted the support for it from honourable members on the government side, as well.

What will this bill do? This bill will ensure that the basis of the conferral of functions and powers on Commonwealth authorities and officers as part of the national registration scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals is not put at risk due to that recent High Court decision. The NRA, in an intergovernmental legislative scheme with the states and territories, operates a uniform national system for evaluation, registration and regulation of agricultural and veterinary chemicals known as the national registration scheme. In Queensland, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 adopts the schedule to the Commonwealth's Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994 as the Agvet Code of Queensland.

There were some interesting contributions. The issue of chemical usage is very important—one to which I will allude during the conclusion to my summation of honourable members' contributions. The issue of chemical usage is very important not only from an industry's perspective but, more importantly, from a community point of view. The Queensland government takes this very seriously. It is also a matter that our primary industries take seriously, as well.

I refer to contributions made by various members. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook raised a number of issues. He raised the issue of the review of the Queensland Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act. As members present would know, many speakers' comments strayed from the contents of the legislation. As I said earlier, it is a pretty technical bill, but I was very pleased with your lenience, Mr Deputy Speaker Poole, during the debate. I will respond to honourable members even though they spoke to issues not relevant to the piece of legislation before the House.

As the honourable member for Hinchinbrook would know, the act has been reviewed in line with national competition policy on the harmonisation of controls of use. I am advised that the Department of Primary Industries has been awaiting agreement from the Commonwealth on how this harmonisation of the controls of use can be achieved. While agreement has still not been reached with the Commonwealth, it is now planned that Queensland should go ahead with its original proposal on controls of use, which is consistent with national competition policy.

The member for Hinchinbrook also commented about whether the Hughes case dealt with issues of validity of the national registration scheme. The Hughes case did not deal specifically with NRS but with Corporations Law. The relevance of the case is found as it casts doubt about cooperative schemes, of which the NRS is one. The amendments, in conjunction with the Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Bill, are designed to ensure that the NRS is capable of withstanding any constitutional attack.

The other important issue the honourable member raised related to whether the DPI was consulted on this piece of legislation. I have been informed by my departmental officers that the amendments were drafted by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in consultation with my department. Since the Minister for Primary Industries is introducing the bill to parliament, it is customary not to list DPI as a department consulted. In effect, this would be like saying that I had consulted with myself. Quite obviously there was consultation. At the end of the day, as I said earlier, the department was not listed because I am introducing a bill of a similar nature.

I refer to the comments of the member for Gladstone in relation to receipt and disposal of dangerous chemicals. She made quite valid points. The member knows that the point is always where the money is going to come from. I understand that government has long recognised the need to ensure the proper and careful handling of chemicals and their disposal. In relation to disposal, I understand that the EPA has in place chemical collection programs that allow the community to dispose of chemicals responsibly and properly. I will certainly, as the honourable member did suggest, pass on her comments to the minister responsible for the EPA.

The honourable members for Mulgrave, Charters Towers and Burdekin spoke quite succinctly to the contents of the bill. They certainly showed a very good understanding of the bill. I thank

them for their contributions. The honourable member for Kawana did raise a number of issues a little outside the scope of the bill. Seeing as this was a wide-ranging debate I was very keen to listen to the comments made by him. One of the points raised related to the shire council on which he served and the dreadful issue of water weeds. Water weeds, of course, permeate many of our water systems state wide. I refer the honourable member to the members for Charters Towers and Burdekin. There is a wonderful initiative in Charters Towers and Burdekin called the rangelands-reef initiative, to which the state government has contributed $3 million. It is about ensuring the cleaning up of our waterways, especially of the Burdekin system. Part of that contribution was the Department of Primary Industries purchasing a water weed harvester for the Burdekin Shire Council. We did trial this water weed harvester—incidentally, it is manufactured in the electorate of Algester, in Archerfield—at Payards Lagoon. It proved to be very successful. That lagoon is completely clear of all water weeds. Follow-up treatment has also been carried out. To all intents and purposes, at the end of the day Payards Lagoon has now become a haven for families to come and spend a nice Sunday afternoon.

I note the member for Burdekin nodding his head. He attended when the Premier was there after a community cabinet meeting to make that announcement with me. Of course, the members for Burdekin and Charters Towers are very carefully monitoring and scrutinising the progress of the Burdekin's rangelands-reef initiative. I refer the honourable member to those two members for further information on the water weed harvester.

Mr Rodgers: The harvester will be a great asset for the Burdekin and the north to do that sort of work.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for his comment, his observation, his great assistance and his great participation in this scheme.

The member for Indooroopilly certainly did speak at some length on the contents of the bill and of his experiences in Ireland. He compared what happens there with what happens here. It was very interesting, from my point of view, to listen to his comments. Of course, the honourable member for Kallangur, who is a person with a very keen interest in primary industries, was certainly able to provide input into the debate on this legislation in a manner that I believe only he could do, and I thank him for his contribution.

I mentioned at the outset that I wanted to make a couple of comments about chemical usage in Queensland. I will address chemical usage and the consumer end of things—how I believe consumers feel about the use of chemicals in the foods they consume. The very existence of our agricultural industries is dependent on the consumers who buy their product. Therefore, the future of agriculture is closely linked to future consumer buying trends. The buying trends of today's consumers are increasingly evident. I ask all honourable members to listen to this and think things through. Consumers want more convenience, more taste and more eating out, and they are more demanding about food safety, health and nutritional aspects. Does that satisfy honourable members?

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr PALASZCZUK: Consumers are also becoming more demanding about the ethical and environmental credentials of what they are buying. Tomorrow's consumers will want to know the true environmental cost of putting that food on the plate. We believe that terms, as the honourable member for Kallangur mentioned, such as 'farming with a minimal footprint' will be very important to tomorrow's consumers. 'Minimal footprint' does not just mean no future impact. Consumers will value production methods that regenerate the soil, making up for past impact. This will be achieved through the development of sustainable farming systems that optimise yields while improving the health of our landscape. Water quality, as the member for Indooroopilly mentioned, and soil health are obviously two essential components of a healthy landscape. Inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides impact on both water quality and soil health.

The path to sustainable farming is important and in many ways it will be never ending. The important message is that we are on the path and we are moving forward. In Queensland I believe that industry and government have made substantial gains. The Department of Primary Industries here in Queensland is undertaking research that addresses broad soil health issues and sustainability; for example, the development and the implementation of nutrient monitoring systems have enabled industries to maintain productivity and also reduce fertiliser inputs. This approach is typified by recent advances in the banana industry, which has seen a 40 per cent reduction in nitrogen fertiliser input, thereby reducing the potential for leaching into streams and watercourses.

In addition to reducing the amount of fertiliser, it is important to reduce the impact of the fertiliser used by making it more environmentally friendly. Organic fertilisers, biological control methods such as exclusion netting, non-toxic bait sprays, biopesticides and soil balance technologies will be an integral part of tomorrow's ethical production systems. These systems will be validated by rigorous third-party accreditation that will always award eco-labelling status to products. This is the future of agriculture and the environment, a future where we need to get smarter to meet consumer demands for environmentally safe food. With those comments, I once again thank all honourable members for their contributions. I also thank the opposition for its support of the legislation.

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 Palaszczuk, by leave, read a third time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 November (see p. 3811).

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (4.02 p.m.): The National Party opposition will be supporting the broad objectives put forward in the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001. The objectives of the legislation as set out in the explanatory notes are to provide for amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 to: (a) introduce a state regulatory framework for dog breeds that are subject to the Commonwealth's importation ban; (b) expand the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six to include a person with particular knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments; (c) clarify that a joint local government may, with the consent of its component local governments, disperse funds that are not required for the exercise of its exclusive jurisdiction for any other local government purpose and make a similar clarification in respect of the Townsville-Thuringowa Water Supply Board, which is a local government entity similar to a joint local government; and (d) enable the state to supervise the financial arrangements of local government owned corporations under the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982. Further, the bill also seeks to amend the Queensland Treasury Corporation Act 1988 to make clear that in applying the act to local government owned corporations the performance dividend requirements do not apply.

The first part of this amendment bill deals with the issue of establishing a state regulatory framework for dog breeds that are subject to the Commonwealth's importation ban. As the minister noted in her second reading speech, the proposed amendments provide for the creation of a state framework of minimum standards for the regulation of breeds of dog, the importation of which is prohibited by the Commonwealth—namely, dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, Japanese tosa, American pit bull terrier or pit bull terriers and crossbreeds of these dogs, referred to as restricted dogs.

For the benefit of members in the House, in terms of the history associated with these regulations, the Commonwealth Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulation gives effect to the federal government's decision of 25 November 1991 to exclude from entry into Australia dogs that pose a threat to public health and safety. The key elements of the bill are: (a) placing controls and conditions upon the keeping of restricted dogs; (b) prohibiting the breeding, sale or exchange and requiring the desexing of restricted dogs; (c) enabling the destruction of a restricted dog in specified circumstances; and (d) providing for local governments to be responsible for the administration and implementation of this regime.

These key elements have been based on an assessment of the legislation of other Australian states for the regulation of breeds of dog prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth. Further, state frameworks to address this issue have been developed in New

South Wales with the Companion Animals Act 1998 and in South Australia with the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995. At present, Victoria is in the process of debating its bill, and in Western Australia the government has announced its intention to prepare draft legislation for a similar regulatory framework. Prior to discussing the amendments that the bill intends to propose, including the insertion of chapter 17A relating to the regulation of restricted dogs and their application to local governments, I intend to also put forward a number of questions which the minister might look at in greater depth when summing up the debate. These are necessary to consider when introducing breed-specific legislation.

As I noted at the start of the second reading debate, the National Party opposition supports the legislation that has been introduced by the government that proposes to bring in a regulatory framework for four breeds of dog and their relevant crossbreeds currently banned from importation by the Commonwealth. We have and will always support animal welfare and rights and advocated this position in the animal care and protection legislation that was passed in this parliament a few months ago. However, this has to be balanced by community health and safety, which has been challenged in recent times with serious dog attacks, particularly on the Gold Coast.

We hear of people being attacked by dogs on numerous occasions. In fact, every politician would have been attacked by a dog at some stage in their careers. If they have not, they should have and perhaps are not doing enough work.

Mr Reeves: Doorknocking.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Doorknocking is the greatest trap. I will never forget one time I was doorknocking in Cunnamulla and there were two blue heelers under the steps. I went to speak to the lady and just as I was heading off and put my hand on the gate they hit me and tore the heel off my shoe. On that occasion I made the fatal mistake—and I have never done it since—of latching the gate properly by pulling the wire over it. From that point on I always leave it so I can get out. Anyway, they did not do much damage apart from damaging my shoe.

A government member: Was the dog all right?

Mr HOBBS: I gave them a fair hiding, but just the same I managed to get out. However, I want to point out something else in relation to dog breeds that ties in fairly well. In the rural areas of Queensland and Australia there are plenty of cattle dogs, blue heelers, kelpies and collies. We know what those true breeds are like. But the introduction of pig dogs, et cetera, has resulted in huge animals. There was an article recently in the *Western Times* headed 'Sheep and goats target of attacks—domestic dogs go on killing rampage'. Members may not be able to see, but there is a photo with the article. There is a cattle dog on one side and on the other side is the biggest dog I have ever seen. It is twice as big as a sheep and was killing sheep. The article states—

> The attack was by two dogs, a male, yellow creamy dog with a broken tail and a female big red dog.
>
> ...
>
> The male dog was destroyed and the female dog attempted to attack Mr Sutton before she was destroyed.

You would never find that with a cattle dog, a kelpie or a collie. If they are spotted, they run, but they would not go and attack anyone like that. Cattle dogs will certainly bail you up, but it is a matter of how you handle them.

This particular gentleman said—

> My son wanted to check the trough and I would not let him go by himself; just as well I did not let him, or he would be dead too.

That dog is an absolute monster. That is an interesting scenario.

A number of relevant groups, including the Department of Primary Industries, the RSPCA and the Local Government Association, have also supported this part of the bill. However, it is also important to note that in the 253 submissions received from the public when the draft legislative proposals were released for comment in mid-September, 218, including 179 form letters, were opposed and 34 were in support of it. The Australian Veterinary Association does not advocate its support for the proposed legislation. A number of local government councils have been concerned as to whether they have the appropriate resources and technical expertise to enforce the regulatory framework.

It is important in this debate to consider why particular groups—and some generally—have voiced their opposition to this legislation and whether the objectives of the government are achievable. We all know what the government is trying to do and we agree with that, but it is a

matter of how we get there. The major point of opposition that has been taken up by the majority of people or groups lies with the idea that there is a real difficulty in identifying the breed of a dog and, in particular, a crossbreed. This opinion was raised strongly by the Australian Veterinary Association as well as the Canine Control Council, which acknowledged that this process of identification can be very difficult in some circumstances. This will be raised in greater detail when discussing the clauses of the bill.

The ability of the veterinary surgeon to identify and qualify the breed of the dog in order to provide a certificate has been questioned. I think it is important for the workability of this legislation that the minister qualifies whether this has been considered by his department. He should also tell us what evidence he has that this identification process will work, particularly with crossbreeds. An example of this difficulty that has been put forward relates to the American Staffordshire Terrier, which is virtually genetically identical to the American Pit Bull Terrier but is recognised as a distinct breed.

The Victorian Canine Association is responding to the introduction of the legislation in Victoria at the Urban Animal Management Conference. Only four months ago it noted that the animal management officers—the authorised officers of councils—agreed that they were not qualified to identify dogs by breed and, further, they did not want that responsibility. Given this response by animal management officers in Victoria, this could be an issue that is likewise raised by local councils and vets in Queensland. This is again an important part of the legislation that I believe requires some further explanation in this debate.

In addition to this line of argument others, including Dr Stephen Collier, a lecturer in human and environmental studies at the University of New England, have made the point that inbred instincts have to be shaped and developed by training, but some expression of aggressive activity is a default behaviour of the respective breeds. This develops the line of argument that the management of animals, in this case dogs, is as much the responsibility of the pet owner. That has only been dealt with in some aspects within this proposed regulatory framework. The problem is that some people have the mentality that if they have a dog for protection it must attack. They think that then people will not come in and raid their home. However, many other owners are very happy for the dog to bark or make a noise so that people are alert as to what is going on and intruders will at least know that the owners know that there is a stranger on the premises and their entrance has been noted.

For many years people have used working dogs on properties. We breed them for their ability and temperament. At the end of the day we want ones that will work. If they are mean and bite and carry on, we do not want them. We cull them out. It is the same situation with horses and all sorts of other animals. We cull for that temperament. A lot of these new breeds are bred to be mean. I will never forget the story of an old drover at Augathella. He had this young cattle pup. Cattle dogs, of course, are meant to bite cattle but not so much people. This fellow was doorknocking one day. I think it might have been the local policeman. Eventually the young pup flew out and bit him. This fellow yelled out from the gate, 'Hey, that dog bit me.' The owner came out and said, 'Go on. Looks like he is going to be all right after all'—that is, the dog will be all right because he will probably go out and bite the cattle. That is the theory that that is what they are bred for.

People are probably the worst enemy in what we are trying to do, particularly people who take these pig dogs out. They seem to be huge things. You see them on the back of Toyotas and they are almost hanging over both sides. It is incredible.

Mrs Liz Cunningham: The bigger the better.

Mr HOBBS: The member for Gladstone reckons the bigger the better. I am not sure about that. I guess I am not a favourite of the little fellows, either. I think it is okay as long as the dog is there, they are a great mate and they are very loyal. They are a great animal if looked after properly and cared for.

Although the opposition supports the proposed objectives of this legislation, it is imperative that the minister answers in some detail the questions that I have raised which impact upon the workings of the regulatory framework. Before moving on to the other objectives that the bill sets out to amend, I would like to raise some points about some of the proposed amendments contained in this legislation. Currently most members would be aware that the main control of dangerous dogs in Queensland is through local government laws. A model local law, model local law No. 4, keeping and control of animals 2000, has been approved to facilitate local government regulation of dangerous dogs. Under the model local law, a local government can declare dogs

that attack, threaten to attack or exhibit other behaviours that threaten public safety to be dangerous dogs and apply conditions on the keeping of such dogs. Up to now all local governments except one have adopted a local law which is either a model local law or is very similar to it. A number of local governments also have subordinate local laws that prohibit the keeping of breeds of dogs in their area that are prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth.

The insertion of clause 18, providing for chapter 17A of the regulatory framework for restricted dogs, will allow for local governments to be responsible for the administration of this framework. More specifically, the intent of the framework is to set minimum standards for the regulation of restricted dogs while allowing local governments to set higher standards through local laws, including prohibiting restricted dogs. Section 1193D deals with the relationship with local laws. Given this framework, it will not prohibit a local council from developing more stringent laws for restricted dogs. Further, I ask the minister: in relation to those councils that have expressed concern about their ability to implement the minimum standards, will any additional cost burdens of these councils be funded by his department? This is a particularly important issue for Queensland's smaller rural local councils.

The opposition supports the objectives of a minimum standard approach that will apply across all local governments unless these standards are already being met. With regard to the insertion of clause 19, which explains the transitional provisions of local governments, will the four-month period given to local governments to review existing local laws be administered on a regular basis during this period, or will the Department of Local Government and Planning conduct a series of checks after this transitional framework is finished? This is pretty important, otherwise the situation might arise in which a particular local council has not yet completed this process. Without regular consultation with the department these types of problems could go undetected.

Section 1193H provides for the definition of when a dog is under effective control. As we understand it, one of the permit conditions for keeping a restricted dog will be that the dog is under the effective control of a person when in a public place. A restricted dog being under effective control refers to the dog being in the control of somebody who is physically able to control the dog either by holding it by a leash of appropriate dimensions, quality and type to restrain the dog and ensuring it is not a risk to the community health and safety, or by tethering the dog and supervising it.

This definition of effective control also allows for a restricted dog to participate in exhibitions or obedience training provided the event is supervised by a body recognised by the relevant local government, for example, a recognised breeding association. As part of the new chapter 17A, this section is an important one for regulating what 'effective control' refers to for the person in control of the dog and, hopefully, would ensure that the owners of a restricted dog are aware of their responsibilities when their dog is in a public place.

Section 1193Q is a further amendment that provides for public health and safety and is an important part of this legislation. It provides that an adult may apply to the relevant local government for a permit to keep a restricted dog at a stated place within the local government area. The intention of subsection 2 is to prevent restricted dogs from being kept in multiresidential complexes or from being used as guard dogs for commercial premises. However, the opposition has some reservations over subsection 3, which provides for a permit application to be made for more than one restricted dog in the same place only if the keeping of more than one restricted dog or more than one dog of any breed type is permitted under the law of the relevant local government. Although this is for the discretion of the relevant local area, it is important that a reasonable attitude be adopted that must also be reinforced by the minister through the Department of Local Government and Planning.

The bill provides that it is an offence not to have a permit for a restricted dog. Further, it will also be considered an offence to breach any of the permit conditions with the maximum penalty for any of the breaches being 75 penalty units, which is the equivalent to $5,625. Other offence provisions include the maximum penalty of 300 penalty points, or $22,500, if a person allows or encourages a restricted dog to attack or cause fear to a person or animal. The opposition supports the fines that have been set down for those breaches.

The final part of this section of the bill that I wish to comment on relates to the two methods that have been provided for declaring a dog to be a restricted dog. We understand that the council may decide the appropriate method on a case-by-case basis. The first method involves the council obtaining an expert opinion on a dog's breed from a veterinary surgeon and then

notifying the owner of this opinion and the intention to declare the dog restricted. As I have mentioned, the ability of the veterinary surgeon to provide a certificate concerning the breed of the dog has been questioned. With regard to this problem, which was flagged by the Department of Primary Industries in consultations with the minister, and on current estimates, will the veterinary profession have the expertise to identify the breed of a dog? This is particularly relevant at a time when a number of vet students in Queensland are not staying on to practise.

The second method, which provides for an authorised officer of a council to declare a dog to be restricted, will obviously require a fair degree of training by technical advisers. For the benefit of the members of the House, could the minister provide some further details as to the category of officers who will provide this technical training. I also ask whether there is any review mechanism attached to this new framework to assess whether the objectives of the minister's department will be met. The opposition supports this aspect of the legislation as it provides for a regulatory framework on a state-wide basis for restricted dogs. However, it is important for the minister to answer in detail the questions that I have put to her for the benefit of the members participating in the debate.

The next part of this very broad bill deals with the proposed expansion of the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six to include a person with a particular knowledge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments. I am sure that members would be aware that the grants commission plays an integral role in recommending the distribution of financial assistance grants made available by the Commonwealth. These grants have been of great benefit to many local communities in terms of upgrading rural and regional roads. The Roads to Recovery Program has been absolutely fantastic and a great boon to local government. Many of those local roads that were starting to fall into disrepair are now certainly receiving some attention. Local governments never have enough money for roads, but this program has certainly been a great help.

In relation to the amendment in section 191, given that there are 32 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments in Queensland, the opposition supports increasing the membership of the grants commission to provide for a person with particular knowledge and expertise in this area. The only issue that I mention to the minister is that I think it is pretty important that we have people on the grants commission who come from councils who receive unqualified audits. Some councils have received qualified audits in relation to their depreciation schedules in terms of accrual accounting. That argument has been going on for a while and needs to be resolved. That is not what I am talking about. I am referring to those councils that have experienced great difficulty, as identified in the Auditor-General's report. I think that it would be unwise to have people from those councils, who cannot run their own accounting arrangements, on the grants commission.

The third objective of the bill is contained in section 60W, the disbursement of a surplus in the operating fund of the joint Townsville-Thuringowa Water Supply Board. This will seek to clarify and ensure that the original policy intention of the Local Government Act 1993 is achieved. As I understand it, under the LGA, joint local governments are given exclusive jurisdiction in their geographic area for the functions for which they were created. Such functions may include the supply of bulk water or running saleyards or libraries where it is convenient for that function to be conducted over the area of more than one local government. It was always intended that a joint local government could expend surplus funds for any purpose within the broad jurisdiction given to local governments. However, this was subject to the local governments involved agreeing on the purpose for which the funds would be spent. Therefore this amendment will allow for the board, if it so determines, to disburse funds for any local government purpose. This has to have the approval of both councils and may relate to a single instance or for a continuing purpose extending beyond the financial year. The opposition supports this amendment to the legislation. It will reduce the restriction on what the board is able to spend any remaining funds on. However, it is important that this additional function does not become part of a joint local government's exclusive jurisdiction.

The final part of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill concerns the ability of the state to supervise the financial arrangements of local government owned corporations under the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1992. The opposition understands that the objectives of this amendment is to hand over the control of the purse strings to the Treasurer by approval for borrowings and other financial arrangements of local government owned corporations. Further to this amendment, clause 20 provides for part 3 to amend the Queensland Treasury Corporation Act, which would intend to clarify that the requirements to remit

performance dividends to the state do not apply to local government owned corporations. The opposition supports these proposed amendments as there are no local government owned corporations currently operating in Queensland. However, given that they are expected to be established in the near future, is it the minister's intention to reintroduce section 19AAA?

The bill contains a number of amendments that apply to various issues across the local government portfolio. The National Party opposition offers its support to the major objectives that are proposed in this Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001.

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (4.28 p.m.): I feel very privileged to speak to this bill. Being a fairly parochial Gold Coaster, I understand the need for this legislation owing to the recent dog attacks on the Gold Coast. One very brave woman who in recent times was attacked by a dog has certainly brought this problem to everybody's attention. Fortunately, she was big and strong enough to survive the dog attack. I shudder to think what would have happened if the dog had attacked a small child.

One of the issues that has been raised in relation to placing controls on the keeping of specific breeds of dogs and crossbreeds is the question of how they can be identified. I was pleased to note that the Department of Local Government and Planning intends to provide training to Queensland councils in relation to the identification of these breeds of dogs.

I was particularly pleased to hear that technical advisers will be engaged to develop materials and to facilitate training sessions across the state in relation to breed identification issues. Importantly, it is intended that the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will coordinate similar training sessions for Aboriginal and Islander councils.

Another issue of concern which has been raised is what happens when an owner and a dog relocate to a different local government area. This bill addresses the issues of movement between different local government areas. I am advised that to prevent an owner moving to another local government area to avoid complying with conditions on the keeping of restricted dogs, the bill provides that an owner must notify the council if they change their address. Where an owner seeks to move a restricted dog to an address in another local government area, the owner must apply for a permit to keep the restricted dog at a place in the new local government area. However, movement of restricted dogs between local government areas will also depend on whether councils have local laws prohibiting the keeping of a restricted dog. I certainly hope the Gold Coast City Council does.

The bill applies to four breeds of dogs and their crossbreeds, those four breeds being the dogs the federal government has banned from importation into Australia; namely, the dogo Argentino, the fila Brasileiro—

Mr Cummins: That's not how you say it.

Mr POOLE: I take the member's interjection, but I will not have another attempt. Other dogs banned were the Japanese tosa and the American pit bull terrier. The bill provides that the only circumstance in which the state can add other breeds to the current list of restricted dogs is where the Commonwealth amends the legislation to impose a ban on the importation of a further breed of dog. So, I suppose we keep on the feds backs! I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (4.31 p.m.): I rise to support the bill before the House today. Like the member for Gaven, I am particularly happy to see it reach this stage. In light of the increased number of dog attacks on people, particularly in the Gold Coast area, this bill introduces the regulation of the ownership and management of dangerous domestic dogs. The key objective of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001 with respect to dangerous dogs is to apply a regulatory framework for particular breeds. It ensures that the banning of importation by the Commonwealth of certain breeds of dog is enforced in the interests of public health and safety. I will attempt to do a better job of pronouncing the names of the restricted breeds than the member for Gaven. They are the American pit bull terrier, the dogo Argentino, the fila Brasileiro and the Japanese tosa.

The bill introduces a minimum standard for the regulation of restricted dogs in Queensland. This means that local governments can impose higher responsibilities on the owners of restricted dogs through existing or new local laws. In addition, local governments will have to apply at least the minimum standard prescribed by the state legislation. The bill specifically provides the matters on which councils can make a local law to prescribe a higher standard obligation or responsibility for the owner than is imposed under the bill. The key elements of the bill in relation to restricted dogs are the placing of controls and conditions upon the keeping of them; prohibiting breeding, sale or exchange; requiring desexing; and, in specific circumstances, enabling destruction. A

further key element of the bill is to enable local governments to be responsible for the administration and implementation of this regime.

The member for Warrego commented that some groups have not supported the bill. However, I am happy that the Canine Control Council, the CCC, strongly supports the proposed regulatory framework for restricted dogs. I speak from experience with the CCC, having owned and bred dobermans in the past. I firmly believe that where problem dogs exist, it is frequently as a result of problem owners. Therefore, any owner of a dog, particularly a large breed, has a responsibility to ensure that the dog is trained such that it presents no risk both at home and in public. I therefore encourage all dog owners, whether they own a problem dog or an ordinary domestic dog—even a dog like Rusty—to ensure that they join a dog club like the CCC so that dog and owner can receive the appropriate training. Speaking of Rusty, I would not be surprised if he has already received his companion dog certificate from the CCC because he was very well behaved today on the Speaker's green when he met Santa Claus.

A Government member: That is good to hear.

Ms KEECH: It is indeed good to know that we have such responsible dogs as Rusty—the number one dog in Queensland.

Unlike the member for Warrego, I have not been bitten by a dog during my time as a politician. Perhaps that means I have not been a politician for as long as the member for Warrego. However, when I was a child I was quite severely bitten by a German Shepherd, which was actually wearing a muzzle at the time it bit me. I was riding on my pushbike along Boston Street in Bundaberg heading to the shops when the dog—wearing his muzzle—rushed out and bit me very soundly on the backside. I can tell members that it certainly hurt.

The reaction from the owners was that it was all my fault. Why was it my fault? In their view it was because I was riding a bike that squeaked and their dog did not like squeaky bikes; therefore, the responsibility was mine. I am glad that this legislation the minister has brought before the House ensures that owners take responsibility for their dogs in all respects.

I note that parliamentary research brief No. 35 by Wayne Jarred states that over 40 Queensland local authorities have placed restrictions on the ownership of the four breeds of dogs mentioned. They have also placed restrictions on the management of those dogs. For those reasons, I support the bill. It has wide support throughout the community in ensuring the public health and safety of our residents.

Mr BELL (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (4.37 p.m.): I rise to speak generally in support of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). Surprise, surprise, my contribution will be in relation to dogs. I said in general that I supported the bill but my major contribution will be at the committee stage. I must say at the outset that I am somewhat concerned about the reference to crossbreeds of restricted dogs and I will certainly be pressing the minister for something more definitive on that account at the committee stage. However, as I have been through dog regulations in local government ad nauseam, I can say that the minister and her officers have done a very commendable job. It does seem that the bill itself is quite balanced; it does take into account the competing interests, and it does provide right the way through for appeals, either to the Magistrates Court or by way of judicial review in one case. I think it is important in a matter where people sometimes feel very passionately and very strongly that appeal processes should be preserved.

During the committee stage, I will also press the minister about the disposal of restricted dogs. I am left somewhat puzzled about what would happen in these circumstances. Surely one is not seeking that a dog be put down if its owner goes into unit accommodation or something of that nature.

About 10 years ago, when the Gold Coast City Council introduced its regulations on dogs, there was a tremendous public reaction to a provision that dog inspectors be permitted right of entry to private property. That is now taken for granted and is certainly covered adequately in the bill before us today. There is no longer a controversy about that. It probably always was provided for in one form or another in the Local Government Act, anyway, but it is good to see it clarified and stated clearly in the bill before us today. I do not intend to speak at length now. With the few the caveats that I mentioned, I am generally happy.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (4.40 p.m.): This afternoon it gives me great pleasure to speak to the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) and in particular about the provisions in relation to restricted dogs. These amendments provide for the creation of a state framework for minimum standards for the regulation of breeds of dogs that are currently

banned or prohibited by the Commonwealth Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulation. The role of this legislation is to provide a state framework consistent with what the Commonwealth government has already introduced.

The four breeds of dog in question are the dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, the Japanese tosa and the American pit bull terrier, or generally the pit bull terrier, or any crossbreeds of these dogs. The primary purpose of this bill is to provide for the regulation of those breeds of dog prohibited from importation into the country by the Commonwealth government. There has been a lot of debate about whether breed-specific laws are the appropriate way to pursue this. It has already been highlighted that we are merely following the lead of the Commonwealth government in banning these four dog breeds.

The issue is about breed-specific bans versus bans on dogs with a certain nature. It is important to identify that, although individual dogs within those four breeds could be playful and not have a nasty bone in their body, these four dogs are bred mainly for their attacking ability, aggression and biting power. Yes, other breeds of dog do attack people, but it is important to highlight that the breeders of these four dogs seek specific genetic traits of aggression and biting power. That is why they have been singled out.

This bill does not address the nature of other dog breeds, because other dog breeds are not specifically bred for their aggression. Prior to my wife giving birth a number of years ago, we had two dogs—a Rhodesian ridgeback cross by the name of Reika and an Australian silky terrier by the name of Jasper. Prior to the birth of our daughter, we were concerned about the way the Rhodesian ridgeback in particular would respond to our daughter. We had a number of concerns in that regard. We spoke to and sought advice from veterinarians. We also spoke to and sought advice from dog specialists.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the chamber. Members are distracting the member for Redlands, who is making a brilliant speech.

Mr ENGLISH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

We sought the advice of a number of experts in relation to dog behaviour so as to try to provide our daughter with as safe an environment as possible. I am a fan of dogs and I am quite happy for my daughter to grow up around dogs and to experience the pleasure that they can provide. However, believe it or not, after the birth of our daughter, our concerns for the Rhodesian ridgeback were found to be baseless as it behaved impeccably towards my daughter. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for the Australian silky terrier by the very aggressive name of Jasper.

Mr Purcell: Vicious Jasper!

Mr ENGLISH: Yes, vicious Jasper. Although not aggressive, unfortunately, as is the way with some terriers, the dog was terribly overenthusiastic. Nothing we could do, including surgical intervention on his testicles, could modify his enthusiasm. So despite a number of training courses and surgery—much to his discomfort—we could not modify his enthusiasm towards my daughter and, as a result—

Dr Kingston: Give him a dose of female hormones.

Mr ENGLISH: That is not something that we explored, but I would hate for my male Australian silky terrier to start growing breasts. To cut a long story short, we ended up giving Jasper away to protect the safety of our daughter. I understand a lot of the concerns that members of the public and parents have in relation to the potential for harm and damage by dogs to children and even adults. However, my point is to highlight the difference between dogs bred specifically for their violence and aggression and other dogs that might exhibit those traits. I am comfortable with the reasons why these four breeds in particular have been targeted. That is not to say that other breeds of dogs will not attack from time to time. However, they are not genetically encouraged to be aggressive.

The Commonwealth and other states, including South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, have recognised the increased risk to public health and safety posed by these four breeds of dogs. Despite my nervousness about the conduct of Jasper towards my daughter, I suspect a frenzied attack by an Australian silky terrier bears very little resemblance to a frenzied attack by an American pit bull terrier or a dogo Argentino. Those dogs can kill an adult. We are talking about horrific injuries that, in some cases, require urgent surgical intervention to save people's lives as opposed to a small puncture wound on a big toe. These dogs are potential

killers and, as such, they have been treated somewhat differently under this law from other breeds of dogs.

Once a breed of dog has been classified as restricted, the key elements that will fall into place are as follows: the bill will place controls and conditions upon the keeping of those restricted dogs; it will prohibit the breeding, sale or exchange of restricted dogs and require the desexing of any restricted dogs currently in Queensland; and it will also enable the destruction of a restricted dog in specified circumstances. I will leave it for other members to discuss that in detail.

This bill also provides for local governments to be responsible for the administration and implementation of this regime. The bill requires that each local government that permits the keeping of restricted dogs in its area to create and maintain a register of restricted dogs. The register has to be open for public inspection and include the following details: the address where the dog is kept and a detailed physical description of the restricted dog.

I can understand some members of the public having concerns about their privacy. There is the potential for a fear campaign and revenge if a house is identified as containing one of these four breeds of dog. To maintain the privacy of certain members of the community, the bill provides that persons who are protected from the disclosure of their name and address under the Valuation of Land Act 1944 for the purpose of local government records are similarly protected under the restricted dog register provisions.

A protected person is someone whose personal safety or property would be placed at risk if their name and postal address were included on such public records. So if a person does have concerns about the safety of themselves or their property, including the dog in question, they can apply to be listed as a protected person and thereby seek suppression of their particular details from the register. I believe that this is a very wise move by the minister. Obviously some members of the community are going to have concerns about retribution or will fear attacks on their property, given the level of misinformation out there in the community about what this bill means. Without further ado I congratulate the minister and the department on the wide-ranging consultation and putting this bill together. I certainly commend the bill to the House.

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (4.51 p.m.): I rise to support the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). In doing so, I will dwell for a minute on the permit conditions, offence provisions and penalty amounts. The bill provides that it is an offence not to have a permit for a restricted dog. The maximum penalty for this offence is 75 penalty units, or $5,625—a substantial penalty. The member for Redlands has already outlined the definition of what is a restricted dog. It will also be an offence to breach any of the permit conditions, with the maximum penalty for any such breach being 75 penalty units—again, $5,625. The permit conditions include that (a) the dog must at all times wear a collar with an attached identifying tag; (b) the dog must be muzzled and under effective control when in a public place; (c) the dog must be kept in an enclosure which is child proof and prevents the dog from escaping; and (d) a sign which notifies the public that a restricted dog is kept at the place must be displayed at or near each entrance to the place where the dog is kept.

The bill also contains a number of outright prohibitions, including the breeding and the acquisition or supply of a restricted dog. The maximum penalty for these offences is 150 penalty units, or $11,250. Further, it is compulsory to desex a restricted dog. Other offence provisions include a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units, or $22,500, if a person allows or encourages a restricted dog to attack or cause fear to a person or animal or if a person abandons a restricted dog.

Currently, the main control on dangerous dogs in Queensland is through local government laws. It is intended that the bill will contribute to the management of dog attacks by complementing existing local laws governing dangerous dogs. The model local law, Model Local Law No. 4 (Keeping and Control of Animals) 2000, has been approved to facilitate local government regulation of dangerous dogs. Model Local Law No. 4 includes a framework for the regulation of dogs declared dangerous on the basis of behaviour or breed. Under the model local law, a local government can declare to be dangerous dogs that attack, threaten attack or exhibit other behaviours that threaten public safety. They may also apply conditions on the keeping of such dogs. A local government may also, by subordinate local law, prohibit the keeping of a specific breed of dog. Councils have been willing to exercise jurisdiction in this matter. The Gold Coast City Council, with Mayor Gary Baildon leading the way, has been particularly vocal on this issue of dangerous dogs following some dreadful incidents of dog attacks which have caused serious and, in some cases, permanent damage.

State legislation provides minimum standards for the regulation of restricted dogs. This means that local governments can prescribe higher standards or impose higher responsibilities on the owner of a restricted dog through the existing or new local laws. Where a council has a local law which prohibits restricted dogs, the local law will apply in that local government area instead of chapter 17A of the bill. The bill specifically provides the matters on which councils may make a local law to prescribe a higher standard, obligation or responsibility for the owner. These matters include requirements for an application, permit conditions and public notice of the dog's presence at the place where the restricted dog is kept. The bill also provides that a council's local laws on matters relevant to owners of all types of dogs will apply to the owners of restricted dogs; for example, the maximum number of dogs to be kept at a place in the area. However, a local government must comply with those parts of the bill dealing with the declaration process, the seizure and destruction of restricted dogs, and the procedures and evidentiary rules for appeals to the Magistrates Court. It is important that a consistent standard is applied across the state in relation to those procedural matters.

I have actually had personal experience in relation to the Magistrates Court appeal process. During my legal career I managed to get a kelpie by the name of Patches off death row. Patches had bitten a young boy who was a neighbour of the people who owned the dog. The young boy required stitches in his arm but, fortunately, was not badly or permanently injured. The boy's parents reported the dog to the Gold Coast City Council, which then issued a destruction order. The owners of the dog were quite upset, as Patches was the pet of their children and had never before bitten anyone. The owners came to see me and we lodged an appeal against the destruction order in the Southport Magistrates Court.

At the hearing it emerged in evidence what had happened. Another neighbour had seen the boy and his brother let Patches out of his well-secured yard and play with him for some time on the footpath. When it came time to go home, they tried to put him back in the yard by pushing him through a gap between the driveway and the gate. A bit of a wrestling match occurred, I suppose. Patches was not too keen on being forced through that hole—which he was not easily able to fit through—and he snapped at the boy, causing the injury. So there must be an appeal process. This act preserves those rights. Fortunately, in Patches' case justice was done and Patches went free.

Mr Cummins: What a glorious legal win that was.

Mr LAWLOR: It was a great legal win and one of the highlights of my career—a very illustrious career, I might add. I commend the bill to the House and congratulate the minister and her ministerial and departmental staff on the work that has been done on this badly needed legislation.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—Ind) (4.57 p.m.): I wish to speak today in support of this bill, but I hope to carefully present to the House a number of issues that some of my constituents have raised with me. I totally agree with the fact that these breeds should be banned in cities and towns. Over the last few years, we have seen a number of horrific dog attacks on people in residential areas—even some losses of life. One of the hardest things now facing authorities will be determining what breeds of dogs are especially crossbred. Someone mentioned to me that most attacks are caused by blue heelers. However, I believe that as blue heelers are working dogs, they are bred to bite. Unless a blue heeler has a lot of work it will nearly always turn out to be a biter. It is natural for them. This example is the exact problem we have facing us with other breeds of dogs.

It is a good thing that the government is continuing to allow local government to be responsible for the administration and implementation of this. I agree that the owner of a restricted dog should have to obtain a permit. It gives councils a fair idea of what is going on. It also lets councils police these laws, as they will have first-hand information on dog owners. These dogs should be muzzled when in a public place. The enclosures can be policed under this bill. I agree with the warning notices. When I was on my electoral campaign I certainly ran into a lot of these breeds. Many times there were no signs anywhere warning people of the dogs. I agree that owners of restricted dogs should have to apply to councils when moving. Too many of these dogs are used for the wrong purpose.

The part of this bill I would like to address does concern a lot of my constituents. As members would be aware, Dalby is the central town of my electorate and it is the start of pig country. Anywhere west of Dalby one will find feral pigs, and a number of my constituents are professional pig hunters. Some of the breeds mentioned in this legislation are used specifically for pig hunting. A good pig dog must not chase anything other than pigs. If they see roos, they must

not be deterred. I might add: they play a role in keeping the population of feral pigs under control. Pig meat goes oversees, and a lot of people capitalise on this market. These dogs are extremely obedient and must not damage the carcass to any great extent. Members can see how this legislation will hurt a lot of these people in a big way.

Some of these dogs are penned and chained up and when not hunting are very well behaved. I know that if I owned dogs specifically for professional pig hunting—some have dogs bred from a special line over many years—I would be very concerned. I believe that where this bill breaks down is that we are not targeting bad dog owners. We should be targeting them, as there is a real industry out there that I believe we have to protect. We must protect the people who police their dogs and do things right.

Members can see that there are some people out there who will be drastically affected by this bill. There are some places for these dogs. I would like to see some way of protecting the people I have hopefully described. Some of these dogs, however, have crossbred with dingoes in the past, and that has been a real problem. I believe that this bill will really take care of that aspect. These dogs make horrific killers. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (5.01 p.m.): I rise in support of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), currently before the House. This legislation essentially sets out minimum standards to apply across Queensland, but local councils will be able to introduce tougher controls still, if they so choose. That is an important consideration, as local councils are the best place to know what is needed in their communities.

Councils will also be responsible for enforcing the legislation, and I know that the minister's department will be providing councils with training on issues relating to the legislation. And what a great department it is! It was the first department I worked in after I graduated in the late 1970s. I still have fond memories of the many characters in the department: Neil Macpherson, who taught me local government law and administration at QUT; Ken Mead, who had a great love of local government; Maurie Tucker, who is here today, who was a respected officer of the department; Jamie Quinn, chief executive officer of the Ipswich City Council, a former officer of the department; Lyn Evans; Melanie; Kate; Ian Wade; Steve Davey; the town-planners; and Roy. They all shaped in some ways my early Public Service career. The professionalism of the department back then is still alive and well today, as can be seen in this great legislation.

In enforcing this legislation the bill provides that a council may rely on existing powers of entry in the Local Government Act or on powers of entry contained in a local law on dangerous dogs. The intent is to enable councils to utilise powers of entry under local laws to enforce the legislation on restricted dogs, thus allowing consistency in the administration and enforcement of dangerous and restricted dog matters. The additional entry and seizure powers in the bill are necessary in the circumstances to ensure enforcement of the legislation and that public health and safety are protected. In exercising the power to enter a place under the bill, an authorised person must follow certain procedural requirements under the Local Government Act—for example, produce an identity card and tell the occupier the purpose of the entry and that it is permitted without the occupier's consent or a warrant.

I was pleased to note that councils generally support the legislation, as does the Local Government Association of Queensland. A number of changes to the draft legislation were made to address concerns raised by the Local Government Association. The provisions which govern the relationship between the state legislation and local laws were redrafted to clarify the policy intent—that is, that the state legislation created minimum standards for the regulation of restricted dogs—and to specifically provide for the matters about which councils could impose additional conditions. I am also aware that the Local Government Association of Queensland has noted that at previous association annual conferences resolutions have been passed calling on the state government to enact legislation for the control of pit bull terriers and pit bull terrier-type dogs. Ipswich City Council has supported this view.

People in my electorate of Bundamba will be pleased with this legislation. The Ipswich City Council will be pleased with the legislation as well. I know for a fact that my people are sick to death of being fearful walking down normal suburban streets and being frightened of being attacked by these types of dogs. There have been many dangerous dog attacks in my electorate. In August 2000 a Bundamba man was hospitalised after being attacked by two dangerous dogs outside his home. He was attacked at 10.30 in the morning by a single dog. A neighbouring dog then jumped the fence and attacked him, followed by a third dog. He suffered multiple puncture wounds to his arms and legs and suffered severe scarring. The treating doctor at Ipswich Hospital

stated that his injuries were very extensive and widespread and that a child would not have survived the attack.

In November 2000 a Bellbird Park woman had to undergo microsurgery after she was bitten on the throat, face and lip by a dangerous dog. Her lip and one side of her face required numerous stitches and she suffered from severe swelling and the possibility of infection. An eight-year-old boy was hospitalised on Christmas Day after a vicious mauling by a dog. I ask members to look at these headlines. From the *Queensland Times* we have 'Dog Shreds Leg'; 'Savaged: Pack of dogs tear into Bundamba man'; 'Surgery follows vicious mauling'; 'Boy's Xmas pit bull mauling'; 'Savage attack'; 'New twist in mob mauling'; 'Dogs strike farmer again'; and 'Death penalty for vicious dog'. The little eight-year-old boy mauled on Christmas Day spent his time in surgery, having his stomach stitched up again.

The council called for dangerous breeds to be banned and, thank God, this government listens to councils such as the Ipswich City Council. I know for a fact that the deputy mayor of Ipswich is sick of visiting adults and children who are recuperating in Ipswich hospitals following dog bites and lacerations. Councillor Paul Pisasale has led the charge in the Ipswich area, calling for this type of legislation to be enacted as he has had a gutful of ordinary residents minding their own business being attacked. Not only do residents suffer from physical complications of these dog attacks; they also suffer from shocking psychological scars. Some children and adults are badly traumatised and need professional psychiatric help for lengthy periods of time.

I sometimes wonder at the type of personality of people who insist on owning such aggressive, dangerous breeds of dogs. It seems to me that some owners only have these dogs so that they can send a message to the community; that is, 'Be scared of the dog; therefore you should be scared of me.' It is like the dog is an extension of their personality problems.

I have walked the length and breadth of my electorate doorknocking in elections, consulting with my constituents and, in the last couple of weeks, looking at our wonderful Christmas lights. I can tell the House that I am only concerned at two things—snakes and dangerous dogs. I remember during the Bundamba by-election my uncle, George Kitching, and I were letter-boxing in Mary Street, Bundamba, just around the corner from where my grandmother and great-grandmother lived, and there before my eyes was a brown snake. I reckon I jumped back around six feet, but my uncle, a tough retired underground miner told me to get a grip on myself. He was more frightened of dogs, however. We never went near any place that had a dangerous dog sign on the letterbox.

The most amazing issue, however, is that some residents have dangerous dog signs but totally inadequate fencing. Some had fencing that even I could walk over, and I am only five foot tall.

Mr Cummins: Four foot twelve.

Mrs MILLER: That is right. Surely any reasonable dog owner, particularly an owner of a dangerous dog, would construct high fencing that would keep the dog enclosed in the yard. Some owners pay hundreds of dollars to purchase these dangerous dogs but are not prepared to pay any money to build proper fencing. In my view these owners should be prevented from owning dangerous dogs as they are irresponsible and obviously have no intention of protecting their neighbours, other community members and children from their dogs.

Ipswich City Council has some of the toughest laws on dangerous dogs in Queensland—it certainly has some of the largest fines—but it also has some proactive policies in place. Petnet is an on-line service for residents to inquire about dog registration requirements and local dog by-laws. It also has Pet Pep, in partnership with the veterinary association, whereby children in schools can learn about how to look after their dogs.

The people of my electorate will be pleased with this legislation. The Ipswich City Council and the Local Government Association support the legislation. I place on record my thanks to the officers of the Department of Local Government who have put this fine legislation together. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (5.09 p.m.): I rise in support of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001. Although I will go on to talk about the legislation in relation to dangerous dogs, I firstly want to mention the state supervision of the financial arrangements of LGOCs. These are two related amendments to enable the state to supervise the financial arrangements of local government owned corporations, or LGOCs, without imposing unnecessary requirements on these entities. This supervisory role is to be provided by applying the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982, or the SBFA Act, to LGOCs.

Local governments may establish local government owned corporations to conduct business activities in a similar way to state government business activities set up as a government owned corporation, or GOC. The first LGOC is expected to be established shortly by the Hervey Bay City Council, as recognised by the member for Hervey Bay. A number of other LGOCs may be established in the very near future. For state and local government entities, the government exercises a supervisory role over borrowings and other financial arrangements by virtue of the SBFA Act 1982. Where the state government has established GOCs, the Treasurer has to approve a GOC's financial arrangements through the exercise of a shareholding minister's powers under the Government Owned Corporations Act. There are no such controls currently applying to LGOCs established by local governments under the Local Government Act 1993.

Legislation providing for LGOCs was first developed in 1997 based on the principle that it should be consistent with the GOC Act except where changes were necessary to take account of the legislative framework for the local government system. This amendment will give the state government a similar level of control over LGOC financial arrangements to that operating for GOCs but by a different mechanism—that is, applying the SBFA Act to LGOCs. This solution will provide for the necessary controls before the Hervey Bay City Council establishes its LGOC for its water and sewerage services. I will comment later on commercial water providers, their profits and community service obligations, because, as members would realise, I was formally on the Caloundra City Council which commercialised its water and sewerage provider—namely, CalAqua. In addition, the Department of Local Government and Planning and the Queensland Treasury will review the legislative framework for LGOCs within two years, including the arrangements for supervision of the financial operations of LGOCs. However, to avoid requiring that LGOCs pay performance dividends to the state government, another amendment to the Queensland Treasury Corporation Act 1988 clarifies that, despite the application of the SBFA Act to LGOCs, the requirements for performance dividends to the state do not apply.

I now turn to that part of the bill which addresses dangerous dogs. Currently, the main control of dangerous dogs in Queensland is through local government laws. Councils make local laws that declare dogs that attack, threaten or exhibit other behaviours that threaten public safety to be dangerous dogs and apply conditions on the keeping of such dogs. This legislation will place controls and conditions on the keeping of breeds of dogs that the Commonwealth has banned from importation, and those breeds have been named quite a few times. It will prohibit the breeding, sale or exchange of restricted dogs and require that they be desexed and enable their destruction in specified circumstances.

We now realise that there are kennels in the United States of America which have bred pit bull terriers for their fighting characteristics and to kill other dogs in pits, hence the name American pit bull terrier. They have been bred as killing machines and we need to do everything we can to protect our citizens and other dogs from being attacked. Pit bulls are different from other dogs in that they give no warning that they are about to attack. When they bite, they do not let go. There are claims that selective breeding enables a pit bull to keep fighting nonstop for two or more hours in spite of broken bones, torn muscles, blood loss, dehydration and exhaustion. It will fight until it wins or dies trying.

An honourable member: They fight to the death.

Mr CUMMINS: Yes, they do fight to the death. At this point I must say that I find this abhorrent. It is not a sport to watch animals fight one another. It is cruel. Unfortunately, many breeds of dogs do have an aggressive streak that enable it to fight or attack other dogs. But, thankfully, there are numerous breeds of dogs that do not. In fact, I have a golden labrador named Coach who has been attacked on various occasions by all sorts of other dogs. I am not frightened to say that he would probably be best described as a coward when it comes to dog fights. Coach does bark when there are noises. He puts on a brave face, but when it comes to being attacked by other dogs he is one of those that won his last fight by 100 yards.

Mr Purcell interjected.

Mr CUMMINS: He did an impersonation of a greyhound that time the big Alsatian came visiting. The legislation before us will provide that, if a council decides that a dog is of a prohibited breed, the owner must register the animal with the local government as a restricted dog unless the owner can demonstrate that it is not of that breed. A state-wide training system is proposed to assist councils to identify restricted breeds. I am not sure whether or not this proposal is fully needed. I would be surprised if there are councils that do not understand what we are up against. I know because of my council background of four years—and other members who have had

similar local government experience would know—that conference after conference, meeting after meeting we spent hours and ratepayers' money discussing dog issues, dog breeds, et cetera.

Councils will establish a register of restricted dogs under this legislation and a permit system. Restricted dogs will be required to wear a muzzle in public places and be kept in a properly enclosed area. Earlier we heard the story of Patches from the member for Southport. From what I heard, good old Patches seemed to have been kept in a properly enclosed area.

Mr Lawlor: A law-abiding dog.

Mr CUMMINS: It appears that Patches was a good, law-abiding dog. I do not know if he could afford to pay the member for Southport's fees or whether he did it on a—

Mr Lawlor: Pro bono.

Mr CUMMINS: He did a pro bono, a community service obligation. The point is that if the majority of breeds are kept in a well fenced enclosure and are properly maintained and exercised they should not be a problem. Unfortunately, it is proven and recognised as such that there are other breeds that we do not want in our society. I have met with people who own such dogs. In fact, one of my campaign workers from the last state election is one such owner. We had a barbecue at his home recently. He is a very good branch member and a very good friend of mine. His brother and sister-in-law were also at the barbecue and they had these types of dogs. I explained my position and said that I thought that their breed of dog was just not acceptable anymore in our society.

When this debate originated in this term of government earlier this year, I was listening to ABC 612 4QR talkback radio. There were numerous calls from owners of these breeds of dogs that we are looking to ban. An elderly lady rang up and was beside herself. She was very upset. She said that about three months ago she was of the same belief as all these other people: their pit bull terrier would never harm another person. It used to play with the kids, et cetera. However, before her eyes she saw another dog break into their yard. Another dog just came into the yard and their lovely family pet turned into a murdering animal. She was devastated. Then she realised how bad the breed was, that the breed was dangerous. It was a terrible thing to see it rip a neighbour's dog apart.

As we know and we have heard from various members on both sides: unfortunately, not only do they go for other animals but they have been known to go for people in our society. It is unacceptable. People should not have to live in a community fearful of dogs. I would also like to quote the editorial of the *Courier-Mail* of 30 July this year. It stated—

> The ban in Queensland is sensible, given the overwhelming evidence the dogs are dangerous. As Mr Beattie has said, keeping a pit bull is akin to having a loaded gun lying around the House—

and I do not wish to enter into that debate. However, that is one way that people describe it. The article goes on—

> In the past, people who have protested against proposed bans on the dogs have argued that many of the attacks blamed on pit bulls were committed by crossbreeds. They also point out most dog attacks in Australia are not committed by pit bulls. But this does not answer why it is acceptable to encourage the keeping of a dog originally bred to fight. Pit bull owners invariably complain their dogs are wonderful, affectionate family pets. This may be so, but is this any reason for people and other dogs outside of a particular family to be at risk of attack? RSPCA officials have stated that while many dog attacks are sparked by the animal's instinct to protect its territory, the behaviour of pit bulls is unpredictable.

I commend the *Courier-Mail* on that editorial.

I sincerely believe that the vast majority of people right across the state are supportive of this legislation. I do feel for those people who believe that their animals are unable to do the damage that they potentially can do. Unfortunately, community leaders such as elected members have to protect the community from things that we feel are dangerous. Yes, my office has been bombarded with faxes, emails and phone calls. I have met with people who own these dogs and, yes, I do feel for them. But I think that, in relation to the fear and the danger, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Too often we have seen photos of dog attacks, whether it be on animals, other dogs or humans. Ninety-five per cent of the time it is committed by a dog about which the owners or people say, 'Hey, we never thought that would happen.' That is one of the frightening things.

As I stated, restricted dogs will be required to wear a muzzle in public places and be kept in a properly enclosed area. The owner must exhibit a sign notifying the public that a restricted dog is kept on the premises. It will be possible to seize and impound restricted dogs if they are not under proper control in a public place. The legislation will enable restricted dogs to be destroyed if they

attack or threaten to attack a person or another animal, if they are a health or safety risk, if they create reasonable apprehension of a threat to health or safety, or if they cause a nuisance. Owners would be notified of a decision to destroy an animal and would have a right of appeal to a Magistrates Court.

The legislation will require owners of restricted dogs to notify local governments within three months of moving to the local government area. The state cannot ban these dogs outright because of the Commonwealth Constitution, which prohibits the Commonwealth and the states from restricting or prohibiting the sale or exchange of trade between the states.

As I mentioned, I have a dog, Coach, a golden labrador. I know that other sensible dog owners will support these controls on such dangerous breeds. This legislation is about protecting people's lives. We may come under attack. People may say that we are overdoing things, but I really do not think we are. We have seen animals kill people and other dogs. Not only people's lives are at risk but also families' pets and the welfare of many agricultural people who rely on animals to farm.

After this legislation is passed it will be up to councils to get fair dinkum and tough on dogs. I was a Caloundra city councillor. I will always remember former mayor Des Dwyer stating that we could debate an issue for half an hour—and it might be spending half a million dollars—but when it came to debating dog issues, the time that was wasted was incredible because everyone has an opinion. Often in the community 50 per cent of people love dogs and 50 per cent of people hate them. Some governments do not want to take on the issue because they do not have the intestinal fortitude to protect people in case they upset a few.

Regarding the funding of councils, I often question the councils when they continue to deviate from their core business and they make mention of devolution of power to deal with various state issues and that we fail to allocate the relevant funds. I question the councils that are involved in Department of State Development matters and those who want to play around too much with economic development or tourism. It is about time that they got back to roads, rates, rubbish and dog control.

Unfortunately, dangerous dogs and American pit bulls in particular are a threat to our society. I have no doubt that many of us will continue to be bombarded with emails and faxes, but we are elected to make decisions that we feel are best for the community. I do believe that banning these types of breeds is the best outcome for the communities. I realise that animals provide companionship, affection, et cetera, often for the lonely and infirm. However, often we will find that the types of breeds that we are banning are not the breeds that would be utilised by these types of people.

In conclusion, I will make mention of the Brisbane City Council. When I was a councillor I listened to a talk by Councillor Hinchliffe, who was the chair of the committee that introduced stringent controls on the sale of animals, fencing and other initiatives. It was a very positive council initiative. Unfortunately, while I was a member of the Caloundra City Council it was put in the too-hard basket for too long. People out there in our society do not wish to be attacked by dogs. They do not want their family attacked by dogs. We do not even want to be threatened by dogs. I commend the legislation to the House. I, too, would like to applaud the minister and her staff for the hard work in tackling such a controversial issue. I hope that all members of the House will be fully supportive of what is before us.

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—Ind) (5.28 p.m.): I rise to address that section of this legislation which concerns dogs. I agree with many of the words spoken by the member for Warrego and the member for Darling Downs. I am disappointed, however, that the member for Warrego has been bitten by farm dogs. I do not think anybody gets more exposed to farm dogs than large-animal vets.

Mr Hobbs: Town dogs.

Dr KINGSTON: Town dogs? They must be badly trained. For a consideration I will give the member for Warrego lessons in how to avoid dog bites.

I also wish to offer some friendly advice to the member for Kawana with his cowardly labrador. A friend of mine in England had an English bull terrier, a very ferocious looking dog. He took him for his first walk in Hyde Park, let him off the leash and the dog trotted off to mix with other dogs, as he should. He took one look at another dog, turned tail and headed for his owner. However, he forgot to stop and he broke his owner's kneecap. His owner spent the next six months in plaster. I hope that the member for Kawana does not suffer a like fate.

I find the problem that this bill is addressing a vexing one. As a veterinarian, I have treated dogs seriously injured by so-called savage dogs. I have also destroyed many dogs that could not be controlled by their owners. I felt sorry for the dogs and angry with the owners. As a horse breeder who guaranteed his product for many years, I experienced the same problem: good horses spoilt by unskilful owners. The problem common in both of those circumstances is the inability of the owners to adequately train and adequately control the animal. On many occasions I have humanely destroyed dogs and retrained horses whilst realising that the fault lay not with the animal but with the unskilled owner. Whilst working as a vet entering farms, all of which appeared to have at least five dogs, and treating injured pig dogs every Sunday afternoon—usually suturing long, deep rips from tusks without an anaesthetic—I have never been bitten by a farm or a hunting dog. The only dog that has ever bitten me was a half-dead cocker spaniel. Strangely enough, it was fully dead by that night.

I have mentioned this to emphasise that experienced handlers are rarely injured by dogs of any breed. In fact, I would much prefer to treat hunting dogs and cattle dogs than lap-dogs. I have more faith in a hunting dog than I have in lap-dogs and more confidence that I will retain all of my fingers. Certain breeds such as the pit bull have received very negative publicity because of injuries inflicted on innocent people. This has already resulted in some councils placing a total ban on such breeds, and rightly so in urban areas. In researching the incidence of injuries from dogs, I have found that the breed that has caused the highest number is the Rottweiler. Rottweilers are a favourite guard dog. The statistics do not explain the circumstances under which the Rottweilers racked up their good score—whether it was in the course of duty or otherwise. But I have to recount what I think is a set of delightful circumstances wherein a potential thief fell into a policeman's arms weeping with relief as he had spent the previous six hours sitting on top of a two-inch pipe fence post whilst a Rottweiler sat below him.

One of my dogs is a bull terrier-blue heeler cross, and he is not a pretty dog at all. With a great deal of imagination, we named him Blue. Blue is a trained guard dog. He will bite if he is told to—if I tell him to—but otherwise he will not. I wish to give an example of the value of such a dog. A good friend of mine, a mechanic, came to pick up my truck for servicing. When he could not find me, he knew the keys would be in the truck, so he thought, 'Well, I will just take it.' He placed one hand on the truck and he felt something take him by the boot, and there was Blue lying on the ground with a firm grip on this man's boot and it was a Mexican stand-off. When he took his hand off the truck, Blue eased his teeth and he was able to walk slowly to the front gate with the dog still hanging on to his boot. When he touched the front gate and opened it, Blue let him go. But his 20-metre walk took 20 minutes.

Whilst I may appear to be treating this subject lightly, I am not. I am seriously concerned that a breed should be banned across-the-board because it is a breed. I am much more in favour of legislation that limits the ownership of potentially harmful dogs to qualified people. Obviously, such legislation must consider the location of the dog and the owner. I strongly support the thrust of this legislation that innocent people must be protected from attack from uncontrolled dogs. I am surprised to hear members express concerns about the accurate identification of the breed and that that will be a problem. Alan Wilton of the University of New South Wales has now perfected a DNA test, and a mitochondrial test, that is capable of identifying dog breeds. He is currently identifying purebred dingoes from hybrid dingoes very accurately. The cost of the test is going to be somewhere in the vicinity of $50 per dog.

I am concerned that the legislation may be widened to include other breeds. I and other farmers in my area—and I am sure in the minister's area—are currently plagued by feral pigs, which are harboured, not intentionally, by national parks and forestry. They are breeding faster than we can eradicate them. Pigs are causing major damage to sugar cane and major losses to canefarmers. I am sure that the minister would be cognisant of that fact. Pigs that are eating sugar cane are like children eating chocolates: it is extremely difficult to get them to eat anything else. The current laws controlling the distribution of 1080 for use to eradicate pigs limits the farmer to using 1080 on grain. Cane-eating pigs regard grain as unpalatable muesli. They do not want to touch it. Personally, I and many other farmers would like to see that restriction eased. Farmers have a need to resort to pig dogs to control feral pigs. Such dogs are often not very attractive and are trained, as has been previously said, to kill pigs. I have already said that I have spent many Sunday afternoons sewing up pig dogs and I have always found that those dogs were particularly easy to handle. I just told the owner to put them on the surgery table and I sutured them. There was never a whimper from them.

To conclude, I agree that people must be protected. I do not agree with a sweeping ban on certain breeds. I think that certain breeds should be limited so that they can be owned only by people who are capable of handling them and who have exhibited that capability. I think that the inclusion of further breeds should be done only after a case-by-case study and that every case should be considered separately. I am strongly in favour of owners being encouraged to undertake training, that is, training for the owners and training for the dogs. Again, I emphasise that in most cases it is the owners who are at fault rather than the dogs.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (5.38 p.m.): I do not know if I will be able to provide as entertaining a speech as that, but I will do my best. St Francis held the view that the way we as humans treat animals is a fair indication of how in time we will treat each other as humans. It is for that reasons that the issue of dogs that have been bred to be dangerous and to fight poses a number of ethical questions that I think are worthy of consideration. Firstly, these animals never asked to be bred to be vicious. In fact, they had no say in that process at all. However, we have animals that have been bred in such a way as to be a danger not only to other animals but also to humans.

The bill provides for amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. Among other things, it will introduce a state regulatory framework for dog breeds which are subject to the Commonwealth's importation ban. It will also expand the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six to include, importantly, a person with particular knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local government issues. The bill will also enable the state to supervise the financial arrangements of local government owned corporations under the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982.

I was concerned to hear the member for Maryborough tell the House that he owns a dog which will bite on command but which is perfectly safe because, if he does not give the command, it will not bite, and it has not bitten anyone yet. I do not intend to have a dig at the member. I will say that one of the biggest problems of dealing with dangerous dogs is the attitude of their owners. Whether someone owns a Chihuahua or a dogo Argentino, over time the owner of an animal develops an affection towards it and a feeling that the animal will never do anything nasty. Dog owners can develop the view that their dog has never done anything bad and it will never attack someone in a vicious way—it is just their friendly little pooch. That is a problem because to say that a dog of this breed is not dangerous, has never bitten someone and that it has never attacked or maimed someone is not the point. All it takes is for the dog to attack once. It could be a two-year-old dog that attacks someone; it could be a ten-year-old dog that attacks someone. However, it is foolish to adopt the view in relation to some breeds that a particular dog is well trained and will not do anything silly.

The dog breeds banned from importation by the Commonwealth are bred for the purpose of fighting and are particularly nasty. Personally, I think it is a great shame to treat an animal in that way. It is a terrible thing. Science has advanced to a point where animals can very easily be bred to be very nasty or to be docile. Cats can be bred to have no hair; cats can be bred to have lots of hair. I am sure similar things can be done with dogs. It is a terrible thing to breed a dog to be vicious and to fight. To its credit, the Commonwealth government has taken steps to ban the importation of four breeds of fighting dogs and this state government has taken a wonderful step in regulating those breeds. The provisions in the bill for the regulation of those breeds will complement the existing regulatory controls on dangerous dogs which are already administered by local governments through local laws. The bill applies a regulatory framework to those breeds of dog which are banned from importation by the Commonwealth in the interests of public health and safety. The way in which this government is seeking to achieve those objectives is not only appropriate but quite reasonable. In the circumstances, there is no realistic alternative to the steps this government is taking. I am pleased to note that there are no significant administrative costs to the government in implementing this legislation.

I will speak briefly about proposed new section 1193E of the bill, which provides the definition of 'restricted dog' to be one of four specific breeds or types of dog and crossbreeds of those dogs. The specified breeds of dog are banned by the Commonwealth from importation into Australia under the Customs Act 1901. Provision is being made for a regulation to prescribe other breeds of dog as a 'restricted dog' but only where the Commonwealth amends its legislation to prohibit the importation of an additional breed or type of dog.

Also worth mentioning are proposed new sections 1193K, prohibition on acquisition or supply; 1193L, prohibition on breeding; 1193M, permit required for restricted dog; 1193N, compulsory desexing; and the permit conditions provided in sections 1193ZA to 1193ZG. Those

sections impose various prohibitions and restrictions in relation to restricted dogs such as a prohibition on breeding, sale or exchange and a requirement for compulsory desexing. An obligation is placed upon owners of restricted dogs to obtain a permit and to comply with a range of conditions attached to the permit. Those provisions are considered necessary in order to provide a means of controlling existing dogs whilst also progressing towards the ultimate aim of a reduction in the population of those breeds in Queensland.

There has been a significant amount of consultation on this bill. It has been undertaken with numerous state agencies, local government representative bodies, local governments, professional associations and community groups as well as members of the public. I have received a number of emails and one letter in relation to this matter, as I am sure did many other members of the parliament. For the most part, the emails expressed concern about this very good legislation. I could not work out whether the letter I received was expressing support for the legislation or was not in favour of the legislation, although it did contain some interesting facts about dangerous dogs.

The Department of Local Government and Planning released a draft legislative proposal for the state regulatory framework for restricted dogs in mid-September and called for submissions in response to the proposals. A total of 293 submissions had been received when the date for closure for submissions arrived on 2 November. Of these, 34 were supportive of the proposals while 218 were opposed. However, of the 218, 179 were one of either of two versions of a form letter. All of those were received via the department's email address which had been specifically set up to aid in the consultation process. Interestingly, once the form letters received by email are removed from the analysis, one finds that submissions in support become 34 and opposed, 39.

I think the legislation is very good. I think it is high time we have legislation of this nature. I am very pleased to see that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the RSPCA, while having some concerns with the concept of banning particular breeds, has understood the need for the Commonwealth to ban the importation and for the state to regulate these dangerous breeds. The dangerous breeds are the dogo Argentino, the fila Brasileiro, the Japanese tosa and the American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier. The RSPCA deserves some credit for taking a fairly community focused stand on these issues. I think we all know that the RSPCA is very forthright in its support for animal rights and would never support legislation that it did not feel was warranted.

I commend the minister and her department for producing a wonderful bill of this nature. I am absolutely honoured to be here to vote in favour of it. It is high time that the state of Queensland sought to regulate dangerous dogs. It is sad that we are seeking to regulate dangerous dogs when these dogs were created to be dangerous. It would be so much easier if people who say they love animals and say they love dogs would acknowledge that by creating a dangerous dog they are really not doing the animal any favours at all. I am very pleased to support the bill.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (5.50 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001 and in particular the section of the bill pertaining to the establishment of a state regulatory framework for dog breeds that are subject to the Commonwealth's importation ban and crossbreeds of these dogs. Australians consider pet ownership an important right. In 1996, the Australian Companion Animal Council claimed that 12 million Australians owned a pet and that the industry employs 30,000 people, contributing $2.2 billion to the economy. About 3.8 million dogs are kept as pets in Australia.

Unfortunately, animals can injure, and even kill, other animals and humans. Dogs are the main culprit. This issue has become a perennial problem facing state and local authorities. The National Injury Surveillance Unit reported that there are fewer than 2,000 people admitted to hospitals each year as a result of dog bites. A quarter of the admissions were for people under four years of age. These figures, though, are only hospital admissions. Many other sources suggest that some 30,000 Australians are treated for dog bites annually. I heard other speakers claiming to have been bitten by dogs. I have suffered three dog attacks in my life and I have since borne the scars.

Urbanisation and an increase in ownership of bigger dogs to avoid crime seems to have resulted in an increase in dog attacks. In 1995 in Toowoomba an elderly woman was killed after a neighbour's dog attacked her. This incident led to the state and various local governments reviewing their dog control policies. A number of my constituents have suffered physically and emotionally from dangerous dog attacks. These constituents have lobbied for changes to the

Local Government Act 1993 to ban breed-specific dogs which are considered to be bred for their violence and attacking power. These constituents have welcomed these proposed amendments.

A number of issues raised during the development of this bill need to be addressed in the House today. In developing the bill, consideration has been given to the difficult issue of breed identification. As there is no scientific means of proving that a dog is of a restricted breed or a crossbreed, identification is based on the physical characteristics of the dog. I was pleased to hear in the contribution by the member for Maryborough that a colleague of his from the University of New South Wales has developed a method of identifying these breeds. The four types of restricted dogs are dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, Japanese tosa; American pit bull terrier or pit bull terriers; and crossbreeds of these dogs.

The bill provides two methods for declaring a dog to be a restricted dog, and a council may decide the appropriate method on a case-by-case basis. The first method involves a council obtaining an expert opinion on a dog's breed from a veterinary surgeon and subsequently notifying an owner of this opinion and the intention to declare a dog to be a restricted dog. An owner could then make written representations to the council, for example, arguing on the basis of a veterinarian or breed certificate that their dog is not a restricted dog. In these circumstances, a council must consider all the evidence before it when making its decision on a dog's declaration status. There is no appeal on the merits of a decision if this method of declaration is used. However, an owner retains the right to judicial review of the council's decision.

The second method provides for an authorised officer of a council to declare a dog to be a restricted dog. Where a council uses this declaration method, an owner has a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court, where they may present evidence that the dog is not one of the restricted breeds.

If a dog is deemed to be a restricted breed, an owner must ensure that the dog wears the required identification tag at all times, the dog wears a muzzle and is under effective control in a public place, the dog is kept in an enclosure which complies with the requirements under the bill and proposed regulation, and a sign is attached to the entrance of the place containing the enclosure giving public notice of the restricted dog.

The Department of Local Government and Planning intends to provide training to councils in relation to the identification of these breeds of dog. It is proposed that technical advisers will be engaged to develop materials and facilitate training sessions across the state in relation to breed identification issues. This will ensure that all councils are fully trained in the act and its interpretation. It is intended that the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will coordinate similar training sessions for Aboriginal and Island councils.

The bill also addresses the issue of movement between local government areas. To prevent an owner moving to another local government area to avoid complying with conditions on the keeping of a restricted dog, the bill provides that an owner must notify the council of any change of address. Where an owner seeks to move a restricted dog to an address in another local government area, the owner must apply for a permit to keep the restricted dog at a place in the new local government area. However, movement of restricted dogs between local government areas will also depend on whether councils have local laws prohibiting the keeping of a restricted dog. The bill provides that the only circumstance where the state can add other breeds to the current list of restricted dogs is where the Commonwealth amends its legislation to impose bans on the importation of a further breed of dog.

Finally, I hope that the proposed legislative changes will go some way towards addressing the concerns in the community and that they will provide safety and comfort to the community from unexpected and hideous attacks by these dangerous dogs. I thank the minister for the hard work that she and her department have put in to bringing in this legislation. I thank also the Parliamentary Library for providing me with some statistics on pet ownership.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.58 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001. The part of this bill that I seek to speak about is that part which inserts into the Local Government Act a new chapter 17A which deals with the registration of restricted dogs. I understand that the Local Government Act 1993 presently confers upon local governments the power to make local laws about dogs, and I note that this bill establishes a process which imposes very significant prohibitions and restrictions upon owners and persons responsible for restricted dogs and that these dogs are mostly identified by breed, although individual dogs may also be declared to be restricted dogs.

I understand also that, while this bill will displace any dog control laws which individual local governments may have made insofar as the local law is inconsistent with this new state government bill, which is soon to be law, I understand that it does not prevent local governments imposing certain requirements in connection with the statutory scheme established by this bill which is higher than those stipulated by this bill itself. I thank the minister for allowing local governments this freedom.

I also ask the minister to clarify what is the legal position in relation to neighbouring landowners where there is already in place an adequate dividing fence of normal specifications. If one neighbour has a restricted dog and is required to provide an appropriate enclosure, I ask the minister: could that dog owner with the restricted dog require the dividing fence to be demolished and replaced by a higher specification fence which would meet the appropriate enclosure standards? And if so, could that dog owner seek a contribution from the neighbour?

I support this bill. I hope that, as a result of the passing of this bill into legislation, all irresponsible dog owners will be reminded that they have a very clear responsibility in providing the appropriate care and providing for their dog irrespective of whether their dog is identified specifically in this bill. Often we hear comments made that there are too many laws in Queensland and that we are all overgoverned or overregulated. But at the end of the day, it must be understood that this bill becoming law has happened only because of irresponsible dog owners. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (6.00 p.m.): I am pleased to lend my support to a bill which will introduce some sensible and necessary controls over some dangerous breeds of dogs. The amendments in particular will create a framework of minimum standards for the regulation of breeds of dogs, the importation of which is prohibited by the Commonwealth government. Those particular breeds have been listed by a number of members in this debate, so I will not repeat them. Some of the key elements of the bill include placing controls and conditions upon the keeping of restricted dogs.

Mr Purcell: I wasn't here earlier. Which dogs were they again?

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: The specific breeds were the dogo Argentino, the fila Brasileiro, the Japanese tosa and the pit bull terrier. Some of the other elements of the bill include prohibiting the breeding, sale or exchange and requiring the desexing of restricted dogs, enabling the destruction of restricted dogs in specified circumstances and providing for local government to be responsible for the administration and implementation of the new regime. Like many members in this House, I am a dog owner and, I believe, a responsible dog owner.

Mr Purcell: Who says you are?

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: I am saying that I am. Our family currently has a small dog. I would not categorise him as a dangerous dog. He is certainly a very naughty dog. He is a Maltese-Shih tzu cross which currently delights in dismantling our Christmas tree. When I was a child we were the proud owners of a purebred fox terrier whose name was Ferentosh Lachlan Busby, which did present some difficulties when we were calling him for dinner or admonishing him for bad behaviour, so we just shortened that to Dick, which seemed to do the job.

A number of members have spoken about the bad behaviour of dogs and, in particular, whether it is the dogs' fault or the owners' fault. I actually acknowledge that a lot of the bad behaviour of dogs is directly related to the way in which they are trained—or not trained—by their owners and the way they are disciplined by their owners. Also, we have to acknowledge that there are a number of breeds which have innate qualities or characteristics which are bred into them. They are hunting or fighting dogs, many of which have been bred to kill. This legislation does endeavour to place what I believe are appropriate controls over those dogs. I have never personally been bitten or attacked by a dog.

Mr Purcell: You're very lucky.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: I am exceptionally lucky. My father has been bitten by a dog. I was in his presence when that happened. He was letterboxing some election material for me when he was attacked unprovoked by a very savage dog which caused substantial injuries. Other people I have known or been quite close to have been attacked and injured, as well.

Mr Purcell: I've only been bitten twice and I shot both of them.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: I recognise that there are some justifiable circumstances to control or manage certain breeds of dogs, and that is what this legislation endeavours to do. The member

for Bulimba has indicated that he has been bitten a couple of times. As I said, I have never been bitten by a dog. I have been kicked in the chest by a horse.

Mr Purcell: Which is like a big dog.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: It would be similar to being bitten by a big dog, I am sure. Some elements of this bill have been based on approaches adopted in other Australian states. I want to take this opportunity to outline some of the features of other states' legislation to show that the approach that has been adopted here in Queensland is not unique but is, in fact, consistent with approaches in other states. Frameworks have been addressed in New South Wales under the Companion Animals Act 1998 and, in South Australia, under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995. Victoria recently introduced a similar bill, and Western Australia has announced its intention to prepare legislation to introduce a substantially similar regulatory framework for the regulation of restricted dogs. The South Australian act, the Dog and Cat Management Act, deems the breeds of dogs that are prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth to be prescribed breeds. A number of controls have been placed on the keeping of those breeds, including the requirement to be muzzled when in a public place and compulsory desexing. It is also an offence to sell, give away or advertise for sale such breeds of dogs.

Where a local government makes orders or gives directions regarding the keeping of a prescribed breed dog, both current and future owners and persons responsible for the dog must comply with such requirements irrespective of any change of ownership or residential location. The South Australian act also distinguishes between the owner of the dog; that is, the registered owner or apparent owner and the person who is responsible for the dog, which is the occupier of premises where the dog is kept or who has possession of the dog at the time of an alleged offence. Both the owner and the person responsible for a dog must comply with council orders in regard to a prescribed breed dog. The act prescribes monetary penalties for prescribed breed dogs which are approximately 10 times the penalty imposed for offences committed by owners of non-prescribed breed dogs.

I might take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of the Brisbane City Council in recent years to control or manage the presence of a large number of dogs within the limits of Brisbane city. I think it is fair to say that the incidents that I talked about when both my father and close friends were bitten—and in both instances they were delivering election material for myself, I might add—

Mr Strong: A good cause, though.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: It was a very worthy cause. A number of years ago it was commonplace to see dogs roaming the streets. I can recall as a youngster growing up in Banyo, which has been my home for 33 years, and being quite fearful of walking down some streets because of the presence of dogs that would jump the fence and literally chase me up the street.

Mr Purcell: You never got bitten? You were very fast.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: I was a very fast runner.

In a city environment, that is totally unacceptable. I have always considered the fear or the threat of an attack by a dog as just as serious as the fear or the threat of attack by another human being and that we need to have laws and controls in place to remove that threat from a lot of communities. It was a real fear both for myself as a young lad growing up in Banyo and also for a number of elderly people who simply wanted to go for a walk in their local neighbourhood. So I believe that the Brisbane City Council, obviously backed up by legislation of the state, deserves credit for cleaning up the streets of Brisbane. There are obviously still problems from time to time, but there is a substantial body of council by-laws to ensure, hopefully, that the majority of problem dogs are under control. The dangerous dog tag or designation that is given by the Brisbane City Council is quite effective in ensuring that owners keep their dogs controlled on their premises. I think this has gone a long way towards making some of our streets a lot safer.

The Brisbane City Council has also put a lot of effort into providing off-leash dog areas. There are a number in and around my electorate. It is quite pleasing to see local dog owners using those facilities quite regularly. I have never used one myself, but I am regularly talking to local people who make great use of them. They say that some of these off-leash dog areas are in fact good meeting places for single people. Apparently it is the new place to meet prospective partners.

Also in my electorate I am very proud to have what I believe to be the only designated off-leash dog swimming area in Queensland and perhaps in Australia.

Mr Pearce: You could have a beach party for your dog.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: Yes. It is in fact on the way to Nudgee Beach, at Tuckeroo Park. There is an off-leash dog swimming area where people are welcome to take their dogs and let them have a swim. We opened it recently—it was an initiative of Councillor Kim Flesser—in conjunction with the opening of Doggy World, which is a low-level obstacle course where owners can take their dogs to crawl over ladders, jump through tunnels and so on. We have not only an off-leash swimming area but also Doggy World, which is a great place for people to take their dogs and enjoy the surrounds of Nudgee Beach.

Mr Bell: The second swimming area in Queensland.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: For dogs? When was the one on the Gold Coast opened?

Mr Bell: About 18 months ago. Yours truly opened one at the Spit.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: Ours was the first in Brisbane and we are very proud of it.

I will make a few comments about the Companion Animals Act 1998, which is a New South Wales act. It deems breeds of dogs prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth to be restricted dogs. The act requires restricted dogs to be kept at all times in a child-proof enclosure with signage indicating the presence of a restricted dog. When away from its residential property a restricted dog must be under effective control and muzzled, and sale to persons under 18 years of age is prohibited.

The New South Wales act defines 'owner' on three bases; that is, on a personal property basis, the ordinary keeper and the registered owner of the dog. Each owner is guilty of an offence unless they can prove that an exception applies, for example, that another owner has been convicted of the offence and/or they have paid the resulting monetary penalty. Where a restricted dog attacks a person or animal, the owner is liable for a penalty which is four to 10 times the amount of the monetary penalty imposed on the owner of a non-restricted dog. The New South Wales legislation requires owners to notify a council of any change of residential address within or outside of a local government area, change of ownership and when a dog cannot be found or has died. The legislation of both states permits councils to seize and destroy these classes of dog in specified circumstances.

I think members can see that the approach being adopted in Queensland is consistent with and in fact builds upon the approaches adopted in other states. This is sensible and necessary legislation for the control of a number of dangerous breeds of dog. With those few comments I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.13 p.m.): The primary purpose of this bill is to provide for the regulation of those breeds of dogs prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth. It is intended that this bill will contribute to the management of dog attacks by complementing existing local government local laws on dangerous dogs. Injuries by dogs can be absolutely devastating, particularly to young children. Along with the physical effects, dog attack victims also suffer psychological effects and can have a terrible fear of dogs and other animals, sometimes for the rest of their lives.

The bill targets those breeds of dogs which have been bred for their aggressive characteristics. The Commonwealth and other states of Australia—South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria—have recognised the increased risk to public health and safety these breeds of dogs exhibit and have developed or enacted similar legislation. Dogs do not need to be vicious to be good watchdogs for protecting property. The mere facts of a dangerous dog sign on a fence and a dog barking instil enough fear for an intruder to not enter a residence.

In developing the bill consideration has been given to the difficult issue of breed identification as there is no scientific means of proving that a dog is of a restricted breed or a crossbreed. Identification is based on the physical characteristics of the dog. I am aware that the department reviewed the UK Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and the associated media coverage. The major concern regarding the UK legislation appears to be the fact that many dogs were seized by police and held in police custody awaiting identification. The Crown Prosecution Service was heavily reliant on a small number of experts to undertake the identification task. As a result, delays were experienced and dogs were retained in custody for extended periods. This seems to me totally unnecessary for dogs that are not aggressive, and this would be a source of frustration for owners.

It appears that the procedures in the UK legislation differ markedly from those in the bill. The bill sets down the specific circumstances in which a council officer can seize a restricted dog and

also specifies the time frames for holding a dog. A dog may be seized only in the following circumstances: where the restricted dog has attacked or caused fear or threatened to attack or cause fear to a person or an animal; where a permit application for the restricted dog has been refused; where no restricted dog permit has been issued for the dog and there is a risk that the dog may be concealed or moved to avoid a requirement under chapter 17A; or where a compliance notice has not been complied with.

I think these laws need to be specific, otherwise some neighbourhood disputes could be caused. There might be seen to be unfair treatment and a trauma experienced by families whose dogs have been taken away. The bill prescribes processes for notifying an owner of the seizure of a dog and also prescribes the time period after which a dog must be returned to his owner. Children get very distressed if their dog is taken from them, and families really need to be kept informed about the situation regarding their dog.

I would like to talk about the consultation that took place in relation to this legislation, the importance of consultation and the ability for a member to represent their constituency, to look at the pros and cons and to balance various points in the legislation. Consultation has been undertaken on all provisions of the bill with relevant state agencies, local government representative bodies, relevant local governments, relevant professional associations, community groups and members of the public. I am sure that other members of parliament have received a large number of emails in relation to this bill over the past few months.

The Department of Local Government and Planning released draft legislative proposals for the state regulatory framework for restricted dogs in mid-September and called for submissions in response to the proposals. The closing date for the receipt of submissions was 2 November 2001. A total of 253 submissions were received by the closing date. Of these, 34 were supportive of the proposals, while 218 were opposed to the proposals and one could not be classified either way. However, of the 218 opposing submissions, 179 were one of two versions of a form letter. All of these were received by a departmental email address set up to facilitate the public consultation process. If the form letters are removed from the analysis, the number of submissions in support remains 34 and the number of submissions opposed becomes 41.

The key stakeholder groups consulted include: the Brisbane City Council; the Local Government Association of Queensland; the South-East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils; the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Australian Veterinary Association, Queensland division; and the Canine Control Council. As members can see, a wide selection of groups has been consulted on this bill.

The position of key stakeholder groups on the state regulatory framework for restricted dogs is as follows. Firstly, I will deal with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the RSPCA. While the RSPCA supports the Commonwealth ban on the importation of the dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, Japanese tosa and American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier, the RSPCA supports the proposed state regulatory framework for restricted dogs which parallels the Commonwealth legislation. The RSPCA's general policy on animal management does not support breed-specific regulation. But due to recent events, the RSPCA does support the regulation of dogs prohibited from importation by the Commonwealth. However, the RSPCA does not support the extension of the regulatory framework to other breeds of dogs. A revised policy which supports the Commonwealth importation ban of the four breeds of fighting dog is currently being considered by the national body, RSPCA Australia. The chief executive officer of RSPCA Queensland has indicated that he anticipates that the national body will adopt this policy in February 2002. Following adoption of this policy, RSPCA shelters will not rehouse abandoned dogs of those breeds.

The Australian Veterinary Association Queensland Division does not support breed-specific legislation and, as such, does not support this bill. The Canine Control Council fully supports the proposed regulatory framework for restricted dogs. The Local Government Association of Queensland supports the proposed regulatory framework for restricted dogs. The South-East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils in principle supports the bill. The response from local government has been generally very supportive of the proposed state regulatory framework. I congratulate the minister. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.21 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), I will take some time to present issues that have been raised with me by constituents not only in my electorate but also outside the electorate. Many members who have contributed to this debate spoke about being bitten as a child. I, too, was bitten by a big, black, curly haired dog—the rotten thing. The problem was that it

was the owner and not the dog who was at fault. It was a medium-to large-sized curly retriever in a small yard. They kept the rotten thing tied up too long and it became quite vicious. I was only about eight at the time. It was the problem of the owner, not the dog.

Mr English: Our new Animal Protection Act will help that.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Yes. It was the problem of the owners and the way they dealt with the dog over a number of years. It was subsequently taken from them, which is something I regret. Again, it was not the dog's fault; it was the owner's fault.

Local government has taken care of dog issues in local communities in a responsible manner for a long time. It is one matter that takes up a large amount of time of not only the environmental health officer but also the dog inspector. If local authorities have a good person working as the canine control officer, a great deal of their problems are taken care of. That person needs to be someone who loves animals but is also able to explain very clearly to residents their responsibilities of dog ownership. That person must also rise above the old allegation that 'they called my dog out and then grabbed it and put it in the truck'.

I do have concerns, though, and seek the minister's response in relation to any additional resourcing that local government may need as a result of the requirements contained in this legislation. She would remember from her experience in local government, as I do, that so often state governments drew up new legislation with the best of intentions and handed the responsibility for administering that legislation to local government, albeit in this instance it is additional to their current responsibilities. I would be interested in the minister's response as to additional resourcing. Most local authorities currently have dangerous dog regulations. They have had to confront that because of incidents in their local authority areas. Whilst the Parliamentary Library report contains a graph at the back with the number of local authorities with specified dangerous dog regulations, most councils have had to work through strategies of dealing with dangerous dogs, dogs that have committed offences or bitten community members.

There are also quite strict regulations relating to appropriate fencing and control in a public place, which is always a bit of a lark. All of us have seen dogs taking their owners for a walk. There are off-leash areas in the Gladstone City Council and—

Mr Cummins: A good council.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: It is an excellent council. The Calliope Shire Council is another very good council.

Mr Cummins: It used to be better.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Oh, well.

Mr Cummins: They look after Tannum Sands.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: It does. It is a beautiful beach.

Mr Cummins: I had a holiday there last Christmas.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: The member needs to come back, because it is excellent. There is a beach in the area and, although I do not know if it has had the official opening that is the member for Nudgee's criteria for being an official swimming beach—

Mr Cummins: A nude dog beach.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: That is an ugly thought. At Canoe Point dogs are allowed to exercise. Again, there has to be responsibility. Dog owners have to ensure that dogs off the leash do not have altercations with each other.

Like many other members—and this is not all of them—I was sent quite a number of submissions on this issue. One thing with email is that the submission only has to be written once but can be sent to 300 different addresses and off it goes to everybody. The sentiments expressed by the vast majority of people are no less valid because they sent their concerns to 89 members and heaven knows how many other people. Because of that ease of distribution, it does not make their concerns any less valid. I cannot put all of their concerns on the record obviously because I will run out of time, but I want to raise some of those issues. A number of the submissions were particularly emotive. In one or two cases, I would have to say that the people were very angry when they wrote their submissions. That certainly tells in the language they used, but again I do not think that their issues are any less valid.

There is one that I presume all members received from Paul Dunkel. He tells the story about America's first war dog, which I assume is one of the breeds proposed to be banned. It contained

some lovely photographs of dogs with hats on. That shows that, irrespective of the breed, there are always going to be outstanding examples of particular breeds for heroism, friendship, love and compassion. I thought that was an interesting story to read. I want to read a short extract from an email from Peter Whitemin. He said—

I would like ministers and sitting members to express there views on dog control to my self so we can talk rationally. I believe there is no place in our towns and cities for human aggressive dogs. However all experts will tell you aggression to people knows no breed. It is more closely related to the upbringing not the breed. Nor do severe attacks happen by one breed. This is why last year in less than 20 shires there was nearly 1000 attacks in varying degree of seriousness.

I do not believe that any thinking member of this chamber or indeed any member of the community would support aggressive dog behaviour in public. There are a minor number of people who get some sort of delight in seeing a dog trained to attack. That is evident in stories about dog fighting and cockfighting, but it is completely untenable and completely unacceptable. However, as I said, the majority of people would agree with Peter Whitemin's sentiments that dogs that are aggressive to humans are unacceptable.

I have a question for the minister. The bill makes a provision that a local government which decides not to renew an application for a permit within the period required is deemed to be a refusal at the end of that period. Jenni Kennedy was very emotional when she wrote her email. She obviously feels very strongly about her animals. However, she wondered whether this legislation would result in dogs being involuntarily taken away from families.

I believe that the basic answer to that would be no, the intention is to stop the breeding of these restricted animals. However, the clause in this bill states that if a local authority does not make a decision with regard to the renewal application for a permit then it is a deemed refusal. I wonder whether those owners will then face the situation that Jenny Kennedy has outlined in which a dog will be taken involuntarily from a property and there will TV cameras filming the owners who will be beside themselves. She also says—

Why not trying to stop the unfit people from owning such a breed and preferably dogs at all. You and I both know it's not the dog's fault but the fool at the end of the lead which is the problem number ONE.

She goes on with some other fairly graphic comments. She feels very strongly, and I would be most interested to see whether the result of this legislation could be that dogs will be taken involuntarily on the basis of the non-renewal of a permit.

The Parliamentary Library briefing paper quoted the Australian Veterinary Association as saying—

The Australian Veterinary Association does not support measures that target particular breeds of dogs. The Association believes that the attention of governments would be better directed at programs of public education and canine training.

In other documentation that members of the government have presented they have said that the AVA holds that view. However, entities such as the RSPCA, which does a terrific job, also do not hold that view but they support this legislation.

I want to now quote a comment made in 1996 by a parliamentary committee in New Zealand that was examining the Dog Control Bill. The Waitakere City Council said—

The idea of a breed ban sounds great at face value, but if one looks into the issue then it is very difficult not to realise that such a move would be a big and costly mistake.

It is an acknowledged fact, both here and overseas, that dog behaviour is determined by the behaviour of the owner or handler, irrespective of the breed. The potential for a dog to inflict injury ranges across breeds, within breeds, and across the entire spectrum of the dog population ... It is just not logical to single out a specific breed as dangerous.

There is no doubt that a black-market for those breeds will develop and experience overseas has shown that the cost of attempting to enforce such ill conceived legislation is horrendous. In addition, people will simply crossbreed existing dogs to achieve whatever variation they want and negate the aim of the proposed legislation anyway.

Even the Veterinary Association states that vets would find identification of pit bulls extremely difficult. So how can dog control officers, and members of the general public be expected to identify the dog and then enforce any new law?

In my view—and it is backed by international experience—is that these sorts of laws are impractical, onerous and not enforceable.

That was back in 1996. I have already asked the minister about the resourcing, particularly the financial resourcing, of local authorities that will be required to not only implement this legislation but also enforce it. I will return to the identification issue just a little bit later on.

I commend, however, Wayne Jarred, the research officer in the Queensland Parliamentary Library for an excellent document and also for going to the trouble of listing at the back of the document those breeds that have been banned. I am not going to list them. I think every member has tried to pronounce them, but I will not. The paper has a description and a picture of the animal. It reinforces the fact that it is going to be very, very difficult to actually identify these crossbreeds. The Japanese tosa looks very much like a cross between either a ridgeback and a boxer of some sort or a Shar Pei and a boxer. I just wonder how these dog inspectors are going to be able to pinpoint the crossbreeds that are already here and will continue to breed. As I said, I do commend the committee for the wonderful work they have done.

Mr Len Burton has commented on the minister's submission with regard to the number of submissions received. He has stated that the minister gave the submission figures as 253, including 170 form letters, against the proposal with one unclassed. He queries whether that was the dog paws one. That submission said, 'Here's my poor print. Come and get me.' He states that there were 34 for the proposal. He goes on to say that he had provided quite a number of form letters to the Dogzonline, and the Dog Holocaust site, which I have never heard of, had 60. He goes on to list a number of other submissions such as those of Dr Stephen Collier of the Department of Human and Environmental Sciences at the University of New England, New South Wales; vets and a vet nurse in Queensland; and numerous canine fanciers. He is effectively querying whether those submissions have all been counted. I do not know the rationale that was used to assess the submissions that were made, but he certainly feels that quite a lot of submissions have been made.

Mr Sam Mansfield submitted a very impressive submission. He states—

As a responsible dog owner (not a pit bull terrier), I pay close attention to the media coverage of dog attacks. I take great notice at the lack of coverage of attacks attributed to other breeds. For example I have a copy of the Gold Coast dog attack statistics, there was a total of 163 attacks reported to the council in this time, a breakdown is as follows:

37: unknown breed

20: Australian Cattle dog

17: German Shepherd

10: Australian Cattle dog cross breed

10: Bull Terrier Cross breed

9: Staffordshire Bull Terrier

6: German Shepherd Cross breed

5: Rottweiler

5: Australian Kelpie

4: Staffordshire Bull Terrier crossbreed

4: Border Collie

4: Rhodesian Ridgeback

...

3: Labrador Retriever cross breed

3: Rottweiler cross breed

3: Doberman—

and the list goes on right down to chihuahua and Shih Tzu, one poodle, one Wolfhound crossbreed, one Wolfhound, one boxer, one boxer cross, one cocker spaniel, one Australian terrier and so it goes on. It lists just about every breed that you could come up against, but only three bites were attributed to pit bull terriers.

The concern is raised that the breeds that have been banned are not the only ones that have been guilty of misconduct. I would hope that the intention is not to extend that list of prohibited breeds, but more to spend time in educating adult owners on the right way to treat their animals so that the animals—and maybe the owners—develop a temperament more amenable to community contact.

I would like to quote from the Melbourne *Age*. It says—

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee ... sources said yesterday several members were concerned the government had gone too far in placing touch restrictions on all pit bulls, regardless of whether they had a history of aggressive behaviour.

The Victorian Canine Association, which is a member of the committee, said the government's pit bull proposals would cause confusion because of the difficulty in identifying pit bulls.

... Roger Hampson ... said RSPCA officers even had difficulty distinguishing between pit bulls and similar dogs such as Staffordshire terriers.

I do not believe he was having a shot at the RSPCA officers at all. As I said, they do a wonderful job, but some of those dogs exhibit very similar facial characteristics.

The other thing that I wanted to quote before my time expires is perhaps in contradiction to what the member for Maryborough said. I received some information from a lady called Judith Blackshaw. She is a breeds expert in southern Queensland. She commented on this breeds specific legislation—that legislation that is intended to keep certain breeds out. In Australia she believes that the breeds other than the major breed that this will affect, that is the pit bulls, do not carry a very high profile in Australia at all. She said that the laws appear to ban those types of breeds but have little impact. She said it is hard to define what a bit bull is; it is a mix of many dog types. Contrary to what the member for Maryborough said, she said—and this is only in the last month or so, since this legislation was tabled—that there is no way scientifically, via DNA, to prove a dog is a pit bull. I would be interested to know, when there is a conflict of opinion as to whether the dog is a pit bull or a pit bull strain or not, where onus of proof will be put. If it is the owner, obviously most of them will have to capitulate because they simply will not be able to afford the vet bills.

In America, if the dog looks like one, then it is deemed to be one. In Britain, people are having some real problems in proving the breeds when it comes to specific bans. Judith Blackshaw's comment was that it is better to train people to contain dogs and not bite people. She finished off the segment that I heard by saying that laws to ban breeds will not make a lot of difference and how will those laws be policed?

In closing, I want to say that, again, I do not support dangerous dogs. I do not support dogs that bite people without provocation. I am always a bit cautious when I hear about dogs that bite children, because there is never a report about what the kid did to the dog just before it bit them. There are some children who will walk up and down a fence with a stick and poke it in and really irritate a dog. That does not justify a large dog jumping a fence and mauling that child. But it is no less reasonable for animals to react to provocation. I am not for one second defending the right of a person to have a dog that is dangerous, that will bite, that will destroy, hurt or maim a human being. However, the vast majority of dogs will not do it without provocation. That is why the adult population needs to be trained in the correct handling of animals. Children need to be trained by their parents not to annoy or try to be cruel to animals, whether that is advertent or inadvertent.

This legislation will be passed tonight. A lot of dog owners in our state will be concerned that they may own a dog that, as a result of the legislation, is a banned species. However, I hope that in the application of the legislation, the minister, her staff and local government officers will exercise a great deal of discretion to ensure that unnecessary hurt and dislocation in families does not occur.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (6.41 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2001. Initially, I wish to speak briefly, as have many members this evening, on the aspects of the bill pertaining to dangerous dogs. I note that the amendments to the bill pertaining to dangerous dogs mirror federal legislation banning the importation of various breeds of dogs. Although I concede, with reference to the comments of the member for Gladstone, that many other breeds of dogs have certainly been implicated in vicious attacks, these dogs have not been recognised in federal legislation as having been banned from importation. Therefore, this legislation focuses very sensibly on those four breeds that have been recognised federally.

I note that other jurisdictions have gone down this path in terms of putting restrictions and regulations on the four breeds of dangerous dogs. These states include South Australia and New South Wales. I understand that legislation is before the House in Victoria and is almost ready or has recently been introduced in Western Australia. I also note that there has been extensive consultation prior to this amendment bill being introduced to this House—indeed, a full two-month public consultation period.

In common with many other members of the House, I received numerous emails on this matter. I must say, however, that few, if any, of those emails or communications were from people in my own electorate. There does not seem to be any particular fear about this legislation in my electorate of Whitsunday.

Having said those few words in support of that part of the bill, I now wish to turn to the part of the bill pertaining to the Local Government Grants Commission. This amendment proposes to

expand the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six members with a new member to have particular knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils. The Queensland Local Government Grants Commission is the body responsible for making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government and Planning about distributing the Commonwealth's financial assistance grants to Queensland's councils. This year, $258 million is to be distributed between 157 councils. They are the 125 mainstream local governments operating under the Local Government Act 1993 as well as the 32 Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils. Neither the Commonwealth government nor the state government place any restrictions on the matters on which the councils are to spend these grant funds. It is up to individual councils to decide how best to spend this grant in light of their circumstances and the needs of their communities.

This funding is vital for councils. Indeed, for around 40 of the councils operating under the Local Government Act, the funds from the financial assistance grants are more than they raise in general rates. However, up until now, the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission has reflected the experience of mainstream local government, that is to say, the councils established under the Local Government Act. Members have been chosen on the basis of their experience with a range of local government situations, that is, the ability to bring their knowledge and experience of urban, rural and mixed urban-rural councils to the deliberations of the commission.

While members may have had some knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils, they did not possess particular knowledge and experience of the situations and operations of these councils. This amendment redresses that situation. Expanding the current membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six members, with a requirement that the new member will possess a knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils, will fill the gap on the commission.

Before making appointments to the Local Government Grants Commission, the Local Government Association of Queensland is invited to nominate three members, other than the chairperson and deputy chairperson, and the Minister for Local Government decides on the chairperson and deputy chairperson. This amendment will not disturb the ability of the LGAQ to nominate three members of the commission. The Aboriginal Coordinating Council and the Island Coordinating Council will be invited to nominate the additional member envisaged by this bill. The members of the commission have been appointed recently, and they are Mr Dennis Byrnes, a former Chief Executive Officer of the Bundaberg City Council; Mr Peter Woolley, Deputy Chair, Manager of the Local Government Funding Division in the Department of Local Government and Planning; Ms Beth Honeycombe, the former Mayor of the Burdekin Shire Council, Mr Peter Wood, the Deputy Mayor of the Toowoomba City Council; and Mr Warren Wilson, the Mayor of Booringa shire.

The councils are always concerned not only about the level of grants funding that they receive but also about the stability of grant outcomes. I draw the attention of the House to the way in which the Minister for Local Government and Planning has acted to protect the interests of Queensland's councils. Currently, the Commonwealth government is reviewing the act under which the financial assistance grants are made. This may produce instability in grant outcomes. Therefore, the minister went into battle with the Commonwealth government to ensure that no council's grant in Queensland would be reduced in 2001-02. It took a number of approaches, but I am advised that the Commonwealth minister finally agreed to that approach for this year. So those councils in Queensland that were facing a further decrease of up to five per cent this year have now received no reductions. Indeed, most have gained a moderate rise.

I am aware that over a number of years Queensland councils have expressed the view that the methodology used by the commission to produce its recommendations is too complex and not easily understood. However, I understand that the new members of the Local Government Grants Commission held their first meeting early in December and that at this meeting they decided to progress the review of their methodology. This will be a challenging task, but I am confident that, with their experience and knowledge of local government, they are more than equipped to tackle this very important task. The addition of a new member with particular knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils will provide further depth of knowledge for the commission in this review. I congratulate the minister and her department on this bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (6.49 p.m.): In rising to speak in support of this Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I acknowledge that it is a bill with many parts. It deals with

membership of the Local Government Grants Commission, the powers of joint local governments, state government powers of financial oversight of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangement Act 1982 and the Local Government Owned Corporations Act.

Having acknowledged that, I will address the regulatory framework for dealing with certain breeds of restricted dog. The amendment before the House will be most welcome news to my constituents. The bill sets out to establish greater control over specific breeds of dog. It establishes a Queensland regulatory regime that applies to breeds of dog which are already covered by an importation ban established by the Commonwealth. The ban also applies to crossbreeds of those dogs. The breeds include dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, Japanese tosa and American pit bull terrier. Under the terms of the proposed legislation, it will be an offence to sell or exchange such animals. There will also be a requirement to desex restricted dogs and, in specified circumstances, approved persons are authorised to carry out the destruction of problem dogs.

Local authorities have been calling for uniform laws applying to dangerous breeds for a number of years now. Local governments will welcome state-wide legislation to regulate the keeping of those dogs and uniform powers to deal with them. Queensland is in good company with this legislation. The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 in South Australia and the Companion Animals Act 1998 in New South Wales provide an established framework to deal with this problem. Legislation is also pending in Victoria and Western Australia and bills similar to this one have already been introduced into their respective parliaments.

Quite appropriately, no person under 18 years of age can be registered as an owner of a restricted dog. An adult owner is required to obtain a permit to keep a restricted dog and must conform to a number of requirements in respect of housing the animal in a safe and responsible manner. Issues arising out of the keeping of such dogs were addressed by the minister in her second reading speech when she outlined the appropriate conditions which make mandatory a number of things. They included the following requirements: that the dog wear an identification tag at all times; that the dog wear a muzzle and is under effective control in a public place; that the dog is kept in an enclosure which complies with requirements under the bill and proposed regulation; that a sign be attached to the entrance of a place containing an enclosure, giving public notice of a restricted dog; that the permit holder notify the council of any change in their residential address.

The bill allows for strong penalties for those who do not comply with the provisions. Not having a permit or breaching any of its conditions will attract a fine of 75 penalty units; that is a fine of $5,625. Where an owner is negligent or encourages a dog attack, the maximum fine is 300 penalty units, or $22,500.

Councils have long called for this intervention by the state. With some leadership now quite evident from the state, a serious responsibility now passes to councils to use the legislation to its best effect. The bill provides minimum standards. There is nothing preventing local governments from establishing a more strict regime. While an authorised council officer is empowered to declare a dog to be a restricted dog, the bill quite rightly allows for a right of appeal by the owner of the animal. Such an appeal can be heard in the Magistrates Court wherein they can present evidence to the contrary.

The bill has come about as a result of a long public debate. The minister has consulted widely and no doubt every member of this House has received emails from people arguing one way or the other. A great deal of effort has gone into the drafting of the bill. In my view, it addresses adequately many of the concerns raised by my constituents. I believe that this is good legislation. I commend the minister and her department and I am pleased to support this bill.

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (6.53 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have participated in the debate on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I appreciate the support of members on both sides of the House for this very important legislation and I appreciate the complimentary comments on the work of members of my department.

As members are aware, this bill seeks to achieve a number of objectives in the areas of control over specific dog breeds, the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission, the powers of joint local governments and the application of the state government powers of financial oversight in the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 to local government owned corporations.

Firstly, the bill establishes a state regulatory framework for those dog breeds that are subject to the Commonwealth's importation ban and crossbreeds of those dogs Secondly, the bill will expand the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from five to six and will require the additional member to have particular knowledge of Aboriginal and Island councils. Thirdly, the bill will clarify that a joint local government may, with the consent of its component local governments, disburse funds that are not required for the exercise of its exclusive jurisdiction for any other local government purpose. A parallel amendment is proposed to clarify that the Townsville Thuringowa Water Supply Board may also disburse such funds in this way. Lastly, the bill will enable the state to supervise the financial arrangements of LGOCs under the SPFA Act.

I will now respond to the matters raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. The committee has raised questions in respect of three areas of the bill: whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights of owners and other persons dealing with restricted dogs, on the one hand, and the general public, on the other; the range and extent of additional enforcement powers conferred in chapter 17A; and the liability for fencing costs where a dividing fence forms part of a restricted dog enclosure and needs to be upgraded to meet the new requirements.

In relation to the first matter, the bill establishes a regime that imposes significant prohibitions and restrictions upon owners and persons responsible for restricted dogs. However, those breeds of fighting dogs have been banned by the Commonwealth from importation into Australia because they pose a threat to public health and safety. It is only appropriate that such dogs, which are already in the community, should have restrictions placed on their ownership to better protect the general public from damage or injury. It is considered that the legislation strikes an appropriate balance between the rights of those who may wish to own such dogs and the public health and safety rights of members of the community. Other states have introduced similar legislation to ensure there are controls in place for the breeds of dog that the Commonwealth has banned from importation.

In relation to the second matter, the specific enforcement powers provided in the bill are necessary for the effective operation of the regulatory regime for restricted dogs. While chapter 15, part 5 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides general powers of entry to local government authorised persons without a warrant, these are not tailored for the specific purpose of regulating the breeds of dog which are subject to the Commonwealth importation ban and, as such, are insufficient to achieve the objectives of the bill.

The additional powers of entry given in chapter 17A are limited to the specific circumstances: where an authorised person reasonably suspects a restricted dog is at a place and no permit has been issued for the dog and any delay in entering the place would result in a risk to community health and safety or the dog being concealed or moved to avoid a requirement under chapter 17A; or the entry is at a time given in a compliance notice for the purpose of checking compliance with the notice.

In exercising those powers, an authorised person may not use force and must follow certain procedural requirements under section 1088 of the Local Government Act to produce an identity card and to tell the occupier the purpose of the entry and that it is permitted without the occupier's consent or a warrant. Additional powers are also given for the subsequent seizure and destruction of restricted dogs in limited circumstances. Provisions of the bill exclude entitlement for compensation to owners for loss or expense caused by the seizure or destruction of a restricted dog. The circumstances in which those powers may be exercised relate primarily to incidents of non-compliance with the requirements of chapter 17A or where there is a risk to community health and safety. Providing compensation to owners in these circumstances is not considered appropriate. However, local governments can recover certain costs associated with seizure and destruction of restricted dogs. This is consistent with the legislation in other states.

In relation to the last matter, section 1193ZZW provides for the liability of costs where a dividing fence forms part of a restricted dog enclosure. The effect of the section is that if a dividing fence is built or extended to form part of an enclosure for a restricted dog, the Dividing Fences Act 1953 sets out the procedures for resolving the liability for costs.

The committee has raised a question—and this was also raised by the member for Nicklin—as to the position of a landowner where there is an existing dividing fence which meets the standards of the DFA but their neighbour wants to demolish it and replace it with a fence that meets the requirements of chapter 17A. In these circumstances, section 1193ZZW applies the DFA. Under the DFA, a person must give their neighbour notice in writing or a notice to fence. The notice to fence must state clearly where the fence will be erected, what sort of fence is planned, a

proposal for construction of the fence, which should include who will undertake the construction, the proposed dates, the expected cost and expected contribution.

Sitting suspended from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: The neighbour then has one month within which to reach an agreement with the owner of the restricted dog about the construction of the fence. If the parties are able to reach an agreement within one month, they will be bound by that agreement. Where no agreement is reached within one month, either party may apply to the Small Claims Tribunal for an order to fence. The tribunal then determines the kind of fence to be constructed, the apportionment of costs for the fence, the time within which the fence is to be built and, if necessary, the fencing line and any compensation by way of annual payment to be paid to an owner for the loss of occupation of any land.

The DFA sets out a process to enable the interests of each landowner to be taken into account, and it is open to a referee or a magistrate to apportion costs between the parties as determined by the merits. I will provide a formal response in writing to the committee about these issues by the due date of 30 January 2002.

Finally, I will address the specific issues raised by members during the debate. The member for Warrego raised a number of questions, including how we identify the breeds of restricted dogs and crossbreeds. The bill provides councils with two options in identifying dogs. The first option enables councils to obtain an expert opinion from the veterinary surgeon as to the particular dog's breed. Once this opinion is obtained, the council must notify the dog's owner of their intention to declare the dog to be a restricted dog and provide a copy of the opinion. The owner is given the opportunity to provide written representations to the council regarding the dog's breed. The council must then make a decision based on all of the information before it. However, an owner retains the right to judicial review of the council's decision.

The second option enables the council authorised officer to declare a dog to be a restricted dog based on his or her knowledge and observation of the dog. In this case, the owner has a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court. After the legislation is passed, my department intends to conduct a state-wide training program for councils regarding breed identification. The Canine Control Council has previously provided assistance to councils regarding breed identification for these breeds of dog and it has indicated its preparedness to continue to assist councils in this regard in light of the bill.

The key elements of the Queensland legislation are similar to the regulatory frameworks established by other states for those breeds of dog prohibited from importation by federal legislation. Both New South Wales and South Australia have had legislation which they have implemented for a number of years and they have effectively dealt with the breed identification issue.

The member for Warrego also asked whether it was necessary to introduce breed-specific legislation. There is certainly widespread concern in the community, and these dogs are prohibited from entry into Australia because of health and safety issues. The Commonwealth has found it necessary to ban these dogs from importation. The New South Wales and South Australian governments already have controlling legislation. Victoria has legislation before the parliament and I believe Western Australia is following similar lines. So, yes, I believe it is necessary to introduce this legislation in Queensland.

The member for Warrego also asked whether the effectiveness of the legislation will be reviewed by the department. The department maintains a rolling program of reviews of all parts of the Local Government Act to ensure that they are meeting their objectives. In the case of new legislation the department would also analyse any difficulties that councils and others may have with the implementation. If there is sufficient justification, I would be prepared to consider proposals to improve the existing law in the light of implementation difficulties.

In relation to the question of whether the department will monitor councils during the four-month review of their local laws and what happens if councils do not complete that review, my department intends to conduct a state-wide training program after the legislation is introduced. The program will cover breed identification and the review of local laws to ensure implementation of a minimum standard across the state. The bill provides that the state legislation will be a minimum standard for the regulation of restricted dogs. If a local law is inconsistent with the state legislation and imposes a lower standard or obligation than the state legislation, the local law will be invalid. In such a situation the requirements in this bill will apply.

Where joint local governments disburse funds on local government functions other than their exclusive jurisdiction these additional functions should not become an exclusive jurisdiction of the joint local government. This was another question that the member far Warrego posed. In reply I say: only the jurisdiction given to a joint local government under the regulation that sets it up as an exclusive jurisdiction. Any function on which the joint local government spends surplus funds with the approval of its component local governments remains a function which the joint local government and all its component local governments can undertake. It is a shared function. The explanatory notes make clear that this is the intent of the amendment.

The member for Warrego also raised the issue that local government members on the grants commission should come from councils with unqualified audits. It is certainly important that any members appointed to the Local Government Grants Commission have the qualifications to carry out their role. This is the basis on which the legislation is drafted, and the same arrangements will apply to the new position on the commission. But it is important to note that people with local government knowledge and experience are not there as representatives of their councils. They are selected on the basis of their qualifications.

It would be impractical to use a requirement of the kind suggested by the member in selecting the members of the commission. Local governments can have qualified audits for a range of technical issues beyond the capacity of any individual councillor to directly influence. In recent years there have been occasions when up to half of local governments established under the Local Government Act have had qualified audits on a range of technical issues.

The member for Surfers Paradise asked what happens if a person has a restricted dog and they have to go into a nursing home. Does the dog have to be destroyed? The bill prohibits the acquisition or supply of a restricted dog. However, the bill provides for limited exceptions to this prohibition. Where the owner of a restricted dog passes away, the ownership of the dog may be transferred by distribution under their estate to a new owner. The bill provides that acquisition or supply will also be permitted where a person has a reasonable excuse. It is considered that a person could ably argue under the reasonable excuse clause that their movement into a nursing home would fall within such circumstances. The new owner would have to apply for a permit and could appeal the court's decisions on that.

The member for Surfers Paradise was also concerned about the reference to crossbreeds and asked whether they can be defined. There is no legal definition of each of the breeds or types of restricted dogs. Because these dogs are banned from importation by the Commonwealth there is no recognised breed standard for these breeds as they are not shown at competitions in Australia. The Canine Control Council has assisted councils in the past regarding this issue and has indicated its ability to continue this role. The Canine Control Council judges the breed or type of dog on the basis of physical characteristics. The same physical characteristics would be used to make a decision regarding crossbreeds of dogs prohibited by the Commonwealth from importation.

However, during the debate honourable members might have heard the member for Maryborough speaking about the possibility of using DNA to identify dogs. My department is not aware of this research. The information which the department has received is that there is currently no scientific means, such as DNA testing, of accurately testing to determine whether a particular dog is one of the restricted breeds or a crossbreed of one of those restricted breeds. However, following the provision of this information by the member for Maryborough my department will make further investigations.

The member for Maryborough was concerned about sweeping bans on certain breeds when training owners is the more appropriate approach. The primary purpose of the bill is to provide for the regulation of restricted dogs, not the banning of them. These breeds of dog were banned from importation by the Commonwealth a number of years ago. Under this legislation these dogs may be kept in Queensland but owners must obtain a permit for keeping a restricted dog and must comply with the permit conditions and requirements of the state legislation.

The Department of Primary Industries provides funding to the RSPCA and the Australian Veterinary Association. These organisations provide a number of programs which educate members of the community regarding ownership and interaction with companion or larger animals. For example, the AVA provides the pets and people education program which forms part of the syllabus for primary schools in Queensland. Under the model local law, a council may currently prohibit outright the keeping of a special breed of dog in its area or may impose conditions for the keeping of specific breeds of dogs or for dogs that have committed dangerous behaviour or threatened dangerous behaviour. That is the current law. The member for

Maryborough also was concerned that more breeds could be added to the list of restricted dogs. The bill provides that the only way that additional breeds or types of dog could be added to the current list of restricted dogs is if the Commonwealth amended its legislation to prohibit another breed or type of dog.

The member for Darling Downs spoke of his concerns about commercial pig hunters. I can understand his concerns for his constituents. However, we cannot bring in laws that apply to some owners and not others. In the case of pig hunters, if their dogs are restricted dogs they will have to be registered as such. We also heard from a number of members that pet owners should be more responsible. I agree wholeheartedly. However, as we heard also, some people breed these dogs to be mean and encourage them to attack. This legislation should stop that from happening.

The member for Gladstone was concerned that the state government provide additional resources to assist councils to implement the proposed legislation. There are no specific funds provided to councils to support implementation of the legislation. The bill deals with a subject which is a core area of responsibility for local government. Councils clearly will be able to charge permit application fees. Further, the bill specifically provides that moneys paid into court as fines for offences under the bill will go back to local government.

The member for Gladstone also was concerned that, if a council does not make a decision on a renewal application in the prescribed time, it is a deemed refusal and wanted to know if this meant the dog could be involuntarily taken away? The provision in the bill regarding deemed refusal reflects the current drafting practice of the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. Where the deemed refusal of a renewal of a permit occurs, the owner of the dog may appeal this deemed decision to the Magistrates Court. The member for Gladstone also was concerned that if there is a debate on whether or not the dog is a restricted dog, who makes the final decision? The bill provides for two methods of declaring a dog to be a dangerous dog. Firstly, where a council obtains an expert opinion prior to declaring a dog to be a restricted dog, the council makes the final decision on the dog's breed. A council must consider the expert opinion and any written representations made by the dog's owner, and this decision may be judicially reviewed where an owner institutes such an action. Where a council uses the second method of an authorised officer making a declaration, the decision may be appealed to the Magistrates Court. In this situation the magistrate makes a decision based on the evidence presented to the court.

There was also a suggestion that there might not have been enough support following release of the draft legislation. There were only 218 against, and this included 179 form letters. As we have some 3.5 million people in Queensland, only 218 objections shows that this legislation is clearly supported.

Finally, almost every speaker to this bill has spoken of a personal dog attack, and there would not be one person in this House who has not seen or heard of a vicious dog attack. This parliament owes it to all Queenslanders to take this action to protect our residents from those breeds of dogs that have been bred to fight. As I said in my second reading speech, there are certain fighting dogs that people cannot bring into Australia for public health and safety reasons. For those very same reasons, if a person has one of those dogs or a crossbreed in Queensland this bill will require that extra controls apply. This action has enormous support in communities throughout Queensland and it has the support of both sides of the parliament. I encourage everyone to support it.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) in charge of the bill.

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

Mr HOBBS (8.46 p.m.): First of all, I thank the minister for her responses to the other issues. They were good responses and I am happy with them. I have a concern relating to having persons with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments on the Local Government Grants Commission. I think it would be very difficult to have on the Grants Commission members who had qualified audits. I mentioned that some councils—as the minister correctly said—had qualified audits, but that related to the depreciation method that councils were

having a row about in relation to new accounting methods. I was not talking about those. What I was referring to was that the Auditor-General reported that there are a considerable number of repeat offenders in some Aboriginal councils. In fact, councillors are obtaining money from the councils and not paying it back. Those are the ones to which I am referring. I do not believe that they should be eligible to be members of the Grants Commission. It is really a matter of looking at each particular audit on its merits. Many councils have various reasons why they have had qualified audits, but that is not the case with the ones I am talking about where councillors have been helping themselves to council funds.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I am quite sure that we do not have a concern here. The Aboriginal councils were asked to nominate a person for this position. I am quite sure that they would have looked at all those things before they nominated the person. But we will certainly check that again and make sure that the person is appropriately qualified. The qualification requirements for this particular member will be exactly the same as they are for the other members. In that instance the chairman was nominated by me as minister. The deputy chair comes from the department. The other three nominations came from the LGAQ to represent different levels of government.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—

Mr BELL (8.49 p.m.): I refer to page 18, line 24, which relates to restricted dogs, including crossbreeds. I am grateful to the minister for making mention of that in her reply. I am still concerned that, as printed in the bill, any amount of blood creates a crossbreed. I would have thought that perhaps there should have been a statement that to be a crossbreed there needs to be 10 per cent of the blood of the restricted breed or some reasonable judgment as to what creates a crossbreed. I guess the minister has been in the same position as I have—walking through a council pound and seeing hundreds of dogs. Probably a quarter of them have a little bit of a pit bull or something like that in them, but a tiny amount—not such as to affect their nature or their aggressive traits. I am troubled that there could be a terrific number of dogs out there that are technically crossbreeds, even though the amount of blood of the restricted varieties might be minimal. I ask the minister to consider that a little further.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I think the issue has been covered quite broadly, because there are two different ways in which dogs can be identified—one, by a veterinary certificate and the other by a person attached to the council. In both cases the owners do have recourse to state their case if they do not believe those options are adequate. I think the issue has been covered fairly well, and there is an avenue for anyone to appeal a decision if they believe it is not correct.

Mr BELL: With respect to the minister, suppose it is not in contest that a particular dog has one per cent of blood of one of the breeds prohibited from entry. No amount of appeal is going to be of any assistance. It is a crossbreed and that is it, it seems.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I think the member can be confident that if that were the case it would be identified by the veterinary report. If it is not identified then those people do have the avenue of putting in their own information. It will then be decided from there.

Mr BELL: I did not quite understand the minister. My point was that if there is the tiniest skerrick then no amount of submission to the court or evidence is going to change that. If it is accepted that there is, say, one per cent of blood then that is it. It is a crossbreed. No amount of appealing is going to make it anything other than a restricted dog. It troubles me that if there is a very, very tiny amount it will be caught up when it may not have been the intent of the bill that that be so.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr McNamara): I remind the honourable member that he has just spoken for the third time on this clause. If he has some other point to make, perhaps he should make it now.

Mr BELL: Thank you. I appreciate that, Mr Temporary Chairman. I also refer to page 22, lines 8 to 12, which relate to not supplying a restricted dog. There is the parallel provision above it about not acquiring a restricted dog, except in two situations. I am glad to see provision made for distribution in a deceased estate. I think that is a very appropriate thing. I wonder about the reasonable excuse. The example I gave in my initial address earlier this evening was not so much about someone going into a nursing home but about someone simply moving from a detached house, which is necessary for a restricted dog, into an apartment. People cannot have a restricted

dog in an apartment. What is to happen to the dog in that case? Is that a sufficiently reasonable excuse to pass on the dog to a relative or friend? If not, what is to become of the dog? It does trouble me that perhaps not enough exceptions have been given or there is not enough definition of 'reasonable excuse' to enable a working situation whereby people will not be unsure of where a situation gives reasonable excuse or not. I would hate to see dogs being put down willy-nilly, just because the owner has to move into a different style of accommodation.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I do not think any dogs are going to be put down willy-nilly. Councils have had control of dogs and dangerous dogs for many, many years. I do not see a lot of evidence of that happening with the laws that are in place currently. All these laws are doing is regulating the control of restricted breeds of dogs—giving councils stronger powers to cope with what has become a major community concern. I do not believe there is any reason to be concerned, because the same councils that are looking at dangerous dogs right now will be following these regulations also. I do not believe there should be any concern at all.

Dr KINGSTON: I have to say that I am surprised that the department is not aware of the DNA and mitochondrial research done by Alan Wilton at the University of New South Wales. It is quite definitive. It is currently being applied to the identification of purebred dingoes and hybrid dingoes. It is an absolute science for dingoes right now—today. It is being used on Fraser Island dingoes and dingoes all over Australia. It is probable, not possible, that that technology can be finetuned and used to identify the parentage of any particular dog, given the research funds and the time. If I undertake to provide to the minister and her department the scientific papers which have so far been published, will she undertake to incorporate consideration of that advance in science into this legislation?

The minister refers constantly to the visual identification and recognition of breeds by veterinarians. I am a veterinarian with, unfortunately, too many years of experience. Dingoes or suspected dingoes, which are a prohibited breed for people in Queensland to own, are often confiscated by DNR and are given to the council. Under the normal routine of things they will be euthanased. I am often called upon to identify the dog, say what breed it is and give a certificate of health. Giving the certificate of health is easy. If anybody is being really truthful they will say that visual identification of the dog is impossible. In Maryborough I have come to an agreement with the authorities, namely the DNR officer, that if the dog in question looks like a purebred dingo—if it has the right colouring and the right morphology; without a DNA test we cannot tell—we will agree that it is or is not a dingo. Based on that visual evaluation, which I stress is very inaccurate, we come to an agreement about whether that dog should be destroyed or not.

That, in my mind, is not satisfactory. We have now at our disposal a test freely available. I can provide the minister with the test submission forms from Alan Wilton. The test costs $50. It needs only a minute sample, such as part of an ear. At the moment, an accurate definition of whether that dog is hybrid or purebred dingo can be arrived at. We can get away from this awful questioning which currently takes place and move into a real area of science. If I provide those details to the minister, is she willing to incorporate those in this legislation?

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: It is not possible to incorporate it in the legislation going through the parliament tonight. However, I have said that my department will follow that through. We are not aware of that issue at all. It is quite unfair to question why the department is not aware of it, because it is not the Department of Primary Industries and this question only came up tonight in the debate. If the member is willing to make that information available, the department will make those investigations. It will look at that information and consider it.

Dr KINGSTON: Minister, I am sorry. I respect the minister and respect her career in the past. As she knows, I am well aware of it. But I cannot accept that in a multidisciplinary government—and surely one department talks to another—her department is not aware of current research. This research is published and has been published for at least three months. I am aware of it. I have read it and have probably read 10 press releases on it. I cannot accept the proposition from the minister that it is excusable for her department not to be aware of it, I am sorry.

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I must support my department on this, because really what the member is talking about is research into dingo identification. We are not talking about dingoes tonight. All of the discussions and the consultations that have gone on with my department and other departments have not identified this. However, I have said to the member that if he makes that available my department will look at it and will consider it.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mrs Nita Cunningham, by leave, read a third time.

LAND SALES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 November (see p. 3807).

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (9.04 p.m.): At the outset, I indicate to the parliament that the opposition will be supporting the Land Sales Amendment Bill. We see no reason from our research as to why we should oppose this legislation. In actual fact, much of it makes commonsense. However, I want to make a couple of comments in a very short contribution.

As I understand it, the reason this bill came about was to take into consideration the changing and contemporary nature of the way that major buildings, particularly residential apartments, are constructed around Queensland. Around 10 years ago there was a situation whereby if people had contracted to be part of a new residential accommodation project the person or the company constructing that new building had 18 months to provide them with an instrument—that is, a title—from the time that the contract was signed. That was extended throughout the 1990s up to three and a half years in 1997.

Most reasonable people would believe that three and a half years is a fair enough time for a syndicate to furnish a person who has contracted to purchase an apartment in that new residential development with a certificate of title. However, we know that that is not always possible, particularly in light of the intention of the Sunland Group on the Gold Coast to construct what is going to be a 78-storey residential building. It is very interesting that this is billed to be the tallest residential building in the world. It will be a sight to behold, but I must admit that I would probably prefer to live a little closer to the ground than on the 78th storey. No doubt with modern engineering techniques, the sky is the limit. One is only limited to the extent of the cost. Obviously, the higher the building the more it costs, and it is less cost-effective because of construction costs and the need to shift a greater amount of material to the top in order to complete such a building. We have to concede that it is a reality, that these things are going to happen and that local government is going to approve these buildings in line with the other expectations which government as a whole places on such developments. I do not believe it is reasonable for us to stand in the way other than to put acceptable standards and protections in place for consumers.

Why is it necessary to increase this at the minister's discretion from three and a half years to four and a half years in exceptional circumstances? As I outlined initially, it is going to take these companies a fair amount of time to get enough commitments from people who want to live in establishments such as this to be able to make it financially viable. The three and a half years which currently exists in the act is not sufficient to ensure that. The good thing about what is being presented to the parliament tonight is the fact that this bill not only takes into consideration the contemporary expectations and the difficulties faced by these companies when they are intending to construct such major residential facilities; it also provides a protection, that is, only in exceptional circumstances can it be extended by up to 12 months. I would not have been able to come in here and support a free-for-all, and I know from my discussions with the minister that she does not support such a thing. What we are debating tonight is a reasonable compromise.

When the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee considered this bill, it became concerned about the fact that this legislation enshrines a Henry VIII clause which allows the government or the minister to be able to make a regulation in certain circumstances to extend the time in which the company can provide a registrable instrument to the person by 12 months. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee did conclude, however, that it was rather narrow and therefore probably acceptable in the circumstances. That is a reasonable assessment from the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, but what I would say though is that the parliament does need to be careful when dealing with Henry VIII clauses. We need to preserve the primacy of the parliament wherever we can to make the legislation up front rather than providing the opportunity for the

government or the minister to be able to come back, potentially at whim, with regard to a regulation to provide that 12-month extension.

In conclusion, we support the bill. The assurances I have received from the minister provide me with enough comfort that it will be used only in extraordinary circumstances, but we have to concede that these extraordinary circumstances will arise, and it is unreasonable to expect a major company such as Sunland or a syndicate of companies to be constrained by the existing three and a half years when one considers the nature of the developments they are proposing. Therefore, the opposition does not have any objection to the Land Sales Amendment Bill.

Mr BELL (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (9.10 p.m.): The bill before us is brief, and I will be brief also. Great things happen in the electorate of Surfers Paradise, and this is another one of them. A building comprised of 78 storeys is something quite spectacular. One would not want one on every block, but in the proposed position it should be a very satisfactory addition to the skyline of Surfers Paradise—something exciting, something which will add real benefit to southern Surfers Paradise.

I note that the provisions for time for making title for multi-storey buildings have been progressively increased by legislation—originally 18 months, then two years, then three years, then 41 months, and now the possibility of an extension, if applied for, of another 12 months. I suggest that in this House in a year or two we will be considering a further extension of time, not for this particular building but because of the fact that buildings are likely to become bigger and bigger as time progresses. In this particular case—not just the 78-storey building in Surfers Paradise but also others like it—the provisions for an optional 12 month extension are quite satisfactory. I regard the bill as being a very sensible piece of legislation, and I certainly support it.

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (9.11 p.m.): The member for Surfers Paradise was brief, and I will be even briefer. I am pleased to support the minister's introduction of the Land Sales Amendment Bill 2001. The amendment to the Land Sales Act 1984 will enable the completion time for developments to be extended as circumstances require. Such flexibility can only serve to enhance investor confidence in large-scale projects in Queensland and must assist in all types of development, particularly tourism-related development. The member for Surfers Paradise has already mentioned the 78-storey residential building which is proposed—and indeed has been approved by the Gold Coast City Council—in his electorate.

It is testament to the minister's forward thinking that the act has been amended to reflect not only the commercial demands of the present but also the development opportunities that may arise in the foreseeable future. With the improvements this bill will afford, Queensland is prepared to take full advantage of the growing investor interest in this state. While the impetus for this bill has been focused on a proposed development on the Gold Coast, all of Queensland's regions will benefit. Queensland is the centre of Australia's tourism industry, and I think it is important to recognise that the Gold Coast sees more tourism dollars than any other region in Queensland. This has long been accepted but now can be backed up by hard facts provided by Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research. The office's report, titled *Visitor expenditure in regional Queensland 1985 to 1999*, is the first official research to place a dollar value on overnight visitor expenditure in the Queensland regions. The report identified that 25 per cent of the total overnight visitor spend—a massive $2.9 billion—is spent on the Gold Coast, confirming that the region is more dependent on and benefits more from tourism than any other of the state's regions.

Developments that will be possible as a result of this bill will add to the strength of the Queensland property development industry whilst also enhancing Queensland destinations. Queensland already has world-class accommodation, and the need for the amendments contained in this bill clearly reflects the strength of the property development market in Queensland. More high standard and innovative developments can only serve to further enhance the reputation of the region.

The bill paves the way for increased tourism-related infrastructure development and ensures that Queensland will maintain its No. 1 position as the Smart State, the state that moves with the times without compromising consumer protection initiatives. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (9.14 p.m.): I rise tonight in support of the Land Sales Amendment Bill. We are passing specific legislation that will allow an extension of time, with conditions, for purchasing units off the plan for a project planned for the Gold Coast. Many of us on the Sunshine Coast would not be in favour of such a significant high-rise building on our coastline. However, we do have numerous high-rise buildings. It was with great pleasure that the

minister visited the Sunshine Coast recently to be part of the opening of the Sirocco complex on Mooloolaba Esplanade. That is a marvellous Juniper Constructions development. Anyone who knows the Sunshine Coast will know that Mooloolaba really has come of age, to the benefit of locals and visitors alike.

Juniper Constructions, along with numerous other developers—including Forrester Kurts, which was previously Forrester Parker—had a lot to do with a foreshore change along Mooloolaba Esplanade. A building was constructed not quite a decade ago on the old picture theatre site at the corner of Mooloolaba Esplanade and Brisbane Road. When the old picture theatre site was sold, Forrester Parker picked it up and built a complex called the Peninsula. It had numerous sales off the plan. While buying off the plan can be dangerous, it can also be beneficial. This legislation addresses many of the issues related to that practice. We have to be very wary and make every effort to protect people when we can. Earlier this year we passed legislation that came down reasonably hard on unscrupulous marketeers. We can only go so far to protect people. When Forrester Parker—as it was then known—developed the Peninsula resort, it was one of the landmarks of the Mooloolaba Esplanade. Ironically, a unit development built by Juniper Constructions—Forrester Parker's competitor—right next door to the Peninsula resort was also named Landmark. My point is that the development industry on the Sunshine Coast employs many people and brings much wealth to the area.

Many of us, myself included, were very sceptical about what would happen along the Mooloolaba Esplanade. I have no doubt that some people still do not like what has happened. However, the changes that have occurred have employed thousands of people, not only in the construction industry but also in terms of restaurants, cafes and all sorts of entertainment areas which have vastly improved the foreshore. I know that many in the real estate industry refer to Mooloolaba as the new Noosa. I do not like to compare one area with the other. I think that Mooloolaba has its own character.

Mr McNamara: Forrester Kurts has done some wonderful work in Hervey Bay.

Mr CUMMINS: Forrester Kurts, formerly Forrester Parker, has done some wonderful work in Hervey Bay. Anyone who returns from various islands off Hervey Bay, as they come into that lovely port, will see about half a dozen different complexes that were built overlooking that marvellous marina.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr CUMMINS: I take the interjection from the minister.

I am pleased to offer my support to the minister in the introduction of this bill. I am on the backbench advisory committee to the minister. I commend her for her briefings. She takes on board all the input that she receives from us and accepts criticisms and bouquets alike. The minister does a marvellous job and is very well received and respected on the Sunshine Coast. Both the tourism industry and the developers in that area welcome her.

The proposed amendments to the Land Sales Act 1984 preserve the safeguards that purchasers of off-the-plan residential style units have enjoyed since the legislation was first introduced. Whilst the period in which the construction must be completed has been the subject of previous amendments to the act, on this occasion the minister has not only preserved the interests of purchasers but has also added further safeguards by providing that any extension of time will have no effect against a purchaser who has not received a written notice from the developer.

This amending legislation also offers added protection for investors. I must add that many of us are wary—and sometimes overly wary—when we talk of purchasers and developers. But often developers provide a good product and purchasers are the recipients of that product. We can no longer simply refer to developers as people who are trying to make a fast buck. Some of the developers on the Sunshine Coast provide a quality product and residents right across the Sunshine Coast appreciate much of what has been done in the redevelopment of Mooloolaba esplanade. The Juniper developers are moving into the Kawana area. They are now undertaking a development right next door to the Kawana pub—a top quality product that I believe was sold completely off the plan. It will be next door to my new office, which I hope to move into in late January, early February.

I will finish by saying that no written notice before a contract is signed and the existing three and a half year money back period continues to apply. This will ensure that developers inform consumers of their rights. Although we cannot always protect people from themselves, basically, the developers who are constructing this building on the Gold Coast cannot complete it within the

time frame that is specified in the present legislation. This bill provides an extension of time so that the contracts that people enter into when they buy off the plan during the construction period will not lapse and penalties will not ensue. In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House and I commend the minister and her department for their extremely good work.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (9.23 p.m.): I am pleased to offer my support to the minister upon the introduction of this bill and wish to speak briefly to it. The proposed amendments to the Land Sales Act 1984 preserve the safeguards that purchasers of off-the-plan residential units have enjoyed since the legislation was first introduced. Whilst the period in which the construction must be completed has been the subject of previous amendments to the act, on this occasion the minister has not only preserved the interests of purchasers but has also added further safeguards.

This bill is another great example of the Beattie government's commitment to consumer protection. We have legislated in relation to payday lenders, innkeepers and cooling-off periods. We also now have a scheme relating to the ownership status of boats. All of that legislation shows that this government is protecting consumers. I have spoken in this House previously about the great publications that have been issued by the Department of Fair Trading such as *Agewise* and *Psst!*. They are further examples of this government's commitment to consumer protection. I know that many of my constituents have phoned the Department of Fair Trading on occasions when they have experienced problems. They have received good service from the department—a service that is available for the whole community. That consumer protection is well provided.

By providing that an extension of time will have no effect against a purchaser who has not received a written notice from the developer, this amendment legislation offers added protection for investors, that is, no written notice before a contract is signed and the existing three and a half year money back period continues to apply. This will ensure that developers inform consumers of their rights.

Under this bill, developments will be able to be progressed. That will strengthen not only the property development industry but also Queensland's tourism industry. This bill demonstrates clearly the government's commitment to a whole-of-government approach to developing Queensland's tourism industry. This approach is demonstrated most clearly in the Growing Tourism strategy that provides a blueprint for the development of the state's second largest industry and the creation of thousands of jobs. Anyone who knows anything about tourism is aware that it is a priority of this government. The Growing Tourism strategy will allow this government to explore the true potential of our magnificent tourism product by establishing clear government priorities and a pathway to our goals.

It was pleasing to hear today about the Qantas deal for Cairns. This is fantastic for Queenslanders, fantastic for jobs and fantastic for tourism. I am sure that the people of Cairns will be travelling to the Gold Coast to enjoy another great and beautiful part of Australia.

While speaking of tourism, can I say that Logan has a lot to offer, too. Logan has great hotels and the Buddhist temple at Rochedale South. I invite members to come down and spend some time with me at Logan. I would love to show them around.

This bill provides a real framework for the government and the industry to work together. It is a smart response to the tourism needs of the Smart State and will ensure results that will be of benefit to communities across the state. Tourism is critical to regions throughout Queensland. It provides communities with an opportunity to display their region's distinct and unique cultural and natural assets while creating employment and diversifying the regional economy.

Queensland is the tourism capital of Australia. Last year, it hosted more than 16.5 million domestic tourists and two million international tourists. The number of international tourists is predicted to double by 2010. Many visitors to Queensland choose to rent apartments and units in developments of which the proposed Sunland development will be the icon. Investors whose interests this bill protects often factor rental income into their financial planning. This bill proposes amendments that will allow such investors to plan with confidence, knowing that their rights are being protected. Once again, that is a display of the Beattie government's commitment to consumer protection.

Tourism and the associated property development infrastructure that supports it is driven by private enterprise. One of the key roles of the government is to provide an environment that stimulates and value adds to the efforts of the private sector. This bill helps to achieve that. I

congratulate the ministerial staff, the departmental staff and, of course, the minister on bringing this bill to the House. I commend the bill.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.27 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly to the Land Sales Amendment Bill 2001. The Gold Coast is synonymous with high-rise accommodation adjacent to the beachfront. As I represent the Cairns area, I am pleased to note that, by and large, we have been spared the need to duplicate those high-rise buildings to fuel our tourism industry. Cairns promotes a different concept, concentrating on the wonders of the reef and the rainforest.

Be that as it may, the need for legislation to cater for the needs of the Gold Coast is obvious. This bill does just that. However, I would like to advise the member for Springwood, who believes that this bill will attract people from Cairns and people who usually visit tourist attractions in Cairns to the Gold Coast, that no man-made structure will ever be able to replace tourist attractions such as the Great Barrier Reef, the abundant sea life and the diverse rainforest and wildlife of far-north Queensland.

Having said that, I congratulate the minister on introducing this bill. Developments such as that proposed by the Sunland Group will bring significant economic benefits to the state. This latest need to amend the Land Sales Act 1984 is proof of the rapid commercial growth in this state and of the increased interest being shown in Queensland by world-class developers such as the Sunland Group. Now that the act will be able to accommodate such large-scale projects, no doubt other developers will be encouraged to look to Queensland when deciding upon a suitable site.

It is also commendable that an extension will be granted only by way of an amendment to the Land Sales Regulation 2000. That will ensure that every extension will be subjected to careful consideration before being granted. It is not automatic. Although the Sunland development is unlikely to be the last large-scale development that will take more than three and a half years to complete, it is not expected that such projects will become a regular occurrence.

To merely extend the period again might encourage smaller developers to extend the time taken to complete their project, which results in purchasers' money being tied up for longer than is otherwise necessary. To protect the rights of purchasers without sacrificing modern and future commercial needs, the amendment allows extensions of the period to be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Under no circumstances will extensions exceed 4.5 years. In addition, developers who are granted an extension must give written notice of this to purchasers before any money is invested in the project. If such notice is not given, the purchaser will enjoy the same rights as any other purchaser of an off-the-plan unit and may seek the return of their money after 3.5 years if no registrable instrument of transfer has been provided. Of course, the amendment does not alter the requirement that any money invested by a purchaser is held in trust until the expiration of the 3.5 years or longer period.

I support the bill, as it provides a pragmatic solution to a trend to accommodate a growing market. Queensland, quite rightly, should lead the way.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (9.30 p.m.): I will speak briefly in support of this quite sensible bill. I echo the sentiments expressed by the members for Mulgrave and Springwood that Queensland has some wonderful tourist destinations. For example, the Gold Coast, Cairns, the Logan area—

Mr Pitt: And the Whitsundays.

Mr LEE: And the Whitsundays. What people are forgetting, though, is the best tourist attraction in Queensland is the Brisbane River as it flows through the electorate of Indooroopilly. There would not be too many visitors to Brisbane at this time of the year who do not take the time to enjoy the jacarandas along the Brisbane River.

A number of people within my electorate do, on occasions, purchase off-the-plan residential units of the type addressed by this bill. In circumstances where a development is likely to take more than 3.5 years to be completed, it is quite sensible that an application such as this can be made to extend it for a further year.

The purchase of off-the-plan residential building units in Queensland is governed by the Land Sales Act 1984. Due to the construction time required to complete certain large scale unit developments, people who invest money to purchase proposed units in those developments may have to wait several years before they are able to obtain a registrable instrument of transfer for their lot. The act is designed to protect the interests of such people by requiring that money

invested be held in trust and that the money is returnable to the person if the vendor is unable to provide a registrable instrument of transfer within the appropriate time.

Personally, I would not like to live in a massive high-rise unit block. However, I understand that a large number of people who are coming to Queensland find that idea to be quite their cup of tea. It is a real indication that Queensland is heading in the right direction under the Beattie Labor government. It is an indication that our Smart State strategies and policies have really worked. They have worked to build this state's economy and to generate investment in Queensland, and that means more jobs for Queenslanders. I am absolutely honoured to support the bill.

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (9.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions and I thank the member for Southern Downs for his support of this bill. As the economy and population of Queensland continues to grow, so too does the scope of development opportunities in this state. We cannot afford to allow the commercial expectations of a few years ago govern what the state is capable of today. These amendments to the Land Sales Act 1984 will prepare the residential unit market in Queensland for the 21st century.

When the act was introduced in 1984, only 18 months were allowed for residential unit developers to provide purchasers of off-the-plan units with a registrable instrument of transfer. After this time, if no such instrument had been provided the purchaser was entitled to a refund of any money invested. Whilst this provided a safeguard to purchasers that their money would not be tied up indefinitely, it created extreme pressure for developers to complete the units up to a stage whereby a registrable instrument of transfer could be provided.

As unit developments increased in scope and sophistication, that 18 month period became unrealistic and was revisited by parliament. Since 1984 the act has been amended several times to extend the period within which a registrable instrument of transfer must be provided to purchasers. The most recent amendment was in 1997 when the period was increased from three years to three and a half years. But just as three years was an inadequate period in 1997, so too is three and a half years an inadequate period in 2001.

In October this year the Sunland Group made an ambitious proposal to construct a 78-storey residential unit development on the Gold Coast. The estimated construction time could well exceed the three and a half years allowed by the act. Without any certainty that the money invested would not be withdrawn by purchasers prior to completion of the units, it was unlikely that the Sunland Group would secure the necessary funding for the development. Once again, commercial progress had revealed the need to examine the adequacy of the legislation. However, on this occasion it was recognised that whilst an across-the-board extension of the period would assist the developers of residential units, it may prejudice the interests of those members of the public entering into contracts to purchase such units.

I thank the Office of Fair Trading team who put the bill together in a fairly short period of time. They are Wayne Briscoe, Mark Zgrajewski and Matt Miller, the Commissioner for the Office of Fair Trading. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mrs Rose, by leave, read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading (9.39 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

SunWater

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (9.39 p.m.): Since last I spoke in this parliament on the issue of water prices, relations between the government and the irrigation industries have deteriorated even further. I call on the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines to call SunWater off, to put an end to the threats and the blackmail and carry out an urgent review of the government's water pricing policies that are the source of so much discontent right across Queensland. Those calls have fallen on deaf ears. Once again, it seems that you can tell a minister of the Beattie government, but you cannot tell him much.

In last Saturday's edition of the *Townsville Bulletin* an anonymous spokesman for the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines proclaimed that 'all bets are off'. He confirmed the minister's announcement that his offer to conduct a review of future water prices only if outstanding water charges were paid had been withdrawn. Nor has any effort been made by the minister to assert some authority over SunWater to prevent irrigators from being dragged through the courts.

The opposition wants this water dispute resolved. The irrigators want it resolved. They have wanted it resolved for nearly 12 months now. For instance, in April the Burdekin irrigators proposed to pay the $2.4 million in outstanding water payments at that stage if the Beattie government would agree to a review of its water pricing policy for future charges. In good faith they were prepared to negotiate, but they were not even given the decency of a reply to that offer. To add insult to injury, again in last Saturday's *Townsville Bulletin* we had the infamous anonymous spokesman for the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines denying any knowledge of the offer, despite the fact that the minister quoted from it here in the parliament. That is the sort of arrogance and dishonesty that has characterised the current minister's administration of water policy.

Instead of up-front, open and honest negotiations to resolve the issue once and for all, we have seen the minister and SunWater passing the buck backwards and forwards between each other for the best part of the last year. That is why the irrigation industries across Queensland have had enough. That is why they are sticking together to fight the government's water reforms.

It is time that the Premier intervened and took charge of water policy in this state. His minister quite simply is incapable. It is time that the Premier started listening to the people rather than his incapable minister and his SunWater bureaucrats. It is time that an independent tribunal was set up to review Queensland's rural water prices, just as a similar independent tribunal has been set up and operated successfully in New South Wales. It is time that an irrigators' representative was appointed to the SunWater board, just as representatives of local government have been appointed. It is time that the Premier acknowledged that his government has got this issue very wrong indeed and that it is time to sit down with industry leaders and irrigators and fix it.

Hope Foundation

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (9.42 p.m.): The matters of which I am about to speak are the result of a two-year investigation by Gold Coast journalist Murray Hubbard and will be printed in detail in tomorrow's edition of the *Gold Coast Sun* newspaper. Andrew John Haberfield, who lives in a palatial waterfront mansion at Benowa on the Gold Coast, is behind a major international scam masquerading as a charity called the Hope Foundation.

The Hope Foundation was started on the promise of providing humanitarian aid to poor countries, particularly after a disaster. The foundation intended buying a Boeing 747 and having it fitted out with an on-board hospital to fly into trouble spots as a first-response unit. Although a commendable idea, the reality was quite different.

The foundation acquired a Lockheed Jetstar—a smaller jet similar to a Lear jet—which was fitted out with luxury leather seats and used to take foundation executives on trips and to impress potential victims. Investing on the basis of earning a dividend while practising philanthropy of sorts, some 30 Australian and New Zealand victims lost $6.3 million by investing in the Hope Foundation. That money has disappeared from accounts held in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Agents for the foundation promote returns of 10 per cent and 40 per cent per month through their scheme. They unfortunately do not show how, with whom and in what country contributors' money will be applied. There are no financial statements, no prospectus, no investment statement and, in a short time, no money. Haberfield is said to have personally gained more than $1 million from the scheme. Documents in my possession show authorisations from his business

associate Robert A. Cowley, chairman of the board of the Hope Foundation, for money transfers made to Haberfield totalling more than $800,000.

The Hope Foundation has left a trail of debts in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. On foundation letterhead he has identified himself as Dr Andrew J. Haberfield and currently purports to be Sir Andrew Haberfield, a Knight of Malta's Sovereign Teutonic Order. Robert Cowley also represents himself as 'Sir Robert'.

Another scam is the Millionaires of the World Club, an offshoot of the Hope Foundation. For $20,000, or $15,000 cash, investors are offered a lifetime membership of the club and a promised annual rate of return of 240 per cent. Again, no-one ever sees his or her original investment again, let alone a return.

I am aware of two previous scams by Haberfield, including one in February 1999 when he attempted to set up a V8 racing team with driver Alan Jones and aspiring young driver Darren Pate. The team and racing cars never materialised and a number of suppliers and investors lost money, including Pate, who to this day is still owed $50,000.

In late 1999, Haberfield left Australia with his family for the United Kingdom with the trip paid for by the Hope Foundation. He lived the high life, drove a Rolls Royce and lived in Mayfair. I believe the Major Fraud Squad in London is very keen to speak with both Sir Andrew and Sir Robert.

Today Andrew Haberfield is back on the Gold Coast seeking sponsors and investors for a V8 supercar racing team for the 2002 season. He is working out of premises at the rear of 6 Supply Court, Arundel, and I have it on very good authority that he is failing to pay award wages, superannuation or other entitlements to those working for him.

Time expired.

Public Transport, Texas

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (9.45 p.m.): I often sit here listening with interest to the honourable member for Mansfield speaking about travelling on the multi hundred-million-dollar busway which delivers him safely, securely and in a timely fashion to parliament each morning. However, many people in my electorate do not have the advantage of public transport that is as reliable as that or, in some cases, any public transport at all. I wish to bring to the attention of the parliament the situation of the people of Texas, who for some time now have been struggling to impress upon the government the need for some form of public transport in that community.

Texas is a relatively small rural community. It has been in the news recently because of a devastating fire which destroyed some of the historic town centre. However, it is a very resilient community and it is one which we will rebuild. It is a community of somewhat less than a thousand people. Nevertheless, they are very determined and self-sufficient.

In October 2000, I called a public meeting to discuss the issue of public transport and ways that the community might be able to work with government in partnership to ensure that those people who do not have access to their own motor vehicle, particularly those people who are elderly or unable to drive themselves, could have some access to a range of services and social interaction in areas away from Texas. It was resolved at that meeting that a committee be formed. A committee was subsequently formed to look at a range of issues, including asking the government to subsidise a public transport operator. Consideration was even given to involving local couriers who may be prepared—on a limited basis and with the right sort of protection—to transport people so that they could catch a bus from, say, Moree through Inglewood to Warwick and up to Toowoomba.

The community is growing somewhat frustrated because following that meeting there has not been any significant or real response from the government. In June of this year I wrote to the Minister for Transport, telling him that the community was anxious to see how his deliberations on their suggestions were going. This was about six months after it was brought to the attention of his department. Of course, I had the stock standard response from his office, which was that the minister was going to look at it and respond in due course. Six months down the track we have heard nothing back from the minister.

What we are looking at is nothing more than a $15,000 subsidy per annum for a bus operator to deviate through that community to be able to deliver a once or twice weekly bus service to those people who do not have access to their own transport or other means of

accessing a range of services. Tonight I am calling on the minister to be a little serious and compassionate towards those people, who have waited for 12 months for an answer from him. At least he should have the decency to provide them with an answer as to whether the government is prepared to consider a subsidy. I believe it should be.

Time expired.

Major General J. Pearn

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (9.48 p.m.): On Saturday, 24 November I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a plaque acknowledging the work on Coochiemudlo Island by the 42nd Landing Craft Company. On that day I had the privilege of meeting one of God's true gentlemen. Of course, I speak of Major General John Pearn. Major General Pearn was the presiding officer on the day of the unveiling of this plaque and spoke eloquently of the contribution of the 42nd Landing Craft Company to the Australian war effort during World War II.

It is important to note Major General Pearn's commitment to improving Australian society. Professor John Pearn is a professor of paediatrics and child health and a senior consultant paediatrician based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane.

Mrs Sheldon: A wonderful man.

Mr ENGLISH: Professor Pearn is also the deputy head of the School of Medicine at the University of Queensland, which is Australia's largest medical school. As I said, Professor Pearn is a major general in the reserves section of the Australian Defence Forces. Major General Pearn is a former surgeon general of the Australian Defence Forces and has seen operational service as a regimental surgeon in Papua New Guinea and later as a physician to the Australian and New Zealand forces in the Vietnam campaign. He served as a resuscitationist, intensivist and senior physician as a member of the forward surgical team within the Australian contingent as part of the United Nations deployment to Rwanda following the genocidal events in central Africa in 1994 and 1995.

Major General Pearn is an enthusiastic toxicologist and botanist. He was awarded his higher doctorate of medicine for his work in experimental pathology on the effects of the toxins from the wild indigo plant. He has published more than 100 papers on plant and animal toxicology in the international medical literature. He is an enthusiastic historian. He was founder and later president of the Australian Society of the History of Medicine. He is a member of the world executive of the International Society of the History of Medicine.

As I said, Professor Pearn is one of God's great men. Following my collapse on that day from a bout of heat stroke and viral illness, Professor Pearn treated me on Coochiemudlo Island. He had a very pleasant bedside manner and a very self-deprecating manner. Following my collapse, I saw my uncle, Dr Brian Donohue, to get myself checked out. I spoke to my uncle about Professor John Pearn. My uncle knew him very well and could not speak highly enough of him as a doctor, a physician and, more importantly, as a person. Professor Pearn has a residence on Coochiemudlo Island, and all the residents on the island hold him in the highest esteem.

Respite Care, Gladstone Electorate

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.51 p.m.): I rise to speak on an issue that I know the Minister for Disability Services is very well aware of and very concerned about, that is, the ability to fund lifestyle support packages. I am going to speak to the minister about this, but it is just that the opportunity arose tonight to put this matter on the record.

A constituent of mine has contacted the minister's office seeking some additional support hours—up to 35 hours a week. I am talking about a very deserving family. I will not put their name on the record, but they have a son, Glen, who is 45 years of age. He was born quite normally, but because of the mal-application of medication and a number of other things he has deteriorated to the point where he now has spastic quadriplegia, grand mal epilepsy and cannot speak, so his mother handles all the necessities for him.

This family has had contact from the minister's office about a support facilitator from Disability Services, but the program of contact that was outlined has not been kept up as far as timing is concerned. The mother writes—

I can no longer cope with our home situation and desperately need those extra hours. There is almost no respite care available to Glen.

That is because of the seriousness of his complaint. There is only one respite house available in the area to give respite to the carers of people with disabilities. Because the demand for respite hours is so high, this lady gets only two respite breaks a year.

As I said, Glen is 45 years of age with uncontrolled epilepsy since he was around the age of two. He is a quadriplegic. Initially, he had some use of his hands. However, he went into the Challinor Centre near Ipswich in 1975 and, when he returned to his family, he was unable to speak or walk. The social worker who had arranged the respite could not get any answers as to what had happened to him. His doctor at the time in Bundaberg suggested it could be psychological, he could have fallen or he could have been given a lumbar puncture. Glen's mother now believes that he was given electric shock treatment that went wrong.

At four years of age Glen was sent to Brisbane for tests for epilepsy, and an operation was performed on his brain without permission. He spent six years in the home for epileptics in Toowoomba between 1965 and 1971. While he was there a kidney was removed without permission. His mother was told that it was appendicitis. Glen is totally dependent on his mum, who is a loving mother. She does an amazing amount of work. I know this family personally. She looks after him. She was told when he deteriorated that he would live till he was 12, but because of the level of care that she has given him Glen is now 45. She will not be able to cope much longer physically. Her husband has had complications from diabetes which affects his feet. He has also had five heart bypasses.

This lady desperately needs those respite hours. I will be taking the opportunity to speak with the minister about this matter. I will not speak about it in any more detail tonight because I have not spoken with the minister at all. This is a family in very great need.

Volunteers

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (9.54 p.m.): I have had many wonderful experiences in the 10 months since I became the member for Whitsunday. I might add that I have learned a great deal about my own community in that time. Not the least of this has been the revelation that there are many wonderful people in the community who give unselfishly of their time and energy to provide support and assistance to make their community a better, safer and more supportive place in which to live. I speak of course of the many volunteers who are out there working quietly, day in and day out. My greatest regret in life is that I have not devoted more of my own time to the pursuit of voluntary community service, but perhaps there will be time for that well into the future.

I had the pleasure of attending the Premier's International Year of the Volunteer north-north-west region awards for volunteers which were held in Townsville on 22 November. I was pleased to attend the ceremony, which was hosted by the member for Townsville and the Premier's representative in the north, the Hon. Mike Reynolds. Of the seven awards made on that day, I was very proud that two of them were awarded to volunteer groups from the electorate of Whitsunday. One of those awards went to a group calling itself the OUCH Volunteers. OUCH stands for the Order of Underwater Coral Heroes. They are indeed heroes in their local area. The group is committed to the environmental protection of the Great Barrier Reef. It was formed in 1994, and its goal is to increase awareness of the reef environment through education programs. It has implemented a reef protection plan to monitor the health of the reef. It is partly responsible for the fact that 10 reefs in and around the Whitsundays are now protected from anchor damage, and there are 60 public moorings in place to protect the reef and provide safe access to the boating public.

Another group which received a Premier's award on that day was the Proserpine Historical Museum Society. The award was accepted on the group's behalf by Jenny Steel. The Proserpine Historical Museum Society, which started with a very small group of people, now has 221 financial members. It is working very hard to preserve the history of the area. It provides a great research service.

On Saturday of last week I attended another awards ceremony when members of the Queensland Fishcare volunteers were awarded with certificates of appreciation from the Minister for Primary Industries. This group works very closely with the Department of Primary Industries Boating and Fisheries Patrol to promote the sustainable use of fisheries in Queensland. It provides a really great educational service in the community. I commend Barry Crisp, James Devery, Craig Sheppard, Tony Noonan and David Robson for the awards they received on that day.

Finally, on Sunday I attended an ecumenical choir service which was to say thank you to the volunteers in the Whitsunday shire area. It was a great pleasure to be there.

Blitz Music and Entertainment Festival

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (9.57 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to promote a wonderful new initiative in my electorate that is seeking to provide regional youth with an opportunity to experience first-class live music and entertainment right at their doorstep. A group of enthusiastic people from the Spring Street Church in Toowoomba have banded together to establish the Blitz Music and Entertainment Festival. This event seeks to provide high school and university students with a safe environment where they can enjoy live bands and fun activities in a totally drug- and alcohol-free setting. The festival invites young and upcoming bands from across the Darling Downs and Queensland to perform all afternoon and into the night. This provides fresh young bands with an opportunity to gain invaluable experience and exposure in front of a broad audience. In addition to live music, Blitz provides a wide range of activities for young people, including beach volleyball, a climbing wall, dual horizontal bungee and inflatable gladiator fights. The evening of fun and entertainment is capped off with a fireworks spectacular for the crowd.

The inaugural Blitz event was held in March this year and enjoyed overwhelming support from the community with a huge turnout of over 1,500 young people. This was a very impressive attendance considering that organisers had anticipated a roll-up of between 300 and 400 people. The terrific response from young people in the region is very encouraging and clearly highlights the popularity and demand for such events in regional areas.

This type of event is something of great value to the Darling Downs and Queensland. Regional and rural youth do not have the entertainment opportunities that are taken for granted in larger metropolitan areas. Often in the search for entertainment to combat their boredom, many young people turn to drugs or alcohol to get their kicks. The Blitz festival is a great initiative that strikes at the very heart of this problem by promoting healthy and safe entertainment for regional young people. The huge turnout at this year's festival is testament that Blitz is making a positive impact on the Toowoomba youth scene.

The youth pastor at the Spring Street church, Alex Attard, is one of the main driving forces behind the event. With his very enthusiastic volunteer helpers he is hoping to expand the Blitz event to make it even bigger and better in 2002. I am currently supporting Alex and his team in their attempt to gain much-needed funding so that they can promote the event more widely in schools and universities, as well as bring in more bands and entertainment facilities and provide increased security and a greater number of amenities.

I congratulate Alex and the Spring Street church on pioneering such a wonderful youth event for the Darling Downs. It is youth oriented events such as Blitz that the state government should be bending over backwards to support, because they provide real and tangible opportunities for regional youth and directly combat boredom and substance abuse in these communities.

Australian Airlines, Cairns

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.00 p.m.): I rise tonight to applaud the decision by Qantas to establish a hub facility in Cairns for subsidiary Australian Airlines, which will cater for the international budget traveller. This is great news for Cairns, for far-north Queensland and for Queensland. I know that I speak on behalf of the member for Cairns, Desley Boyle, and the member for Barron River, Lesley Clark, when I congratulate all concerned—Premier Peter Beattie, the Department of State Development and Minister Tom Barton, Qantas Australia, Tourism Queensland and the Cairns Port Authority under the chairmanship of Clive Skarrott.

Like most tourist destinations, the Cairns region has suffered a downturn since 11 September and as a result of the problems experienced by Ansett Australia. The *Cairns Post*, the local newspaper, has been unusually effusive in its praise of the role played by the Beattie government in achieving this positive outcome. Under the headline 'Beattie's present to Cairns', the editorial states—

> If Premier Beattie succeeds in delivering new budget international carrier Australian Airlines to Cairns, he will indeed have given the city a grand Christmas present. Such a coup will have immense flow-on effects for the city's economy.

Even in the initial stages of operation, using just five Boeing 767s to start with, Australian Airlines is expected to deliver around 350,000 additional overseas visitors to Cairns. This is a near 50 per cent increase on current overseas visitor numbers to the far north.

Inbound Australian Airlines passengers will have to board a domestic flight in Cairns to travel elsewhere in the country, while outbound passengers will have to travel to Cairns on domestic services to catch their Australian Airlines flight. Either way, they will have to pass through Cairns. As a result, as they will be going through the city anyway, and given the region's high profile tourism reputation, many of these extra visitors are likely to decide that they might as well include an extended Cairns stopover in their Australian holiday itinerary.

I understand that the operation will commence in the third quarter of next year. The initiative signals the start of a new golden era for tourism in the far north and Queensland, and it will generate thousands of new jobs. The far north will be the biggest beneficiary, but benefits will ripple across Queensland and Australia. Australian Airlines will offer services from Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka in Japan as well as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei. Australian Airlines estimates that inbound tourists will spend about $500 million a year.

This announcement sweeps away the pain of the loss of direct flights into Cairns over the past year and gives the industry a massive shot in the arm and renewed confidence for the future. Special recognition must be given to Tourism Queensland, which prepared an impressive 220-page business case for Australian Airlines to base in Cairns. The government then added incentives to sweeten the offer. Bringing Australian Airlines to Queensland and its operational base to Cairns is a massive vote of confidence in Queensland and our tourism industry. I acknowledge the role played by our government. I am sure that the people of Cairns and far-north Queensland appreciate it as well.

Recycled Waste Water

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.03 p.m.): I have spoken in this parliament many times about a very exciting project to bring recycled water from Brisbane and south-east Queensland to the Lockyer and the Darling Downs. This is a project that has enormous potential because it can deliver for the environment by removing from the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay the nutrients that promote blue-green algae. At the other end of the scheme, it can allow for irrigation farmers to let a little more water go down the Condamine-Balonne system into the Murray-Darling river system. In between, it can provide for security of water supply to the Lockyer, particularly the central Lockyer, which is experiencing some very big shortages of irrigation supply, and the Darling Downs, which has experienced some very difficult droughts in recent years.

This is one of the most exciting projects ever proposed for Australia—a true Snowy Mountains type project. It is a project that will not only deliver for the environment, the farming community and the businesses in the area but also deliver an enormous number of jobs. It will provide an immediate increase in farm gate sales of $150 million. On a dollar for dollar basis that is a $300 million boost to the Lockyer and the Darling Downs without any further addition to on-farm infrastructure. That will of course mean exports and jobs.

With all of that in mind, I am pleased that the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, accepted my invitation to come up to the Darling Downs and the Lockyer. In association with local members and the leaders of City to Soil, Vision 2000 and people who are working for them we were able to undertake an aerial inspection of the Darling Downs, followed by an on-ground inspection and a shed meeting with about 120 growers in the Norwin district. Following that, we then flew down to the Lockyer to look at the project there, at the various valleys in the central Lockyer.

I have to congratulate Minister Barton for the way in which he took a genuine interest in the project and the swift way in which he followed up that visit by arranging for a contribution by the state government of $300,000 towards a joint task force, along with regional councils in the area and with City to Soil and Vision 2000, so that cooperatively this task force can work on finalising some of the important research that can add to what has been done already.

With this sort of cooperation and bipartisan support I am sure that this great project can get under way. It will be one of the best projects this state has ever seen. I take this opportunity to thank Minister Barton for coming up, for taking the interest that he did and for getting some results. Of course it still is just the start. The big money that will be required later on will require

more bipartisan support and cooperation. I am sure that this is a good start. I can assure the minister of my continued support of his efforts.

Queensland Irish Association

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (10.06 p.m.): With respect to the sale of the vacant QIA land beside Tara House, let us consider for a moment the way in which the so-called second bid was handled. The kindest interpretation of what occurred is that Mr Brian Dunphy, the real estate agent who acted for the second bidder, was simply ill-informed or under-prepared for this job. From official government records we know that a formal complaint was lodged against Mr Dunphy with the Office of Fair Trading. It is clear that Mr Dunphy did not hold a written appointment to act for the QIA and that he should have been aware that another agent had been appointed.

Under changes to legislation which came into operation on 1 July 2001, Mr Dunphy's actions would now form the basis for disciplinary action before the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Tribunal. Serious questions need to be asked about the manner in which Mr Dunphy became involved in this failed bid. That, however, is a job for the Office of Fair Trading. I seek leave to table information relating to this matter.

Leave granted.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: In stark contrast to these actions, the board of directors charged with managing the financial affairs of the QIA acted properly and with all due care in the best interests of the QIA membership. Let me state clearly that I am not aware of the identity of any of the potential purchasers or the companies they represent. Neither do I know any of the real estate agents connected with the sale. The only people I know are my fellow members of the QIA. I reaffirm my strong belief that the board of directors of the QIA were and continue to be a financially responsible group.

To seek reassurance on this matter, all that members of the QIA need to do is examine the history of the previous decade of the club to see how well the association's financial affairs were managed. With a current membership fee of just $44, the QIA has one of the lowest subscription rates of any inner-city club. This is a deliberate policy which enables people from varying income levels to join the Irish club. Yet, with this affordable membership rate the QIA provides a venue for workers, professionals and businesspeople which is the envy of most inner-city clubs. Tara House remains one of the favourite meeting places for working-class people of Irish heritage and a favourite drinking spot for all members and guests.

Over a 12-year period the QIA board of directors, under successive presidents Bill Tyquin, Bill Hanley and Paddy Brennan, have carried out a major refurbishment and upgrading program to the tune of some $5 million to $6 million. With careful financial management and an annual turnover of about $3 million, the QIA has seen new foundations and a new roof, new airconditioning and toilets, a new kitchen costing almost $700,000 and a new bar in the Tara ballroom. The ceilings have been restored to their 1920s condition and a valuable library has been established. All this has been accomplished by the first inner-city club to incorporate full female membership—12 years ago—and by an association that can attract the President of Ireland, the Speaker of the Dail Eirn and the President of the Irish Senate. This Irish club also arranged the first meeting of the Wexford Senate to be held outside of Ireland. The QIA is a great association—a magnificent assembly of Irish Australians.

I have the utmost confidence in the leadership of the QIA. Alongside Vice-President Pauline Donegan, Treasurer Peter Geraghty and his fellow directors, the experienced Bob Ward will continue to lead the QIA in a manner designed to produce the greatest benefit for the broad range of QIA membership. I have had confidence in the past management of the QIA and I continue to have confidence in the new board of directors. I encourage all members to continue to support the QIA, which is the envy of other Irish associations in Australia.

Millaa Millaa

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.09 p.m.): Millaa Millaa is an Aboriginal word meaning 'many waters'. In 1909 only Christie Palmerston and surveyors Douglas and Oswald had penetrated the rainforest in the Millaa Millaa area. Settlers then walked in from Atherton with not much more than brush hooks and axes to clear the land for dairying. Once the railway reached

Millaa Millaa, the town developed into a beef and dairy community and timber from the local mill could be transported to the coast.

Millaa Millaa is only small in population with approximately 400 residents but is a popular destination for tourists. The waterfall circuit is high on the list of priorities for tourists, both international and from within Australia. Local tourist information centres are constantly asked for directions to the waterfalls in the Atherton Tableland area. There are six waterfalls within 15 kilometres of Millaa Millaa with scenic walks connecting these impressive waterfalls and lookouts.

The cliff formation of the Millaa Millaa Falls is the result of three distinct lava flows and features basalt columns due to the slow cooling of the bottom lava flow. In 1970 and before its closure three years later, the Millaa Millaa Butter Factory held the record for the longest milk run in the world, supplying Darwin with fresh milk. The milk was packed in sachets in Innisfail and the trip by truck took 48 hours. Dairying was once the main agricultural industry in this district, but it has seen a downturn since deregulation.

One recently established business in the Millaa Millaa area has been the Mungalli Creek Dairy. This is a biodynamic farm situated about 10 kilometres from the town. Biodynamic farming is an enhanced organic method. These farmers started off with an idea of producing biodynamic products and have built up an industry, which is growing rapidly. Biodynamic foods and organic foods are produced without the use of artificial fertilisers or synthetic chemicals. No herbicides, pesticides or antibiotics are used in the farming process. Organic foods are not only healthier; they also taste better. This is due in no small part to the fact that they are produced in smaller quantities—

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.