

TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 2002

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

PRIVILEGE

Berri Ltd

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (9.31 a.m.): On Monday, 11 March a number of media outlets carried reports claiming that I had lied to this parliament when I asked a question of the Minister for State Development on 8 March. This is a very serious accusation and it has been repeated a number of times by both the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The claim is demonstrably wrong. I did not lie to this parliament, nor did I mislead this parliament on 8 March or at any other time. The question that I asked referred to concerns that had been raised with me by a constituent relating to state government grants.

Mr Speaker, I wish to table some documents pertaining to that issue. I table a copy of a telephone log from 8 August last year from my electorate office and a copy of my diary from 9 August last year, both of which record the initial contact that I had on this issue with my constituent. One is in my secretary's handwriting and one is in mine.

Mr Speaker, I also table a document supplied by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission which is a current and historical search on Berri New South Wales Ltd, the corporate entity which received the grant. Under sections 168 to 171 of the Corporations Act, Berri Ltd has a statutory responsibility to ensure that this public record is correct. This particular document is dated 20 March 2002, some 10 days after I asked the question in the parliament, and it is one of a number of such documents that we have. I direct members' attention to page 7 of the document. It, like all other searches that we did, lists the ultimate holding company for Berri New South Wales Ltd as National Foods Ltd. It also traces the corporate evolution of Sunburst Juices to National Foods Juice Ltd to Berri New South Wales Ltd on 29 November 1999, just three days before the application was lodged for assistance under the government scheme. This document also gives some indication of the shared directorships and corporate links between Berri and National Foods.

The accusation that I lied to this parliament was certainly repeated many times by both the Premier and the Deputy Premier, both of whom have made threats of referring me to the members' ethics committee. I did not lie to this parliament and I can demonstrate that. I challenge both the Premier and the Deputy Premier to make good their baseless threats and to refer me to that committee or acknowledge that these claims are false.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 a.m.): I move:

That these matters be referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee to determine whether the member lied or misrepresented these matters to the parliament.

Motion agreed to.

ASSENT TO BILLS

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

13 March 2002

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 the dates shown:

"A Bill for an Act to amend the trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990" (11 March 2002)

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Weapons Act 1990 and other Acts (13 March 2002)

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995" (13 March 2002)

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Brisbane Casino Agreement Act 1992 and the Jupiters Casino Agreement Act 1983" (13 March 2002)

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

TOWNSVILLE REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For the information of honourable members, I advise that the Parliamentary Service's planning for the scheduled sitting in north Queensland continues. To that end, I advise that the planned chamber layout for use in Townsville has been temporarily set up in the former Legislative Council chamber here at Parliament House. During this sitting week I will be consulting specifically with all party leaders and the whips on this layout and on associated arrangements. Other members will also be given the opportunity to be briefed on the layout.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move:

That this House desires to place on record its deep sympathies and condolences in the news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

On behalf of the people of Queensland, we express our deepest sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the royal family. I have spoken to the Leader of the Opposition and asked him to second this motion, which he has agreed to do.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, was born the Hon. Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon on 4 August 1900. Descended from the Royal House of Scotland, the Queen Mother was immensely proud of her Scottish heritage and retained strong associations with Scotland throughout her life—as indeed do a number of members of this House.

Widow of King George VI and mother to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, the Queen Mother was a much loved and respected member of the royal family. She represented all that was dignified and positive in the royal family. The Queen Mother's remarkable life spanned over a century and she leaves behind a public deeply saddened by her death.

Anyone watching the television coverage will have seen the outpouring of sympathy and the outpouring and a sense of gratitude to the life that the Queen Mother led on behalf not just of the people of Great Britain but of the Commonwealth. Her tireless, unwavering devotion to public service and her zest for life aroused the affection and respect of the international community.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 there were suggestions that the Queen and her daughters evacuate to the United States or Canada. It was to this suggestion that she made her famous reply: 'The children won't go without me. I won't leave the King. And the King will never leave.'

Visiting badly damaged areas throughout the country after air raids and sharing the dangers and difficulties of the Second World War with the nation was one of many acts that inspired enduring respect and affection for the Queen Mother. We have to remember that in fact this was not just Britain's darkest hour but the darkest hour in many senses for freedom and democracy in the world. Leadership at that time was very important, particularly under those difficult circumstances. In fact, the easy way out would have been to go to Canada, but that did not happen.

The Queen Mother's longstanding service and commitment to charities, voluntary bodies and organisations was another characteristic which inspired enduring respect and affection. Throughout her lifetime the Queen Mother was involved, either as patron or president, in well over 300 charities, voluntary bodies and organisations. She was a patron of organisations such as the Australian Red Cross Society, the British Red Cross Society and the Royal College of Nursing and

the Commandant-in-Chief of the British Army and Royal Air Force Women's Services and of Women in the Royal Navy.

Her involvement in such organisations was lifelong as, for example, she served the British Legion throughout most of its entire existence of 80 years. At the age of 80, the Queen Mother was carrying out 130 public engagements each year and over 50 such engagements at the age of 100. That is not bad!

Mr Speaker, you may recall—and if I recall correctly, I have reported this in the past—that we exchanged correspondence with the Queen Mother to join the 100 Club in Queensland. She exchanged correspondence and indicated her willingness to participate as a member—obviously in a very patriotic role—and that was warmly regarded and greeted by those Queenslanders who have reached that milestone of 100.

The Queen Mother visited Australia three times. In 1927, she visited as the Duchess of York, during which time her husband, the then Duke of York, opened the federal parliament in Canberra. In 1958 and 1966, she visited as the Queen Mother. We are all deeply saddened to hear of her death. On 31 March 2002, on behalf of the people of Queensland, I formally extended our deepest sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen. I also now wish on behalf of the parliament to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Her Majesty the Queen and members of the royal family.

As we know, recently Her Majesty the Queen visited Queensland for an official state visit as well as to attend as head of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting—CHOGM. Her Majesty, I think, had a very successful visit here. Recently, she wrote to me on 7 March. Her Majesty while visiting obviously had the dual problem of experiencing tragically the death of her sister and knowing that her mother was obviously not well. Notwithstanding those difficulties and pressures, Her Majesty the Queen carried out a very successful and very warm visit to Queensland, for which I would hope all members are grateful. Her Majesty, through Sir Robert Janvrin, Private Secretary to the Queen, wrote—

Dear Mr Premier,

On our return to the United Kingdom The Queen has asked me to write to thank you for all that you did to ensure the success of her visit to Queensland last week. As I am sure was evident to you, both Her Majesty and His Royal Highness hugely enjoyed the visit. It was disappointing that, following the postponement of the tour from last October, the programme in Queensland had to be compressed along with other stages in the original program but The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh felt that the revised itinerary allowed them to see something of modern Queensland and to catch a glimpse of the energy and vitality of your State.

Both Her Majesty and His Royal Highness thought that the arrangements for the visit worked impeccably throughout and were most grateful to you and all your visits team for the immaculate preparations and the hard work that went into this. They have both come away with many vivid memories not least that of the warmth of the crowds at every stage. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh have also asked me to thank you and the people of Queensland for presenting them with the gifts of the brooch and cufflinks. These will be happy reminders of the visit in the years to come.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of all members, I express condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and her family. Mr Speaker, presumably that will be conveyed through you and me to Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.42 a.m.): It is a privilege to second the motion of the Premier. The Queen Mother, the mother of Elizabeth II the present British sovereign and the widow of the late King George VI, was dearly loved throughout the world, particularly through the British Commonwealth of Nations. The daughter of Lord Glamis, later the 14th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, the Queen Mother was descended from the royal house of Scotland and throughout her life retained strong associations with Scotland.

The Queen Mother's remarkable life spanned over a century—a period of immense change. Having married Prince Albert, Duke of York, in 1923 she found herself queen consort on the abdication of King Edward VIII in 1936. As Queen, she played a significant role in the life of the nation, supporting the King and helping to uphold national morale during the difficult years of the Second World War and its aftermath. Widowed at the age of 51, she continued to undertake royal duties for the next 50 years in support of her daughter the Queen. Public appearances continued right up to the end of her life, even in periods of ill health.

The resilience, sense of duty and gracefulness of the Queen Mother in all areas of her life earned her a secure place in the heart of our national life. Her first visit to Australia in 1927 was the tour in which the Duke of York, the future King George VI, opened the original Parliament House in Canberra. Although only an infrequent visitor to Australia, the Queen Mother had many connections here and a vast following. She was Colonel in Chief of the Royal Australian Army

Medical Corps, which is why members of that corps marched in the cortege last week and are participating in the funeral today. They make us proud as we honour the links with the monarchy that this country enjoys. There is another link that many may not recall. In 1979, the Queen Mother succeeded Sir Robert Menzies as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Sir Robert was, of course, the first Australian to hold that ancient symbolic office and was unique in that respect.

The Queen Mother in that office, and in every duty, was simply unique. She was in a very real sense the people's Queen. This came out during the dark days of the London blitz during World War II in which the Queen Mother inspired the people of the East End and they, in turn, inspired her. Despite strong advice that the Queen and her two children should leave London for Canada, the Queen refused to go. 'The princesses cannot go without me. I cannot go without the King. And the King will never leave,' she said as she resolved to remain at Buckingham Palace. Instead, she learned to shoot a revolver, practising her aim in the palace gardens. One London East Ender recalls of the blitz years—

There was still an air raid on when she walked through the rubble. I always thought the world of her ... I remember her putting her arm around people covered in blood and grime, and consoling them. I feel she knows what our lives were like.

Oona King, the British Labour MP who repeated those words of a constituent in the House of Commons debate last Wednesday when the Mother of Parliaments was specially recalled to remember and pay proper tribute to the Queen Mother, said something else that I think we should reflect on in this place—

The century the Queen Mother spanned has closed. She was the last Empress. Although the world in which she was born and in which she moved has vanished, the characteristics with which she is associated endure ... and we give thanks for them.

Australia's own experience has, of course, been different from that of Britain. The monarchy remains the symbol of Australia's historic place as a free nation governed by the will of its people under the Crown. On Sunday afternoon I attended the choral Evensong for the Queen Mother at St John's Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane, which was a moving celebration of her life. The Queen Mother was a woman of immense faith. She lived the life of a true Christian, finding her deep spirituality in the worship of God, in the stories of the Bible and the singing of hymns. She enjoyed going to church. It was part of her life. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has said—

Christian love shone through her character ... it was the great depth and simplicity of her own Christian faith that saw her through one hundred and one years.

Icon of the century, the nation's favourite grandmother, the richest jewel in the royal family's crown, the Queen Mother was the longest living British royal in memory and she witnessed some of the most significant developments and historical moments of the last century. I join with the Premier in seconding the motion of condolence and extending on behalf of this parliament, particularly the members on this side of the House, sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen and the royal family on this sad occasion.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.46 a.m.): Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, was an integral part of the royal family and played an important role in the life of Britain and the Commonwealth over the course of her remarkable century-long life. Many people will remember or have been told about the wonderful way she energised and inspired the people of London during the blitz in World War II. Her personal determination, courage and good humour during that period of history are well known and boosted the morale of all the allied forces.

The Queen Mother became queen consort to George VI under difficult circumstances following the abdication of King Edward VIII. That up until her recent death she remained one of the most respected members of the royal family is a testament to the remarkable manner in which she handled that difficult period of transition. Her Majesty was also a patron of a truly innumerable array of charitable organisations. I am particularly pleased to highlight her longstanding role as patron of the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Trust, which has a very obvious connection with this country and with one of this country's great statesmen. Her Majesty's great interest in the welfare of children was also apparent in her association with the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Royal School for Deaf Children.

The Queen Mother will be remembered as one who took her duties as a member of the royal family seriously and who had a wholehearted commitment to both Great Britain and the Commonwealth. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend my condolences to the British royal family during this time of sadness.

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (9.47 a.m.): With all my heart I gladly join the Premier's motion. On behalf of the people of the Lockyer and the One Nation Party, I am privileged to be afforded

this opportunity to honour the memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. The words of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party do not need repeating. They were wise and welcome statements. But may I say that truly was the Queen Mother a supporter of democracy—a real leader among leaders, a quiet achiever. She was a faithful advocate of the people of the United Kingdom, present members of the Commonwealth of Nations and, therefore, a friend and admirer of the Australian nation.

We should remember the Queen Mother not just in word but in deed as well. We must follow her lessons of leadership by example. I recall a very simple incident when as a young constable of the Hampshire constabulary in the UK in the early 1970s I was appointed to stand guard over the Queen Mother's Rolls Royce whilst she was attending a public function opening an arboretum somewhere near the city of Winchester. I had the temerity to ask the chauffeur if it was in order for me to take a peek inside. The royal servant sniffed that, no, it would not be in order—somewhat starched in those days. At that very moment the Queen Mother returned to her vehicle and in a flash she assessed the situation and said that she appreciated the fine work done by the police and that, yes, it would be in order for me to take a peek. Members might imagine, given the point in history and my obvious monarchist leanings, how I felt the common touch that this much-loved person had in abundance.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her family at this most agonising of times in their lives, and we pray that the Queen Mother's spirit of life, love and selfless example will support them in the years ahead.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would members rise in silence in respect for the memory of the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr N. E. Lee, MP

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Norman Edward Lee, a former member of the parliament of Queensland and a Minister of the Crown.

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

Mr Norman Edward Lee was born on 4 April 1920 in Kurumbul, Queensland. Mr Lee was educated at various Brisbane schools, including Yeronga State School. Alongside his service to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Mr Lee was a successful grazier, civil engineering contractor and company director.

Mr Lee won the seat of Yeronga in a by-election on 6 June 1964 and resigned from his seat 25 years later, on 29 November 1989. During his term in office, Mr Lee strove to represent all members of his electorate to the best of his ability, as was highlighted in his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly on 19 August 1964. He said—

I shall do my humble best to represent them all ably, irrespective of their particular interests or political affiliations.

Mr Lee's service to the Legislative Assembly was extensive and during his term in office he was the Minister for Public Works and Housing from March 1975 to December 1977 and the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services from December 1977 to December 1980. In addition, he provided his services in other capacities such as a member of the parliamentary delegation to Asia in 1973, leader of the parliamentary delegation to Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and South Pacific in 1973, and a member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee.

Mr Lee was involved in numerous community groups and organisations. He was patron of most major clubs in his electorate. Mr Lee was interested in horse racing, golf and bowls. He was a member of Tattersalls, the Yeronga Bowling Club, the Brisbane Golf Club and the Queensland Turf and Brisbane Amateur Turf Clubs.

Mr Lee is survived by his wife, Dorothy May, two children and nine grandchildren. I extend my sympathy and that of this House to his family.

I knew Norm Lee, although not as well as some members of this House knew him. He had a reputation as a strong supporter of Queensland Made. Indeed, as I understand it, he used to

carry inside his pocket the Queensland Made ad. Whenever an opportunity arose Norm would give people a very quick flash of Queensland Made.

Mr Mackenroth: And government ministers used to feature in television ads.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right. I thank the minister for reminding me. We have changed all that. It was an opportunity to promote Queensland Made, and on this occasion I acknowledge Norm Lee's contribution. I would hope that all members of this House would be strong supporters of Queensland Made and Australian Made. Norm Lee was certainly an advocate for it and that should be acknowledged on this occasion. On behalf of government members and, indeed, all members of this parliament, I express condolences to his family.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.54 a.m.): I rise to second the condolence motion for the late Norm Lee. My colleagues and the Liberal Party join with me in paying tribute to the late Norm Lee, who served the people of Yeronga and the Liberal Party with great distinction in this parliament for a quarter of a century.

During his life, Norm Lee was successful at everything he did. He was a successful businessman, principally in the earthmoving industry, before he was elected to parliament at a by-election in the Yeronga electorate in June 1964. He was a successful and effective representative, demonstrated by the fact that he served for 25 years until he retired before the 1989 election, which saw his seat being won by Labor for the first time in its history. Not many men or women serve in this place for a quarter of a century. I am sure that his successor as the member for Yeronga, the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts, is not planning to beat Norm Lee's record!

He was a minister for five years of portfolios in which he had a particular interest: works, housing and industry. He was a very effective minister, drawing on his vast experience and success in business in portfolios which had a strong business focus. When the coalition split in 1983, there was never any doubt where Norm Lee's loyalty lay. He had been a lifelong Liberal. Even though he had been a coalition minister, he continued to serve the Liberal Party from the cross benches with loyalty and distinction for another six years and was the party spokesman on the Works, Housing, Main Roads and Racing portfolios.

During his parliamentary career and after he retired, he developed a major interest in the cattle industry. At one stage, Norm and his son, Trevor, were amongst the largest individual or family owned cattle producers in Queensland. They were leaders in the live cattle export industry. I am told that their property near Roma was a model of efficient production and the use of the latest technology.

He was also successful in another great industry in our state—the racing industry. He raced thoroughbreds with great success, some in partnership with the late Ken Tomkins, who was a National Party minister and member for Roma during the coalition years.

When Norm was elected to parliament, he was asked to fill very large shoes. The by-election which Norm won was made necessary by the sudden death of the then Health Minister, Dr Winston Noble, who was not only a very effective minister but also a highly regarded representative of the Yeronga electorate. Norm filled those shoes more than adequately. He is fondly remembered by many organisations in the Yeronga electorate which benefited from his representation and advocacy over a quarter of a century.

After he retired, Norm maintained a keen interest in politics and in this parliament. He was vice-president of the Association of Former Members and regularly attended functions here with former colleagues. As I said earlier, his long career in both business and public life was marked by considerable success. He was a strong advocate for both the business and farm sectors, in which he achieved great success.

My colleagues and our party express to his wife, Dot, to his son and daughter and to all his family our sympathy at his passing and our appreciation for his contribution to Queensland, to the Yeronga electorate and to the Liberal Party.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.57 a.m.): I rise to support this condolence motion on the passing of the late Norm Lee, my predecessor as the member for Yeronga, a seat he held for 25 years. Yesterday I attended his funeral, which was a moving and poetic ceremony.

Norm Lee was well known and well regarded by the schools and community organisations in the electorate of Yeronga. In 1988 and 1989 in the lead-up to the December 1989 election, as I was door-knocking around the electorate, I came across many instances of individuals speaking

warmly of Norm Lee and of his assistance. The local parents and citizens associations spoke of his advocacy on their behalf and, in particular, of his contribution during the time that he served as Minister for Public Works and Housing. Apparently the schools in the Yeronga electorate did okay during that period! Sporting groups, such as the Stephens Croquet Club, were strongly supported by Norm and his wife, Dorothy. I pay tribute to his contribution to the local community which I now have the honour of representing in this House.

The Honourable the Premier has referred to Norm's advocacy in respect of supporting local industry. A former Leader of the Liberal Party, Angus Innes, at the time of a valedictory on 19 October 1989—a valedictory for Norm Lee and Bill Lickiss—expressed it in these terms—

Like Bill Lickiss, Norm is a character, but in a different way. Nobody will ever forget his slogan, 'We make it great in the Sunshine State.' We can still ponder whether the suit really was Australian-made or whether it was made in Hong Kong. Norm is one of the few people who can travel around Hong Kong in apparent anonymity because of his unusual name. Looking for a Mr Lee in a hotel in Hong Kong is a fairly difficult proposition.

Let me turn, though, to Norm's words on the occasion of his valedictory on 19 October 1989, which is a sobering observation to all of us who serve in the parliament. I note the observations of the Leader of the Liberal Party that it might be incumbent on his successor to try to break the 25-year record in representing that seat. I must say it was not a challenge that I had previously had in mind, but now that he has put it in my mind I will give it due and serious consideration, though I am sure I would not want to start yet another rumour circulating about my future! This is what Norm Lee had to say—

After 25 years as a member of Parliament, my decision was not easy. During that period I faced 12 elections. I would be foolish to say that I will not miss the Parliament. Although one whinges and whines about this place, one certainly makes a lot of good friends. During the time that I have been in politics, today is the only day on which I know where I am going. I know I will not be back. Many other honourable members do not know that; that is for sure. A hell of a lot of them do not know that they will not be back. But I do.

Norm Lee brought a degree of insight and wit to this chamber. Let me extend my sympathies and best wishes to his family at this difficult time.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.01 a.m.): On behalf of the National Party, I join in this condolence motion for Mr Norm Lee and speak kindly of him, as he spent some 25 years in this parliament—an incredible record. In that time he had great achievements as a minister and as a leader of parliamentary delegations.

Norm Lee was born in 1920 near Goondiwindi. He served this parliament well after his education at the Yeronga State School and employment as a grazier, a civil engineering contractor and a company director. He was elected as the member for Yeronga in a by-election in 1964 following the death of Winston Noble. In serving those 25 years, he was Minister for Works and Housing from March 1975 to December 1977. He was the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services from December 1977 to December 1980. He led a parliamentary delegation to Asia in 1973 and a parliamentary delegation to the South Pacific in 1978. After 25 years of loyal and hardworking service on behalf of the constituents of Yeronga and the people of Queensland, he resigned from the parliament at the end of November 1989.

Norm Lee was a real character. He was full of good humour and he was a devoted family man. I have been very fortunate to be good friends with his son-in-law, Dennis, over many years. We played footie together in our younger years. Norm knew the art of interjection. Norm and a former member, the late Des Frawley, staged competitions in the House to see how many interjections would be taken by a speaker such as the late Kev Hooper. Kev Hooper was an easy target; he loved taking interjections. However, their trick was to try to get a member who usually would not take an interjection to take one. They used to ask the speaker why, when and how. When the speaker responded to the interjection, a point was scored and they would gleefully tick off the interjections scored, later compare notes and decide who won. I know that we have moved on to more serious things.

Norm Lee was a very active committee member and well remembered for being strong and vociferous about the issues that mattered to him—for example, a fallout of soot from the then operational Tennyson Power House, traffic congestion and the proper management of traffic in the metropolitan area, road construction and private sector involvement and expertise in the construction industry.

As has been said by other speakers, when he was Minister for Industry he coined the phrase, 'We make it great in the Sunshine State.' A lot of us would remember the song about the Sunshine State. He very proudly appeared in television and cinema commercials not to promote

himself but to promote Queensland and its great goods and services. He was passionate about promoting Queensland.

Norm maintained very strong links with the country. He regularly attended the Stuart Creek bull sales. Stuart Creek was the Hereford stud of his good friend and former National Party member for Roma, Ken Tomkins, and they had a long friendship. He was one of the first graziers to establish feedlots not just in Roma but throughout the whole of Queensland. He established a very successful grazing and feedlot enterprise that is still managed today by his son, Trevor. He maintained as a hobby a great interest in thoroughbred breeding and racing and was a member of the Bernborough club.

On behalf of the National Party, I thank the Lee family for the wonderful contribution by Norm Lee to Queensland and extend our condolences to his wife, Dorothy, his two children and their family.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (10.05 a.m.): I wish to associate myself briefly with the condolences being expressed this morning for the late Norm Lee. Similar to the member for Yeronga, the minister, I attended the funeral yesterday, along with the members for Redcliffe and Bulimba. There might have been some other members there whom I did not see. A moving tribute was given by his son, Trevor, who gave a eulogy which fully covered the exceptional life that Norm led during his 82 years.

I first got to know Norm well when I was in federal parliament, as his electorate of Yeronga partly overlapped my federal electorate of Forde. We had some common branches, community groups and other interests. By that time, Norm had been in this House for 20 years and yet remained an effective and dedicated representative and an advocate for local causes and concerns. I valued the frank advice that he gave me from time to time. Norm was never backward in giving frank advice.

Mr Purcell: Particularly to the feds.

Dr WATSON: Particularly to the feds, and particularly in the aftermath of the coalition split in 1983. I think it is fair to say that Norm never forgave those Liberals who switched sides to keep their ministries.

To me what is particularly noteworthy about his contribution to this parliament is that he came here after a very successful career in business at what was then a comparatively young age of 44. He went on to make a strong contribution as the member for Yeronga and as a minister. In later years, he achieved great success in another business activity—cattle production and export. He built his firm into, as others have said, one of the major agribusinesses in this state.

I know from my various discussions with Norm over the years that he was especially proud of what he and his son, Trevor, achieved in the cattle production and export areas and the contribution they made to rural Queensland and the whole of the state. He was a good friend of my predecessor, Bill Lickiss. They entered the parliament and the ministry at about the same time and they left on the same day. It would be fair to say that neither was impressed by their departure, but both remained effective members and loyal Liberals. Fittingly, both retired from parliament voluntarily on the same day in 1989. The coincidences in their political careers are remarkable, as is the fact that both entered the parliament after successful business and professional careers. In his retirement, Norm continued his interests in politics, the Liberal Party and business.

Finally, I think it is a tribute to Norm's effectiveness as an MP that in 1972 he was able to defeat arguably the strongest possible challenger the Labor Party could have put up against him, the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Clem Jones. At the time, Clem Jones was at the peak of his popularity. I think he had only recently wiped out the council opposition, but Norm was able to comfortably defeat such a popular challenger. Some would argue that Norm was helped by a favourable distribution in 1972, as I am sure the current member for Logan would say about his defeat at the hands of Norm Lee in 1986. But the fact remains that Norm always understood his electorate and, like any good politician, understood numbers.

I join with the Premier, my leader and other speakers in paying tribute to a distinguished former member, someone I came to know well and regard as a good friend. I extend my sympathy to his widow, Dot, and to his family.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (10.10 a.m.) As one who served with the late Norm Lee, I would like to make a few comments and reiterate the remarks which were made earlier. I had proposed to cover some of those matters but I will not repeat them.

I believe that Norm Lee was one of the real gentlemen who entered this Parliament. It did not matter who one was; if Norm could help, he would, and he did that very effectively. One of the reasons why he was so successful as a Works Minister was that, having previously been in the construction industry, he understood the subject. As a member, I found it very helpful in those years gone by when, initially, the electorate of Belyando and then Peak Downs was developing its coal mines because Norm understood what was needed. It was great to see him talking to the various councils in my area. At last, the councillors and the engineers found someone who understood the subject particularly well. Norm Lee's actions were of great assistance in the pioneering days when the new towns of Moranbah and Blackwater were being established. I wish to express my gratitude for the great assistance Norm Lee rendered on that occasion.

One thing he taught me was that nothing is ever certain in this game of politics. The Labor Party nominated Lord Mayor Clem Jones, at about the peak of his popularity, in Norm's electorate. I well recall the Brisbane media really not giving Norm any hope; it was more or less a foregone conclusion that Clem Jones, with his popularity, would win, and would win well. Norm, of course, showed otherwise. That taught me a good lesson: it does not matter who the opposition is; if one is doing the job properly one will win.

To Norm's wife Dot and his son and daughter I convey my condolences. They have had a very great person in their lives.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

Food Irradiation

Mr Beattie from 11 petitioners requesting the House to (a) prohibit the establishment of a nuclear irradiation facility or X-ray or electron beam facility at any location in Queensland, (b) ban the import and sale of irradiated food in Queensland and (c) call on the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Council (ANZFSC) and the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) to amend Standards A-17 and 1.5.3—Irradiation of Foods in the Food Standards Code to ban food irradiation outright in Australia and New Zealand.

Gold Coast Harbour Vision 2020 Project

Mr Lawlor from 1,019 petitioners requesting the House to advise the Gold Coast City Council that the House will not agree to the recommendation contained in the "Gold Coast Harbour Vision 2020 Project – Report No 1" and is against any commercial development of the Broadwater (including Wavebreak Is.) and the western foreshore and any further reclamation.

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—

11 March 2002—

National Environment Protection Council—Annual Report 2000-2001

13 March 2002—

Reference, dated 15 February 2002, of a reviewable local government matter to the Electoral Commissioner by the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) regarding the area of the Shire of Maroochy and the area of the Shire of Noosa

27 March 2002—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 33—The Electoral (Fraudulent Actions) Amendment Bill 2001

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—Submissions received regarding the review of the Electoral (Fraudulent Actions) Amendment Bill 2001

28 March 2002—

Queensland Treasury Corporation—Half Yearly Report July-December 2001

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Water Resources Act 1989—

Water Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 38

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 39

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

Government Owned Corporations Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 40

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

Government Owned Corporations (Queensland Investment Corporation) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 41

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 42

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 43

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries (Asian Green Mussels) Disease and Quarantine Declaration 2002, No. 44

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (South African Citrus Thrips) Notice 2002, No. 45

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety (Industry Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2002, No. 46

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 47

Health Services Act 1991—

Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 48

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2002, No. 49

Marine Parks Act 1982—

Marine Parks (Townsville/Whitsunday) Amendment Zoning Plan (No. 1) 2002, No. 50

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 51

Mental Health Act 2000—

Mental Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 52

Racing and Betting Amendment Act (No. 2) 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 53

Valuers Registration Act 1992—

Valuers Registration Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 54

Valuers Registration Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 55

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Protected Plants Harvest Period) Notice 2002, No. 56

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 57

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (Prescription of Pests) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 58

Building Act 1975—

Building Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 59

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 60 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 60

Public Trustee Act 1978—

Public Trustee (Fees and Charges Amendment Notice) (No. 1) 2002

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following responses to parliamentary committee reports, received during the recess, were tabled by The Clerk—

response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) to report No. 32 of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee entitled Freedom of Information in Queensland

response from the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing (Mr Schwarten) to report No. 75 of the Public Works Committee entitled Cairns Convention Centre Stage 2

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to a petition presented by Mr Bell from 40 petitioners, regarding Schoolies Week—

8 Mar 2002

Mr R Doyle
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Robert

Thank you for your letter of 13 December 2001 regarding the petition received by the Parliament from Mr John Hill concerning Schoolies Week, which was lodged by Mr Lex Bell MP, Member for Surfers Paradise.

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

7 Mar 2002

Mr John Hill
PO Box 704
SURFERS PARADISE Q 4217

Dear John

I refer to your petition lodged with the Clerk of the Parliament on 12 December 2001 regarding the Schoolies Week festival.

The Schoolies Week festival is promoted nationally, attracting numbers of school leavers in excess of 70,000 over a three week period. It has the full support of the Gold Coast City Council and substantial support from the local tourist industry.

Since 1999, the Gold Coast City Council has been given the responsibility of coordinating the Schoolies Week festival at Surfers Paradise, in collaboration with a range of community and government organisations. Each year, a committee is formed under the control of the Council involving the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Health, Liquor Licensing, the Surfers Paradise Public Intoxication Group and various community and interest groups. This committee meets regularly to plan a safe, well-organised event for young people.

In the management of the festival, the priority is the safety of young people and the broader community. The Queensland Police Service has a primary role in providing a safe environment during the festival. The Queensland Police Service advises that the event is well organised and the large number of participants is generally well behaved.

The emphasis of the festival is on providing safe, planned and positive activities in a contained and well-managed environment. There is an emphasis on risk management and safety while preserving the lifestyles of residents, businesses and other tourists in and around Surfers Paradise.

Over 600 volunteers from all sectors of the Gold Coast community provide advice, information, administrative assistance and support services throughout the festival. The local volunteers provide a community response to the event, and have had a strong presence in upholding safety during the festival. The Gold Coast City Council also provides a Schoolies Safety Forum providing training and headquarters to volunteers including parents, community groups and high schools.

Entertainment at the Schoolies Week festival takes into consideration issues of crowd control and sound control, and adopts measures to divert and reduce drug and alcohol consumption. All entertainment areas are observed by police, security and volunteers in order to identify potential 'hot spots' requiring action.

The Gold Coast Youth Service receives annual funding from the Department of Families under the Management of Public Intoxication Program. A significant proportion of these funds is dedicated to activities during the Schoolies Week Festival. Initiatives undertaken by the Gold Coast Youth Service focus on Schoolies Week as an opportunity to promote positive messages to our young people. They include education and training events for community and licensed venue representatives.

The Queensland Government has made a significant financial commitment to the Schoolies Week festival. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has provided \$100,000 over the last four years. In addition, the Department of Families has contributed a total of \$70,000 over the last three years. There is a commitment to continuing the positive partnerships with the Gold Coast City Council and the Gold Coast community in relation to this event.

If you require further information in relation to the Schoolies Week Festival, please contact Vicky Ketchell, Festival Events Coordinator, Gold Coast City Council on 5581 6819; Inspector Ken Fox, coordinator of policing for Surfers Paradise on 5570 7906; or Charlotte Black, Coordinator, Community Support Services, Gold Coast Area Office, Department of Families on 5595 7100.

Thank you for raising your concerns with the Queensland Parliament. While the Government does not believe the issues raised in the petition warrant an independent commission into Schoolies Week, I can assure you that the safety of young people and the broader community in Surfers Paradise is a priority for the organisers of the Schoolies Week Festival.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mr Lingard from 5,609 petitioners, regarding services at the Beaudesert Hospital—

28 February 2002

Mr and Mrs P and K Allen
24 Orchid Drive
BEAUDESERT Q 4285

Dear Mr and Mrs Allen

Thank you for the petition dated 19 February 2002, forwarded to us by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, regarding services at the Beaudesert Hospital.

I have been advised by the District Manager, Logan Beaudesert Health Service District, that all services will be restored at the Beaudesert Hospital as soon as appropriately credentialled medical staff are recruited. Obstetric services, ie birthing services, were ceased on 17 December 2001 as a result of unexpected medical staffing problems. In the meantime, to ensure patient safety, birthing services are not available at the Beaudesert Hospital. However, patients have all been contacted and assisted to access services at the Logan Hospital or another public hospital of their choice. Antenatal and postnatal services are still available at the Beaudesert Hospital.

I have also been advised that an extensive recruitment exercise has been conducted and two appropriately credentialled medical officers have been selected. Both successful applicants have commitments elsewhere until mid year. It is anticipated that full obstetric services will be restored to the Beaudesert Hospital in July 2002.

I understand that all other services including antenatal and postnatal care and surgical services are operating at the Beaudesert Hospital. There is no change to the staffing profile at the Beaudesert Hospital and all temporary vacancies are being filled in line with service needs.

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

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

CC: R D Doyle, Clerk of the Parliament

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mrs C Smith from 28 petitioners, regarding irradiation of food and the proposal to construct a gamma irradiation plant at Narangba—

26 March 2002

Mr R Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 2002, which accompanied a petition which was received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly regarding irradiation of food and the proposal to construct a gamma irradiation plant at Narangba.

At the outset it should be noted that food irradiation is an internationally accepted technique of food processing which Australia and New Zealand have recently adopted for use on a limited number of foods. This technique is only used on those foods where such processing fulfils a technological need or is necessary for a purpose associated with food safety.

The consensus among scientists worldwide, after more than 40 years of research into the safety of irradiated foods, is that irradiation when it is carried out in accordance with specified standards, produces food that is safe to eat. This research has included multigenerational animal studies and studies using volunteers who ate only irradiated food.

Both the World Health Organization, and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations accept that food irradiation is a safe and a useful processing tool.

In Australia and New Zealand, the Food Standards Code prohibits the irradiation of food and food ingredients unless specifically approved by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Council (ANZFSC), on a case-by-case basis, in response to applications to irradiate individual foods.

In all cases an application to irradiate food can only be considered by ANZFSC members after ANZFA has undertaken detailed analysis of the need to irradiate a particular food and the public risk associated with the consumption of the food once it is irradiated.

ANZFA must also undertake two rounds of public consultation before making a recommendation to ANZFSC on whether a food should be irradiated. This allows members of the public to provide information they believe is relevant to a particular application.

At this point in time, approval has only been given for the irradiation of herbs, spices and herbal infusions. This decision followed a stringent safety assessment by the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) over a ten-month period, which was subject to scientific peer review by local and international experts.

It is also important to note that cobalt 60 is not a waste product from nuclear reactors and is not related to the nuclear weapons industry in any way.

During irradiation, cobalt 60 sources do not make contact with the goods being sterilized. The gamma radiation passes through the goods being irradiated and the energy from the cobalt 60 sources will not make the goods being irradiated, radioactive.

In general, the irradiation process produces very little chemical change in food. None of the changes known to occur have been found to be harmful or dangerous.

Once irradiated, these foods and foods containing irradiated products as ingredients, will be required to be clearly labelled, giving consumers the power to make an informed choice about the food they choose to consume.

Steritech Pty Ltd, the proponents of the Narangba irradiation facility, have been granted approval by Caboolture Shire Council for a Material Change of Use (Consent) of property at Narangba (under the Integrated Planning Act 1997) and approval by the Commonwealth Government, through Environment Australia, for the development to proceed (under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999).

Under the Radiation Safety Act 1999 which is administered by Queensland Health, any person who possesses, uses or transports prescribed quantities of radioactive substances is required to hold an appropriate licence.

Applications for licences are assessed on radiation safety grounds only. The Radiation Safety Act 1999 does not confer on the Chief Executive or I any discretionary powers for the allocation of a licence where all requirements are able to be met.

The Radiation Safety Act 1999 also imposes sufficient regulatory controls to ensure the health and safety of the public and persons involved in carrying out radiation practices. Such controls are in accordance with national and international best practice safety standards and will ensure that the environment is also adequately protected.

Should you require more detailed information on food irradiation, this can be obtained from publications available on the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) web site at www.anzfa.gov.au or from the Information Officer, ANZFA, PO Box 7186, Canberra MC ACT 2610, on telephone (02) 6271 2241, or facsimile (02) 6271 2278.

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

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 Mr Pitt from 73 petitioners, regarding the locality name of Little Mulgrave—

25 March 2002

Mr R D Doyle

The Clerk of the Parliament

Parliament House

Alice and George Streets

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2002 concerning a Petition that was received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, regarding the locality name of Little Mulgrave.

The issues outlined in the petition for the inclusion of Little Mulgrave as a separate locality are reasonable and valid. My Department has received 47 letters from affected residents and is currently developing a proposal to include Little Mulgrave in the localities of Cairns City local government area.

At this stage the proposal requires further consultation with relevant agencies, including Cairns City Council. A final decision will be made following this consultation.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following ministerial paper—

Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities (Mr Palaszczuk)—

Australian code of practice for the welfare of cattle in beef feedlots, in section 2.2, appendix 2.2A of the 'National guidelines for beef cattle feedlots in Australia', 2nd edition, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1997, SCARM Report No. 47

Australian model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Cattle, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1992, SCA Report Series No. 39

Australian model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Land transport of cattle, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1999, SCARM Report No. 77

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Animals at saleyards, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 31

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Domestic poultry, 3rd edition, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1995, SCARM Report No. 40

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Farmed buffalo, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1995, SCARM Report Series No. 52

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Feral livestock animals: Destruction or capture handling and marketing, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 34

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Husbandry of captive-bred emus, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1999, SCARM Report No. 69

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Intensive husbandry of rabbits, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 33

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Land transport of horses, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resources Management, published by CSIRO, 1998, SCARM Report No. 62

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Land transport of pigs, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1997, SCARM Report No. 63

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Land transport of poultry, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1998, SCARM Report No. 65

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Livestock at slaughtering establishments, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 2001, SCARM Report No. 79

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Pigs, 2nd edition, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1998, SCARM Report No. 66

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—The camel (*Camelus dromedarius*), prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1997, SCARM Report No. 61

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—The farming of deer, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 30

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—The goat, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 32

Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—The sheep, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCARM Report Series No. 29.

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following papers were tabled—

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie)—

Letter from Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to Mr R Doyle, The Clerk of the Parliament

Copy of letter from Ms Julie Bishop, Chairman, Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) listing proposed international treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Parliament on 12 March 2002

National Interest analyses for each of the proposed treaty actions listed in the above letter

Regulation impact statements for the following treaties—

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America on Social Security

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand amending the Agreement between the two Governments establishing a System for the Development of Joint Food Standards of 1995

Protocol amending the Convention between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.13 a.m.): In responding to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee's report, *The role of the Queensland parliament in treaty making*, of April 2000, I agreed to table correspondence received from the Commonwealth parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. In line with that commitment I would now like to table the latest correspondence I have received from the committee chairman, Julie Bishop. There are a couple of other points, which I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Treaties Committee she chairs will consider and report on whether 13 proposed treaties are in the national interest and the Queensland Government has been invited to comment on any issues arising from the treaties.

For the information of Members I seek leave to table the following material:

A copy of the letter from the Treaties Committee listing proposed international treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Commonwealth parliament on 12 March 2002;

National interest analysis for each of the proposed treaty actions listed in the letter; and

Regulation impact statements for the following treaties—

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America on social security;

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand amending the agreement between the two governments establishing a system for the development of Joint Food Standards of 1995; and

Protocol amending the convention between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Council of Australian Governments

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: The meeting of the Council of Australian Governments last week was the most cooperative and productive I have attended. I table the communiques which were agreed to by the leaders. The leaders also reached agreement on terrorism and multijurisdictional crime, a copy of which I also table.

I also attended a meeting of trade ministers in Canberra on Thursday which was equally productive. I table the media release which sums up the achievements of that meeting. There are a number of controversial but important issues in the communique and I have arranged for copies to be provided to all members.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Canned Baby Food

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: Until today, parents could not give their babies Australian owned and Australian made canned baby food. Later today I will participate in the launch of another innovative initiative by a Queensland company—the new range of Golden Circle's canned baby foods.

Golden Circle is recognised as one of Australia's top 10 grocery brands and produces almost 500 products. Now it has become the first Australian company to enter the canned baby food market. Golden Circle uses only premium Australian grown ingredients for its baby foods—mostly grown here in Queensland.

Two years ago I officially opened a new \$17 million food processing and packaging hall at Northgate. The addition of the new baby food range has seen the food hall increase its capacity by 40 per cent. The food hall is now working at full capacity with the baby food range creating 20 new jobs. Australia's baby food market is worth \$75 million. US based Heinz has 89 per cent of the market and the UK based Robinsons has the rest. As I said, until today parents could not give their babies Australian-owned and Australian made canned baby food.

I commend Golden Circle for the great job it is doing for Queensland and Australia. It has supplied some very smart thinking to its operations and is opening new markets both in Australia and overseas. Golden Circle has set export targets. It hopes to increase exports from the current eight per cent of revenue to 15 per cent by 2004.

The new baby food line and the recent acquisition of the Melbourne based fresh-chilled juice company Original Juice and the fruit packing and juicing operations of Excello in Griffith, New South Wales, show that Golden Circle is ready to meet the challenges of a global economy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Film Industry

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.17 a.m.), by leave: Queensland's film industry is set to enter a dynamic era of expansion with construction

commencing on two new sound stages at the Warner Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast. About 160 jobs are being created during construction of the sound stages which will almost double studio space and enable Queensland to produce at least two additional major movies a year. The work is due for completion in August and, once completed, the first of an estimated 2,500 new jobs will start flowing in the local film industry. The project will create about \$640 million in economic benefits over the next three years alone.

Already more than 150 service companies have established themselves on the Gold Coast as a result of consistent production levels at the studios, and I have no doubt that many more will follow. This sort of massive job creation is why my government has loaned Warner Roadshow \$8 million for the project.

Mr Foley: Hear, hear!

Mr BEATTIE: I take the interjection from the Minister for the Arts. He is an enthusiastic supporter of this project and, together with the Treasurer, is part of the negotiating team.

These sorts of benefits have been recognised nationally, with large investments by other states such as New South Wales and Victoria to establish and expand studio facilities to compete with Queensland. I am advised that every major film studio in Australia has received government financial assistance. For instance, Fox Studios in Sydney received tens of millions of dollars in grants from the New South Wales and federal governments, and the Victorian government has committed \$40 million to build the Central City Studios in Melbourne.

The additional studio space at Oxenford will allow more film production with an economic impact of more than \$640m for Queensland. I repeat that figure—\$640m. Since 1991, Warner Roadshow Studios has demonstrated its commitment to Queensland, contributing more than \$615m to the Queensland economy. There are some further comments that I seek to incorporate in *Hansard* because of the time issues today.

Leave granted.

The studio expansion is necessary to ensure Queensland can compete worldwide.

Without the Government incentives we provide, the movies—and the thousands of jobs that go with them—would not come to Australia.

Big Hollywood productions are being wooed to other locations in Canada, Texas and Mexico—but instead my Government is helping bring them to Queensland.

In Los Angeles during a recent Trade Mission I was given a sneak preview of the latest Scooby Doo film which was shot at Movie World on the Gold Coast and at Queensland locations such as Mt Tamborine and Tangalooma.

In Los Angeles I also announced the Queensland Government is negotiating with Warner Bros for *The Last Man* to be filmed in Queensland. The movie is expected to star Kate Blanchett and Brad Pitt.

And Queensland is in the running to capture another blockbuster *Peter Pan*. While in Los Angeles I met with executives at Revolution Studios about Queensland's suitability for a major new production of this children's classic.

Negotiations still need to be finalised but I'm very hopeful it will come to Queensland.

Internet sources say the movie will be a \$100 million event picture involving three major production houses—Revolution Studios, Walt Disney Pictures and Sony's Columbia Pictures.

Movies like this don't just happen. They are big business, big budget events that generate enormous economic benefits for local economies and the worldwide competition to win these movies is immense.

Queensland has much to offer. We have wonderful weather, great locations, international standard production and technical staff and world class actors.

The film industry also has the strong support of my Government. It is a smart industry that is creating smart jobs for hundred of young Queenslanders with enormous flow-on benefits for other industries, particularly tourism.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Flag

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: As we all know, we love Queensland—and so we should—we love our flag, and I am keen to see it flying higher and longer right across the state during Queensland Day celebrations this year. To meet this objective I have extended the free Queensland flag scheme to provide five additional flags to every state member to distribute to local community groups in their electorates. By now, every member should have received a letter from me informing them of the new scheme we are trialling for a year. I want to encourage Queenslanders to become familiar with and fly their Queensland flag as much as possible. Although a free Queensland flag scheme has been operating for some 20 years, I believe more needs to be done. I encourage every member to get behind the Queensland flag initiative and distribute the flags to community groups prior to Queensland Day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Instant Scratch-Its

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.20 a.m.), by leave: The Golden Casket Lottery Corporation offers a range of Instant Scratch-Its lotteries through its agency network in Queensland. The checking of winning tickets is in most instances done through a validation terminal in the casket agent's premises. In December of last year the Queensland Office of Gaming Regulation received a complaint from an Instant Scratch-Its player alleging that a validation terminal was able to check an unscratched Instant Scratch-Its ticket to identify whether it was a winning ticket. The attentiveness of that player and his willingness to help the Queensland Office of Gaming Regulation have been much appreciated. Subsequent investigation verified that the unscratched ticket had in fact been identified as a winning ticket using the validation terminal.

As this type of terminal is installed in most agencies and the system is designed so that only scratched tickets can be validated, this incident raised serious concerns about the integrity of the system. Further examination identified that the problem occurred due to the lottery validating terminal not performing to specification. The problem was evident with a small number of terminals across the Instant Scratch-Its validation network. It should be noted that the lotto and casket system was not affected in any way by this problem.

The Golden Casket Lottery Corporation Limited, following consultation with the gaming regulator, moved quickly to restore integrity to the system. This was achieved by introducing an additional system validation procedure requiring the entering of a special security code into the validation terminal. To read the security code the ticket must be scratched, thus rendering it unsuitable for resale. With these additional measures in place, Instant Scratch-Its players can continue to participate in these lottery games with absolute confidence that they are being conducted honestly and fairly. The Queensland Office of Gaming Regulation is currently conducting investigations to ascertain whether there has been any abuse of the fault in the system.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.22 a.m.), by leave: For the first time in its 160-year history Queensland racing has a skills based control body, the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board. Not only is it a first for Queensland, it is also a first for Australia. Bob Bentley is chair and Steven Lonie is deputy chair, with Tony Hanmer, George Pippas and Michael Lambert making up the board.

The QTRB had its genesis in a review I conducted into the Queensland Principal Club and its selection process for committee members. The overwhelming message from the submissions and subsequent consultations was that the major problem was committee members' conflicts of interest. It was clear that any new body should be independent.

Last December I explained to this parliament the process to find board members. That process was carried out. I asked the control body, the Interim Thoroughbred Racing Board, to provide me with a representative of non-TAB clubs and one representative of TAB clubs to join my nominee on a selection panel. Former Queensland Principal Club chairman Craig Black represented non-TAB clubs and former Brisbane Turf Club committeeman Chris Sourris represented TAB clubs. Don Jackson was my representative on the panel.

TMP Worldwide, a professional recruitment agency, was engaged to carry out the recruitment process and provide a short list of candidates to the selection panel. The panel interviewed short-listed candidates and provided the director-general of my department with a list of five names for the board and a list of 'reserves' should any candidate be unable to take their place or at a later stage any member resign from the QTRB. Conclusion of this process completed the job of the panel and it was discharged. I was extremely disappointed that there was so much speculation among the Brisbane racing media regarding who may or may not be on the list.

Prior to the QTRB process being completed, one of the board nominees chose to withdraw their nomination. The CEO of my department met with the chair of the Interim Thoroughbred Racing Board to discuss the formation of a panel to select a replacement from the 'reserves' list. As the only ITRB members without conflicts of interest—those conflicts of interest would include

any member who had nominated themselves for the new board—were North Queensland Racing Association chair Cyril Vains, Downs and South-West Racing Association representative Tom Warren and chairman Laurie Longland, they formed the panel. The panel unanimously selected for appointment Robert Bentley as member and chair.

The process for the selection of the QTRB has been an independent process at arm's length from government. At every stage there has been industry majority participation. I have delivered on my promise to rid the control body of the conflicts of interest and factionalism that had been the most prominent feature of the Queensland Principal Club. This obviously grates with those who believe they have a right to rule. I challenge that minority to put their bitterness and personal vendettas behind them and to work with the new board to take the industry forward. The Queensland Racing Industry needs professional management, which is what it now has, not an old boys club.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Charter

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (10.27 a.m.), by leave: Later today I will have the privilege of launching another Queensland first, the Queensland youth charter. It is the first document of its type to be endorsed by any Queensland cabinet. The launch of the *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People* also marks the fulfilment of another Beattie government promise.

The charter clearly outlines our commitment to actively seek young people's involvement in the development of government programs, policies and services. This youth charter will serve as a guide to identify the levels of participation and standards required to achieve best practice when involving young Queenslanders in government decision making.

From the youth charter consultation process with government, the community and young people, two clear findings emerged: a groundswell of support for youth participation in our government and state; and the need for not only a charter like this but also resources to assist in the practical implementation of the values, beliefs and principles outlined in the charter.

Included in the information packs that will be available as part of today's launch are a copy of the youth charter, a guide for consulting with young people and a handbook about including young people in decision-making bodies such as boards and committees. I table the information pack. I seek leave to have the balance of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The principles of this charter are already being put into action by the Beattie government by including young people in its consultation process for the Education and Training Reforms for the Future green paper.

To find out what young people and the community think of the proposed reforms, we are engaging in an extensive consultation process across the state.

Education Minister Anna Bligh and I have started this process, which will include 39 community forums.

The first of these took place on March 26 at Kedron.

They will conclude in Hervey Bay on July 30.

The goal of the Green Paper reforms is to provide the very best education and training possible for all young Queenslanders so they can reach their full potential.

Through initiatives like the Youth Charter, we demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that young people are listened to, that they are included and that they are empowered to make a difference.

Young people are not just the future of our state.

They have an essential part to play right now.

Empowering our young people will transform Queensland into the Smart State—a state of prosperity and social justice with a commitment to equality of opportunity.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 3 of 2002*.

Ordered to be printed.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**Recycled Water Project**

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 a.m.): Our Premier is very big on stunts but not very good on substance. Just recently, in the past few days, we have seen a stunt involving the recycled water project. This is a great project that has had bipartisan support. I compliment the Minister for State Development in relation to this issue. This issue requires a partnership between state, federal and local government, private enterprise and irrigators.

For the Premier to try to derail this project and say that it is D-E-A-D, dead, is an absolute disgrace. This project is still in the feasibility study stages. It still has funding from the state and federal governments, private industry and local government for feasibility study. It deserves to go through this particular stage. The project has the in-principle support of the Deputy Prime Minister and of federal Ministers Macfarlane and Kemp. This project is great for Queensland. It is great for Australia. It is above politics and the Premier should not be trying to derail this great project, taking with him the member for Toowoomba North, who supported this idea of making the project D-E-A-D, dead. I am here to tell the House that it is A-L-I-V-E.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Mr W.T. D'Arcy; Sexual Abuse Victim**

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Premier to a constituent of his who was a victim of convicted child rapist and former Labor MP Mr D'Arcy and who has asked me to seek an explanation from the Premier. I also refer to this victim's four attempts from 9 March to 2 May 2001 to meet personally with the Premier, her local member, to raise her concerns about the Victim Support Service and the need for changes to the treatment of victims in sexual abuse cases after the trauma she suffered during the investigation and trial of Mr D'Arcy. I ask: why did the Premier have his staff advise this victim that there was no point in meeting with her because there was nothing that could be done? Why did he so turn his back on this victim, who suffered the most despicable child abuse as a seven-year-old school child?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. The events surrounding Bill D'Arcy, a former member of this House, are a blight on not just this House but a blight on those dedicated teachers who have worked very hard to improve education standards for all our young Queenslanders. Bill D'Arcy—and I made this clear—felt the full force of my displeasure about his activities. He is in jail now because the law, which this government fully supports, went through a process and found him guilty. Bill D'Arcy is in jail, and so he should be in jail. This government does not and will never support anybody who is involved in any area of child abuse.

In terms of any other issues, I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the restrictions that are imposed on all members of this House—including him, although he does not seem to acknowledge them. There are matters still before the courts involving victims. It is inappropriate for any Premier to be involved in any discussions on matters before the courts. I know that the Leader of the Opposition is not trained in the law, and I am not trying to be clever about this issue. I am a lawyer and I respect the courts in a way that perhaps he does not understand. But the reality is that there is a separation between the courts and the parliament. One of the most important ingredients that exists—it is the hallmark of our system—is that the Executive is separate from the courts. It is one of the great traditions that we got from the British. It is one of the great traditions of our society. The courts have to be allowed to do their work separately from interference from the Executive. Breaching that rule means that there is no fairness before the courts. There will be no confidence before the courts, because an equitable principle exists—that is, justice being seen to be done as well as justice being done.

I have a well-known record of seeing my constituents. I go out of my way as Premier to do so. Because of my workload, there are occasions when I ask staff to see constituents. There are times when it is inappropriate for me to see people, and I will not see them if it is inappropriate. We have brought—we saw this in the Goss years, and we have continued it—dignity and honesty in government, things called standards. I will not move away from that dignity and honesty. All I say to the Leader of the Opposition is that this is another tactical lie.

Mr W.T. D'Arcy; Sexual Abuse Victim

Mr HORAN: I also refer the Premier to his statement in the parliament on 21 February 2002 regarding the Governor-General in which he said—

... I remind the parliament that before the latest allegations I indicated publicly before Christmas that the Governor-General should meet with the victims.

I ask: before making that statement in parliament, did the Premier reflect on his own failure to meet with his constituent, a traumatised victim of Mr D'Arcy?

Mr BEATTIE: I would have thought that the most appropriate thing would have been for the Leader of the Opposition to reconsider his second question in light of my answer to his first question. If members remember the history of this D'Arcy matter, I find this ironic. I took a very strong view in relation to Bill D'Arcy's continuing membership of this parliament. Who attacked me? The Leader of the Opposition at the time, Rob Borbidge, attacked me. Do members know why I was attacked by Rob Borbidge? I was also attacked by some other members opposite, if I recall correctly. I was being attacked for denying him natural justice. Do members know why I took a strong view? I took a strong view as a parent and someone who is part of a government that is tough on people who take advantage of young Queenslanders and children. I think the question being asked today is one of those typical gutter-type questions to get a headline. It is a typical gutter-like question to get a 6 o'clock—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No, I am not blaming the media. I am blaming him, because when one is Leader of the Opposition one is supposed to have some standards. We have seen his standards. I have made it clear that Mr D'Arcy is not in this parliament for two reasons: firstly, I did everything I could to force him out; and, secondly, he then went to jail. I have made it clear that we would not, under any circumstances, interfere. We allowed the court system to do its job, and it did its job. That is what happened. I make no apology for doing that. There are times when it is appropriate for the Premier of the day to see people; there are times when it is inappropriate. This government will not go back to the days of corruption that we saw under the National Party. That is not the way we will behave. Those corrupt members opposite can suggest we go down a corrupt path, but we will not do so because we respect the principles of our democracy. We respect the principles of the court. We will continue to stand by the things called integrity, honesty and decency. That is what we stand for. I will not move away from that. In this parliament in the last session we saw a tactical lie supported by the Leader of the Opposition. Those opposite were prepared to pursue a tactical lie. On my side of politics we will have no place for that.

Attraction of International Airlines to Queensland

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I refer the Premier to the fact that recent reports suggest that there has been some success in attracting major international airlines into Queensland. I ask: can he confirm that these reports are correct?

Mr BEATTIE: Let us talk about some issues that really improve people's lives instead of questions in the gutter. I thank the honourable member for Stafford for his question. I am delighted to confirm that the answer to his question is indeed yes. It is correct. This year we continue to attract more and more international flights. In January, Air New Zealand, following our lobbying in December—and I sat down with representatives of the board of Air New Zealand at the end of last year in Auckland, and this is one of the direct results of overseas trade trips—announced six additional weekly flights, including two into Cairns. By July that will rise to 11 additional flights.

Last month, Singapore Airlines announced two extra flights into Brisbane each week. Singapore Airlines says that south-east Queensland is one of the world's few tourism bright spots following last year's terrorist attacks on the United States, and that is great. There are more and more international carriers taking up opportunities in Queensland. I raised the issue of aviation and mutual opportunities for Singapore and Queensland when I met with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, while at CHOGM earlier last month when I travelled to the Sunshine Coast to meet him. These will sit well with other Qantas projects, and I acknowledge the role of the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, in achieving these and also the support of the Minister for Tourism, Merri Rose.

Let us look at what we have achieved in aviation. Let us get out of the gutter and talk about what we are doing for Queensland to turn it into the Smart State. As a direct result of the policies

of my government Snap Fresh is providing up to 20 million meals for Qantas and other airline customers, the hospitality industry, health and aged care centres and remote mining sites in Queensland. There is the \$65.8 million heavy maintenance facility for its fleet of 36 Boeing 767 aircraft at Brisbane airport, which will eventually employ 500 people in Queensland as a direct result of the policies of my government. The new leisure international subsidiary Australian Airlines will bring more than 350,000 tourists into Queensland each year and will create about 350 new jobs in Cairns over a four-year period in Queensland as a direct result of the policies of my government.

Singapore Airlines also plans to base its flight training operations on the Sunshine Coast. These announcements are proof positive that our efforts in tourism marketing and in creating an aviation hub are working. That is the results; they work.

Mr Terry Sullivan: A friend of mine who works there has been able to get extra hours.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection; that is one of the other benefits. The new Singapore flights start on 2 June and will bring to 12 the number of direct, non-stop flights between Singapore and Brisbane each week. This also sits well with the efforts of Tourism Minister Merri Rose and myself in Los Angeles last month in a meeting with North American tourism operators and wholesalers.

But the tourism push does not end there. Last Tuesday, Tourism Minister Merri Rose and the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, were in Cairns to welcome the first of the Auckland-Cairns direct flights. The twice weekly services bring an additional 25,000 tourists a year to Cairns. These are strategies for the future of Queensland. This is about Queensland as a Smart State.

Interruption.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the Speaker's Gallery Clive Hughes, the former Liberal member for Kurilpa from 1960 to 1974.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

Cape York Justice Study Report

Mr JOHNSON: The Premier commenced his last question by saying, 'Let's talk about some issues that affect people's lives.' I refer the Premier to his media statement of 19 November last year in which he stated that his government would report within two months on how government actions and resources could be refocused to meet the challenges provided by the recommendations set out in the Cape York Justice Study report, the Fitzgerald report. The Premier's cabinet has now met on this issue three times, with the most recent meeting being yesterday, and there is still no announcement as to the government's plan of action. Indigenous communities in the Cape York region have universally condemned the government's paternalistic approach in the commissioning of the Fitzgerald report on the lack of consultation with indigenous communities.

In the public gallery today are five members of the Aboriginal coordinating council—Mr Bob Sands, CEO, Kowanyama Council; Mr Lloyd Fourmile, deputy chairperson, Yarrabah Community Council; Mr Ted Wymarra, manager, ACC; Mr Ken Bone, mayor, Cherbourg Community Council; and Mr Alfred Lacey, deputy chair, ACC. The ACC informs me that it has made repeated requests—verbal and written—for the Premier to meet with its 17 members. Those requests have gone unanswered.

Given the presence of these councillors in the public gallery today, will the Premier be perfectly clear and explain why it is that his government has failed to consult properly with indigenous communities in relation to the Fitzgerald report? When will the Premier meet with the ACC and deliver on his promise to meet the challenges of addressing the Fitzgerald recommendations?

Mr BEATTIE: Before I answer the question, let me table for the House's information a 4QR Andrew Lofthouse interview of Monday, 10 January 2000, in which the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, said—

...there had been attempts by the Labor Party over a period of time to force Bill D'Arcy out. Mr Beattie on this occasion has been successful.

It confirms what I have done on this. I have been consistent, I have made a stand; I do not run away from my responsibilities.

Let us deal with the question at hand. I welcome the members in the gallery. I am delighted to see them here, because I hope that they will take some note of what the government is doing in relation to dealing with the issue of indigenous problems and of our support. In relation to meetings, on a number of occasions the minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs has met with the representatives to whom the member referred, and so have a string of other ministers. I cannot meet physically with every group. I perhaps have a longer schedule than any Premier in recent history. I meet very regularly with people. We do it at community cabinet. It is not physically possible for me to meet with every group. I have 18 ministerial colleagues who do, and they do it very well. I am proud of what they do.

Let me deal with the member's question. We are dealing with a very difficult issue; we are dealing with a controversial issue. There are two reports we have considered, including the Fitzgerald report to which the member referred. There have been detailed consultations across the cape. There will be people in the cape and in other parts of Queensland who do not share Tony Fitzgerald's view in relation to alcohol and who will not share the government's view. Let me make one point on this very clear at the outset—there are too many young indigenous Queenslanders not being given the opportunity to reach their full potential. Too many young Queenslanders are being bashed as a result of alcohol abuse. Too many indigenous women are being raped and bashed in communities, and this government is prepared to do something about it.

On a number of occasions cabinet has considered the Fitzgerald report, the consultation process and the responses to it. We have already indicated that when we release our response, which cabinet has considered on a number of occasions and has not yet finalised—there are matters for Judy Spence and me to resolve—we will release the details of those consultations. Let the community make a determination on it, but do not be under any illusions. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition can score cheap points on these issues, but these issues—

Mr Johnson: This is not about scoring points, this is about consultation.

Mr BEATTIE: Well, you're doing very well at it. The member can score cheap points on this if he wishes. The reality is we are not interested in cheap points, we are interested in solutions to help indigenous people. I expect that when this report comes down there will be controversy and there will be people who will disagree with it, but we will do everything we can to help young indigenous children get a chance. We are going to protect indigenous women from being bashed and raped; it is that simple.

Qantas Founders Outback Museum

Mr REEVES: I refer the Premier to his strong commitment to boosting outback tourism. Last July, my wife and I spent a few days in Longreach on our honeymoon visiting the Qantas Founders Outback Museum. What support has the state government given to the new Qantas Founders Outback Museum at Longreach?

Mr BEATTIE: I did not receive any complaints about the member's visit during his honeymoon; therefore, I assume that he was well behaved and I thank him for that and for being a good advocate for the government.

Mr Welford: You obviously haven't spoken to his wife!

Mr BEATTIE: All right; I will confer with the member's wife to see whether there are any objections. On Easter Sunday, 31 March, the Minister for the Arts and I—and I thank the minister for giving up his Easter Sunday—had the pleasure of visiting Longreach to officially open the \$9 million Qantas Founders Outback Museum. The local member, Vaughan Johnson, was there as was Wilson Tuckey, the federal minister. The Queensland government is the principal benefactor of the museum. On behalf of the government, I congratulate the people of Longreach and the Qantas Foundation Memorial Limited for creating a magnificent attraction.

Through the Queensland Heritage Trail network the state government provided funding of \$5.75 million to help the community turn its vision into a world class museum; in fact, with the Commonwealth government we are spending \$110 million. This program is now administered by the Minister for the Arts. It shows our commitment to the bush and to the regions. Yes, we are building a magnificent gallery there for all Queenslanders and are making sure everyone in the bush and the regions gets a fair go as well. There is \$110 million into the bush, and so it should be; they are entitled to it. Together with other unique attractions on the Queensland Heritage Trail network, the museum not only honours the achievements of pioneering Queenslanders but will also help revitalise many communities and rural Queensland through cultural tourism. It is a magnificent attraction that finally complements the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame just across the road and is a perfect example of community and government working together to achieve an outstanding result. I publicly acknowledge the other major contributors to this project. As I said, we put in \$5.75 million, the federal government \$1.75 million, Qantas more than \$1 million and the local community, Australian companies and individuals more than \$500,000.

During the past 12 months, 30,000 people visited the Qantas museum. With the opening of stage 2, the numbers are expected to grow to more than 50,000 a year. In the process, some 15 full-time and part-time jobs have been created. During the museum's construction, over \$3 million of business was placed with local and regional companies.

The museum aims to inspire young people to believe that difficulties can be overcome and dreams achieved. I am confident that this attraction will become another successful icon for outback Queensland. At present, almost three-quarters of all international visitors to the Queensland outback are from the United Kingdom and Europe, but there are signs that American interest is growing rapidly. I believe that the number of US visitors is set to explode owing to factors such as the Sydney Olympics and the incredible success of the television program *Survivor 2: The Australian Outback*, with a staggering 36 million viewers watching the final episode in the United States.

My government is strongly committed to outback tourism with more than \$27 million being spent on 10 of Queensland's heritage trail network attractions. Because of time, I seek the details of those to be incorporated in *Hansard*. This is the Year of the Outback.

Leave granted.

As well as the Qantas museum and the Hall of Fame, funding is going to:

Lark Quarry in the Winton area: \$2.5 million of preservation works to protect the famous dinosaur stampede tracks.

Winton's Waltzing Matilda Centre: \$1 million to further develop its displays and interpretation to include heritage sites in Winton and the surrounding region.

Barcaldine's Australian Workers Heritage Centre: \$1.7 million for the presentation of a history of Australia's working women.

Blackall Woolscour: \$2 million for the conservation and interpretation of this one-of-a-kind woolscour.

Charleville Cosmos Centre: \$2.5 million for the development of this facility featuring indigenous cosmology.

Cloncurry Heritage Centre: \$1 million for a new visitor information facility that will be a starting point for trails of discovery in the region.

Mt Isa Underground Mining World: \$6.9 million for development of new exhibits and first-hand mining experiences.

Richmond's Marine Fossil Museum—Kronosaurus Korner: with funding of \$1 million.

These are all exciting projects that provide extra impetus for city people to pack up the car and head west.

Support Teachers for Children with Disabilities

Mr FLYNN: My question is to the Minister for Education. In December 2001 I asked whether the minister could address the disparities in the allocation of teacher resources between children with specific learning difficulties and others with conditions such as autism and hearing, sight and speech difficulties, to name but a few. The minister replied in part that there are 619 support teachers for children with learning difficulties within primary schools, 321 support teachers in secondary schools, 377 guidance officers and 300 behaviour management staff who work in both primary and secondary schools. There is still reason to be concerned in that only about 50 per cent of support teachers for students who have learning disabilities or learning difficulties have qualifications appropriate to their employment in the specialist area. Therefore I ask: what are the categories of qualifications of the 1,617 joint support teachers, guidance officers and behaviour management staff employed in Queensland schools? How many of these staff have specialist

qualifications in the field of learning difficulties? Does the minister regard this situation as satisfactory? What steps might the minister take to increase the proportion of appropriately qualified teachers and in what time frame?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question and I thank him for his interest in the needs of children in our schools, whether they have disabilities or specialist needs in relation to learning difficulties. I am aware of his interest in those issues and I share that interest. I am very, very happy to put on the record today the commitment of our government to ensuring that we are providing the best that we can for students in our classrooms regardless of their needs and regardless of which schools they are in. I am not in a position this morning—and I think that the member would understand this—to give a detailed answer to the question that he asked. I will have a look at it later and get back to him with the sort of detailed numbers that he is asking for.

But I am happy to inform both the member and the House that earlier this year I announced a seven point plan in relation to improving our response to the needs of children who have special needs in our classrooms. Part of that was the establishment of a task force that brings together a range of stakeholders to consider this issue, how we allocate resources, where the resources go, and the basis of that allocation. The first meeting of that task force has now occurred. It is being chaired by Professor John Elkins from the University of Queensland, who has a very well respected reputation in this area. The task force brings together people who represent everything from the family needs of parents of children with disabilities, the industrial rights and protections of our teachers through their unions as well as people who have specific expertise and professional qualifications in the area.

I assure the member that I am determined that that task force will be providing practical, hands-on solutions that can be implemented for me and our government over the next two years. I met with the task force at its first meeting and they are a group of very, very dedicated people who I think have the best interests of our children and their teachers at heart. I am happy to give the commitment that I will make regular reports back to the parliament as those solutions are considered by the government. I will get back to the honourable member with more details about the question that he asked this morning.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Toowoomba North, could I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers of the Southern Cross College in the electorate of Redcliffe. Welcome.

McCaffertys Central and Western Queensland Bus Routes

Mr SHINE: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the recent threat of cancellation of bus routes serviced by McCaffertys in central and western Queensland, and I ask: can the minister please advise the House what moves the government has taken to avert this likelihood?

Mr BREDHAUER: I thank the honourable member for the question. I, too, would like to welcome the students from Southern Cross College—my old alma mater. I went to school there in the 1960s and early 1970s. So I welcome them.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes, I did play in the first 15. I swam in the swimming team and various other things.

I thank the honourable member for this question, because McCaffertys is a proud Queensland based company which is a major employer of over 1,000 employees in Queensland and is the largest bus company in the country. Last year McCaffertys approached us looking for assistance because of the non-profitability of some of its western routes. Essentially, for many years McCaffertys has cross-subsidised some of its non-profitable services with its profitable services, particularly on the east coast. For a range of reasons, that cross-subsidisation has become increasingly more difficult. So McCaffertys approached the government to see if there was any prospect of financial assistance.

We have secured \$250,000 for McCaffertys in an interim financial assistance package until 30 June on the basis that there will be no reductions in services. This will be a major boost to people in regional and rural parts of Queensland. In particular, services to Emerald and Longreach, Brisbane and Mount Isa, Brisbane and Charleville, Townsville and Mount Isa, and Brisbane and Rockhampton via the inland route will be assisted through this financial assistance package.

This is the Year of the Outback and access to transport services for people in regional and rural parts of Queensland is very important to this government, which is why we have made this assistance to McCaffertys. In addition, we are currently reviewing other long distance bus services and also our rural air services support program, because I know that there are other bus companies out there that are experiencing similar difficulties. For example, the member for Charters Towers has been working hard with me in relation to the B&S services between Emerald and Mackay. That is specifically one of the services that we are looking at in the context of this review.

Some of the towns that will benefit from the government's assistance package to McCaffertys include Dingo, Duaringa, Anakie, Alpha, Murgon, Tambo, Wandoan, Theodore, Moura, Kynuna, Hughenden and Mitchell.

Mr Schwarten: I've been everywhere man.

Mr BREDHAUER: As the member for Rockhampton would know, I have been to most of those places during my union organising days.

Mr Schwarten: No, they were in my area.

Mr BREDHAUER: Some of them were in the minister's area; some of them were in mine.

It is important that in this the Year of the Outback the state government has shown its commitment to people in outback areas. I know that the member for Mansfield is a big fan of bus transport. Might I say to him that the next time he wants to go to Longreach, he might consider going by a McCaffertys bus.

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board; Mr B. Bentley

Mr HOBBS: I refer the Minister for Racing to her personal appointment of Bob Bentley as chairman of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board and who, contrary to her statement, was appointed without the official approval of members of the Interim Thoroughbred Racing Board. Most of those members were not even aware that the Interim Thoroughbred Racing Board had a secret second selection panel. I ask the minister: is it not a fact that she was angry that the original independent selection panel, chaired by Mr Don Jackson, did not select Mr Bentley or even have him on the reserve list? Why was the minister's department actively canvassing support for Mr Bentley prior to and in isolation of the original selection panel's nomination of Ms Nerolie Withnall?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the member for the question because it gives me another opportunity, following my ministerial statement this morning, to put on the record the facts in relation to the processes involved in selecting the five members of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board. At all stages through the process there has been majority industry representation. It has been kept at arm's length from the government. It has been a completely independent process. For the first time we now have five members of the QTRB who have the skills, the professionalism and the business acumen to be able to take the Queensland racing industry into the future.

Bob Bentley, who is the chair of the QTRB, is a very successful businessman. He is a member of the TAB board. He is a racing administrator. Steven Lonie, who is the deputy chair, is a highly reputable strategic planner. Tony Hanmer—

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. This is a disgrace. The minister is not answering the question. She is going through the members of the board.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr HOBBS: It is an absolute disgrace. She is a fraud.

Mr SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. That is unparliamentary.

Mrs ROSE: Tony Hanmer is a marketing expert from the Sunshine Coast—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego will withdraw that statement. It is unparliamentary.

Mr Hobbs: I withdraw it.

Mrs ROSE: George Pippas is the director of Australian Rugby Union and a sporting administrator, and Michael Lambert is an economist. These five people were selected by an independent process.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mrs ROSE: Obviously the Leader of the Opposition was not listening to my ministerial statement, so I will briefly run through it again. The Interim Thoroughbred—

Mr Hobbs: You are wrong. You are misleading the House.

Mrs ROSE: Members of the opposition are not interested in the facts. They are not interested! The Interim Thoroughbred Racing—

Mr Hobbs: You have been caught out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego.

Mrs ROSE: What a load of rubbish! This is the problem. It is members of the opposition spreading this sort of rubbish which harms the racing industry. The recruitment agency provided short-listed—

Mr Hobbs: Why wasn't he on the reserve list?

Mrs ROSE: He was on the reserve list!

An opposition member: They didn't pick him.

Mrs ROSE: The panel selected five board members and compiled a reserve list. There is a reserve list.

Mr Hobbs: He wasn't on it.

Mrs ROSE: For heaven's sake! To suggest anything else is rubbish, scuttlebutt and untruths. The shadow minister for racing continues to spread this rubbish. I am calling on the shadow minister, the Leader of the Opposition and other opposition members to get behind the new Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board and support it. There are a great many good things happening in Queensland racing, but they are not reported. Some turf writers are intent only on spreading misinformation, rumours and gossip.

Mr Hobbs: Which ones?

Mrs ROSE: The industry is plagued with rubbish—

Time expired.

Hospital Schools

Ms BOYLE: I refer the Minister for Education to the review of the state government's hospital school policy. I ask her to inform the House of the outcome of that review and to tell the House whether there is a new policy as a result.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. The member for Cairns is a well-known supporter of the new hospital, and the people of Cairns have indeed benefited from the review. I will spell that out more clearly in a moment.

There is indeed a new Smart State education policy that will benefit sick children. The new policy is called Educational Services for Hospitalised Students. It was developed after extensive consultation with teachers, parents and health professionals to bring our policy in line with modern paediatric medicine.

Feedback from stakeholders, arising from a comprehensive review, identified the changing nature of hospitalisation. The average length of time that a child stays in hospital is now only two to three days. Indeed, many operations—tonsillectomies, for example—for which members might recall spending a week in hospital are now considered day surgery for most children. If they are well enough, children can be given work programs from their normal school.

The review identified a need to focus on the continuity of educational programs for longer-term student patients and for those whose education is unfortunately disrupted by frequent hospitalisation due to chronic illness. While initial advice was to provide the service after five days of admission, some of the stakeholders believed that this was too long an eligibility period. I listened to their concerns and decided to make services under the new policy available to sick children whose anticipated hospitalisation is four days or longer. These children will be enrolled from the first day of their admission, subject to the support of the school principal and the child's clinician. Similarly, those children with chronic or acute health conditions who are regularly in and out of hospital may be enrolled from the first day of their admission.

The policy also provides for the educational needs of the siblings of a sick child or for a child relocated due to a parent receiving extended medical treatment in hospital away from their home. In exceptional circumstances, children who fall outside the eligibility guidelines may be authorised

by the local district director of Education Queensland to enrol in a hospital school if the principal and the student's clinician support the enrolment.

Our government is committed to minimising the disruption that extended periods of hospitalisation cause in the education of school students and, where possible, to do that wherever they may be. In the comprehensive review, stakeholders noted that while school services exist in a number of regional hospitals, children in the far north did not receive any service. Again, we listened to their concerns and have moved to redress this.

This new policy will expand services into Cairns for the first time, providing for a group of children in the far north previously not catered for. Extra teaching resources will be allocated to Woree State High School to run an outreach service to educate sick children in the new Cairns Base Hospital. The Cairns Base Hospital services a very large region, including the Torres Strait. The new service is expected to begin in term two and will be offered in the ward where the child is receiving medical treatment. I am delighted that we have been able to extend the service to those regions and that we will continue to provide it at the two major children's hospitals—the Mater Children's Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital—in Brisbane. Officers of my department are currently negotiating the siting of the Mater Hospital School in new premises in the Mater Children's Hospital, with the ability to deliver both ward-based services and services to groups of students.

Amalgamation of Education and Training Portfolios

Mr WELLINGTON: In directing a question to the Premier, I ask: has he investigated the significant benefits and improvements which could be achieved in the education and training of Queenslanders by combining the currently separate ministerial responsibilities for the Department of TAFE and the Department of Education under the responsibility of one minister? This question is in no way a reflection on the performance of the current ministers responsible for these two separate departments.

Mr BEATTIE: Before I answer that question, can I just say that I am delighted to see the honourable member on both feet! He has made a remarkable recovery and demonstrated enormous courage. On behalf of all members, I congratulate him. I do not think any members thought they would see the member for Nicklin sprinting around the chamber as he has today.

In answer to the question, yes, I have. This is an ongoing issue for Premiers when they consider portfolio allocations. I should say at the outset, as the member for Nicklin has, that I am delighted with the performance of both the Minister for Education, who is No. 3 in the government, and the Minister for Training, who is No. 4 in the government. That gives members some idea of how seriously we regard education and training. No. 3 and No. 4 are very senior ministers in the government.

I have grappled with the problem and, indeed, after the last election I spent a lot of time working through a number of issues, including this one. There are arguments for bringing those portfolios together, because of the relationship between training and education. There are also some arguments for keeping them separate, so that training has a particular component and can deliver outcomes through TAFE. At the moment I have decided, as you would appreciate, to leave them separate. I think that arrangement allows for a better outcome. However, we need to get cooperation and they need to work together.

In the document released recently by the two honourable ministers and myself on behalf of the government, our major push for education and training, the creation and the underpinning of the Smart State, the member will notice that there was actually a very significant partnership between education and training and we are valuing things like school-based apprenticeships. Queensland leads Australia when it comes to school-based apprenticeships. Members will notice that one of the issues raised in that document is the so-called school leaving age. It is not really the leaving age; it is more to do with whether people are in education—that is, in school—or in training or in TAFE or in a job.

Ms Bligh: Learning or earning.

Mr BEATTIE: That is exactly right. That is the phrase we use: learning or earning. That is the partnership between education and training. One thing we are trying to do out of this is to value the diversity of education and training and make it a lifelong experience—value university education and schools, value TAFE, and value apprenticeships and traineeships as well. Not everybody wants to be a rocket scientist. A lot of people can be in the professions, but a lot of

people can also gain meaningful occupation—and we desperately need them—in the trades. We have tried to restore the importance of apprenticeships. We need apprentices in plumbing, carpentry, electricians—you name it. I am hoping that one of my boys will become a plumber and then I can retire very soon. That will please some of you more than others! Plumbers do very, very well. We have got to recognise the importance of apprenticeships. It is a very important issue and one that I will continue to consider, assuming that I have the honour of being re-elected in two years' time.

Foster Carers

Ms PHILLIPS: I ask the Minister for Families: would she please inform the House of the success of the recent recruitment drive for foster carers in Queensland?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for the question. She and other members would be aware that last month I launched a statewide appeal to identify Queensland families who are interested in fostering our children and young people. I did this because we urgently need 500 foster families to accept short and long-term placements for children, groups of siblings, children with disabilities and teenagers.

The situation in this state is that we have about 1,500 active foster families on our books. At this point, we have about 3,640 children on care and protection orders. From time to time we hear that, because we have a shortage of foster families, we are placing a lot of stress on families and asking them to take in a larger number of children than they would otherwise desire, and that we need more foster families in this state. Queensland is not unique. This is a problem being suffered by all Australian states. We all rely on foster families to look after our young children on care and protection orders, but Queensland places 80 per cent of those children in foster families.

The appeal has so far been very successful. We identified four regions in the state that had shortages—Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich and Logan, and the Gold Coast. So far we have had 173 responses: 55 from the Townsville region, 32 from Ipswich and Logan, 14 from the Cairns region, and 19 from the Gold Coast, with the remainder in the Brisbane area. I acknowledge and thank publicly the media organisations throughout Queensland that over the past two weeks have run stories about this appeal and profiled foster families throughout the state. We need to promote to Queensland homes the good work that foster families are doing. I am sure many Queensland families have never considered fostering children. However, once they find out about it, they might like to take children in need into their home.

I thank also members of parliament who have fallen behind this campaign and identified and profiled foster families in their electorate and ensured that this issue received media attention. Not everyone who contacts the department and expresses interest in becoming a foster parent will follow through, and that is why we are looking for more people to make contact with us on this issue.

We are particularly interested in having a variety of families, not just the traditional family, taking on foster children. We have a number of single parents who fulfil this role quite admirably. Obviously, we rely on the foster family situation because it provides our children with a sense of family and love that institutions cannot.

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board; Mr B. Bentley

Mr SEENEY: I refer the Minister for Tourism and Racing to her personal appointment of Bob Bentley as Chairman of the Thoroughbred Racing Board. Her official line has been that the independent selection panel's nomination for the position, Ms Nerolie Withnall, had a conflict of interest. I ask: what was that conflict of interest? Could the minister please explain how Mr Bentley does not have a conflict of interest given his position as a board member of the TAB, especially in view of the delicate confidential negotiations regarding Sky Channel access?

Mrs ROSE: There has been all sorts of wild speculation in the media regarding who was going to be on the board and about the board candidate who withdrew. I am not going to confirm or deny who that board member was. All candidates and nominees for those board positions are entitled to confidentiality and privacy. I have never at any time confirmed whether any person withdrew. I think the member, by standing up in this House, naming a person and saying that there was a conflict of interest is exposing himself to defamation.

Every person who applied for a position on that board is entitled to confidentiality and privacy. If any individual wishes to make a public or a private statement that they nominated for the board—

Mr Johnson: Don't you read the papers?

Mrs ROSE: I will respond to that interjection shortly.

As I said, any candidate is entitled to their confidentiality and privacy. If they wish to make a personal or private statement as to whether or not they applied for a position, made the short list or withdrew, that is clearly a matter for them.

The member for Gregory said that it was in the newspaper. With all due respect, we should not necessarily believe everything we read in the newspaper. In yesterday's 'The Bottom Line' a claim was made that I had contacted Channel 9 and the *Courier-Mail* and was upset about a critical assessment of a television program called McLeod's Daughters. There was a retraction in 'The Bottom Line' this morning. Not every Mary Rose who makes a comment is actually me. I caution the member for Gregory that he should not believe absolutely everything he reads in the media. I was curious about why there were so many objections to Bob Bentley.

Recycled Water Project

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Premier: what has he done in recent times to support the south-east Queensland recycled water project?

Mr BEATTIE: Quite a lot. I thank the honourable member for his question. I wrote to the Prime Minister in October last year seeking his support for studies and capital costs in relation to possible recycled water projects from Brisbane to the Lockyer Valley and on to the Darling Downs. He wrote back to me six months later, in late March, saying that both were outside the scope of the Commonwealth. I did not pull the plug on this project, it is the Prime Minister himself who has done so. My government has supported the project with hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact—and the minister might help me—we have spent \$600,000 and committed another \$300,000. We have promised almost a million dollars. However, the Prime Minister's 17 March letter is crystal clear. Let us deal with the facts. It states—

My dear Premier

Thank you for your letter of October 2001 seeking a commitment from the Commonwealth to part fund the feasibility study and capital costs of the proposed South East Queensland Recycled Water Project. The delay in replying is regretted.

I appreciate that effluent from sewage treatment plants is a major contributor of pollution to Moreton Bay—

which I think I referred to in my letter—

and that there is a need to address this issue. I am advised that this can be achieved through the improved treatment of effluent, and I understand that such proposals are already in the planning phase with some assistance from the Commonwealth. While obviously a complementary proposal, the pumping of treated effluent from Brisbane to the Lockyer Valley and Darling Downs appears to have very high costs that are largely for private benefit.

I appreciate you bringing this proposal to my attention. However, I must advise that it is outside the scope of Commonwealth programmes for this type of activity.

Yours sincerely

I table a copy of the letter for the information of the House. I was stunned. I released it, because I felt it was important that there be some public understanding. Clearly, the leader of this nation, the Prime Minister, did not support it. Some of his ministers, such as Ian MacFarlane, and the Leader of the Opposition may think so, but they are obviously irrelevant to the Prime Minister's view; he had not communicated his view to them. We have had enough nonsense about this project.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on a minute. This government supports it. The sensible thing is to get the Prime Minister, the leader of the nation, to commit to it, because no other commitment makes any sense or is worth the paper it is written on unless the Prime Minister agrees.

On 3 April I wrote to John Howard on this basis—

Dear Prime Minister (John)

I refer to your letter of 17 March 2000, relating to the South East Queensland Recycled Water Project. As you would be aware, this project is of vital importance to the economic future of South East Queensland, in particular communities located in the Bremer, Warrill and Lockyer Valleys, as well as on the Darling Downs. I was greatly disappointed by the content of your letter, which advises that the project is outside the scope of Commonwealth

Programs. This effectively eliminates the possibility of this important infrastructure project extending to the Darling Downs and jeopardizes the overall viability of the total project.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate this in *Hansard*, because this is my attempt to get the Prime Minister to commit to this program so we can work together to benefit the Darling Downs and the Lockyer.

Leave granted.

Following my public announcement of the contents of your letter, I have both received advice from interested parties and noted media comments by the State Opposition, that the contents of your letter are inconsistent with recent commitments provided by your Government colleagues, in particular, the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources and Member for Groome, the Honourable Ian MacFarlane.

Given the stature of this project and the potential economic benefits for South East Queensland, I seek urgent clarification from you concerning the Federal Government's commitment to the Project.

Yours sincerely

Jobs, Information Technology

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his decision in 1998 to appoint a minister specifically responsible for information technology as part of his government's pursuit of the Smart State agenda. I also refer the Premier to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in February which show that since August 1998 the so-called Smart State has created just 4,600 new IT jobs. By comparison, Victoria has created 22,500 new IT jobs—five times the number in Queensland—and New South Wales has created an extra 27,600 IT jobs—six times the number in Queensland. I now ask: why do we have such a woeful record in creating IT jobs and why is the Smart State failing to keep pace with our interstate rivals?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, the creation of the new department and the allocation of a particular Minister for Innovation is a key part of our commitment to the Smart State. We are working very hard to expand the cake, if you like—the economy—and to ensure that we have significant jobs in IT and biotech.

In recent times a significant number of jobs have been created and we are going to continue to work even harder to create jobs. Every day we hear of further ICT downturn—and Australia is certainly suffering at the hands of global rationalisation, a shaky international economy and 11 September, not to mention some of the Commonwealth Government's communications policies. But Queensland's success is obvious. We are the home to Mincom, Australia's largest ICT firm. We are also home to the biggest e-security cluster outside North America. Queensland has arguably Australia's biggest concentration of electronic games companies—multi-media. The figures speak for themselves. The Commonwealth government's ICT Skills Hub forecasts a jobs rise in Queensland of 12 per cent in 2001 and 17 per cent in 2002, whilst nationally it will be 11 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively. We lead the nation.

A report commissioned by the Australian Computer Society—the Houghton report—last year showed that Queensland's ICT exports increased 20 per cent every year over the past decade; in other words double the national average. This was reinforced by last year's ABS labour force survey which showed that ICT employment in Queensland in 2001 was 31,300—a 17 per cent rise since August 1999. I should underline that we came to government in June 1998.

The Queensland government's Smart State strategy is working. Queensland firms are responding and creating new, high skilled, high valued jobs in this state at a faster rate than the rest of the country. For example, we have the SAP building world research centre in Brisbane—seventh city in the world—with five full-time jobs, 10 external researchers, as well as university students, and this is set to double in 2003.

Mr Lucas: Oracle.

Mr BEATTIE: Oracle. We have Sun Micro Systems—

Mr Lucas: Boeing.

Mr BEATTIE: Boeing. Look at what we are spending with regard to Boeing. We also have Red Hat. The list goes on and on. There is a quiet revolution—

Mr Lucas: Compaq on the Gold Coast.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes. A quiet revolution is going on in regard to new IT jobs. Let me inform honourable members that one of the areas that will most benefit is the Gold Coast. We are determined that the Gold Coast and the south-east corner of Queensland will, in the next few

years, become the Silicon Valley of Australia. I hope we will have the Leader of the Liberal Party on board to support it. It is important that he supports it because we want bipartisan support.

The government's increased spending on ICT is also helping grow local industry. The list goes on. The government established an ICT SME task force. It is due to report to Paul Lucas by the end of next month. We are seeking information on how the government might improve SME access to government contracts.

We will make this the Smart State notwithstanding the whingers and the knockers.

National Green Fleet Scheme

Mr PURCELL: My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. I refer the minister to the recent decision by the state government's fleet manager, Q-Fleet, to take part in the National Green Fleet Scheme and I ask: what are the benefits to Queensland from this initiative?

Mr SCHWARTEN: As honourable members are aware, Queensland is the home of the largest fleet in Australia, consisting of some 12,600 vehicles owned by the taxpayers of this state. At a time when we are all being called upon to do something about the discharge of motor vehicle fumes into the environment, we find that Queensland is now the largest contributor to the Green Fleet Association of Australia. That association is a non-profit organisation which aims to get people who use vehicles to put something back into the environment.

The Queensland government, through Q-Fleet, is funding 17 seedlings for each of the 12,600 vehicles that we own. I have a note here that there will be a reduction of some 54,000 tonnes of CO₂ as a result of that action. That is a very practical example of what governments can do to ensure that the day-to-day activities of government have a less disastrous effect upon the environment in which we live. This would not have been achieved but for the Queensland government's decision not to privatise Q-Fleet. Honourable members can be guaranteed that private fleets are not mirroring the actions of the Queensland government. This government took a good economic and environmental decision to retain the fleet.

We are doing other things in terms of lessening our impact on the environment. For example, we have one Toyota vehicle and one Honda vehicle which are driven by a combination of petrol and electricity. These vehicles are currently being trialled. Recently, the government bought one of these vehicles to see how it can be amalgamated into Q-Fleet.

Honourable members would be aware that the Environment Minister and I recently launched the ethanol additive. This is good news for the sugar industry and for the environment. The government garage is now offering that fuel as a result of our contract with BP, which was negotiated through the state purchasing policy. We also have the first environmental fleet manager appointed in this state. He will ensure that we continue to develop processes that limit our impact on the environment.

We have had a 12-month trial of LPG in Falcons. Our agreement with Ford in this respect is going well and we should have an analysis of the tests in a short time. A number of people believe that we should be using more LPG.

Time expired.

Fish Resources Report

Mr ROWELL: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries. I refer to the alarming reductions of certain fish stocks in Queensland waters, confirmed in the long-awaited Queensland fisheries resources condition and recent trends report which was promised for release in late 1999 but only released last week. Why was the release of this report delayed for two and a half years? Has any estimate been made of how much over-fishing has occurred while we waited two and a half years for the report?

Mr PALASZCZUK: May I say at the outset that fisheries management is guided by the principle of sustainability. Fisheries management is an ongoing job. I am sure honourable members would be aware of the new arrangements for tailor which were approved last week.

In relation to the report that was released last week, we are now light years away from the time of the findings of that report. The report is based on statistics and data collated between the years 1998 and 2000. Since then a lot has happened in Queensland in relation to fisheries

management. Let me go through some of the issues that have been worked through since the report was produced. For example, the east coast trawl management plan is one of the world's most advanced fisheries management regimes.

Let me detail seven points on the enforcement of fisheries laws and management arrangements in the last couple of years. The first point is this. The Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol is continuing to welcome intakes of new officers. In December 2000, as minister I officially welcomed 13 new officers to the patrol. That particular intake was the first selected for a position with the patrol since tertiary education became a mandatory requirement. The second point relates to the upgrade of the patrol's fleet. In 1999 we commissioned a new long range vessel, the *KI Ross*. Last year the Premier and I announced the successful Brisbane tenderer for a new \$1.68 million vessel to be based at Pinkenba. The Queensland Fisheries Service now has a fleet of 90 vessels.

The third point is the roll-out of the satellite based VMS, which the member opposite is not very happy with. I believe it is doing a wonderful job. The fourth point is—

Mr ROWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I raised issues about the defective nature of the VMS report.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The time for questions has expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): I rise to speak on one of the most critical matters of public importance on which I have ever had occasion to speak. Child sexual abuse is repugnant and detestable, and its perpetrators are to be weeded out and punished. It is not a matter to be cynically exploited for political gain.

This Premier is guilty of a double standard of simply monstrous proportions. He was willing to brazenly seek political advantage surrounding the Governor-General some weeks ago, yet he refused to act when repeatedly approached by one of his own constituents—a victim of one of his Labor colleagues. It was the sheer hypocrisy of the Premier's attacks on the Governor-General that prompted one of D'Arcy's victims to approach me after her local member, the Premier, failed her. I can only conclude that this new-found concern by the Premier for victims of sexual abuse was based more on getting his face on the nightly news than on any real thought for the plight of the victims.

This victim of D'Arcy had issues she wanted to clear up as part of her personal healing process and wished to ensure that no other victims of child abuse had to be revictimised time and again in the same way she had been. I have received detailed correspondence from the solicitor who represents this victim detailing the history of run-arounds and fob-offs she received from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and from her local member, the Premier. I table that for the benefit of the House.

This lady was only six or seven when she fell victim to the most awful and despicable acts, and she suffered in silence for more than 25 years before becoming a witness in the court that had D'Arcy locked up. On 10 November 2000 the lady wrote to the Attorney-General to draw his attention to her issues. Three days later she got a call from one of the Attorney-General's officers. Then on the 16th the lady met with that officer. The concerns she raised included: the role of the victims support service; the need for names to be suppressed and a closed court if adult victims were to come forward; personal and family harassment from the media; options available in order to make a change; suggestions for change to the treatment of victims in sexual abuse cases; and that the avenues for compensation were cut off due to the offences occurring in the sixties. The officer said that he would pass the concerns to his superior in the Attorney's office.

In December the victim called the officer about the lack of response, despite being promised that her matter would receive urgent attention. In January she again rang the officer because she had had no response. In February the victim again rang the office to express her anger that she had still not received a response. On 9 February the victim finally received a letter from the Attorney's office. While she says that the letter was polite and encouraging, there was little effect. In fact, they gave her the phone number of someone else she should speak to.

On 9 March 2001 this victim contacted her local member, who happens to also be the Premier. The victim outlined the full case to the Premier's staff member and specifically requested a meeting with her local member. The next day the Premier's office called back to say that prior to

meeting with her local member she should speak to his liaison officer. The victim then had to outline her story for the liaison officer. On 23 March the victim had more detailed talks with the liaison officer and again requested a meeting with the Premier. This lady tells me that she wanted to help change the system so adult victims would receive more support and would not have to endure the trauma she was subjected to.

She was then told that the best person for her to speak to was one of the Premier's advisers more senior than the liaison officer, so on 30 April the victim spoke to the adviser and told her story again. Again she specifically asked for a meeting with the Premier. The adviser told her he would see what he could do and would get back in touch. On 2 May this more senior adviser contacted her and explained that there was no point in her meeting with the Premier because he would not be able to do anything for her. This victim told me that she continued to insist that she wanted to see her local member, but no meeting was ever actually offered. The victim says that she felt helpless and that the Premier, her local member, was not interested in meeting with her, a victim of D'Arcy. Not only did the Premier not meet with her; his determination to avoid meeting with her led to her being revictimised through having to tell her story over and over again—not once but three times—to different members of the Premier's staff who ultimately told her that there was nothing that could be done.

For those who might not remember, D'Arcy is a former longstanding member of this House. He was elected as the Labor member for Woodridge in 1977 and, with the exception of one term of parliament, he served until January 2000. In 1998 D'Arcy was charged with numerous child sex offences, but in the environment where Labor held government by just one seat the Premier needed his vote. So he stayed on, not just as a member of parliament but also as Deputy Speaker and as Chairman of Committees—positions entirely within the gift of the Premier and the ALP. He stayed on as a member of parliament for some 14 months. Here was a man actually charged with the most heinous of crimes against young children sitting in exalted positions conferred upon him by the Premier.

Let us look at some of the things the Premier had to say at the time. On 30 August 1998, after a 45-minute meeting with Mr D'Arcy and his lawyer, the Premier said—

... if charges were laid, it would be normal for an MP to stand down from their official job in Parliament. But whether he remains in Parliament, that is a matter for the individual. No Premier can force a Member from Parliament.

Of course, the Premier could have sacked him from the position of Deputy Speaker or Chairman of Committees, but he did not. On 31 August 1998 on ABC Radio, when asked about the presumption of innocence in relation to D'Arcy, the Premier said—

Well the person—

that is, D'Arcy—

is exactly right. Presumed innocent until proven guilty.

On 1 September 1998 on ABC News, after suggesting the member might stand down because of ill health, he said—

He in fact has a medical condition. He has had a bad heart for some time. Now, I don't want to go into the details, but I know that, and that was one of the concerns I had. It was a humanitarian concern, and having seen the press reports up to the time of that meeting, and how they had been treating him, I was concerned about his health, what impact it would have on the family, as well as the Government.

On 2 September 1998 on ABC Radio, explaining why he would accept the vote of Mr D'Arcy despite asking him to resign, he said—

If the Member was not charged, then of course we would accept that Member's vote. There is a presumption of innocence ...

D'Arcy was first charged by police on 29 October 1998. He then sat in this parliament for about 14 months. In that time he attended 45 sitting days in parliament. At the time the Premier blamed the opposition because it would not provide a pair. Try as we might, we could not find any reference to looking after the victims. The victims were not important. All that mattered was keeping D'Arcy in parliament so Labor stayed in power and Mr Beattie remained Premier.

Let us contrast the Premier's ardent defence of his Labor colleague with his politically motivated attack on the Governor-General, who admits to showing poor judgment but who nonetheless is not a charged paedophile. The Premier said in the *Australian* on 24 December 2001—

Compassion is a very important thing, and while it may be very difficult for the Governor-General to do, if I were him I'd ask the Prime Minister for a week off to try and help those victims.

He went on—

He's in a very powerful position, and now he has to use that to help with the healing process.

Well, that is just what the Premier's constituent wanted—the healing process. On 22 February 2002 on ABC Radio the Premier said—

My concerns are for the victims, and my other concerns are for the office.

The Governor-General could stand aside, until there was an appropriate investigation nationally.

I hate being involved in these things personally, because it is agonising. But these events largely happened in Queensland, but as Premier, I have to provide some leadership on it, no matter how difficult it is. I haven't enjoyed this at all, but I felt I had to provide some leadership ...

Then he went on to say—

At the end of the day, the victims are the ones we have to think about—people who are trying to put their lives back together.

That is just what his constituent was trying to do. He said—

Our children are our future. They are the most important part of our species. Really, you cannot allow them to be violated. It ruins their lives, and everybody has an obligation.

In this very House on 21 February this year the Premier said—

... I remind the parliament that before the latest allegations I indicated publicly before Christmas that the Governor-General should meet with the victims.

When he is under the glare of public scrutiny and political pressure, the Premier typically accuses others of neglect, which is exactly what he is guilty of in this case of D'Arcy and this victim trying to receive some support and help.

The Premier has acted out of the most abhorrent kind of political opportunity. When he needed D'Arcy—the charged child rapist—to keep his hands on political power, the victims of his crimes were irrelevant next to the presumption of innocence. When Labor figures around the country were baying for the Governor-General's blood, the Premier thought there was a photo opportunity in it for him. But there was no photo opportunity for D'Arcy's victim, so she got short shrift. There were no comforting words for her, just the cold shoulder. That is unacceptable. The Premier owes that victim an apology. He should take his own advice and take some time off to consider his position.

Caloundra Hospital

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (11.40 a.m.): I rise today to canvass an issue that affects all of my constituents and everyone on the Sunshine Coast. I refer to the appalling lack of services at the Caloundra Hospital. I also give notice that I will table a petition of 1,870 signatures which were collected in one week, with more signatures to come. The petition sets out the general community concern about the lack of services at the Caloundra Hospital. The petition reads—

That the Premier Mr Peter Beattie immediately makes available the necessary funds to ensure that the Caloundra City Hospital receives sufficient financial resources for qualified staff, equipment and all other utilities necessary, to ensure that this Hospital functions to its fullest capacity.

Your petitioners therefore request the House to:

Ensure both Hospital Theatres are fully operational

All Hospital beds are fully functional

The new quick recovery wards are fully staffed and equipped

Provide funding for staff and equipment to service the 16 bed Rehabilitation Unit

That there is sufficient Specialists, GP and Medical Staff permanently employed to allow this Hospital to make available to patients a seven day, twenty four hour, Out-patients and Emergency Service

Reinstate the outpatients Physiotherapy Clinic

Place in position additional financial resources into the Caloundra City Hospital Dental Clinic

Employ more dentists so as to reduce the extended waiting time that patients must endure waiting for dental treatment.

This petition covers the issues that are of grave concern to people in my electorate. Whilst the petition mentions the dental clinic, it needs to be firmly put on the record that when the federal government ceased funding dental services throughout the states in 1996 I was the Treasurer and put funding into the budget to cover the moneys that we would no longer get from the federal government. It has been said by some in my electorate—those with ALP tendencies it would seem, seeing it was the ALP candidate who ran for the seat of Caloundra at the last election—that in fact I had done nothing to improve dental services. I would like to see the

current Labor government put the same sort of money into the budget that I put into the budget to increase dental services throughout this state.

I also raise the concerns of my constituents in Caloundra and Kawana that, even though an extra \$5 million was finally put into the last budget by the Health Minister to improve dental services, none of that went to Caloundra or Kawana dental clinics. It was believed that there was not enough urgency and that the lists were not long enough. The waiting time is now over two years to get just a general examination for teeth. It is nearly as long for dentures. Getting emergency treatment is very difficult. People have to stand outside, rain, hail or shine, in winter and in summer, at 5.30 in the morning to try to get an appointment when the dental clinic opens at 8 o'clock or 8.30. The usual practice is that there are one or two dentists operating; very few of those people queuing can get an appointment. Whether they are in pain or not, they are not treated. This is an absolute disgrace.

I further highlight to the House the trials of another constituent, Mr Ronald Elmer. He had an operation in March 2001 which required him to get a colostomy bowel bag. He was told that the bag would be removed in six weeks, maybe a little longer. He saw the surgeon at Nambour Hospital in May when the six weeks was up and was told that he may well have to wait another six weeks. He went back again and was told that he would have to wait six months. This happened in March 2001. At the end of January this year he was told that it would be early February. He again rang on 11 February and was told that the hospital did not know when it would be able to do it and he would have to wait. He has now been told that his colostomy bag will not be removed before the end of the year.

This is a very simple procedure. This man has now had to wear a colostomy bag for nearly 18 months when he did not need to wear one and has been told that he will have to wear it for another eight months. That is a positive disgrace. He is a pensioner and is currently looking to see how much it will cost to have this procedure done privately. This Health Minister has a lot to answer for.

Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (11.45 a.m.): Drug abuse is a problem that faces many communities in Queensland. In the Mackay electorate, a community driven group has made great strides to address the problem and to assist those with substance abuse problems. Today I rise to speak about the efforts of that group, the Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership. Drugs have been an issue in Mackay for many years prior to the formation of the partnership. Like many communities, it is common knowledge that drugs are available in Mackay. Mackay also has several bkie gangs based in the region and the link between some gangs and illegal drug production is well documented. Media coverage of the Mackay drug problem began in earnest in 1998 when a Mackay mother told the story of how drugs had devastated the life of her son and their family. Other frustrated families began to speak out through the media and a debate ensued between concerned members of the Mackay public, local government and the state government about the lack of action on drug use in Mackay.

I arranged a meeting between relevant community representatives and the Minister for Health, the Hon. Wendy Edmond. The director of ATODS at Queensland Health gave a commitment to review ATOD services in Mackay. At the same time, I initiated the formation of the Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership. The partnership's inaugural meeting was held in August 2000. Prior to the election in February 2001, the Beattie Labor government gave a commitment to establish a 10-bed alcohol and drug rehabilitation service in Mackay. The partnership set about developing a model for the centre in June last year. The Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership undertook extensive consultation throughout the Mackay region, including Sarina and the Whitsundays. It is the first group in Queensland to come together as a community with government to develop a model of this kind and it must be commended for its initiative. The partnership briefed me on its activities but at no stage did I interfere in the process, so the result is a community outcome, not a political one. I was there to assist the group whenever it needed it.

Drug and alcohol rehabilitation is a community problem and solutions need to come from the community to effect real results. However, the role of government in implementing the good work of the partnership is vital. Health Minister Edmond has been extremely supportive of the work done by the Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership. Minister Edmond met with members of the partnership and me in December last year to examine the model. She

praised the group for its efforts and continues to be a strong advocate for the establishment of the service. There is still work to be done, and I have asked the Health Minister for her department's assistance to finetune the model. I want to ensure that we have the right model for our community.

The model has been recognised for its inclusive approach to providing services for drug rehabilitation. A paper on the Mackay model was presented to the National Conference on Drugs held in Brisbane in December 2001 by Councillor Deirdre Comerford and Mr David Goodinson, coordinator of ATODS Mackay. The conference included a line-up of international and national guest speakers. The 10-bed residential and community support service would offer assessment and referral to other services. It would also offer short-term residential and community care for males and females 16 years and over who have an alcohol and/or drug problem. The service would be non-medical and, as such, the atmosphere would be homely, with a shared culture for staff and clients. In essence, the service is a social detoxification. As such, clients would be those who are free from acute medical, surgical or psychiatric illnesses or complications that are unlikely to advance to a more severe withdrawal phase. The process would be voluntary and designed for those seeking change in their lives. The social care model has an academic origin in studies of sociology and anthropology. People who present for help are assisted under the model by understanding the meaning of the person, their life experiences and how they interact with the world. Different people have different ways of seeing and interpreting the world around us.

Consideration was given to a model that would recognise the importance of significant others and family in understanding a person's experience of addiction and health. The cultural, economic and socio-political significance and disadvantaged status of Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander communities was also a consideration in the design of the service. At least one bed in the service would be secured for persons from the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander communities. At least one staff member would also be of Aboriginal or Islander descent. And while the model acknowledges and utilises state and federal government resources, the service aims to remove the sense of alienation that many might feel when dealing with social structures, including government.

The Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who have worked hard to develop a great model to help those affected by drugs in our community. The eventual establishment of a service based on the partnership's model encompasses the delivery of an important election promise that will have a significant impact on the health and social wellbeing of people in the Mackay community.

Centenary of Federation; *Ship of Hope*

Ms PHILLIPS (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.51 a.m.): Recently, I was privileged to be present at the launch of the *Ship of Hope*, a project funded by this government's Centenary of Federation program. As part of the project, the Migrant Resource Centre, Townsville/Thuringowa Limited, built a monument in the form of a ship, the *Ship of Hope*. In this large ship's construction, a flowerbed containing flowers of many different colours symbolises the beauty and harmony in diversity. This monument, placed in a newly developed part of Pioneer Park behind the Weir State School in Thuringowa, is adjacent to the tail of an almost 50-metre long rainbow serpent, the biggest ever produced in Australia, representing the many Aboriginal cultures of Australia. This rainbow serpent is another Migrant Resource Centre project.

Over 1,300 people from all over Australia who have lived in the north Queensland region provided their names. Each name was written on an individual brass plaque with their country of origin and year of arrival in the region. These engraved plaques have been placed in alphabetical order around the ship, symbolising the act of immigration to this region and the reality of hope for building a home in this land. Many people provided names on behalf of their parents and grandparents.

The *Ship of Hope* concept was developed by Favardin Daliri, manager of the MRC, and his hardworking committee. It provides a dramatic, concrete record of all who have come to our region from overseas countries. On the day of the launch, I launched a publication called *Proud to be Australian*, also produced by the MRC. The book records short stories from 44 Australians from different cultural backgrounds who are living or have lived in our local area. These 44 individuals are not only proud Australians but also proud north Queenslanders. I quote from the preface of this booklet—

Australia, as a nation built through immigration on the backdrop of age-old indigenous cultures and traditions, has much to celebrate in relation to our achievements as a peaceful nation. In different parts of the world, cultural differences are being seen as a threat of an unknown reality. In many parts of world, differences of culture, race, religion and class form the basis for conflict, hatred and war. Australia, however, has the potential to make these differences a means of strength, power and progress. Here we can draw on different cultures as a means of accessing knowledge and different ways of seeing the world as well as different paths to progress and development which can all be complementary and add value to one another in this country called 'Australia'.

In launching *Proud to be Australian*, it prompted me to think about why I am proud to be an Australian—and the list is certainly a long one. This country has been and is home to some of the most talented and interesting people history has every known—from the man who gave us the Hills hoist to the man who has just given us our first gold medal in the Winter Olympics, just by taking his time. We excel in science, the arts, food, sport and literature. Our achievements include the black box flight recorder, plastic bank notes, wine casks, pacemakers and penicillin. Of course, we are a nation of heroes—brave men and women who have faced immeasurable odds, both at war and at home, and who have come out on top.

Basically, I decided that we are a nation of good all-rounders, and that is really something to be proud of. Maybe one of the reasons we are such good all-rounders is that we come from all around the world. Australia is one of the most culturally diverse nations on earth. We are heart and home to people from the Middle East, Europe, UK, Asia, China, Africa. The list is limited only by the countries on the earth. Some of these people are first generation Australians, many second or third; but only a small percentage of us, apart from our indigenous people, could lay claim to firmer ties. We are a nation of boat and plane people who have made their lives here, raised their families and contributed their own cultural uniqueness and knowledge so that this country could move ahead—people who are a vital part of our unique local history and without whom we would have had much less to be proud of.

I congratulate the MRC and all involved in creating the *Ship of Hope*, which is such a tangible reminder of what it means to be Australian. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the MRC on all its activities.

Queensland Institute of Medical Research; Mr C. Berghofer

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.57 a.m.): The Beattie government is pursuing strategies to establish Queensland as Australia's Smart State. The new comprehensive cancer research centre at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, the QIMR, has the dual task of creating cures and creating jobs. The \$60 million has been funded jointly by the Queensland government, federal government and an anonymous American philanthropist. The Queensland government contributed \$20 million. The commitment of the American philanthropist speaks for itself and shows the high international regard for QIMR and its research teams.

QIMR is a linchpin in Queensland's drive to be the Smart State and has also been successful in attracting a number of grants from a Washington DC based national institute of health. Queensland Health provides \$4.85 million annually to QIMR for infrastructure and salaries to support the world-class research. The value we place on this research is reflected by the fact that support for QIMR is 75 per cent of the Queensland health research budget. The centre will play a key role in the Beattie government's Smart State strategy.

Recently I had the pleasure of attending a benefit dinner for QIMR at which it was announced that Toowoomba's most prominent businessman, Mr Clive Berghofer, generously donated \$5.04 million towards the operating costs of the new facility. Mr Berghofer's contribution is the largest made by an individual for cancer research in Queensland and, as far as is known, in Australia by an Australian. But, most importantly, as QIMR Director Professor Michael Good said—

In the eyes of medical researchers and anyone who has had or will develop cancer, what Clive has given this time cannot be bought or measured—for hope and health have no price tags.

I would like the House to note Professor Good's words—'what Clive has given this time'. Those who know of this man and the people of Toowoomba would be well aware of his generosity—the enormous contribution he has made to the development of Toowoomba as a former mayor, state member and humble citizen—and of his passion for his home town and its people.

I shall briefly outline for the House part of the unending list of Clive Berghofer's achievements that I know in some way, shape or form have touched every person of Toowoomba. He was an alderman from 1973, mayor to 1992 and member for Toowoomba South from 1986 to 1991. He had great success as mayor and member and readily mixed with

all people from all levels of the community. This gave him a particular insight into the needs of the community, which was a fundamental reason for his popularity and effectiveness as a mayor and member.

During his time as mayor he oversaw major projects; namely, the construction of Lake Cressbrook, the municipal library, multi-storey parking and the bus interchange. He was one of Toowoomba's major land developers and offered land that was affordable to all. He developed more than 10,000 allotments. He was a staunch advocate to 'shop locally and put your money back into the city'. He likes not only to shop locally but also to employ local tradespeople. Ninety-nine per cent of property owned by Clive is in Toowoomba. He was a major sponsor and patron of sporting and community groups in Toowoomba. He was owner of the Wilsonton shopping centre, Village Fair shopping centre and Drayton Villas retirement units. Clive was instrumental in opening and developing the Wilsonton area. The Wilsonton Hotel had the largest volume of sales of liquor in Australia in its time.

He is listed in the top 200 wealthiest people in Australia as an individual, as opposed to being part of a corporation. Probably the most important thing about Clive is that he truly loves Toowoomba. He not only supports local groups but also donates his equipment and men to level a school sports field or deliver dirt from one of his developments to a group that may need it. There would be very few Toowoomba people, schools, community groups or sports groups who have not at some time been touched by the generosity and fervent force of Clive Berghofer. I commend him for his contribution to Toowoomba, and on behalf of the Toowoomba residents I thank him for his passion and overwhelming generosity.

Cape York Justice Study Report

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.00 p.m.): I rise to speak about another matter where the Premier and his government have a disgraceful history of being all show and no go, having more stunts than Evel Knievel and still no substance. In December 1999, the Premier hailed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's task force report as being a blueprint for change for Queensland's indigenous communities. Two years later, the Premier announced the Cape York Justice Study. The report has been a landmark study.

There has been lots of rhetoric, fancy phrases, media moments and photo opportunities for the Premier, but what do the indigenous communities themselves think about the application of Mr Beattie's media tart antics to the problems that they face? The 17 communities that form the elected representatives of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council under the Community Services Act have universally condemned the Beattie government's paternalistic actions in failing to consult with either the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board or the Aboriginal Coordinating Council before commissioning the Fitzgerald report. In the public gallery today are five members of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council—the ACC: Mr Bob Sands, CEO of the Kowanyama council; Mr Lloyd Fourmile, Deputy Chairperson of the Yarrabah Community Council; Mr Ted Wymarra, Manager of the ACC; Mr Ken Bone, Mayor of the Cherbourg Community Council; and Mr Alfred Lacey, Deputy Chair of the ACC. In November last year the Premier said that his government would report within two months on how his government's actions and resources could be refocused to meet the challenges set down in the Fitzgerald report. The government still has not made any of those announcements as to its plans.

The Beattie cabinet considered these issues on three occasions, the most recent being yesterday when it reviewed a secret submission on these issues. There are too many secrets. The government should be open about its process in dealing with these problems and embracing bodies such as the ACC in its consultation processes. As such, I table four submissions from the indigenous communities in the Cape York region: the Kowanyama Aboriginal Council, the Hope Vale Aboriginal Council, the Umagico Aboriginal Council and the Pormpuraaw Community Council. The government did not want these submissions to see the light of day. But that is too bad: they are now on the public record for all Queenslanders to read and access. I also table a copy of the ACC's summary of community responses to the Cape York justice report, which appears in the ACC's April special edition newsletter.

These are some of the damning comments from the ACC in relation to the Beattie government's consultation process on the Fitzgerald report: 'The government's consultation process is flawed'; and 'Councils ... are still concerned at the attitude displayed by the government and senior public servants bypassing the councils, listening and communicating with

non-elected people about our future in Cape York'. They are treating these people as different and out of kilter with real life. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that they are normal human beings like you and I. Further comments are—

Vague and uncertain consultation arrangements to date have placed communities at a severe disadvantage in addressing the Cape York Justice Study report. The report has not been, in any real sense, accessible to most indigenous people.

The ACC goes on to state—

Councils believe many of the problems identified in the report are a result of inactivity on the part of the state government over the past 12 years.

And—

The government has failed to support and implement suggestions for solutions to economic problems in communities suggested by councils in the past.

This next comment from the ACC is the killer—

If the Beattie government had bothered to properly consult with indigenous communities, it could have saved itself and the taxpayers of Queensland the \$500,000 cost of the Fitzgerald report.

Further, the ACC states—

Any strategy to address alcohol, violence and crime issues on the cape should seek to understand the fundamental link between aspects of community dysfunction and the absence of economic security and wellbeing. Community based efforts to break the current poverty/welfare cycle should be supported as a matter of priority.

Further, the ACC states—

The Cape York justice report fails to look beyond the surface of social and economic problems experienced by the council and its community. The causes are much deeper than alcohol and other substance abuse.

It is crucial that Queensland's indigenous people are listened to and heard when tackling the problem.

Time expired.

Bayside Adolescent Boarding Incorporated

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (12.05 p.m.): I rise to inform the House that yesterday I had the privilege of attending an open day conducted by BABI, Bayside Adolescent Boarding Incorporated. This community based group is located in the Lytton electorate. I am well aware that the honourable member for Lytton is a great supporter of this organisation.

Mr Lucas: Hear, hear! A great organisation.

Mr ENGLISH: BABI was established in 1983 at the urging of Father Wally Dethlef. He is a Catholic priest who saw a great need in the Wynnum area because a number of young people were unemployed and homeless and at risk of getting into crime. Research has indicated that one week on the streets is one week too long for many children because of the risks posed to them in that one week by drugs and prostitution and what they have to do to try to make ends meet and to try to keep food in their mouths. We cannot afford to have our children on the streets for any period.

The greatest poverty suffered by the homeless is not the poverty of resources but the poverty of relationships. The Burdekin inquiry highlighted BABI as one of the best community responses to youth homelessness. At this point it is important to acknowledge the work done by the member for Ashgrove in preparing the Burdekin report and his work with the Human Rights Commission.

Currently, BABI is under the stewardship of a fantastic board led by the chair, Bill Reuter. Other board members are Ross Farley, Claude Huppy, Di Fletcher and Jamie Lyons. This board puts its desire to protect children in the Wynnum and Redlands area into action and has a number of committed workers. Yesterday I met the manager, Lynn Rose, who spent an hour with me discussing the programs and introducing me to the workers who put into action their desire to minimise youth homelessness.

The counselling services are run by the coordinator, Bev Griffiths, and social workers Tracy and Matt. They do a fantastic job. Daveen does a lot of great work in trying to find housing for youths who are at risk of getting onto the streets. They have a federally funded employment program called Youthco. The manager of that program, Ann Chandra, is doing a lot of great work. Unlike other job network providers where the profits go into people's pockets, it is important to note that any profits made by the Youthco arm of BABI are poured back into BABI to support

other services. This is a good example of a community based employment network using its profits to further advance the community.

Daina Fenyhourgh is a youth support worker. She is doing a lot of work to try to keep children in their homes so that they do not end up on the streets or in care, being a further drag on the resources of the state. She is trying to implement early intervention programs to keep children safe in their homes. BABI has a quite innovative youth justice program under the leadership of David Petersen. This is one program that I want to learn a lot more about. David is doing a lot of work on the bay islands, because as we know the transition from primary school to high school is quite traumatic for many children, particularly in the electorate of Redlands where children grow up in small isolated communities on the bay islands and then have to come across to the mainland to go to high school and a lot of their social support networks are lost. David is doing a lot of work on that transition phase to try to provide those young people with support. David is also running an innovative graffiti program, about which I will be speaking to members of the education subcommittee of the graffiti task force. I think that they should get down to Wynnum and look at some of the great work that David and his team are doing.

Finally, of course—

Mr Lucas: The first graffiti trailer in Queensland was a Wynnum graffiti trailer.

Mr ENGLISH: Obviously the hard work of the member for Lytton has come to fruition again. The family support program run by Robyn Patterson acknowledges the need to work with the children and to make sure that they are safe and supported. We also need to work with parents and to make sure that parents have the necessary skills to provide a safe and supportive environment for their children.

Time expired.

Housing, Gladstone Electorate

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.10 p.m.): I rise to speak on a matter that has been raised in this House on a number of occasions by me and by others in a different genre. Industrialisation in my electorate is a very positive initiative. It creates a lot of jobs. Some are short term—for example, jobs in construction—and many are permanent. A permanent job is a great asset to anyone supporting a family.

However, along with that industrialisation there must be a comparable provision of infrastructure. That includes emergency services and necessary services such as housing, which is the subject I will speak on today. Usually the Gladstone and Calliope shires run at a rental margin of about three per cent. At the moment 15 per cent to 20 per cent of the available private rental stock has been taken off the market. Bechtel, which has taken on the responsibility of providing housing for employees of the Comalco smelter, has already leased a significant number of properties. It does depend on who you speak to, but the figures available to me indicate that a range of between 150 to 350 properties have been leased in the Gladstone and Boyne-Tannum region for employees of Comalco. That is a significant number of properties that will no longer be available to the general community.

There are a number of other problems. Rent increases have taken place in the vicinity of \$30 to \$100 a week. If I have time, I will tell members some stories of families which have been displaced, not because their homes have ceased to be available but because the rent has increased to such an extent that, as a family on a fixed income, they can no longer afford it.

Property agents have contacted owners and given them advice—perhaps even encouraged them—on the timing of rental increases. I heard a radio interview with a real estate agent who said—perhaps rightly—that rentals in the area had not risen for a number of years and now was the time to put rents up because the demand was there. Implicit in that statement is a failure to recognise that a significant increase in rentals adversely affects those people who are renting and who cannot afford to pay the higher amount. It has been said that rental increases are used as an artificial means of removing tenants from a house and it is then re-rented at a quite inflated price.

In our region, there are no alternatives for affordable housing. We have a number of agencies which do a terrific job of providing rental houses for low-income families. Housing Queensland does a wonderful job. The community rent scheme, the tenancy advocacy group and a number of emergency housing organisations are all facing the same constraints and challenges. For instance, the community rent scheme had been managing 55 properties. In the

last three months it has been given notice to quit on seven of those properties. That has significantly reduced its ability to provide housing. These are the sorts of problems that are coming to light.

In relation to the Comalco project, the work force is expected to peak at 1,500 during the construction phase. In all probability, Aldoga will be tacked onto Comalco during Comalco's construction, and its peak construction work force is estimated to be 3,500 people.

I have heard many stories from people who have come into my office. I started to get anecdotal information; therefore to get a clear picture I actually invited people to contact me about the problems they were facing because I wanted to gain a broad understanding of the relevant issues. Mainly what is happening is that, as people's leases expire or their rent becomes due, they are contacted by the real estate agent or, in some instances, by the owner and told that their rental will increase. Whether or not they have been in that property for a significant period of time does not appear to be of any importance or have any merit.

I remind the government—and I have written to the office of the Minister for Housing—that a significantly increased level of funding is needed urgently so that the emergency housing sector is able to provide rental housing for low-income families. What is more important, and probably more achievable, is an increase in the funds allocated to the public housing sector. I know that Robert Schwartz, the Minister for Housing, has a real heart for public housing tenants and their needs. My electorate has experienced a couple of housing booms, with a large number of houses being built at Barney Point and Toolooa. I am aware that the department is trying to avoid similar blocks of commission housing, but the alternative of people living under bridges, in tents and in backyards is completely unacceptable in this day and age. The lead time on this industrialisation means the lack of housing is also unacceptable, and I urge the government to address this housing matter.

National Australia Bank, Branch Closures

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (12.15 p.m.): It is of interest to me and to the One Nation Party to know why we always have to rely on this government to wave the state and national flags, as we saw last week. The One Nation Party acknowledges this but asks why it has taken so long. I wish that all other Labor governments and, more particularly, the federal coalition—which remains quite silent on national pride—would follow suit, speaking up forcefully and presenting Australia and its member states as God's own country, producing by dint of a work ethic second to none in the world goods which are arguably the best in the world. We might send the government One Nation membership forms.

There is no shame, nor should there be, in waving the flag. It feels good to belong to a nation proudly strutting its stuff on the international stage. Can we take it then that this government is also opposed to globalism and its tendency to strip nations of self-determination in the interests of a few obscenely well funded companies and their senior staff?

There is an institution in Australia operating against the best interests of this country and it is called the National Australia Bank. The flying of the flag outside their buildings, whether state or national, would be a lie. How is it that the group of companies making up the National Australia Bank can continue to use that name when clearly its god is money, not people—and certainly not nations?

The National Australia Bank recently announced its intention to restructure its organisation, with the closure of 56 rural branches across Australia, seven of which are in Queensland, with a projected loss of 2,050 staff nationally. Queensland has already lost 85 branches since 1996. The NAB says that this will save it approximately \$370 million over two years. This is rather strange when one considers that its 2001 financial statement reveals a profit of \$2.1 billion. Although this is very much reduced by the loss of \$3.6 billion in a write-down of Homeside, the NAB must surely agree that such an incident would hopefully not recur in the near future and history demonstrates that such losses regenerate to better profits as a result of further investments developing.

When banks close, they say 'Go to the post office'. Post offices can cope with minor transactions, but they cannot provide personal banking services. Despite the popularity of ATMs, they will never address total banking needs.

I understand that a process of industrial and court action is planned and I look forward to either a reversal of the NAB's plan or, at worst, a compromise. We live in an age when, due to

the effects of multinational control and the centralisation of affairs in our cities and overseas, regional Australia is losing its voice and its heart. Banks must face the reality that there are certain institutions which form the hub of activities in regional communities and provide services vital to the lifeblood of these regions.

I would encourage government to send a clear message to the National Australia Bank and any other bank considering the same option that whilst they have the right to reasonable profit, they also have responsibilities. Part of these responsibilities include active support for the people who afford them the special conditions our banks enjoy. I would not necessarily support the push to have NAB customers as a whole transfer to other banks, as this might not serve the purpose of saving those jobs and, indeed, might lead to further job losses with the NAB in urban Queensland as well.

The ANZ Bank has indicated a possible buy-out and a continuation of services, employing staff as normal, but what substance is there to that proposal? We have seen nothing. To governments I say: Fight the banks. Do not submit.

Energex Community Rescue Service

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (12.19 p.m.): Today I rise to bring to the attention of the House the great work done by an exceptional community group and also a well-known Sunshine Coast community member who lives within my electorate of Kawana on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. I speak of the Queensland Energex Helicopter Rescue Service and Mr Don Moffat or, as some of us on the Sunshine Coast like to refer to him, the 'Big Don'.

Don was born in the Kingaroy area. I believe he served as an Iriquois helicopter pilot in the Vietnam conflict in the seventies. He was formerly the Chairman of Tourism Sunshine Coast. I was privileged to serve as a director on that board under Don, as I was Caloundra's representative from the council and he was one of two elected representatives from the tourism industry. Don is now the Chairman of the Energex Community Rescue Service. This rescue service is an incredible asset to our entire region. The late Des Scanlan was the former chairman and he, too, had a passion for the Sunshine Coast community. A rescue helicopter now carries his name.

Energex Community Rescue undertakes vital search, rescue and medical missions right across south-east Queensland. They are a non-profit organisation, which means they are owned by the communities they serve. They are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks in the year at no cost to patients. Last year alone they attended 549 medical call-outs, including motor vehicle, motorcycle and horse riding accidents, as well as farming, camping and surf accidents. In addition, the chopper has completed 103 tasks with the Queensland police, including the search for and apprehension of the suspect relating to the Childers backpacker hostel fire. Of the 103 tasks, there were search and rescues, including the rescue of two climbers from Mount Tibrogargan, part of the Glasshouse Mountains on the Sunshine Coast—a beautiful area of Queensland.

Since the service started more than 22 years ago, countless lives have been saved due to this rescue service. Accidents happen when and where we least expect them to, and we should realise that Energex Community Rescue is always there to help, thanks to the dedicated crew, volunteers and various medical teams. The Energex Community Rescue area extends from Brisbane to the north of Bundaberg, south as far as northern New South Wales and inland to the Darling Downs. Energex has been the rescue service's major sponsor and supporter since 1994. Over this time I believe some 6,300 rescues have been conducted, helping to save countless numbers of lives.

I draw to the attention of the House the fact that, recently, upon receiving my last Energex power bill, I did not find any mention of whether I was still a contributor to this well respected and utilised helicopter rescue service. I would encourage all community members and honourable members to be contributors. I called the bill information phone number. Having changed my residential address in the middle of last year, I needed to change my power connection and billing details. I was advised that, yes, I had previously been contributing through my power bill. However, possibly through human error during the changeover, my contribution was not automatically switched over. Therefore, I suggest that all Energex customers be subscribers and check their bills and financial commitment to the Energex Community Rescue Service—\$2 per bill, or per quarter, which adds up to \$8 per year. That is money well spent within our community. A better process perhaps would be for all Energex consumers, excluding pensioners, to be levied

unless they specifically request not to give that \$2 per quarter. Although I might cop criticism for this suggestion, I sincerely believe that the Energex Community Rescue Service is deserving of our society's commitment.

On 23 March at the Maroochy airport I attended the Energex rescue reunion, which brought together crew and volunteers with people they have helped in the past. The celebration included tours of the hanger and chopper. Also, I will mention that one of its extraordinary former patients, Pam Meacle, undertook a walk up Mount Emu to help raise awareness of the service. Ten years ago, on 21 March 1992, Pam was halfway across a pedestrian crossing on Aerodrome Road, Maroochydore, when she was hit by a four-wheel-drive. She suffered devastating injuries.

Time expired.

Caboolture Shire Council, Water Rates

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (12.25 p.m.): I am sure everyone in this room would agree that they do not mind paying for what they get. Equally, I am sure that they do not like being ripped off. The ratepayers in the Caboolture shire also agree. Under the present council, they feel hard done by. They are upset and angry and believe the council is ripping them off with regard to their water rates. I, along with only two councillors, Lynette Devereaux and John McNaught, attended a meeting convened in the Ningi Hall on Wednesday, 13 February to discuss the new expensive water rates charged by the Caboolture Shire Council. I can honestly say that the crowd swelled to over 180 at one point and they remained angry at the council for the entire two-hour meeting. Their main concerns were as follows: lack of notice—people were unaware of the huge increase; that they now receive two rate notices a year instead of the previous one; and that the user pay system was unfair.

Residents in Morayfield such as Angie Bell and Neil Hoddinett, whose water meters were read six months later than households in other areas, were charged at the new rate of 60c and not 41c, which is certainly what they believe should have been the case. Councillors Devereaux and McNaught have been trying to put the case of the ratepayers to the conservative mayor and councillors for weeks, but to no avail. Councillor Devereaux even put up a notice of motion questioning its legality, but to no avail.

I agree with them that the system is unfair as it discriminates against all larger users of water. The council is trying to tell ratepayers that it has introduced a user pays system, but it is not a user pays system in the true sense. Households are allowed to use 350 kilolitres of water and pay 60c a kilolitre, but over that it jumps to 95c and the more people use, the heftier the price tag. That is bad luck for people if they love to garden, have a pool or belong to a large family. Can honourable members imagine the outcry if Telstra told its users, 'You can have 350 local calls per year at 60c per call, but if you go over that, the same service will cost you 95c per call.' There would be outrage, and rightly so.

The price tag for water under the Caboolture council has increased from 32c to 60c over two budgets. It is blaming national competition policy, but all other close councils I checked had increased their water by an absolute minimum. Brisbane was five per cent, Ipswich was four per cent, the Gold Coast was four per cent, and the Caloundra City Council had no increase in water rates at all over the past two years.

Mr Cummins: They have good councillors, that council.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: It is a good council.

The only reason the Caboolture Shire Council has introduced this system is to boost revenue and nothing more. They say their objective is to get people to conserve water, but if they were fair dinkum they would simply subsidise a tank for every household. The recent decision of the Brisbane City Council to reintroduce water tanks is commendable. There are enormous advantages in collecting and using millions of litres of rain water instead of having it running into the gutters. This is a genuine attempt at water conservation. Unfortunately for us, the Caboolture Shire Council knows that would reduce its profits. Former Caboolture Shire Council Mayor Tom McLoughlin estimates that council will make a profit of \$16 million.

This increase is hurting people. It is as popular as the council's increased dump fees. A recent quote in a local paper read—

Since Caboolture Council introduced tip fees for local residents last year, the side effects have been very dramatic and not very pretty.

Recently, I went for a drive through the national park on Bribie Island with local environmentalist John Ward. We counted 43 discarded tyres in the first 50 metres, not to mention the two car bodies, fridge, household rubbish and cement tailings. John commented that he had never seen it so bad. Council was charging a high fee for the disposal of tyres, and now I am told it simply will not accept them. This has caused yet another problem. Hoons are picking up old tyres from commercial premises and deliberately trying to blow them out on our roads.

The recent meeting at Ningi proved this council's decisions are unpopular. Apart from Councillors Lyn Devereaux and John McNaught, people have been asking how to sack the rest. I suggested that they do as I did and look for a council candidate in their division who has a social conscience and who is prepared to work with everyone for the betterment of the community. I trust they will succeed before the next election.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McNamara): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (12.30 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend legislation about animal and plant health, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (12.30 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Animal and Plant Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2001 amends key provisions of the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981, the Stock Act 1925, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Plant Protection Act 1989 and the Agricultural Standards Act 1994.

The aim of these amendments is to achieve the optimum legislative capacity to prepare for and to respond to actual outbreaks of devastating animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease, FMD, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, and aquatic animal diseases such as white spot syndrome virus of prawns. The bill will also provide a legislative framework under the Plant Protection Act 1989 to underpin regulatory response aimed at preventing further introductions and facilitating control of spread and eradication of two species of exotic fire ants that have been detected in the state.

This bill is the result of a number of reviews by government animal health authorities in all jurisdictions on Australia's preparedness in relation to preventative measures and emergency response capacity for FMD, in particular, and BSE in the light of the current FMD and BSE experiences in Britain and Europe. While some may see the amendments proposed as being extremely tough, they are the minimum needed to successfully address these pest and disease outbreaks without undue impact on the community as a whole.

Analysis by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics indicates that an outbreak of FMD in Australia is likely to result in the immediate loss of export markets for beef, sheep meat, pig meat, live animals, dairy products and greasy wool, resulting in large falls in prices received for livestock products. A loss of \$5.8 billion in export revenue in the first year is estimated. This estimate is in addition to the containment and eradication costs and the collateral impact on rural communities. It would cause a fall of about 3.5 per cent of national gross domestic product, GDP, and a 1 per cent increase in unemployment, with the main impact on the meat and dairy industries.

As the British experience demonstrates, management of an outbreak of FMD would be technically, logistically, financially and politically on a scale never before experienced in Australia in peacetime. The eventual eradication of FMD from Britain will not remove the threat of FMD to

Australia. The outbreak there has only exacerbated the risk to Australia. The likeliest ongoing source of introduction of the disease remains through Asia, particularly as the Pan-Asian strain has recently been identified in Laos.

The detection of BSE in the Australian cattle population, something that we all hope will never occur, would also have direct economic effects resulting from reduced market access for export livestock and livestock products. It would also change domestic consumer perceptions about the safety of Australian meats and, more importantly, could lead to fatal human cases of BSE. We must do all in our power to stop this happening, and we must do it now.

It is now recognised from the British experience that a major outbreak of FMD or BSE would necessitate a whole-of-government response at both state and Commonwealth level. The issues would also quickly move beyond the agricultural arena and necessitate national economic and social strategies. Proposals for such a national approach are being prepared for the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and the Council of Australian Governments. However, lesser outbreaks may still be managed at the state level, and an outbreak of any magnitude would certainly be addressed, initially at least, through state legislation and emergency plans. This national approach will not remove the need for responsive and adequate state disease control legislation.

Turning now to white spot syndrome virus, this has been found in green prawns imported into Australia under AQIS approval for human consumption but redirected to the bait market. These prawns have come from Asian countries where the disease is endemic in both cultured and wild populations. White spot syndrome virus was first discovered in Japan in 1993 and it has since spread to many countries in Asia and to central and southern North America. White spot syndrome virus has caused serious economic loss to the countries where it has established. It has the potential to devastate the prawn farming and wild caught prawn industry in Queensland. Queensland's 1999-2000 aquaculture production of marine prawns was worth \$45.2 million and is increasing by over \$10 million each year. Queensland's production of wild caught prawns is up to \$200 million per year.

Against these backgrounds, the relevant Queensland animal health legislation, consisting of the Stock Act 1915, the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981, the Fisheries Act 1994 and the Agricultural Standards Act 1994 have been reviewed and a number of perceived deficiencies identified. It is imperative that the deficiencies are rectified to optimise Queensland's capacity to deal with FMD, BSE, white spot syndrome virus and similar exotic animal diseases.

In developing control and eradication strategies for the current fire ant incursions into the Brisbane region, deficiencies in the most appropriate legislation, the Plant Protection Act 1989, became immediately apparent. This act has been used many times to respond to plant pest and disease emergencies. However, these previous responses have always been in the agricultural environment where farmers with a vested interest in controlling the pest or disease expect regulatory intervention and are therefore cooperative. Deficiencies in the legislation have not manifested in the past because of this cooperation. The fire ant infestations, on the other hand, have occurred in heavily populated, urban metropolitan areas where the same extent of understanding and cooperation cannot be expected. It quickly became apparent that the Plant Protection Regulation 1990 did not provide adequate powers to survey for and to treat the fire ant in a regulatory based control and eradication program.

A recent amendment to the Plant Protection Regulation 1990 introduced the concept of restricting the movement of materials which may harbour fire ants and a regulation made on 14 March 2002 allows an inspector to enter premises to treat for possible fire ant infestations without first gaining the consent of the owner. However, the act is deficient in providing similar entry powers in respect of pest infestations outside a pest quarantine area. The application of inspectors and assurance certificates under the Plant Protection Act is limited to plants. The use of these certificates needs to be extended to include soil, potting mixes, appliances and other things likely to spread fire ants or another plant pest.

Clear powers are also required to monitor compliance with the stock feed restrictions, including the ruminant feed ban imposed on the feeding of stock food containing restricted animal material under the Stock Act 1915 and the Agricultural Standards Act 1994.

The bill also provides capacity for staged repeal of the provisions of the Meat Industry Act 1993 that will be rendered redundant by the making of Food Safety Schemes under the Food Production (Safety) Act 2000 and repeal of the remaining provisions on winding up of the Queensland Abattoir Corporation.

The objectives will be achieved by a range of core provisions in this bill. I have quite a deal more to detail to the House. However, for the sake of saving time, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Amendment of the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981

While proposing a number of changes to this Act it needs to be understood that this is dormant legislation until such time as an exotic disease outbreak is declared and accordingly the provisions of the Act would then apply.

Specific proposed amendments include:

- The inadequate penalties under the Exotic Diseases Act will be increased to reflect the gravity of non-compliance with control and eradication measures associated with exotic disease outbreaks such as FMD and BSE and to create parity for offence penalties across domestic jurisdictions and other similar penalties in the Queensland Statute Book.
- The Minister's power to order destruction of infected or suspected animals will be extended to provide for the pre-emptive destruction of susceptible host animals as an exotic disease control strategy and to remove any legal impediment to carrying out an order to destroy animals made under section 22 of the Act to curb the spread of an exotic disease.
- This will be achieved by ousting the operation of parts 3 and 5 of the Judicial Review Act 1991 and by removing the courts inherent power to issue certain remedies that would inhibit or impede a destruction order. The ousting of these rights is recognised as a significant impact of individual rights as a fundamental legislative principle, it is argued that it is essential that the pre-emptive destruction of susceptible at risk stock as a control of a serious exotic diseases is not delayed by interlocutory or injunctive orders. The destruction of such stock would be subject to payment of compensation at market value.
- The power of an inspector to destroy stock in section 12 of the Act will be broadened to ensure that an order in relation to the destruction of stock may be made on the basis that is determined reasonable by the inspector in the circumstances. This will assist in the timely destruction of infected and suspected stock, and should greatly assist in the prevention of spread and eradication of the disease.
- Spongiform encephalopathy will be included as an "exotic disease" for the purposes of the Exotic Diseases Act.
- The capacity to appoint inspectors under the Act will be extended to public service officers or employees, employees of the Commonwealth or another State or Territory, employees of a local government, veterinary surgeons under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 and another class of persons prescribed by regulation to be appointed as inspectors. Inspectors may be appointed with full or limited powers, and honorary inspector appointments will be revoked. This amendment will facilitate the necessary appointment of inspectors as required to meet emergency response under the Act
- The general powers of an inspector under the Act will be clarified to ensure that the power of an inspector includes that the inspector may search for, trap and destroy vectors of exotic disease including baiting or poisoning such animals.
- Section 17 defining the effect of a "standstill" notification will be amended to prohibit the movement into, within or out of the standstill zone of specified species or classes of animals, or category, class or type of carcass, animal product, biological preparation, property, vehicle or vessel unless it is moved under the conditions of an inspector's written approval. An inspector's approval may be issued only if the inspector considers it necessary in the interests of public health or safety or the health or well being of the animal.
- The offence penalties against the Act are totally inadequate in respect of the severe consequences to the public interest. The general offence penalty will be amended to retain the current 80 penalty units that is \$6,000 for an offence against a regulation, however the alternative of 6 months imprisonment will be removed. A general offence penalty against the Act, unless a specific offence penalty is stated will be set at a maximum of 400 penalty units that is \$30,000. The specified penalties for particular offences have also been increased up to 2,000 penalty units (\$150,000) or 2 years imprisonment for the most serious offences.

Amendment to the Stock Act 1915

- To provide for early detection and a timely response to disease incursions, obligations in relation to a notifiable disease will be amended to also require notification of the following symptoms and conditions that may be indicative of a disease of stock:-
 - (i) Any condition causing blisters on the mouths or feet of stock; or
 - (ii) Any unexplained or abnormally high mortalities or morbidities with stock; or
 - (iii) A sudden unexplained drop in production.
- The Stock Act will be amended to provide the capacity to respond to non-prescribed and unnamed/undiagnosed diseases in emergencies by expanding the definition of "disease" to include any other disease that the Chief Veterinary Officer deems. The power will be used where the CVO considers an immediate or potential threat to the economy of the state or to public health as a result of an unidentified disease presence. It is proposed that a "disease" could be notified by way of subordinate legislation.
- All of the penalties for offences under the Stock Act are now considered inadequate. The general penalty under the Act for instance, is a maximum of 20 penalty units, which equates to \$ 1,500. A particular issue is the grossly inadequate penalty for "swill feeding" under the Stock Regulation 1988, where the penalty currently applied is only the general penalty. To reflect the severe consequences of "swill feeding", the offence penalty will be increased to a maximum of 400 penalty units, that is \$30,000. The general penalty will be increased to 40 penalty units for an offence against a regulation or 400 penalty units against the Act,

except where otherwise specified. The specified offence penalties have also been increased to a maximum of 1,000 penalty units, that is \$75,000 or 1 year's imprisonment to reflect the risks.

- The current appointment provisions that require an inspector to be a public servant are considered to be too restrictive. It is necessary, in order to effect emergency response that both interstate government and private vets in this capacity could be appointed to undertake necessary requirements under the Stock Act.
- The Primary Industries Ministerial Council identified the need for each jurisdiction to monitor compliance with the ruminant feed bans in the interests of maintaining market access for Australian livestock and livestock products and to address the human health risks posed by transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. In order to ensure the appropriate monitoring of compliance with the relevant restrictions, it is proposed to provide a general power of an inspector to monitor compliance with these provisions.

Amendment of the Fisheries Act 1994

- The Fisheries Act will be amended to provide for an emergency disease or quarantine declarations to be subordinate legislation and to expire after 3 months rather than 2 months.
- Section 102 of the Act will be amended to ensure that it relates to revocation of a quarantine declaration and not to an emergency quarantine declaration to remove ambiguity.

Amendment of the Plant Protection Act 1989

- The life of a Ministerial notice under sections 4 (declaration of pests), 8 (prohibitions on introduction of pests), 9 (prohibitions on spread of pests) and 11 (declaration of pest quarantine areas) of the Act will be extended from the existing 21 days to 3 months.
- The powers of inspectors will be amended to expressly provide the capacity for inspectors to enter land to inspect, survey and monitor for the presence of pests and diseases, to take samples for identification and testing, and to treat pests outside of a pest quarantine area in cases where the chief executive is satisfied there is an imminent risk of land being infested and where the inspector has been unable to obtain the permission of the owner after reasonable efforts to obtain permission.
- The use of an inspector's certificate and an assurance certificate under the Act will be extended to things other than plants capable of spreading a pest (for example, soil, potting mix, containers, appliances and other things).
- The notification obligation under the Act is presently limited to notifiable pests on an owner's land only. A truck driver who becomes aware of red imported fire ant in a load of soil, whilst in transit, would not be required to notify. An amendment will impose an obligation on any person who becomes aware of a notifiable pest in relation to their land or in relation to their activities to notify an inspector and the Chief Executive.

Amendment of the Agricultural Standards Act 1994

- An essential element of the ruminant feed restrictions is the operation of the formulation and labelling requirements contained in the Agricultural Standards Regulation 1997. It is critical that the ruminant feed bans imposed on the manufacture and labelling of stock feed containing restricted animal material are monitored.

Repeal of the Meat Industry Act 1993

- The food safety provisions of the Meat Industry Act will become redundant when the Food Safety Schemes for meat are enacted under the Food Production (Safety) Act 2000. There is therefore a need to repeal the redundant provisions of the Act. In addition the remaining provisions of the Act need to be repealed on winding up of the Queensland Abattoir Corporation, expected on 01 January 2003. This Bill is the only vehicle that will achieve the necessary repeals within the timeframe.

This Bill is essential to correct a number of deficiencies identified in the legislative framework that underpins emergency response to serious exotic diseases of livestock and fisheries resources and pests of plants.

This is probably the most important Primary Industries legislation introduced into this House for a considerable period of time. I am proud to be the Minister who brings this Bill into the Parliament. It deserves the full support of all Members.

I commend the Bill to the House.

LAND PROTECTION (PEST AND STOCK ROUTE MANAGEMENT) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 11 December 2001 (see p. 4423).

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (12.39 p.m.): This so-called land protection bill deals with two issues that have very little in common. It deals with stock route management and with pest management. The first issue of stock route management is straightforward. It was the subject of some dewy-eyed romanticism from the minister in his second reading speech. The second issue of pest management is very important for all land-holders and land managers. It is on this second issue that I want to focus my attention in this debate.

It is because of the issue of pest management that I refer to the bill as the so-called land protection bill, because the bill does not do what its title would have us believe it does. It certainly does not take the steps that are necessary to ensure that Queensland land, Queensland state land in particular, is adequately protected from the ravages of pests and feral animals. It is not an

exaggeration to say that pests and feral animals, and most importantly noxious and invasive weeds, are the single biggest environmental threats facing rural lands in Queensland and probably in Australia. Some would argue quite credibly that they are the biggest environmental threats facing this country today.

Of the two, noxious invasive weeds are the most difficult to control, and the environmental damage they cause is the most severe. It is an insidious attack—one that is not noticed by many who do not understand the land and the ecosystems—that is destroying the environmental and economic values of vast areas of Queensland. It has been going on unnoticed in a lot of quarters of the wider community for some time. It receives very little attention from the so-called environmental movement, who are more interested in the furry, cuddly environmental issues that can be whipped up with emotional television images. But those furry and cuddly issues pale into insignificance when compared with the ongoing damage of noxious and invasive weeds.

Invasive weeds do not have the same emotional appeal as koalas and possums, they do not have the same drama as flood damage or soil erosion and they do not have the hype of salinity, yet their impact on the environment is so much more profound. Their impact is not only an environmental one but also a massive economic one. In many cases the battle is already lost. In many cases the only strategies that have any hope of success are those aimed at slowing the further inevitable invasion. Eradication is hopelessly impossible and even containment is out of the question for some of Queensland's major invasive weeds.

It is very difficult to overstate the extent of the problem. Every area of Queensland shares that problem. Every land-holder in Queensland should recognise the fact that they have a responsibility to do what they can to combat the problem. Every area has a particular weed or weeds that are alarming land managers and challenging their resources as they attempt control measures.

There is no definitive estimate as to the monetary cost of weeds to the agricultural sector, but the national weeds strategy document makes mention of an estimated cost of over \$3 billion per annum when factors such as control, yield losses in crops and pastures and the contamination and downgrading of grains, fodder and animal products are all taken into account. A more specific estimate of the cost of weed control practices can be made when we consider that direct expenditure on herbicides in 1995 totalled some \$452 million. In Queensland the annual estimate of the cost of weed management extends into the hundreds of millions of dollars, and it is a major expense for many private land-holders. Many private land-holders face a major expense each year to try to combat this problem on their private land. Fifty million dollars per year is spent on the control of such things as parthenium weed, rubber vine, prickly acacia, mesquite and Parkinsonia alone.

Governments at all levels have been slow to respond to their responsibilities as land-holders. The economic assessment of agricultural weeds has been identified as an area that has been underresearched, whilst there has been a total absence of research on the effects of environmental weeds. The environmental impacts of these weeds is something that has not been realised and has not been given the priority that it deserves.

The national weeds strategy is the product of a joint consultative effort by the Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, the Australian and New Zealand environment and conservation councils and the responsible ministers in both countries. The strategy was first published in June 1997 and a revised strategy was released in March 1999, yet it has had no measurable impact on the problem on a state-wide basis or on an individual land-holder basis. It has had no measurable impact. We cannot point to one particular instance in the state. I challenge the minister and his department to do so if he disagrees. Can he point to one instance in the state where this national weeds strategy has produced a reversal of the invasive effects of noxious weeds?

The implementation of the national weeds strategy is being undertaken by the National Weeds Strategy Executive Committee, which was established with joint funding from the Commonwealth and the states. The executive committee has established a work program that includes identifying weeds of national significance and devising strategies to encourage all states and territories to develop and implement their own weeds strategies and associated management structures. The national weeds strategy program seeks to develop integrated strategic approaches to reduce the impacts of weeds of national significance and to prevent the introduction of new pest plants through revised quarantine assessment procedures. It also seeks to assess the potential of existing pest plants to become weeds of national significance.

The states and territories combined have nominated over 70 weeds for classification as weeds of national significance, but only 20 of those had been categorised by June 2000. Those original 70 were just the tip of the iceberg. Each nationally significant weed will be the subject of strategic management plans aimed at their control. The goal of these plans is to reduce the impact of those weeds to the extent whereby management by each individual state and territory is possible. The Commonwealth entered into an agreement with the states and territories to provide 50 per cent funding for pest plant eradication programs.

Of the 20 weeds of national significance, Queensland currently has major infestations of 11 of them. Those 11 weeds included in the classification as weeds of national significance are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the total weed problem faced by Queensland land-holders. Those 11 weeds are: cabomba, which originated in the United States; hymenachne, which came from South and tropical America; lantana, a particularly bad one in the electorates I represent, originating from Central America; mesquite, which originated from South America; Parkinsonia, which came from the United States and Mexico; parthenium, a major weed in central Queensland which came from the Caribbean; pond apple; prickly acacia; rubber vine, which is a major weed in north Queensland; and, of course, the water weed salvinia.

To that list we can add many more weeds which, while not of national or even state-wide significance, have devastating local and regional impacts throughout the state. It is too often overlooked that, even though a weed is not important enough in terms of its invasive range to rate as a weed of national significance and sometimes not even important enough to rate in terms of the state department's activities, some of these things can be massive problems at a local level. At a local level they can cause huge expense and expenditure by local land-holders to try to halt what is essentially a local problem but a very real problem for the land-holders within a particular region or a particular catchment. It is a problem that always has to be addressed at a regional level. Every one of those land-holders has to pull their weight and play their role. I will speak about that more later.

An important goal of the national weeds strategy is the provision of a framework and the capacity for the ongoing management of weed problems for these weeds that have been adjudged to be of national significance. An essential element to the attainment of this goal of ongoing management is the development of strategic plans. This bill represents a response to this goal by providing for the establishment of pest management plans on state controlled land and other land within local government areas. To that extent it has our support. It does provide the mechanisms. It provides for the setting up of those pest management plans, both on state controlled land and, at the local level, on a local government, shire-by-shire basis.

The national weeds strategy specifically acknowledges the significant part that local government and community groups such as Landcare and conservation groups can play in the development and implementation of strategic plans for pest management. To the problem of noxious and invasive weeds must be added the damage caused by feral animals and other animal pests. By far the worst in most parts of Queensland are feral pigs. Once again, it is difficult to fully comprehend the damage that they do, especially in the north of our state where the natural environment seems to be tailor made for the needs of feral pigs. The other major animal pest is of course dingoes and feral dogs, and I will speak more in detail about that problem later as well. Suffice it to say that it is a real issue for many people right across Queensland, but it is a particularly important and pertinent issue for people in small stock industries such as the sheep industry in central and western Queensland.

This bill suggests a framework for the management of both noxious invasive weeds and feral animal pests. However, this bill totally fails to address the biggest problem facing those charged with the task of meeting this threat. This bill does not provide for a coordinated response but allows for a continuation of the disjointed approach that will inevitably lead to a further failure of containment of this range of plant and animal pests. While the bill provides for the establishment of pest control plans on state owned lands and within local government areas, the links that are said to ensure coordination between the two are tenuous links indeed. There is very little in this bill to address what everyone involved in rural land management knows to be the major impediment to success. There is very little in this bill to correct what everybody involved in land management in Queensland today knows to be the major problem facing land-holders right across the state.

No land-holder can hope to successfully tackle this issue in isolation. Invasive noxious weeds and feral animals have no respect for property boundaries. They have no respect for land tenure. They have no respect for land title. Any effort to control them must be done on a regional basis.

Any control efforts have to be coordinated with every land-holder within that region. No land-holder can be allowed to ignore their responsibility to be part of that regional effort, simply because a refusal by one land-holder to meet that responsibility will almost certainly lead to the failure of the efforts put in by others who are trying to meet their responsibilities on their land. That is simply inevitable, as the areas of land that are not included in the coordinated approach very quickly and very predictably become havens and refuges for invasive noxious weeds and feral animals that continually breed in numbers to reinvade surrounding areas.

This bill recognises that inevitability when it comes to private land-holders, but it completely ignores that inevitability when it comes to state owned land. This legislation ignores the reality when it comes to state owned land because for the current government the whole issue of providing the resources for managing state owned land has already become just too hard. For the Department of Natural Resources, this issue of providing adequate resources to meet its responsibility as a land-holder has already become just too hard. For this bill to do what it should have done and insist that the responsibilities that are not being met at the moment by the department and the state be met following the passage of this bill would require a further commitment of resources and a much greater commitment of resources, which is long overdue. There is a long overdue requirement for those resources to be committed. Those resources should be committed to those officers within the department who have the responsibility of ensuring that the department and therefore the state meet their responsibilities as responsible land-holders.

There already is a massive underresourcing of the departments charged with managing state owned land. It is not just the Department of Natural Resources; it is also the Department of Environment. My colleague the shadow minister will speak about that underresourcing later in this debate. That underresourcing all stems from the same philosophy within the government that this responsibility can somehow be ignored. That massive underresourcing is very evident when it comes to ongoing maintenance, of which the control of noxious invasive weeds and feral animals are an essential part. That is what has to be recognised and that is what is not recognised in the philosophy this government has adopted. It does not recognise that land requires ongoing maintenance, especially with regard to the control and the prevention of the spread of noxious invasive weeds and feral animals.

The government has been proactive in acquiring more and more land under a number of different guises. However, with that land ownership comes responsibilities that cannot be ignored. There seems to be an assumption inherent in this government's philosophy that it can acquire large tracts of land and then somehow just leave it alone to exist in some natural blissful state. There seems to be an assumption that large areas can be locked up in order to continue to exist in some sort of idyllic state that will be of great benefit to every Queenslanders. That idealistic approach to land management is quite simply wrong, and it is easily recognised as wrong by anyone with any real experience in land management. It is wrong no more so than in the area of pest management.

No matter who the owner of the land, the truism remains. Anyone who owns land has a responsibility to control invasive noxious weeds and feral animals on that land, and that means a major commitment of resources and money to that task. That is the responsibility that this bill is ensuring that every private land-holder meets, and rightly so. But that is the responsibility which the state government should also recognise. This bill fails because it does not insist and ensure that the state government meets that responsibility as it insists and ensures that private land-holders meet their responsibilities.

Noxious invasive weeds and feral animals are a reality. They cannot be ignored in some starry-eyed quest for a return to the natural state. Neither can they be ignored to cause damage and expense to neighbours and nearby land-holders, and that is the other responsibility which the government consistently until now has not accepted. This bill does not insist and ensure that it accepts that responsibility—that is, the responsibility it has as land-holders not to cause its neighbours damage and expense. Every land-holder has that responsibility which is inherent in the concept of land ownership. That responsibility is firstly to the land itself and to the environment, because it is often said—and it is always true—that none of us really own the land. We only hold it in trust for our children.

But that is as true for private land-holders as it is for the government as a land-holder. State government departments have to recognise that truism as well. There is also a responsibility as land-holders to our neighbours and our community, because whatever happens on one piece of land cannot happen in isolation. It has the potential to affect others and, in the case of pest

control, to negate the efforts of others to meet their responsibilities. That is why every land-holder needs to be part of the regional effort on pest control. This bill allows for that regional effort on a shire-by-shire basis as it requires each local government area to be covered by a pest control plan, and that is a good concept. This bill ensures that all private land-holders meet their responsibility under that plan by providing for an enforcement mechanism based on pest control notices. Division 2 of the bill in clause 78 sets out that process.

However, the bill fails completely because of the inclusion of six words at the end of clause 78. Six words is all it took for the government to abdicate its responsibility. Those words are 'owner does not include the state'. For the purposes of clause 78, which is the clause which sets up the mechanism that gives this bill the teeth and the power to do anything, the definition of 'landowner' does not include the state. For the purposes of clause 78, which ensures that every landowner plays their part in the regional pest management plan, a landowner does not include the state. That is an unacceptable abrogation of the state's responsibility as a land-holder and will almost inevitably ensure that those pest management efforts of private land-holders will never be as successful as they should be. A percentage of their efforts will always be wasted. The efforts of every other land-holder will be negated by the lack of effort by the state on state controlled land. The evidence of that lack of effort is readily available all over Queensland at the present time. That evidence is readily available, and I will deal with that later.

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

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr W.T. D'Arcy; Sexual Abuse Victim

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.30 p.m.), by leave: This morning the Leader of the Opposition raised some allegations in parliament. There is no foundation to them, but there are a number of very serious issues involved in this matter. It is important that I explain them to the parliament and to the people. At the outset, my main concern is not to draw the woman concerned, the victim, into a political gutter brawl. I learnt today that she felt abused by the process of being publicly identified when she appeared before the court and was effectively identified by the media. She felt that media and private investigators infringed on her privacy. She had not told her family full details of the abuse, and these were revealed by the media who then went to her home and her family's home. This must have been a dreadfully traumatic time for her, and the last thing I want to do is create a situation where she relives it. However, I have to respond to the allegations, untruthful as they are, from the opposition.

I will try to do it in the most sensitive way I know. One central issue in this is that the criminal law has to be followed, and so does proper process. One of the hallmarks of a democracy, which separates us from the jungle dictatorships of Africa, is the separation of the courts and the executive. Therefore, when matters are before the courts in a criminal trial, the courts must be allowed to conduct their business without any interference or perceived interference from politicians. Not only must justice be done, it must be seen to be done.

Matters involving Bill D'Arcy are still before the courts. I am still in a difficult position in relation to this. Timing in terms of Bill D'Arcy's trial is crucial, though, to the allegations made. He was found guilty on 1 November 2000. He was not sentenced until 17 November. I understand from Mr Horan's comments this morning that the woman concerned approached my office on 10 November; in other words, before the sentence on 17 November. It would have been entirely improper for me to meet with her before the verdict and the sentencing. It could have been perceived as some attempt by me to influence the sentence or indeed to influence the court.

Bill D'Arcy appealed his sentence in May 2001, and this was not decided until August 2001. If I as Premier had met with the victim concerned, the defence counsel would have been able to seek a mistrial of the matter before the courts because of perceived interference. I am not a private individual. I say this without any sense of elevation—I am not an ordinary member of parliament; I am the Premier. If the Premier were to meet with an individual who is both the victim and a witness in a matter before the courts, it would be quite within the rights of the defence to refer to that and to seek a mistrial.

Let me make it clear: I would not be prepared under any circumstances to act in a way that could bring about a mistrial of any case, and certainly not this one. As I have said, matters are

still before the courts. The woman concerned has obviously endured dreadful experiences, and I would never assume that anything the government has done could erase her pain. I understand her pain. But a range of appropriate people in government have listened to her and offered support and advice. I understand that she met with the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Leanne Clare, in January 2001. Peter Clarke, who was senior policy adviser to the then Attorney-General, Matt Foley, wrote to her in February 2001 offering advice about such things as seeking compensation and accessing the Victims of Crime Association. The then Attorney-General also wrote in February 2001 to Ms Clare. I seek leave to have both these letters incorporated in *Hansard* because they are important to the case.

Leave granted.

9/2/01

Dear ...

I write in response to your attendance at the office of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts when you met with Mr Mark Gordon.

On behalf of the Attorney-General and myself, please allow me to thank you for attending at our office and providing the information which you have. This information will be invaluable for the government and specifically the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the police and the courts in ensuring that they treat victims of crime more humanely, with greater compassion and assist in keeping victims better informed.

I understand that you have concerns that the Victim Support Service within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions did not fully explain to you the process in which you would be involved. I have forwarded your comments to the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mrs Leanne Clare and requested that she make arrangements to meet with you in order that you may explain your concerns about the operation of the Victim Support Service. I request that once you have met with Mrs Clare that you communicate with us to advise the outcome of your discussions.

I note that you have grave concerns about the decision to release to the media details of the offences committed against you and others. The decision to release this information is one solely for the courts.

In regard to the media and private investigators infringing upon your private life, I have asked the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider whether any actions are appropriate. I will keep you informed of the advice received from the Director of Public Prosecutions.

With respect to compensation for the offences which have been committed upon you, you will be aware that the Premier has established a Task Force to investigate what actions may be taken in regard to the superannuation received by Mr D'Arcy. The government's contact officer in regard to this matter is... Her telephone number is ...

I understand that it may be your intention to pursue your civil rights in regard to compensation from Mr D'Arcy. The Queensland Law Society will be able to provide you with the names of solicitors who are prepared to act on a speculative basis. That is, they will be prepared to act on the basis that if you do not succeed in your action for compensation, no fees will be payable. You can obtain the names of these solicitors by contacting the Queensland Law Society. The telephone number is 3842 5888. A solicitor will be able to advise whether you can pursue this avenue.

In closing, may I suggest that if you have not already done so, that you contact the Victims of Crime Association on 1300 733 777. The contact officer at the Victims of Crime Association is Ms Sue Leckie. The Victims of Crime Association was established by victims of crime. They offer a wide range of support services which may be of assistance to you. The services that the Victims of Crime Association offer are free. They will be able to refer you to other trained professionals who have experience in assisting victims of crime should this be of any assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clarke
Senior Policy Adviser

Mrs Leanne Clare
Director of Public Prosecutions
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
Level 6
State Law Building
Cnr George and Ann Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

9/2/01

Dear Mrs Clare

I write in regard to contact made with our office by Ms ... Ms ... was a victim of William Theodore D'Arcy.

Ms ... has expressed concerns in regard to the way the Victim Support Service dealt with her matter. In particular she believes that she was not properly informed of the process upon which she was about to embark. ... has concerns that the process that she was subjected to was much more difficult than she was advised it would be and she was not able to prepare herself for the eventuality.

Further Ms ... was extremely concerned that The Courier Mail was given permission to publish her details. She feels the only identifying fact not published was her name. The story in The Courier Mail resulted in other members

of the media attending at her home and the home of her parents. Ms ... had chosen not to explain to her family all of the details of the offences which were committed upon her. Please advise what action you propose to take in regard to ... concern. If no action can be taken please advise what amendments to the law should be made so that this highly disturbing situation is not repeated.

I have directed the Crown Solicitor to investigate the matter fully. Please cooperate with him in this matter.

A copy of the correspondence we have forwarded to Ms ... and the letter received is enclosed for your information. Please contact ... whose postal

address is ... in order that she may speak with you about her concerns.

Yours sincerely

Matt Foley

Attorney-General Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts Enc.

Mr BEATTIE: I refer in particular to the letter that Matt Foley wrote to Leanne Clare on 9 February. I will not refer to all of it. I should say that for obvious reasons the victim's name has been crossed out in black. Mr Foley's letter states—

(The victim) has expressed concerns in regard to the way the Victim Support Service dealt with her matter. In particular she believes that she was not properly informed of the process upon which she was about to embark. (The victim) has concerns that the process that she was subjected to was much more difficult than she was advised it would be and she was not able to prepare herself for the eventuality.

Further (the victim) was extremely concerned that The Courier Mail was given permission to publish her details. She feels the only identifying fact not published was her name. The story in the Courier Mail resulted in other members of the media attending at her home and the home of her parents. (The victim) had chosen not to explain to her family all of the details of the offences which were committed upon her. Please advise what action you propose to take in regard to (the victim's) concerns.

It is important to understand that the Attorney-General is the first law officer of the land. Matt Foley, as the first law officer of the land, was independent of the parliamentary process, the executive and the government. It is appropriate for the first law officer of the land, at the time Matt Foley, or his staff to meet with the person concerned, the victim, and then refer her concerns to the Director of Public Prosecutions. So we did listen. On behalf of the people, the Attorney-General listened, and the concerns were passed on to the appropriate person, the Director of Public Prosecutions.

As I said, it would have been quite inappropriate for me as Premier to have met her, but it was appropriate for the Attorney's staff to. The Attorney acted appropriately and, I might say on these matters, impeccably. I draw attention to the fact that, subsequently, on 26 October the Attorney-General announced that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill passed by the parliament early that morning would become law tomorrow. Mr Foley said it was symbolic that a new law which enshrined a woman's right to protection against violent crime came into effect on the annual Reclaim the Night demonstration. The historic reforms honour the government's commitment. These changes to the Criminal Code will limit the ability of lawyers to put victims of child abuse and rape through the hoops while in the witness box. They will enable judges to prevent offensive cross-examination of witnesses. Another major change will stop the accused from being able to interrogate the witness, something seen as desirable in Victoria and the United Kingdom.

I seek to incorporate that as well, because this was a direct response to the government's concern about what the victim had complained about. It was obviously raised well before the victim appeared and raised these issues, but it reflected our concern.

Leave granted.

Ministerial Media Statement
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice/The Arts
The Hon. Matthew Foley MP

6 October 2000

WOMENS TASKFORCE REFORMS BECOME LAW

Attorney-General Matt Foley today said recommendations from the Taskforce on Women and the Criminal Code were recognised in a Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2000 passed by Parliament today.

Mr Foley said the Women's Taskforce first met in November 1998 to examine the need to reform the Criminal Code and court practices as they relate to women, whether as victims, defendants or witnesses.

"This Bill delivers what the Government promised and is the result of 18 months of close consultation between the Taskforce and a broad range of Queensland women in community organisations. We consulted widely, from the Country Women's Association to Rape Crisis groups, Police prosecutors and legal practitioners."

"Acting on the recommendations in the Taskforce Report relating to specific reforms to the Criminal Code, this Bill shifts the whole culture of the criminal justice system from a serious neglect of women and children's rights and needs within that system, to a more inclusive, equitable and humane position." Mr Foley said.

"The aim of this comprehensive process has been to ensure the criminal justice system treats women and children fairly after they have, at times, been subjected to 'rougher than usual handling' by the system."

"Queensland women and children are entitled to expect equality before the law and in access to justice," he said.

"These changes to the Criminal Code are going to limit the ability of lawyers to put victims of child abuse and rape through the hoops while they're in the witness box. They will enable judges to prevent offensive cross-examination of witnesses. Another major change will stop the accused from being able to interrogate the victim, something which was seen as desirable in Victoria and the United Kingdom."

"These changes are significant and represent a serious Government response to the needs expressed by women right around Queensland. We made a pre-election promise to set up a Women's Taskforce to review the Criminal Code. We commissioned that Taskforce when we got into government. Now we have acted on the basis of that report in a way which will produce a fairer outcome for all people, particularly women." Mr. Foley said.

Mr BEATTIE: In the letter, the Attorney-General advised Ms Clare of the woman's concerns, including a concern about the way the media was permitted to publish her details. He asked her to advise what action the Director of Public Prosecutions intended to take and, failing that, what amendments could be made so that this highly disturbing situation is not repeated. So the Attorney actually asked the Director of Public Prosecutions what legislation was needed to fix up this person's concerns. This was a proper and compassionate response by the then Attorney-General.

I also remind the House that, since the woman's regrettable experience with the courts, we have made changes to the law that give better protection to victims of crime, particularly women and children. As I said before, we made historic amendments to the Criminal Code that came into force in late October 2000, unfortunately too late for this woman. The amendments resulted from a task force on women and the Criminal Code which consulted widely throughout the state with women, including victims like the woman concerned. Our changes have limited lawyers' ability to put victims of child abuse and rape through the hoops. They have also tightened up the rules for protecting the privacy of victims. We are considering further changes to the law which will provide greater protection of victims' privacy as well as greater certainty for the media when reporting on criminal cases. I stress that I am not attacking the media on this; I am reporting what was said to us by the victim. I have no desire to attack the media on this issue.

I gather that these are the sorts of changes that the woman concerned was hoping for. I assure members that the information from victims of crime, such as this woman, does have an impact on government policy, and we have seen that from what I have said.

I also want to comment on the ridiculous comparison that the opposition is trying to draw between the Governor-General and me. In regard to the teachers at Toowoomba prep, the Governor-General was in a supervisory role. I had no such role in terms of Bill D'arcy's teaching career. I was still at school at the time. It is spurious to try to compare us and, indeed, I make the other point—and as members would understand, this ministerial statement has been put together in a hasty way and it is accurate to the best of my knowledge—that in terms of the matters involving the Anglican Church, I am not aware of new criminal proceedings involving the Anglican Church. As I understand it, one of the alleged perpetrators committed suicide. So there were no criminal matters. I understand that there were civil matters. However, the difference is very simple: this is a criminal matter before the courts that still remains before the courts. At the conclusion of these matters before the courts, when any appeal rights of Mr D'arcy are exercised and the courts have made whatever decision they want to make, I am quite happy to meet with the woman concerned as her local member. However, it would be quite improper for me to do so while those matters are before the courts. I stand by my behaviour in this matter. I believe that I have acted with integrity and honesty. I believe that this is the sort of standard Queenslanders expect.

Finally, I know when a party is in opposition and it has 12 seats that it is a difficult time. There are pressures put on the opposition both within its own party and by the media. The Labor Party has been there, done that. I was part of the Labor Party organisation when it was rebuilding. However, one of the things that is important to resist is to act in a morally corrupt and bankrupt way. My advice to Mr Horan is very simply this—and I would hope that he would think about this: this is not the behaviour of an alternative Premier where a victim is in pain, is agonising, is hurtful, and has been dragged through the political mire. For what? A headline? I think we deserve better.

LAND PROTECTION (PEST AND STOCK ROUTE MANAGEMENT) BILL
Second Reading

Resumed (see p. 689).

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (2.42 p.m.), continuing: Before the debate was adjourned, I was outlining how I believe this bill fails completely to live up to its title as a land protection bill and the reasons for that. Those reasons are centred around clause 78. In fact, it is six words in clause 78 that ensures that this bill fails to live up to its title of a land protection bill. Those words are—

"Owner" does not include the state.

For the purposes of clause 78, which ensures that every landowner will play their part in regional pest management plans, a landowner does not include the state. The state is excluded from the responsibilities that are placed on every other landowner. That is an unacceptable abrogation of the state's responsibilities as a land-holder. It will almost inevitably ensure that those pest management efforts of private land-holders will never be as successful as they should.

The efforts of every other land-holder will be negated by the lack of effort on the part of the state on state controlled land. The evidence for that lack of effort, the reason that it is reasonable to expect that there will be a lack of effort by the state on state controlled land, is readily available all over Queensland at present. We only have to look at the present situation to make some judgment about the likelihood of what will happen in the future. At the moment, there is no will in the government to address this very real problem. At the moment there are no resources in the critical departments for this purpose. This bill exempts the state owned land from any meaningful requirement for pest control and takes away the necessity to build that will and to allocate those resources.

I say 'meaningful requirement' very deliberately, because I have no doubt that the minister is going to claim that the state is required to prepare its own plan for all state owned land. Under the legislation, it is. Like so many other things that this government does, that is meaningless when the detail is examined. It sounds fine. At first glance, it seems to be the right thing to do. But when we look at the detail of it, we realise the absurdity of the proposal.

This proposal for separate plans for state land is set out in some detail in part 3 division 1 of the bill. But it is only on a careful reading, as I said, of that part 3 division 1 that the absurdity and the worthlessness of this proposal becomes apparent. It is worthless in terms of achieving any meaningful impact not only on the current unsatisfactory situation but also on achieving any impact in the future.

This proposal is designed simply to meet the state's commitments under the national weed strategy, about which I spoke earlier. Technically it does that. That is why there is this requirement for the state to draw up a management plan for land under its control. I submit that it is not there to reflect any great will on the part of the government to undertake those control measures. It is not there because there is a recognition within the government that those control measures need to be taken for all of the reasons that I have outlined—for the reasons of meeting their responsibility as a land-holder. It is not there to meet their responsibility to other land-holders, it is not there to meet their responsibility to the environment. This proposal is simply in place to meet the government's commitments under the national weed strategy and to access the finances available from the federal government.

However, this bill fails twice. It fails to ensure that there will be any real commitment from this state government or any future state government to control weeds and feral pests. There is no mechanism in this bill to hold this state government, or any other state government, to a minimum commitment. There is no mechanism in this bill to ensure that there is a minimum level of resources allocated on the part of the state government to this problem.

I ask members to contrast that to the situation that exists for private land-holders. This legislation—quite rightly, in my view—will mean that every private land-holder in the state will need to make some minimum allocation of his or her resources to combat this problem. They will need to be part of the coordinated strategies that are put in place on a regional level to combat the pest control in their particular region.

But for the state government, it is different. All the state government needs to do is draw up a plan. This government is drawing up that plan not because of any commitment to the problem, but simply because that is a requirement in order to access the federal funding. Currently, there is a gross underfunding for resources for this effort. As I said, there is no will in the departments

and there is a gross underfunding. There is a token effort by all of the departments of the Queensland government that are involved in land management.

What can we expect in the future? What mechanism is there in this legislation that will give us any confidence that any extra money that may be accessed from the federal government in the future as part of a national weed strategy as the realisation grows at a federal level that this is a huge environmental issue—and, hopefully, there will be extra funding available at a federal level, and no doubt this legislation will put in place the structures that will allow this state government to access some of that funding—will find its way to the heart of the problem?

What mechanism is there to give a land-holder any confidence that the effort he or she is putting in will be supported by the federal funding which will hopefully flow once it is realised a problem exists. I fear that we will end up with a situation not dissimilar to the one I spoke about earlier, in terms of the 20 weeds of national significance. The amounts of money spent on those problem weeds over the years since 1997 have had no measurable impact. I look forward to the minister's justification of the different opinion he obviously holds when he sums up this debate. I challenge the minister to point to some instances where the money allocated to this issue at a federal level has had a measurable impact even on the containment of some of these pests. In the future, we must ensure that the resources made available from the state and federal governments have a measurable impact on the problem.

I will be seeking to amend this section of the act to give those pest control plans for state-owned land some credibility and commonsense. I will be seeking to amend this section to ensure that there is a minimum commitment on the part of this state government—and every future state government—to providing resources for the control of pests and feral animals on state-controlled land. That is only fair because that is how this legislation affects every private land-holder in the state. Every private land-holder in the state needs to accept their responsibility under this legislation to make a minimum commitment of their resources to dealing with this issue. The amendments which I will be moving seek to ensure that the state government does exactly that for state-owned land in the state budget.

I have no doubt the minister will refer to the following requirement to attempt to justify this situation. The chief executive of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines is required to establish a pest control committee made up of one representative of each government department that manages state-owned land. That committee must meet once a year to draw up pest control plans for all state-owned land in Queensland. That is a requirement of the legislation and I am sure the minister will say that it negates all of the concerns I have raised and which industry groups have raised with me. That is an absurd proposition!

The requirements of departments in their planning processes are ridiculously broad, as are the objectives to be met by the plans. The whole process is almost certain to be a farce. Can members imagine it? The Department of Natural Resources holds a meeting once a year with one representative from each department and draws up plans or monitors the plans to control pests and feral animals on all state-owned land in Queensland. It is an enormous task to make any sort of reasonable or sustainable impact on the feral animal and weed problems on state-owned land in Queensland at the moment. I acknowledge that it is a huge task, simply because a lot of catch-up work needs to be done.

However, instead of recognising the enormity of the task, acknowledging that the state has fallen behind in its responsibilities, and legislating to ensure it does not slip further behind, the minister has introduced a bill which requires a committee, consisting of one representative from each department, to meet once a year. There is no mechanism to ensure that local communities or industry groups have any input into the plans for pest control on state-owned land. I will be seeking to amend that.

Local governments have a very complex process of consultation and public review for their proposed pest management plans. That is set out in the legislation and I support that. The process which has been set out is a valid and appropriate one. However, it does not apply to the state departments and their planning requirements. There is only the vaguest requirement for any integration and coordination between the state plan and the much more detailed local government plan. As I pointed out earlier, because of those six words in section 78 there is no enforcement mechanism for a situation where the lack of action on state land is threatening the efforts of private land-holders who are bound by the requirements of the local government's pest management plan. There is no enforcement mechanism; it is a case of cop it sweet. Never mind if the efforts of the private land-holders and the efforts that have gone into drawing up the local management plan by the local authority come to nought because of a lack of effort, resources or

commitment on the part of a particular government department. There is no mechanism for land-holders and local authorities to do anything about the state government's attitude.

One only needs to look at the situation in Queensland today to clearly understand why there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that state departments meet their responsibilities as land managers. Clearly, they are not doing so at the moment, as any landowner in the vicinity of, or neighbouring a national park or forest reserve or any other state land will clearly attest. Private land-holders all over Queensland struggle with noxious evasive weeds and feral animals currently harboured by areas of state-owned land. Perhaps the worst examples are wild dogs and wild pigs. The mobility of those pests allows them to take advantage of the opportunity to shelter and breed in state-owned land and then move on to other land at will, with damaging and expensive consequences.

In north Queensland the wild pig issue is a particular threat. Some of my colleagues who represent electorates in north Queensland will speak about the state's complete failure to manage the large areas of state land in north Queensland and the consequences for industries such as the cane industry. I look forward to the contributions from some of the government members who represent some of those seats in north Queensland and listening to their perspective on that particular problem. Any member of this House who travels to north Queensland and meets with any community group is sure to have that situation brought to their attention.

In north Queensland the wild pig issue is a particular threat. The failure to control the wild pigs in that area is now so great that a very substantial threat to the environmental values of the reserve land is very real. It is those environmental values that the state government sought to protect that are being threatened by the fact that those areas are not being allocated any resources to control this very profound problem.

Put simply, I believe there is no point in this state government reserving any further areas as national parks or reserves if there are no resources available to ensure that the environmental values of those areas are not destroyed by feral animals such as wild pigs or are not lost to the incursions of noxious weeds such as lantana and rubber vine and all of those others that north Queenslanders know well.

Unfortunately, that is what is happening to large areas of Queensland's national parks at the moment. It is a tragedy for our environment and for the private land-holders who must deal with the problems of being located in the vicinity of those areas. Once again, it comes about as a result of a government that is more interested in media grabs and public relations exercises than the reality of the issue. It is all very well to make media mileage out of the fact that the area of national park estate in Queensland has been increased or whatever to appease particular interest groups in our community. However, unless hand in hand with that acquisition of land for national park estate goes a commitment to allocate resources to control this very issue, unfortunately the environmental values of those areas will be lessened rather than preserved. Queenslanders will be left poorer for the actions of the government. That land would be far better left to the stewardship of private land-holders, who have managed it for many years and who are bound by the provisions of this legislation to ensure that minimum standards are maintained for pest management and the control of invasive noxious weeds.

This bill does nothing to address the reality that clearly exists in Queensland today in relation to those reserved areas and therefore this bill fails to ensure the situation will improve in any way. As I said, this bill has been introduced in this form simply to allow the state to access Commonwealth funding under the national weed strategy. It will allow the state government to continue to escape the reality of the responsibility placed on every Queensland land-holder because the government currently and consistently refuses to commit resources to meet its responsibilities. As I said, I will be introducing amendments to address these failures, and I will deal with the issues in more detail when we debate each clause.

There is another aspect of this bill which causes grave concern to me. Grave concern has been expressed to me by a number of other groups as they become aware of the detail of this bill. There is a provision in this bill that allows for plants and animals not declared pests under the legislation to be subjected to a pest control notice for environmental reasons. That is a frightening prospect when consideration is given to all of the possibilities that could arise. When we think about the scenarios that could develop in rural and regional Queensland and the types of situations that this provision could be applied to, it is a frightening prospect indeed.

It means that introduced species that are the basis of commercial industries, such as buffel grass and lucerna, could be the subject of pest control notices, not just on environmentally sensitive land but also on land that adjoins it. That is the killer. For a private land-holder who adjoins one of these so defined environmentally sensitive areas, any plant or animal species, whether or not it is the basis of the land-holder's commercial enterprise, can be the subject of a pest control notice. No doubt the minister will assure the parliament that that will never happen, that that was not the intent of the legislation, that the member for Callide is scaremongering and all of the things we have heard before. But that is simply not good enough. It is simply not good enough to have a provision in this legislation that can allow somebody in the future to subject lucerna, buffel grass, Rhodes grass or even sheep and cattle to a pest control notice not just on environmentally sensitive land but also on private land that adjoins environmentally sensitive land. It is simply unacceptable to have that sort of provision in this legislation.

This legislation will be around for a long time after this parliamentary debate is forgotten. It will be around for a long time after the minister has departed the position he holds at the moment. The minister's assurances and the assurances that no doubt we will get in this debate will be worthless. What will matter is what is written in the legislation. This provision in the legislation could be very dangerous in the hands of people who were not part of the process of drawing it up, who did not know what the minister's intent was and who choose to interpret the legislation the way it is written.

I will certainly be introducing an amendment to remove this provision from the legislation. The minister should give serious consideration to that amendment. This is a particularly dangerous provision in the legislation, well intentioned as it may have been on the part of the people who drew it up. I do not doubt that their intention had nothing to do with some of the scenarios that I have alluded to and will outline further at the committee stage. I have no doubt that that was not their intention. I have no doubt that it is not the minister's intention that those types of scenarios would eventuate. While this legislation continues to make those scenarios a possibility it is unacceptable and it must be amended.

Part 10 of the bill deals with a different issue, and that is the control of wild, or feral, dogs. Dingoes and wild dogs have always been a major problem for land managers. Everything that I have said in relation to state land acting as a haven and breeding ground for pests of all types is very relevant to the situation that Queensland land-holders have always had to face in terms of controlling that wild dog problem.

Over the years, the distinction between dingoes and wild dogs, or feral dogs as they have now become known, has become blurred to a point where in many areas they are indistinguishable. I presume from the way this part of the legislation is written that that distinction is no longer important. I welcome that, because I know there are elements in the community and in the government who would like to somehow portray the dingo as a part of the natural ecosystem and exclude it from the types of management processes that land-holders have always had to adopt to protect their domestic animals from predatory activity. But that cannot be done and it should not be done unless a distinction is made between dingoes and the hybrid wild dogs which are much more common today. I welcome the fact that this legislation makes no distinction, and that is the way it should be. I hope that situation continues.

Clause 95 allows for the destruction of any dog by a landowner on his land if that dog is not under someone's control and is attacking or is likely to attack stock on the land. This is a commonsense approach to a growing problem of distinguishing dingoes from feral dogs and it also at least partially solves an emerging problem in another area, the near urban areas. In rural residential areas, where block sizes can range from a couple of acres up to larger blocks of a hundred acres, the density of houses is much greater than in the traditional rural areas. In most of these areas—the semi-urban rural areas or the urban-rural interface areas—local council by-laws that limit the number of dogs to usually two per household in urban areas do not apply. In fact, that is one of the reasons in many cases that people choose to live in those areas. Another common reason they choose to live there is to keep small numbers of livestock that are usually not much more than pets. Obviously, the control of dogs in those areas is a problem, and conflicts with livestock owners are common. I suspect that I am not the only honourable member who has been approached by constituents about this issue. I welcome this section of the bill that will allow livestock owners in those subdivision areas to protect their stock without fear of incurring compensation or some sort of litigation. This provision of the legislation negates the need to worry about the distinction between dingoes and feral dogs in more extensive areas.

However, the threat from these wild dogs to the Queensland sheep industry is probably the big issue. It is a growing problem. The threat to our small stock industry—and to the sheep industry in particular—has never been greater. This is due to a number of factors. In recent weeks we have heard extensive public debate about these factors. These factors include the increasing number of hybrids amongst the wild dog population. This leads to an increase in both size and aggression. Some people say it makes for more prolific breeding.

All of these arguments have some merit and no doubt they are all involved in the increase in the size of this problem for the Queensland sheep industry. It is a big problem. It is legitimate to recognise that it is one of the reasons why the sheep industry in Queensland is contracting. It is one of the reasons why people are moving from the sheep industry into other industries in particular parts of Queensland. This is occurring simply because the efforts needed to control the wild dog population to a level that makes the sheep industry viable have become too great.

This reinforces the arguments that I have made to date about the state having a responsibility to meet its obligations as a land-holder in order to ensure that the wild dog control programs are conducted on a coordinated regional basis. With the possible exception of wild pigs in north Queensland, there is no other pest that can better make use of areas of state land as harbours and refuges and breeding grounds than the wild dog population in central, western and northern Queensland. In the past two or three weeks this problem has been extensively referred to in the media by all sorts of groups. It has not been referred to simply by opposition members of parliament who represent those areas; it has also been addressed by local government and industry groups. That illustrates better than any argument I could advance in this House why this bill is deficient. It illustrates why this bill needs to be amended in order to ensure that the state government's responsibilities as a land-holder are met. It is necessary that this bill insists that this state government, and future state governments, meet those responsibilities in the same way and at the same level as private land-holders. I look forward to the debate on the amendments that I will introduce in the committee stage.

Chapter 3 of the bill deals with the management of the state stock route network. The minister made some comments about the management of the stock route network in his second reading speech. In fact, his second reading speech concentrated almost entirely on this issue of the management of the state stock route network rather than the big issue, which is the control of pests on state-owned land. The bill requires the preparation of a state stock route network management strategy to include the recognition of the network's multiple uses and the preservation of the land corridor connections as well as the sustainable management of natural resources on the network and the maintenance and improvement of facilities for travelling stock on the network.

I do not think anyone disagrees with that. Certainly, no-one in this House disagrees with it. I am sure we would be hard pressed to find anyone in Queensland who would disagree with it. There is growing recognition of the value of the stock route network that has always been part of the Queensland community. There is concern in some districts about incursions upon that network from a range of pressures. It is good to see that this legislation will attempt to ensure that such incursions from those pressures are effectively combated.

This legislation also provides for the resolution of competing and conflicting interests in relation to the network and allows for community input into the network's management. Those are steps in the right direction and, once again, no-one would have any great problem with that.

Local government will be required to prepare, within one year from the commencement of the act, a stock route network management plan. As with the pest management plans, a local authority preparing a stock route network management plan will be required to establish a working group to give advice on the preparation of the draft plan. Local government will be required to notify the public of the completion of the draft stock route management plan and call for public submissions. After consideration of those public submissions, the draft plan must be submitted to the relevant minister who may then advise the local government concerned that the minister is satisfied that the plan is consistent with the principles of stock route network management and the stock route management strategy.

Local government will have the authority to grant stock route agistment permits to landowners in the local government area whose land is adversely affected by drought, fire or flood. Permits may also be issued by the local government to persons travelling stock under a stock route travel permit.

Local government, as part of its management responsibility for stock routes, may also issue permits for agistment on stock route land which contains pasture excess to that needed for the use of travelling stock. Local government may issue stock route travelling permits for stock routes in the shire. The bill also gives local government the power to issue fencing notices to landowners for the construction of stock-proof fencing to prevent stock from entering a part of the stock route network.

The water facility agreements are currently provided for under the Rural Lands Protection Act 1985. These agreements will now be authorised under this bill. The bill provides for the new offence of allowing stock to stray onto stock route land without reasonable excuse. This offence will attract a maximum penalty of \$7,500 when the number of stock concerned is less than 10, and \$30,000 when the number of stock involved is greater than 10. That seems to be something of a contradiction with the penalties that are involved for travelling stock on the stock route network without a permit. It is, perhaps, an issue that the minister will address in his reply to this debate. It is an issue that the opposition will probably query in the committee stage.

I have no real problem with the clause of the bill which deals with the management of stock routes, although there are some issues that appear strange, such as the one I have just mentioned. The opposition will be querying those matters before the completion of this debate.

I am happy to lend support to what is an important updating of the legislation to manage an important state asset such as the state stock route network. I believe the government's direction is sound in that regard, even if some of the detail needs to be questioned. However, I am less than happy with that section of the bill to which I referred in the first half of my address. This relates to the control of feral animals and noxious weeds. I will be moving a number of amendments to address the failure of this legislation in relation to the management of pests on state-owned land.

In its current form this Bill does not deserve the title of a land protection bill because it does not protect Queensland's lands in the way that it should. A valuable opportunity is being missed if this House passes this legislation in its current form, because nobody disputes the fact that Queensland's lands need to be protected.

There is increasing environmental awareness across the Queensland community and it is not just confined to urban areas. There is increasing environmental awareness amongst Queensland's land-holding community right across the state. Queensland land-holders are much more environmentally aware than they were in years past. They want to see Queensland lands protected. They want to see legislation in place to ensure that the state government meets its responsibilities to protect the land that is under its stewardship.

Those responsibilities are not bartered away in the budget debate every year when resources are allocated to some other more fashionable end rather than the hard slog that every landowner knows is involved in controlling noxious weeds and feral animals. It is a hard slog. It is a constant drain on every land-holder's resources. It is probably the job that land-holders detest most and look forward to the least, but it is a job that has to be done. It is a job that has to be done. It has to be done by every land-holder in the state. The state government has to recognise that it is probably one of the largest land-holders in the state. Its commitment has to be in proportion to the size of its land-holdings. Otherwise it has no right to continue holding those lands. That is the bottom line. Unless there is a recognition that being one of the state's biggest land-holders means that there has to be a commitment every year, in every state budget, to allocate resources to this responsibility then the state should not be a land-holder.

There has to be a commitment in the budget every year that cannot be negotiated away, that cannot be put off until next year. There has been no recognition of that to date. The departments that are charged with this responsibility are already grossly underfunded. The Department of Natural Resources is grossly underfunded in a whole range of activities. It is especially underfunded and underresourced in terms of this particular responsibility. And so it goes for the Department of the Environment in relation to the national park estate that I spoke about earlier. There has to be a recognition of the need for an allocation of resources every year for the hard slog of controlling feral animals and noxious weeds in the national park estate. That has to be done. It has to be recognised that that cannot be negotiated away. It is simply not happening at the moment. The opportunity exists with this legislation to ensure that it happens.

I appeal to every member of this House to recognise the environmental threat to the entire Queensland land estate and especially to that part of the estate that is managed by government departments. We should ensure that this government and every other state government that will

follow is bound by legislation that ensures that the state government meets its responsibilities as the state's biggest land-holder.

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (3.22 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise to speak to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill. I will take this opportunity to make some brief comments about some issues, particularly some of the issues raised by the shadow minister. I am pleased to see that he recognises the awareness that exists in the community, particularly the rural community, about land protection. I think that is important. As the minister said in his second reading speech—

Pest plants and animals cost Queensland over \$600 million annually in lost production and in control costs.

That gives everybody here an idea of the substantial impact that pest plants and animals have on our state.

An important aspect of this bill is that it provides a direction for future pest and stock route management. Out of that, of course, state strategies will be developed for weeds, pest animals and the stock route network. I appreciate this opportunity to speak after the shadow minister. One of the important parts of this bill relates to the issue of planning, which is central to this bill and to this new approach to pest and stock route management.

This bill requires that state strategies for weeds, pest animals and the stock route network be developed after consultation with key stakeholders and the broader community. Of course, the modern planning processes employed are designed to ensure the development of collaborative partnerships and a wide ownership of the plans and their implementation. If these things are to work the process really has to be like that. In other words, everybody has to be part of the process to ensure general acceptance around the state of the plans as they are developed. Of course, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will be responsible for the development of these pest and stock route strategies.

Four state government agencies that hold large areas of land will each develop a state strategy for management of pests on lands for which they are responsible. As has been said before, these agencies are the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Primary Industries, Main Roads and the Environmental Protection Authority. As was recognised by the shadow minister, these agencies occupy substantial portions of land within the state.

I think it is important to recognise that these provisions are new. I think the shadow minister recognised that there is no requirement or mechanism for stakeholders to agree on state-wide strategic directions and priorities. This bill also provides a link with other planning processes. That is important, because we have to develop ownership of these plans and processes. Otherwise it becomes an impossible task.

The bill, as with the present act, states that local governments in Queensland are responsible for ensuring pest plants and animals are controlled on private lands and lands under council control. This responsibility is therefore placed as close as possible to where the issues of pest management are most important. Really, they are at the local level. The bill proposes that local governments develop pest and stock route management plans in consultation with the community. Again, this is about getting agreement throughout the community as to what comprises these management plans.

These plans and their implementation are to be funded directly under the normal budget processes of local government. This removes the present precept concept whereby the local government collects moneys from landowners, forwards these to the state and the state reallocates the funds to local government to undertake actions determined from a state, rather than a local government, perspective. The purpose of this is to put the control and the ownership back at a local level. There is to be input, of course, from the state government agencies concerning the management of pests on lands that they manage. The shadow minister talked about that as well.

The draft local government plans are submitted to the state government to ensure that the state's interests are covered. The intention of the bill is that all of Queensland will be covered by pest management plans developed by local government. So those priorities, those outcomes, those performance measures and, importantly, those targets which are included in those plans will provide a basis for reports to the communities. People at a local level will know exactly what progress is being made and what is being done in an absolutely practical way. Progress will be able to be clearly measured on the basis of the performance measures put forward in those plans.

Pest planning will be linked as closely as possible with other planning activities, including the regional vegetation management planning process and water resources plans. This will provide an effective and balanced approach to natural resource management in Queensland. This is a new approach to planning. It recognises the financial independence and the accountability of local governments. It also recognises that partnerships between state and local governments can be very effective mechanisms for the implementation process. It is easy to have plans—it is easy to have ideas and so on—but it is important to ensure that there is a proper implementation process. Otherwise we could make no progress with any issue—in this case the very important issue of control of pest plants and animals. As I said before, and as the minister said in his second reading speech, pest plants and animals cost the state \$600 million annually in lost production and control costs.

This bill is a positive move from the more prescriptive approach of the existing Rural Lands Protection Act. It also, as I have said, gives due recognition to those local governments that have already developed high-quality pest management plans for areas under their jurisdiction. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (3.30 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001. In the minister's second reading speech reference was made to a new way of dealing with pests and weeds. I ask the minister to give a commitment that there will be appropriate funding for his department so it will be able to play a lead role in controlling and eradicating these pests and weeds. One weed that readily comes to mind is the giant rat-tail grass because it certainly is spreading out of control throughout this state.

I also take this opportunity to ask the minister to clarify the interpretation of clause 77 of the bill which requires landowners to take responsible steps to keep free from class 1 and class 2 pests not only the landowner's land but also certain adjoining lands. I note the minister's response to this question as asked by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, but nevertheless ask the minister to give some more real-life examples so that Queenslanders will have a better understanding of the implications of this proposed act. I also ask the minister if he has a preferred person or preferred people to take on the role of chairman and members of the new Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Council. I also note that clause 196 provides that 'a member holds office on the terms not provided for by this act that are decided by the minister'. I ask the minister to clarify the intent of this clause.

What does the minister anticipate will be the cost of administering this new act once it becomes law? In particular, what does he anticipate will be the cost of the application of this new act on local councils? One concern I certainly do have is that so often state governments delegate important tasks to councils but there is no appropriate funding to go with that delegation. I also note that the minister referred to increased community participation as an important feature of this bill. What does the minister consider to be an appropriate level of community participation in the preparation of the appropriate plans? Will he be undertaking a review on the effectiveness of this bill and its implications on Queensland local governments and the community at some stage after the bill becomes law?

I note that reference is also made by the minister to prevention as being a key principle in pest management. I have recently conducted a series of community meetings in my electorate dealing with the issue of feral dogs, wild dogs, dingoes, call them what you like; they certainly are problem dogs. In this regard, I inform the minister of the good work that Scott O'Keefe from his department is doing. We held meetings in the communities of Bli Bli, Yandina, Mapleton and Woombye where we received some real-life examples of plaster casts of footprints of large dogs and very clear and real descriptions of problem dogs. In relation to some dogs, we have been advised that trackers and catchers have attempted to catch these dogs but it seems that these dogs are becoming very wise to human movements.

At these meetings the minister's departmental staff have been assuring my constituents that the department will act in a responsible manner as a good neighbour, just like other land-holders. I take this opportunity to ask the minister for his commitment and support in eradicating these serious pests and working in a genuine partnership towards a realistic goal for the control of feral dogs in my region, an area in which the state government is a significant land-holder.

Since holding those meetings, at the moment we are collating the information we received from the various meetings and are planning to have a further meeting towards the end of April. In all of the communities where we held meetings we received nominations from members of the public to form a committee which will come up with plans and recommendations for the

government, the council and the community in order to eradicate and control problem dogs in my region. I anticipate that these recommendations will range from a request for funding to eradicate some identifiable problem dogs right through to a public relations exercise for the benefit of all residents.

Actions speak louder than words. Accordingly, I will be listening with interest to the minister's responses to my questions in deciding if I will support this bill. I note that there are many speakers scheduled to speak on this bill and understand that the vote on this bill may not occur until tomorrow. In that regard, I inform all honourable members that tomorrow I will be absent from the House for a short period with the Minister for Education, the Hon. Anna Bligh, for a visit to the Nambour State High School in my electorate when we will meet with parents and students. I certainly hope to return to the chamber in time for the vote on this bill.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (3.35 p.m.): I am pleased to support the passage of the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001 and to address the topics of partnerships for effective pest and stock route management and the employment of community engagement processes for advice and planning. The bill seeks to continue the partnership in pest and stock route management between the state and local governments. 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 address particular issues of concern. At the local level, local governments enforce the provisions of the legislation and operate in the role of the day-to-day managers of a significant area of land—that is, the stock route network.

Local governments will develop pest and stock route management plans in consultation with the local community. Draft plans will be submitted to the state to ensure that issues of importance to the state are covered. The Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Council is to be established to provide government, conservation, community and industry advice to the minister about strategic issues related to pest and stock route network management. The council will replace the existing Rural Lands Protection Board and will complement the Ministerial Advisory Council on Vegetation Management and the Landcare and Catchment Management Council. All three councils are evidence of how serious the Beattie government is about community engagement and effective and sustainable management of our natural resources.

The 15 member composition of the Land Protection Council will reflect increased representation for conservation, community and the environment movement, as well as representatives of rural industry and government departments. There will be an appointed chairperson and one nominee from each of the Departments of Natural Resources and Mines, Primary Industries and the Environmental Protection Agency; three nominees from the Local Government Association of Queensland; six nominees from entities representing agricultural production interests, including Agforce, Queensland Dairyfarmers, Queensland Canegrowers, Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers; one nominee from the Queensland Conservation Council; and one nominee of the minister representing community interests. The Rural Lands Protection Board included two other nominees—one each from the abolished Council of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

The new bill provides a strategic focus on how to achieve pest and stock route network management through effective partnerships and the council will provide the minister with advice concerning management of pests and the stock route network and make recommendations about major control and management programs for declared pests; research into the management of pests and the stock route network; developing, implementing and reviewing management plans for pests and the stock route network; educational programs about pests and the stock route network; policies about pests and the management of the stock route network; guidelines about the management of declared pests; animals or plants that are to be declared pests; major funding initiatives for pest and stock route network management; and other matters that the minister directs.

The new bill also provides for a head of power to create pest operational boards to manage specific pest issues as determined necessary by the minister. Enabling provisions are proposed to cover the necessary scope of operations. Board members are to be appointed by the minister. Funding for a board's operations will be in whole or part by local government and will use the provisions of the legislation to raise contributions through a rate. A board would be a body corporate able to acquire, sell or hold land; to enforce legislated provisions in an area; to engage employees; to enter into contracts; and to sue or be sued. The board would be established under a regulation and its area of operations would be defined. Composition of a board would be

contained within the regulation and may include local government, primary production, rural land expertise and geographical interests. An example of a pest operational board is the existing Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board. This board is based in Warwick and keeps a large part of south-east Queensland free from rabbits by maintaining a rabbit-proof fence and controlling rabbit populations found within the area.

Funding for the board's operations may be raised in whole or in part from the local governments within the district through the financial mechanism proposed in the bill. At a local level, the bill will have a positive and significant impact on the Mackay region. Local governments will be required to develop pest management area plans that are intended to bring together all relevant sectors of the local community to manage pests. This means that state agencies will need to have input and also outlay their strategies for managing pests on areas of state lands. Local government area pest management plans will set a framework for greater cooperation and establish valuable partnerships between local governments, state agencies and the community. Plans will need to be consistent with state pest management strategies, principles and guidelines. State agencies holding large parcels of land will be required to develop plans for managing pests and, as outlined above, contribute to local government area planning. This will have a major resource impact on Natural Resources and Mines.

Weed seed spread is a very big issue, with the new bill proposing changes to reflect greater powers and offence penalties. Property quarantine powers will be available for the first time, aimed at protecting the community through prevention of contaminated fodder, livestock, machinery, soil, et cetera.

Currently, Mackay's declared pest plants include parthenium, tobacco weed, milkweed, giant rat-tail grass, sicklepod, prickly acacia, Parkinsonia, rubber vine, mimosa pigra, harrisia cactus, water lettuce, water hyacinth, salvinia, giant sensitive plant and mother-of-millions.

Mackay's declared animals include feral pigs, wild dogs/dingoes and rabbits. The Rural Lands Protection Act 1985 and the proposed bill do not cover exotic birds, amphibians or invertebrates—excluding migratory, spur-throated and Australian plague locusts—which may have pest potential in Queensland. The major pest plant projects within Mackay district include a project to combat mimosa pigra at the Peter Faust Dam in Proserpine. An extensive survey and control program is continuing to run twice annually, to coincide with flowering/seeding periods. The program has been running for 12 months with no new sites found outside of the dam catchment area. The control program objectives are to eradicate all plants within the dam and therefore to contain the infestation within its current confines.

Another project was initiated when *Blainvillea gayana* was discovered in late 2000 at two localities in the Mackay region. Currently, not a lot is known about the weedy potential of this plant in Australia. A weed of open ground in semi-arid regions of West Africa, *Blainvillea* has not previously been recorded in Australia. A SWEEP project proposal was developed and control undertaken in early 2001. An annual plant, *Blainvillea* has required repeated control during 2001 and it can be assumed that this will again be necessary in 2002. Natural Resources and Mines are working with respective local governments and land-holders to treat areas.

Partnerships and community engagement are important factors in effectively managing our natural resources. The Land Protection Bill 2001 has been developed by extensive consultation with relevant groups and will strengthen existing relationships in pest and stock route management. I place on record my appreciation of the tremendous work done by DNR&M staff in the Mackay region, particularly regional officer Peter Austin and local officer Cassandra Chopping. These officers work very effectively with councils and property owners in the management of our natural resources. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (3.44 p.m.): The shadow minister has outlined a number of the opposition's issues and concerns with certain provisions of this bill. Broadly, though, many aspects of it are a good step in the right direction. However, it behoves the minister and other members to take into consideration those matters which the shadow minister raised not only from a theoretical but also a practitioner's viewpoint, because he is from the land and he does understand the issues of pest management throughout Queensland, whether that be weeds or feral animals.

I live on a farming property. We have some grazing interests, and I live very close to a significant area of state lands. I note the comment this afternoon on the management of pests on state lands and the management of pests on private lands as well. Sometimes the balance does get a little bit out of whack, but generally it behoves us to have a modern land protection

act in the state, one which facilitates the process of local and regional pest management plans and which can effectively and holistically deal with the scourge of pests not just in isolation but right across the state.

From time to time a lot is said in here and outside about the government and other people's commitment to the eradication of pests, but in many cases that is not necessarily backed up by the resources necessary to do it properly. We need to ensure that any legislation which passes through this parliament and which deals with this issue does have a practical application. It needs to be backed up by resources and a willingness not only on the part of private land-holders but also on the part of government to commit the resources to control and eradicate pests on lands throughout this state.

There has been consultation over a long period of time on this legislation. I know that the legislation was around when I was minister some four-odd years ago. It is almost so long ago that I can hardly even remember it now, and it had been around for a while before that. We also knew of some of the contentious issues at that time.

I refer to the issue of management of pests on state-owned land. I will be very interested in the minister's response to this, because one thing that I have noticed over a period of time is that as we have acquired—

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: We will come to the 1080 issue in a moment. The use of 1080 is one of the most effective ways of controlling feral pigs and wild dogs in this state—something that I am sure the minister recognises. I am concerned about reports of a review of the way that chemical can be used and why it may not be able to be used in the future. That is of enormous concern to me and to land-holders. On the issue of 1080 baiting, I am sure a lot of people throughout Queensland have absolutely no idea of the effective value of that chemical. If it were not for 1080 there would be no real way of controlling on a broad scale feral dogs and feral pigs. We use it in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources for the control of foxes along with our dingo baiting campaign. It is very good and very effective. While some people might talk about cruelty, it is probably one of the most humane and effective ways of eradication. One can go out and shoot, but there is a limit to how much one can shoot from the ground. In a moment I shall touch on the issue of being able to shoot from the air, because there is something that government and land-holders working together can do to address that.

I refer to state lands and to the way that certain plants and animals are often left to get out of control. I am not saying that that is not the situation with private land-holders, but there does seem to be a propensity on the part of councils, through land protection officers and pest management officers, to try to enforce a regime. In many cases, a lack of real commitment and interest or a blind eye is turned to what is a growing and manifestly significant problem on state-owned land.

I know that the minister has been in my electorate on quite a number of occasions over the last year or so and for that I commend him, but if one drives into Goondiwindi one notices that about 10 kilometres to the east of Goondiwindi on the Cunningham Highway there is a huge problem with harrisia cactus and tree pear. I know that we have a big problem with tree pear and that a lot of land-holders are trying to control it, but harrisia cactus has been there for more than 10 years. It is spreading right across the ground. I went down there the other day and noticed that a grass fire had burnt the understorey, so to speak, and really denuded the place. The harrisia cactus is almost like a jungle. I do not think fire controls it, so it will actually spring up like new. In fact, some of it has gone from that main road onto private lands. Some land-holders have obviously tried to control it on their property, so there are some areas where it has only just gone into their property but others where it has spread. However, the common denominator is the state land. I do not know whether it is an issue of the government or the control authority not having the resources—the money, the commitment, the drive, the administration—to control it at the outset when it was a small problem, but it has become a major problem.

The other issue is weeds such as mother-of-millions. I have a forestry lease and I try to go in there and spray it. That begs another question from a practical user's viewpoint. A motorbike sprayer can go around a property spot spraying, but if a person wants to venture into the forestry lease—which he is obliged to look after; it is just next to his property—he is supposed to have accreditation. I think that is where the practicality goes out of some of these issues. A person is quite capable and quite competent to combat the weed that is poking just through the fence of his property from his forestry lease, but he really cannot do that. He has to go through an

accreditation process. I think that we need to look at that issue. A responsible land-holder with a grazing lease on those particular blocks of land is not going to do anything stupid. Those people are worried about their own health. This issue really drives them to distraction because in trying to do the right thing they are weighed down by regulation. I think that needs to be looked at.

The issue of wild dogs is a real, growing problem in my part of the world. Fortunately in the Stanthorpe shire, because of the fencing arrangements down there and a spur fence that was put in place in the late 1980s in cooperation between the government and the council, wild dogs have not encroached on the eastern part of the shire, but they are a problem in the national parks. Warwick shire has a problem with wild dogs because they come off the main range country. Some of them get as far back as almost to Millmerran. By the time the dogs reach that area, they are extremely wily old dogs. Despite the best efforts of some fairly hardened locals with their dingo drives, a lot of those dogs get away. Those people may have a dozen or 15 dingo drives, but they might not necessarily get these wily old dogs. After two or three years maybe somebody will stumble across them and shoot them or somebody might trap them. But in the meantime several thousand fine-wool sheep go down.

That is why I think that it is very necessary to make sure that we have effective, proactive baiting campaigns. To its credit, I know that the Department of Natural Resources tries to encourage that. It has very proactive pest management officers in that area. But I say to land-holders in my area that it does not matter if they have sheep, cattle, or whatever; they have a duty and an obligation to themselves and other people in the surrounding areas that are vulnerable to wild dogs to try to reduce the number of those wild dogs.

I am relatively fortunate that most of the wild dogs in my area still tend to be relatively pure bred. We do not have the crossbreeding problem that we hear about that is happening in other places. Generally, my area has dingoes and the occasional crossbreed. But we have noticed that the pure-bred dingoes are becoming more and more brazen. Once, as soon as they were seen they were gone; now the dogs will stay there and watch people. I do not know whether that is because they hear more and more mechanical noise, or whether they hear television sets during the night-time. Those dogs might be only a matter of a few hundred metres away from people's houses. That also creates an additional challenge.

Recently, somebody from the Warwick shire came to see me. I will refer back to what I was talking about a moment ago in relation to the effect that wild dogs have on the shires in my area. There is a bit of a problem in the Warwick shire. The Stanthorpe shire is generally contained within the dog fence. However, in the Inglewood shire and back into Waggamba, there is a growing problem. The minister would be aware that in the Inglewood shire there is a significant amount of state forest that runs into Millmerran up towards Cecil Plains. There are actually hundreds of thousands of acres of it there and it has a real wild dog problem. We have a proactive dogger in Inglewood who is extremely effective. Over a significant period he has eradicated a number of dingoes and wild dogs. But his job is getting more difficult by the day.

I think that I can understand the motivation, but I am somewhat concerned about the wisdom of transferring the responsibility for state forests from the DNR to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. There is no doubt that there is a difference in mentality in the way in which those two departments manage their responsibilities. I am not saying that the National Parks and Wildlife Service are not genuinely committed to the job that they are supposed to do, but when considering some of the plans that that service is putting in place in conjunction with local authorities, I believe that there are some real issues of practicality. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is primarily motivated to maintain our natural environment and native animals. The Department of Natural Resources, with its pest management officers, has had a liaison with other people in the management of state forest. It has a more practical understanding of the way in which that state land should be managed.

Perimeter baiting has been mentioned. I know that it has been around for some time, but when we are dealing with a piece of state forest that might be 10 kilometres or 15 kilometres across and 30 kilometres, 40 kilometres or 50 kilometres long, it has its limitations. A wild dog may encroach outside that area, but it is a hit-and-miss process. The real issue is to have a process of baiting throughout the state forest, not just on the perimeter, because we need to be able to get to the critical mass of wild dogs—where they are breeding and where they are coming from.

Mr Johnson: It's got to be controlled and coordinated.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It has to be coordinated, it has to be effective and it has to be on a broad scale. I understand the thinking that the wild dogs' natural habitat is in the state owned land, that it is only when those dogs go beyond the perimeter of the state forest that they start to affect land-holders and that we should deal with the problem then because we do not want to get involved in fights with environmental groups for baiting those wild dogs within the state forest. But I think that is a folly, because unless we can get to the dogs where they are breeding, where there are significant numbers of them, then we are fighting a losing battle. Therefore, from a practical landowner's viewpoint, I ask the minister, in his dealings with National Parks and Wildlife Service and local government, to not dismiss that strategy as an option.

The other issue—and probably no member will broach this subject—is the trapping process. The dogger in the Inglewood shire traps in excess of 100 dogs each year. He is very, very good at it. If he did not work in that shire, there would be significant sheep and calf losses. But we are moving to rubber jaw traps. People might think that that sounds humane, but the reality is that in many cases dogs can pull their feet out of the rubber jaw traps. What are we trying to achieve? Does it assuage our conscience to have rubber jawed traps? The reality is that metal jaw traps are effective. They are probably not the most humane things, but rubber jaw traps can still dislocate an animal's leg. If we are going to trap an animal that subsequently releases itself, are we really tackling the problem? I think that we need to look at this issue from a practical point of view. Of course we need to look at the issue of trapping dogs humanely, but we need to be practical and look at what we are trying to achieve and what is ultimately saved as a consequence of trapping.

Recently in Warwick I had a deputation from a local councillor with the council's pest management officer who put a proposition to me and asked me to raise it with the minister. I said that I would raise it when this bill was debated in parliament. Some time ago, this man approached a number of landowners in that Warwick shire with a view to a helicopter shoot-out campaign. I understand that the state government does that in the circumstances of feral animals in certain places. As the man's proposal gained further approval, it reached the Civil Aviation Authority. Apparently, a firearm cannot be discharged from an aircraft less than 500 feet above the ground. The man asked me, 'How can the state government manage to do it?' I think that matter should be investigated, because that is what this fellow was told. He had the experience in New South Wales where the government of that state each year used to conduct a major feral pig eradication campaign from the air. In a matter of three or four hours they used to shoot up to 300 to 400 feral pigs. The equivalent of the rural land protection authority in that state used to supply the ammunition. That is an extraordinarily effective way of eradicating large numbers of wild pigs over a vast area. It is also a very effective method of eradicating rogue wild dogs. This method has been tried previously throughout the Warwick shire. People used to go out in a helicopter and in a couple of hours shoot eight or nine problem wild dogs and probably clean up the bank of the local dingo or wild dog management committee, because that committee had a bounty of \$400 or \$500 for each wild dog that was shot. That used to be a worthwhile exercise for somebody who had the initiative to do it. It is an issue that could be looked at because he had people—

Mr Robertson: Is this because they were close to the town?

Mr SPRINGBORG: No, not close to towns; I am talking kilometres away from towns. Also, we are dealing with shotguns, which we know are hardly effective over about 50 or 60 metres, and are virtually not dangerous at all 100 yards away. We are dealing with the firing of shotguns in this particular situation. It was not in proximity to a built-up area and there seemed to be almost unanimous land-holder support for it. In actual fact, this pest management officer had started rounding up a number of licensed shooters who were prepared to fund the campaign. They were actually prepared to fund the helicopter and to contribute the ammunition for the campaign. All of these land-holders were lined up and it was to be a coordinated approach, but it seems to have run into some problems with CASA with regard to the discharge of firearms from the air.

We need to know if it can be done by the state government even if private individuals might have a problem doing it. If there is a problem with regard to private set-ups doing it, can something be done under the auspices of the state government to provide an effective accreditation and oversight of this process, particularly if somebody is willing to pay for it and it is supported by people in the area? The pest management officer had actually spoken to people in the Warwick shire who did not want to go on a baiting campaign but said they would be happy

for a shoot-out campaign from the air. That situation covers people who would not enter into a baiting campaign.

I support the contention of the shadow minister that by the time we have finished in the committee stage, this legislation must absolutely and unequivocally ensure that the state government will fulfil its obligation to expend the same amount of time, effort, resources and motivation in the control of pest animals and weeds on its land as it expects of private land-holders. That is a matter of concern and I am not convinced that this legislation imposes the same obligation, commitment and oversight on the state government as it imposes on private land-holders. It needs to be unequivocal. If we are to have a regime which enforces to a high degree the obligations of private land-holders—and fair enough—then it should enforce a similar obligation that the four to five per cent of Queensland which is tied up in national parks and the amounts which are tied up in state forest and other state-owned land will also be controlled to the same high standard. Is this because the government is concerned about its resources and the cost? If that is the case, it is not a very good excuse. There is no point in forcing very high standards on private land-holders and ensuring their oversight without the state government necessarily making the same commitment itself. The result will be a growing pool of pest animals and weeds on state-owned land which will encroach on areas which have actually been cleaned up. The government needs to make a far greater commitment on this issue.

In my electorate there are two Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officers who service from the top of Cunninghams Gap to just short of St George. How good is that? They cover several hundred thousand acres of state forest land on which we have a significant feral animal problem. It is not good enough!

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (4.03 p.m.): It is a pleasure to join the debate today on the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001. I will say at the outset that I support this legislation. The minister has done a great job of bringing the legislation to this point and presenting it to the House today.

Since the beginning of white settlement, generations of Australians have taken this great country for granted. There is a belief by some that the land from which we harvest our foods is an unlimited resource. It is probably fair to say that that belief can be a reality, but only if we look after our land. Over the decades, trees have been cleared, land cultivated and pastures grazed beyond the capacity of the land and the limits caused by seasonal fluctuations. These activities have resulted in soil erosion, salt invasion and weed infestation.

Every member of this House knows that land degradation is unsustainable. There has to be a change in the way that we, as a nation, manage our land resources. Productive lands are essential to our very existence and we should never, ever think differently. As legislators, as primary producers and as ordinary citizens living in the populated regions, we all have a responsibility to care for the land. We have an obligation to future generations to ensure that our land continues to be productive to meet their needs. We must ensure that flora and fauna can continue to survive and play their role in keeping the balance right.

Although we still have a long way to go, I believe that today's Australians are genuinely more environmentally conscious of our day-to-day activities than we once were. Farmers are thinking more about the long-term viability of the land. In fact, I know from my own experiences that there are many rural producers who are excelling in land management practices. Governments are making the legislative changes necessary to control the slash-and-burn cowboys who, through their selfish and uncaring behaviour, impact on those working against the odds to maintain the land from which they draw a livelihood.

The national weed strategy is the result of a partnership between the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, the Australia and New Zealand Environment Council and the ministers responsible for forestry. The implementation of this strategy is the responsibility of the executive committee of the national weed strategy. The committee has been working to identify weeds of national importance and working with the states and territories to develop and implement their own weed strategies and management structures. Everyone is focused and working together with the same intent: to put in place structures that will work. However, for any weed strategy to be successful, there needs to be a major injection of funds and a genuine commitment to attacking the weed problem. I understand that the Beattie Labor government currently spends around \$6 million a year on weed control. Late last year, the federal government committed \$5.7 million in funding to tackle the spread of the state's worst five weeds. Those weeds are Parkinsonia, prickly acacia, mesquite, rubber vine and parthenium.

As per usual in these types of agreements, the state government is required to provide contributions equal to or greater than the federal government. It is unclear whether our state's contribution is in addition to the annual commitment of around \$6 million for weed control or whether it is to be drawn from that budget allocation. One thing is for sure: the amount of money being discussed is well below the dollars required to take control of the weed problem in Queensland. The federal government must take seriously the extent of this problem if we are to have any hope of bringing the rapid spread of weeds under control. Our minister and our state government are committed to the task, but they will continue to flounder unless the federal government is prepared to commit more funds.

I understand that there are more than 60 introduced plant species that are declared weeds in Queensland. That is pretty horrific! A declared weed is a plant that is considered a serious enough pest to warrant enforced control and prohibited sale under the Land Protection Act 1985, which will be replaced by the bill we are currently debating. While there are more than 60 declared weeds, there is limited funding from the federal government. There is no doubt that we welcome the \$5.7 million contributed by the federal government last year. It will help tackle the serious problem of infestation coming from the spread of Parkinsonia, prickly acacia, mesquite, rubber vine and parthenium. However, the federal government's response to other serious weed infestations is a joke and highlights the Howard government's lack of genuine commitment to tackling the Queensland weed problem head-on. For example, last year our government identified \$4.2 million worth of projects under the weeds of national significance program. Identified projects for the control of hymenachne, pond apple, salvinia and cabomba drew a mere \$900,000. We asked for \$4.2 million and we received \$900,000. This is a genuinely disappointing response to the good work done by industry, the state government and the community.

Strategies for the management and control of weeds cannot and will not work without financial backing from the government. It must be understood that governments cannot carry the burden; the community has to realise that this is a community issue and it has to be educated as to the seriousness of the eradication of weeds program. It is no good saying that the problem is out there and that it exists. We know it is there. The community has to be prepared to get behind governments to make sure that the funds are there to take control. It is pretty scary that, when weeds are reported to be costing Queensland around \$500 million a year in lost production, the best the federal government can do is allocate \$6.5 million. This is a national issue that must involve the community if we are to implement strategies that will achieve outcomes that are effective and everlasting.

We need massive injections of funding for research. We need huge commitments of dollars for on-the-ground projects. Those funds need to be separate and clearly identifiable in terms of where and how they are spent. It serves no purpose to put a spin on funding allocations and to have those funds spread thinly over areas of demand.

We need to get serious about the issue of weed control. As I said before, weed control is a community issue. It is an issue that, if not taken seriously, could leave future generations with a major environmental catastrophe. We stand to lose valuable lands to parthenium, giant rat-tail grass, mother-of-millions and the 60 or so other declared plants. There is a need for government to support the committed landowner in respect of neighbours who are poor land managers. I get complaints on a regular basis from landowners who are doing the right thing—good land managers who are working hard continuously to keep their lands clean. But all of their good work is being undone simply because they have a neighbour who has a poor attitude and does not understand what it means to be a good land manager.

Local councils must have the legislative powers to force landowners to take action against the cowboys who have no respect for other landowners or future generations. Local councils must be brought into line over their ad hoc approach to effective weed control and their apparent unwillingness to take on landowners. I see this on a regular basis. Local authorities have had issues of weed infestation brought to their attention. They have the powers. However, they fail to act upon those powers and, therefore, the genuine landowner who is putting in the hard work is disadvantaged.

As I said before, the community must also be better educated about weeds and weed control. We need to make members of the public aware of their responsibilities. The legislation before the House today recognises these requirements and the urgency of the problems that exist. The success and the intent of the legislation is dependent on commitments of ongoing funding, the right strategies and the vigilance of government agencies. If we do not get fair

dinkum about the management and control of weeds, we are simply pouring millions of dollars into an out of control weed storm. That is unsustainable for us as a nation and an issue that really has to be taken very seriously before it gets to that stage.

I wish to raise a couple of local issues, one of which relates to the depasturing of stock routes and the fees and other charges made under section 58(4), 'Powers and functions of local governments' of the 1985 act, which is addressed in the bill before the House. That section of the act allowed local governments to collect fees and charges in respect of stock routes or reserves used for travelling stock. A local authority must charge depasturing fees for livestock forced onto a stock route under permit during times of extended dry spells and when landowners' pastures are beyond recovery until it rains. I understand the need for a local authority to collect the fees, which are passed on to the state. However, I have some real concerns about the fee structure.

The fee currently stands at \$1.65 per head per week and is set by regulation. I understand that the legislation to be passed will have the same requirement, but those fees are yet to be set by regulation. The fee that is charged can be varied upon application by the chairman of the local authority to the executive director of the department. Producers seeking to access a stock route due to climatic conditions are usually in trouble and the additional burden of fees can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. What I am saying is that we understand that the fees have to be there. During good times there is no reason why the fees should not be applicable and there should not be any reason for anybody to complain about them. However, when a grazier or a landowner is faced with a difficult dry spell and he finds himself starting to struggle financially, the fees at that level and the rate at which they are applied—on a per head per week basis—can over time become a burden.

The fee should be applied when times are good, but I would like the minister to look at and give serious consideration to a review of how and when these fees and charges should apply. Local councils are well aware of the prevailing conditions and are able to make a commonsense decision about the ability of people to pay at the time. I am not suggesting that they should not pay anything at all. Let us have a look at the structure and the amount of money that those people are asked to pay. A lot of people out there would welcome the minister having a look at that. I understand the difficulties that would arise if changes have to be made. On behalf of my constituents, I say that I would appreciate it if the minister looked at this.

Another issue of concern to me is giant rat-tail grass, or GRT as it is known. As everybody knows, it is an aggressive grass that is spreading throughout Queensland. It was introduced from South Africa in the 1960s as a contaminant in pasture seed and is having a major impact on the pasture grasses in many areas of my electorate and is on the move throughout Queensland. It has the capacity to take over pastures. It is extremely hardy and is rejected by livestock. It is also very hard to identify. I am told that even goats refuse to eat GRT. If that is true, that says a lot about the type of weed it is. Goats will eat just about anything. If they will not eat GRT, we have got a problem.

Harrisia cactus is another cause for concern. Peter Bambling, a constituent of mine north of Dingo on the Dingo-Mount Flora Road on a property called Marion, alerted me to this problem some years ago. Recently, I spoke to him again and had another look at the area which he had pointed out to me several years ago. It is certainly spreading. From speaking with other landowners in the area, I am aware that it is spreading throughout central Queensland as well. This is a native of South Africa, introduced in the 1890s. It chokes out pasture. I was also amazed to learn that it can interfere with the movement of livestock around stock routes or on properties. Cattle are reluctant to go anywhere near it.

Parthenium has been spreading throughout central Queensland and my electorate. It spreads over huge distances every time we have the right seasonal events. Around the Capella, Tieri and Emerald areas I have seen major infestations, with the whole landscape covered in the yellow parthenium flower, which means that that land is useless to livestock. Therefore, it is a real issue for graziers.

I have seen properties down around the Moura area where there is proper management of cattle grazing land which has infestations of parthenium weed. The cattle are put into the area and are allowed to eat the grass to a certain level and they are then moved to another paddock. This practice is having an impact on the spread of parthenium weed. I believe that if these graziers continue to manage their pastures in such a way they will be able to keep parthenium weed under control.

Another pest that has been of concern to me in the electorate of Fitzroy is mother-of-millions. I am alarmed at the way in which this plant is spreading. The way that mother-of-millions has spread through Taroom Shire is incredible.

I know that the minister and the Beattie government are committed to funding research and helping local authorities and landowners control weeds. I am pleased to see this happening. The minister and the government should be complimented. Research involves expenditure of a lot of money. However, whilst research is being undertaken the weeds are still spreading. I believe we need to be out there on the ground supporting programs that attack the problems where they exist—on the property. We need to take control of the problem where it exists.

I certainly do not believe that we can eradicate these weeds through blood, sweat and tears. However, we cannot afford to simply stand and look on and hope that research can come up with the right answers to these problems

I support the legislation before the House. It is a step in the right direction in providing for the management and control of weeds. The legislation will assist local authorities and ensure that everything possible is being done at the grassroots level. This will help us to take some control of the weed situation in Queensland.

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—ONP) (4.23 p.m.): I rise today to speak in support of the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill. But, whilst I strongly support all endeavours aimed at eradicating weeds and pest animals due to the adverse effects they can have on the environment and primary production, there are some areas of the bill that my community and I feel need addressing.

One area of concern is the often erratic approach many councils take in their approach to pest management and control. The lack of uniformity between councils regarding pest management is a real issue, with many holding different views on what they regard as a pest. Will this bill ensure an improved level of consistency between councils? How will this government ensure council compliance with the pest management plan? In order to ensure the effectiveness and success of this legislation, a coordinated approach needs to be taken between all shires. Will this state's councils also be provided with extra funding and staff levels in order for them to adequately carry out systematic inspections of designated areas and to implement the pest management plan?

As the minister would be aware, my electorate is suffering from increasing dingo and hybrid dog attacks. Will this legislation make any inroads into the lack of trained staff who are able to give permission for landowners to bait? The waiting period for baiting permission is far too long and there is a lack of departmental staff who are able to carry out the baiting. At the moment, to have one person trained to apply the bait, once permission is given by another employee of the department, takes over six months.

The five kilometre distance for baiting is also a hindrance to primary producers and adds to the huge delay in baiting. This is just not reasonable or viable when these producers are continually losing livestock and thousands of dollars in the process.

With regard to the control of pests in rural and regional Queensland, and to further enhance the outcomes of the pest management plan, will this government be providing any funding increases to our pest research stations?

I have received some queries in my electorate regarding riparian access to rivers by land-holders. The bill does not really address the situation which may occur when one land-holder carries out his or her responsibility regarding weed control when the adjacent landowner may not be complying with the regulations as set out in the legislation. This could lead to the spread of weeds by someone who is not being responsible. What redress does the responsible landowner have if the neighbouring land-holder has failed to keep up his end of the bargain and subsequently sullies the other person's area of the waterway? Will this government provide subsidies to land-holders who have to purchase large quantities of chemicals in order to treat and control the spread of pests?

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (4.26 p.m.): This bill draws attention to the magnificent public asset that is represented by the state's network of stock routes and the need to manage that network for future generations in a sustainable manner.

The Queensland stock route network consists of approximately 72,000 kilometres of land corridor traversing much of Queensland and covering many biogeographical regions. Stock routes are usually roads and land corridors used for vehicular movement, power, gas and

telecommunications infrastructure and other industry. Along with stock feed, water facilities and reserves, the network contains remnant vegetation, rare and endangered animal species and culturally significant sites. The demands of these multiple uses and the resourcing of them can often conflict.

This bill recognises the pressing need to manage the natural resources on the network for future generations, while continuing to cater for the current needs of travelling stock. The proposed bill establishes a management framework for the network that preserves its existing functionality and biodiversity and ensures its sustainability for future generations. Recognition of the importance of these land corridors that criss-cross the biogeographical regions of Queensland is given by the new bill. Under this bill the 48 local governments with a history of stock movements are identified, and each local government will be required under the bill to sponsor development of a stock route management plan. A partnership approach to planned development will seek involvement from the land-holders, industry, community and government agencies—all local stakeholders.

The proposed bill requires local governments to have a stock route network management plan within one year of the commencement of the new act. The plan may include: identification of those parts of the network in the local government area; achievable objectives; strategies, activities and other responsibilities for achieving the objectives; monitoring the plan's implementation and evaluating its effectiveness; the plan may be for a period of not more than four years; and local government must implement the plan as far as practicable. The effectiveness of each management plan must be reviewed at least three months prior to the end of the financial year and when the state-wide stock route network strategy is amended.

The new bill also provides that maps held by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will define the stock route network. This will overcome the current position where it is not clear which roads or tracks are stock routes.

Under the proposed bill, stock travel permits may have attached conditions for their use. These may include conditions associated with road safety, stock supervision, stock warning signs and public liability insurance. Local governments may issue permits only for their area, or for longer journeys with the permission of effective local governments along the route. These improvements overcome an issue where, presently, livestock travel permits lack provision for conditions and can be issued for travel in another local government area.

To the detriment of travelling stock, the current agistment permit system on stock routes does not adequately protect against excessive use of pasture from local agistment of livestock. Under the proposed bill, agistment of livestock on the stock route network is subject to criteria. The stock owner's land must be affected by drought, fire or flood, and the applicant must not have had a permit upon the subject land for the past three months. Conditions similar to those for travelling livestock will be attached to permits.

Agistment fees are proposed to reflect pasture type, current conditions and market values. The period of an agistment permit is proposed to be up to 28 days, with one opportunity for renewal by the applicant to cover the same land on the network. These proposed changes will remove any confusion and inconvenience caused by the present system, which requires two permits for travel along state controlled roads that are also stock routes. They will also allow for the sustainable management of the stock route network.

Under the bill, local governments and the state will share the stock route fees equally. This clearly signifies the partnership between the two tiers of government and gives true recognition of the important role of local government in natural resource management—in this case of the stock route network. It ensures that local government receives a fair proportion of the proceeds of its activities associated with the management of these important land corridors, activities which include planning for effective management of the stock routes. Under the present legislation this is not recognised and local government does not receive fees as they are paid directly to the state. These are important changes that will enhance management of our stock route network. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.30 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill. I have heard what many members in the House have had to say this afternoon. Unless the government pays particular attention to all aspects of this bill, it will not work. I do not say that lightly. It is important to establish proper principles for pest management for land and stock route management. There are many other aspects to this legislation.

One of the guidelines always set down for leasehold land is proper management practices. This afternoon I heard the member for Fitzroy use the term 'cowboy'. I suppose we could call these people irresponsible or whatever. The fact is that now there are not many people who do not care about their land. One good thing that has developed over the last 10 or 15 years is the responsibility people are taking for the land they are custodians of. We live in a very competitive world. We see that when we look at commodity prices. Regardless of what is produced on the land in question, people are trying to produce quality products.

In the electorate of Gregory, which I represent, there are many stock routes and national parks. Where government controlled land interfaces with rural properties—they may be freehold tenure, grazing homestead leases, pastoral leases or whatever—it is most important that proper management procedures be applied to both the government controlled land and the privately controlled land.

This afternoon I wish to talk about noxious plants and weeds, especially in national parks and on stock routes. This legislation refers to a management plan being put in place whereby the local government will play a vital, integral and very responsible role. I urge the minister to pay particular attention to the issue of management of national parks. Where there are national parks upstream from a lot of these pastoral aggregations, there is always the problem of the seeds of noxious plants—noxious weeds, woody weeds or whatever—washing down and taking root somewhere else. Classic examples of this are Noogoora burr, Bathurst burr and parthenium weed.

It is bad luck for the bloke at the bottom of the stream. He is always going to have a problem unless things are controlled at the top, where the watershed is. If we cannot control the watershed and find out where the problem starts, we will not be able to control it along the length and breadth of the channel or flood plain in question. Proper management practices must be put in place in national parks so we can control that flora that is detrimental to the biodiversity of national parks, stock routes and general properties.

I wish to raise the issue of parthenium weed. This is a real scourge to rural industries today.

Mr Purcell: Don't touch on it. Get a hoe and knock it out, mate.

Mr JOHNSON: The member for Bulimba knows that we cannot do that. The situation is becoming progressively worse. The reason is that there are a lot of people who cannot identify the plant. In its infancy, when the plant is an inch or two inches high, a lot of people would probably think it is just another weed. As it grows up a bit the configuration changes a little more. No doubt the minister has seen quite high plants, especially in the central highlands around Capella and Emerald. It has rendered a lot of that farming country virtually useless.

I believe we have to have an all-out campaign to make people—not only land-holders but all people—aware of and able to identify some of these noxious plants. Parthenium falls into that category, because it will render a lot of our good pastoral land useless. The member for Bulimba just said that we should get a hoe and knock it out. I remember when I was younger we had a problem with Noogoora burr at Quilpie. In a lot of places you cannot get to Noogoora burr and spray it. You have to get in there with a hoe and cut it out, or do the best you can. Eradication programs must be put in place.

I was talking to my colleague the member for Darling Downs a while ago about tourists. They will stop their cars in one place, get out and let their dog have a run. They would not know what that dog has been running in, whether it is parthenium, Noogoora burr or whatever. They may have picked up the seed. They will then go on to the next place, which could be 150 kilometres or 200 kilometres away, and let the dog out again. The weed could be transported in this way. Another possibility for transfer is that the car has picked up the seed because it has been off the road. Control of this type of transfer comes back to identification. This is a very serious issue. The minister knows that as well as I do. These weeds are a real impost on and impediment to rural land-holders today.

I turn to the issue of wild dogs and their control. This issue is near and dear to me, because I have had a lot of experience with dingoes in my life on the land. In this day and age we see that a lot of these dogs have crossbred with dingoes and other breeds. Some of these crossbreeds are worse pests than the dingoes themselves. I said in an interjection on my colleague the member for Southern Downs that I believe these 1080 campaigns have to be controlled, coordinated and on a wide scale. We talk about wild dogs, dingoes, foxes and feral pigs. The minister should make absolutely certain that while ever he is in control of this portfolio the 1080 poison is readily available to land-holders. He should also ensure that that chemical is

not weakened because some group has got to him and said, 'We need to lighten the concentration of poison.' If this campaign against wild dogs, pigs, dingoes, foxes or whatever is to be successful, we have to ensure that the poison is of the appropriate strength to do the job.

The member for Kallangur commented about the cost to industry of some \$600 million in lost production and control costs. That figure is very high. That is certainly a lot of money. The dingo barrier fence is another area that comes under the minister's control. I urge him to ensure that funding is readily available for the maintenance of that project.

Many people have criticised that project, but I have to say that it is a very good project. It contains measures which help to control the number of dingoes, especially in sheep grazing areas. The member for Callide and opposition spokesman made reference to that during his contribution to the debate when he talked about the scourge of the sheep industry by wild dogs and dingoes. However, we need to keep all measures readily available to producers and land-holders. If we do not, taking out the \$600 million that their industries provide to the economy will mean that local communities suffer and jobs suffer. The whole equation goes across industries, communities and private enterprise. At the end of the day, the best medicine of all is preventative medicine. That is what we are trying to achieve here. We can do that by responsible outcomes and responsible policy which is formulated with the ideals and input of people who know and understand the industry. As I said earlier, if we are going to have an all-out campaign, we must have a campaign that is openly supported by both the government, which is responsible for national parks and stock routes, and land-holders in adjacent areas.

Another area I want to touch on this afternoon relates to the stock routes themselves. Stock routes are an integral part of our operations throughout this state. This state was created on the movement of stock before road transport existed. These stock routes still provide a very integral role in the movement of stock in western Queensland and other areas of the state today. It is paramount that when this new practice is struck with local government these routes are not abused. Some of these routes have been abused in the past, and I suppose one could say that it is the greed factor. Some people have allowed stock to loiter and some blokes just do not care. If they can make two stages come back to one day, they will do it quite easily.

Mr Purcell: The worst offenders of what you are talking about are those who live along the stock routes.

Mr JOHNSON: In many cases, that is right. My property at Quilpie adjoined nine miles of stock route. All of those stock routes were unfenced, but you never, ever deprived a moving mob of water or of feed. If stockmen had to go off the stock route to get a feed or come onto your property to get feed for their horses, you always allowed them. It was an unwritten law. It was something that the member opposite would do, I would do and the majority of people would do. But the honourable member for Bulimba is dead right, because people will flog those stock routes with their own stock and then let that stock go and graze somewhere else. This is a complete violation of what is a concessional piece of country. Whether it is stock routes, a reserve or whatever, that is something that has to be closely monitored.

Mr Robertson: We take that up in the bill.

Mr JOHNSON: There was good control on stock routes back in the days when each local authority had their own common ranger who would check the stock routes to make sure the land-holder was keeping noxious weeds such as Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr off the land.

A government member: Thistles.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, thistles is another one. Of course, parthenium is now a real scourge. Those rangers would ensure that the land-holders kept such weeds down. We have to get back to that, but local government cannot afford that. It is a real preventative control measure if local government is able to give financial support to put those common rangers back in place. If every council in Queensland had a common ranger—and I know that not every one of them has—they would play a very important role in monitoring the problem of noxious weeds and feral animals.

I have canvassed most of the issues I wanted to canvass in this debate. Mostly, it comes back to commonsense. We do not need to give rise to the situation of red tape strangling what is rightfully ours as land-holders or somebody with travelling stock. The important thing is that we need an education program on some of these noxious plants so that the general public can identify them. We have all become more environmentally responsible in this modern day and age. The young people of our generation certainly are, and I applaud them for that. Many young people can teach us many things as part of an education program. If young people understand what some of these noxious plants are, we can eliminate and eradicate the problem.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (4.45 p.m.): I intend to make observations about some items which are the subject of this legislation—that is, stock routes, particularly their history and their control, the National Weed Strategy and what it is, the Toowoomba Landcare group, who they are and what they are doing and some comments about barrier fences, their physical extent and what is proposed under this legislation. I turn to stock routes themselves. What are they? Not everyone in this House would be familiar with them.

A government member: I'm not.

Mr SHINE: I take that interjection.

Mr Purcell: What are they?

Mr SHINE: Mr Richard Bell, a member of the Rural Lands Protection Board, described them as follows—

The stock routes are corridors of our past, a fodder reserve in drought and a remnant resource of vegetative biodiversity straddling vast distances of Queensland.

What is their history? Who has controlled them? Who controls them now? Who will control them under this act? I hope to address some of these questions.

I have a personal interest and am a bit of a romanticist, I suppose. I might offend the honourable member for Callide in admitting that, but nevertheless it takes me back to my youth. One of my jobs during a drought was to take the stock from the home paddock down to the Brisbane River for a drink and to let them stay on the reserve for an hour or two to get a bit of green pick. The member for Gregory made some comments about that practice as not being entirely desirable, but it was certainly essential in the circumstances we were in during the 1961 drought. I have drawn liberally from a work put out by the minister's department entitled *The romance and the reality*. I commend that publication to all honourable members as worthy reading.

The great importance that stock routes have played since the early days of pastoral expansion and the occupation of Queensland should be self-evident. They often followed similar pathways to the Aborigines and explorers and were dictated by the natural waters of the river systems. Prior to 1859, any laws that applied were New South Wales laws, but Queensland laws have applied since the 1860s. The design or block surveys—that is, distances between streams and designed blocks suitable for settlement—were carried out during the 1860s and provision was made for the movement of stock along the watercourses. Work of this nature commenced in the eastern part of the state at about that time, moving in the 1870s and 1880s to the western and northern sections.

Stock routes were developed by early pastoralists moving stock into newly discovered grazing lands. When stock numbers increased, the direction of flow altered as surplus stock and fat stock were removed back to the markets. For example, in the 1850s the Victorian gold diggings furnished a concentrated market of previously unprecedented magnitude, and stock from south-east Queensland were moved south in great numbers. Though important from the earliest days of pastoral occupancy, stock route development was both casual and unsystematic, with administrative concern surfacing relatively late. Development of stock routes was based on the flow of cattle, and to a lesser extent sheep, moving to market. Stock moved from the Northern Territory and the far north to markets in the south and east. Most of the early routes followed rivers such as the Condamine, Balonne, Maranoa, Warrego, Paroo, McKenzie, Georgina, Diamantina and Barcoo and Coopers creeks.

By 1890, rail lines were pushed inland to Charleville, Barcaldine and Winton. Many further routes were established to feed stock to these lines for transport to market and to other properties for fattening. The movement of stock, however, was highly erratic and seasonal because of dependence on natural waters. By 1900, about 40 or 50 watering facilities at most were constructed, and these were used mostly for the benefit of travelling stock, though not designed exclusively for that purpose. In the early 1900s, care or responsibility for these facilities was turned over to councils, which constructed more. In 1930, a royal commission was appointed to inquire into certain matters relating to rabbit, dingo and stock route administration. The commission found that councils exercised no effective control and were not impartial to the administration of stock route issues. Many stock routes were too narrow. In many places, dry stages were too long. There was too much toleration by most councils of overgrazing by stock from adjacent land-holdings. There was a need to address the law concerning the daily distance stock must travel, and there was no coordination among councils or with land-holders on weed control.

At the end of the day, the commission recommended control be taken from the local authorities and be vested in new district improvement boards. The Moore government introduced such changes in 1930 and the duties of the boards were to administer and improve stock routes and to control and direct the destruction of declared plants and animals on those stock routes. However, these provisions proved to be ineffective, and these responsibilities were in fact transferred back to the councils by the Forgan-Smith government in 1933.

In 1937, under the Stock Routes Improvements and Animal and Vegetable Pests Destruction Act 1936, stock route improvements would now become the function of the Secretary of Public Lands rather than the local authorities. But within a few months the responsibilities and powers of the minister were delegated back to councils. But the Lands Department retained the right to formulate works programs and to supervise the construction of water facilities.

In 1944, a conference was called by the minister which resulted in the councils continuing to be responsible for stock route administration, but the Irrigation Commission was then formed to continue with construction activities. Two significant new provisions were included in the 1944 act, the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944. First, a coordinating board, now the Rural Lands Protection Board, was established to oversee state-wide stock route improvements; and, secondly, the Stock Routes and Pest Destruction Fund was created to give financial support to the works program.

In 1985, under section 57 of the Rural Lands Protection Act 1985, local governments were given responsibility for the control, improvement and maintenance of stock routes and reserves. As I understand, the bill currently before the House maintains the partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and councils. Local governments will be the day-to-day managers of stock routes. I have attempted to show that history indicates a seesawing but huge and traditional involvement of local government in the maintenance of stock routes.

I refer to the excellent work set out in the Queensland Parliamentary Library research brief 2002/5 concerning this bill. Page one of the brief refers to the national weed strategy. I note that the member for Callide also referred to that strategy earlier today and was of the view that it had not been successful in its aims in that pests are still here and that the spread of the same has not been stopped. I think that the member was rather harsh in his criticism of that strategy. What is the strategy and from where has it come? The national weed strategy is a strategic approach to weed problems of national significance. Three ministerial councils endorsed and launched the national weed strategy in June 1997 in order to bring a strategic focus to weed management across Australia. The three councils—Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, Australian New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council and forestry ministers formed the National Weed Strategy Executive Committee to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

The committee is to report to the councils annually on progress and refer significant issues to them for endorsement. The committee deals with high level policy issues and liaises closely with the Australian Weeds Committee for technical advice. In order to facilitate the implementation of the strategy, the state and Commonwealth agreed to fund a project manager. The work program of the strategy is: to establish a process for prioritising major weed problems as a means of determining the nation's weeds of national significance, WONS; to develop an administrative process for managing WONS and developing national strategies for their management; to gain ministerial endorsement of WONS; to encourage all states and territories to develop and implement weed strategies and associated management structures; to encourage and monitor the development of weed risk assessment by AQIS for use in assessing all new plant introductions into Australia; to implement a national reporting system for all newly naturalised plants backed by risk assessment and incursion management processes; to establish a network of people working with weeds across Australia; to establish a worldwide web site that links all aspects of weed management together in order to make high quality information available to any interested person; and to develop national training competencies for people involved in weed management.

One can readily appreciate the valuable work carried out by the national weed strategy. I assume that many of the fruits of its labour are the basis for some of the reforms in the bill, particularly in relation to matters having probable effect outside as well as inside Queensland as they relate to pest management.

I refer to the Toowoomba Landcare Group, which performs extremely valuable work in Toowoomba. Key Landcare members in Toowoomba are James McKee, president; Phil McCullough and Veronica Newbery, Toowoomba City Council; Sarah Walbank, Landcare

Discovery Centre; Pete Filet, Toowoomba City Council; Alison Curtis, Toowoomba City Council; and John Sworbrick, Friends of the Escarpment.

The Toowoomba Landcare Group Incorporated was formed by a group of people interested in seeing the community of Toowoomba become more responsible and involved in looking after natural resources. Toowoomba Landcare is a well recognised and respected concept which is non-political and which focuses on giving community members of any type the opportunity to take responsibility for their environment themselves in a very practical way. I had the delight of being associated with the mayor of Toowoomba, Di Thorley, last year on national tree planting day, organised by the Toowoomba Landcare Group, and attended the spot adjacent to Commonwealth oval where trees were planted in association with the management committee of that oval—President Ian Lucterhand; Philip Daly, a community representative I know well; Trevor Keal; and others.

I can vouch first-hand the worthwhile work carried out by that body. Time does not permit me to go into further detail in relation to that matter, but I would like to say some words in relation to barrier fences. I am pleased to support the passage of the bill as it relates to barrier fences that exist for the protection of livestock from dingoes and wild dogs and to protect primary production generally from the impacts of rabbits. Queensland has a long history of barrier fences for rabbits, marsupials, dingoes and wild dogs. The barrier fences are recognised as some of the longest structures in the world, with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines currently patrolling and maintaining most of the 2,564 kilometre long wild dog barrier fence that runs from Jandowae in the east to the New South Wales border west of Hungerford.

In south-east Queensland, the local government funded Darling Downs-Moreton rabbit board maintains a rabbit-proof fence and aims to keep the area to the north and east of the fence in a rabbit-free condition. The creation of protected areas behind wire is still recognised as an effective means of protecting populations of farm animals or, in some cases, remnant populations of rare and endangered native animal species. The grazing industry in particular needs to manage wild dogs, because they can kill or mutilate sheep, goats or calves and result in serious financial losses to these industries. A barrier fence benefits adjoining landowners, because it often provides a maintenance-free boundary fence and those inside the protected area are benefited by the protection of sheep, goats and cattle. It provides a non-chemical solution to the dog problem.

These benefits have led to considerable support for the barrier fences in and around the protected areas. This new legislation will rely on that support, rather than the past coercive provisions for the establishment and maintenance of barrier fences. The bill takes into account the level of popular support in the community and the informed cooperation between state government, local government and landowners evidenced in fence management.

The bill proposes that the chief executive of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines may by regulation establish the building line for a fence to prevent the passage of a declared pest animal. Where the fence divides a property, a secure and animal-proof opening will be allowed so that the property's normal operations can continue unhampered. Other openings, such as those required for roads, public utilities or mineral and oil exploration, will require the permission of the chief executive of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. These openings must be kept in an animal-proof condition.

For barrier fences to remain effective, they must be patrolled regularly to check for damage that is caused by wind, water, fire, animals, or other factors. A graded track allows for vehicular patrol along the fence on a fairly regular basis. This requires powers of entry for authorised persons to inspect and maintain the fence upon what is privately owned land since no resumption process is to be employed to acquire the private land. Obstructing the building, inspection or maintenance of a declared pest fence, causing damage to the fence, or not closing a gate that is part of the fence, will be considered as offences under the new bill.

Existing bureaucratic requirements will be cleared away under the new bill. For example, the existing legislation requires an order for the construction of a barrier fence to be registered on the title of the land affected by the fence. The bill removes this requirement and all such orders are to be cancelled upon the implementation of the new legislation. This legislation will assist Queensland to more effectively control pests and protect our natural resources. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.04 p.m.): The issue of the destruction of noxious weeds and the containment of pests is one that most landowners, large and small,

spend a considerable amount of their time—and certainly a lot of money and a lot of hard work—in achieving. Any legislation that will enhance the protection of not only the natural environment but will also streamline the process that landowners have to face is certainly welcome.

In my area—and I am sure that this applies across the state—we do not just have the problem of seed that is carried either by cattle, other animals or by birds, we have a great increase in the introduction of noxious weeds by foreign vehicles on properties. Because of the development in the area—the gas pipeline, the water pipeline, industrial investment and powerlines—it has become increasingly obvious that much of the infestation has been introduced by improperly cleaned, if cleaned at all, vehicles. That is a problem for the landowners. They are required to keep their properties clean of weeds. They rely on people to be responsible. I know that there are requirements that vehicles traversing private land be properly cleaned. There are wash-down stations—not very many of them. It is really up to the morality and the honesty of the entities who are traversing private land to ensure that proper protection is given to those landowners. This is not a new problem, but it is an increasing problem because of the increased number of people in vehicles that access private land and do business on them.

Back in 1976—and I know that the member for Toowoomba North gave us an extensive history lesson on this area of legislation—the committee of inquiry reported the following—

We stress as our basic and considered belief that pest control or management starts and finishes with the landholder.

I endorse that, but where there are those foreign vehicles—those non-custodial vehicles—that are going onto land, there also is a shared responsibility to ensure that pests and other weeds are not carried with them. The other reason that I agree with that statement is that it puts squarely within the responsibility of the state government the responsibility to control pests and to manage weed infestations on state government controlled land. That, too, is a problem that many landowners face.

Responsible landowners are affected detrimentally in two areas. One is where they adjoin state government land. Often state governments do not manage their weed infestations and pests and control matters well simply because of the vast quantities of land that they have under their control. I understand the practical problems, or at least the financial problems, but it is very difficult for landowners adjoining state land when they are given a notice to clear or are regularly written to by authorities reminding them that they have an infestation—probably of rubber vine, parthenium or similar—when they believe with a measure of reliability that the infestation came from state controlled land. So I believe that in placing an obligation on landowners, that obligation has to equally dwell on the shoulders of state governments where they are the custodians of public land.

The other area where landowners can be quite detrimentally affected and it is beyond their ability to control is where local authorities adjoining one another do not have differing views on declared noxious weeds—they do not declare those weeds, that is done on a more central basis—but they have a differing attitude about the degree to which they pursue the management of noxious weeds. Although the legislation says that noxious weeds must be cleared, some councils pursue the landowners in their shires to various degrees to ensure that they actually do that. I know that adjoining landowners up around Horriggan Creek in my electorate have a terrible problem because landowners across the creek from them have quite serious infestations of rubber vine—I do not know if that includes parthenium. That infestation became evident when the rubber vine came into flower. Those landowners had significant problems and the genesis of those problems were often not in their own land management but in the fact that the adjoining landowners fell under the control of another shire that did not have the same attitude to weeds management as the Calliope Shire Council.

Many members have talked about feral dogs, crossbred dingoes and dingo control and I am not about to return to that topic. An allied issue is the baiting of feral dogs in areas which are becoming rural residential, albeit on larger blocks, and which adjoin urban areas. There are warrants relating to the laying of baits and their distance from cities, towns and small villages. I am pleased to see an almost graduated scale of dropping baits responsibly, but fairly freely, and the use of tied or wired baits on a plotted area. I hope that practice continues.

In between Gladstone city and the Calliope shire there is an area which is probably designated rural residential. They are large residential lots with quite a distance between houses and they have a real problem with crossbred dogs. It took quite a lot of time and a lot of remonstrating with landowners before a baiting program was put in place. That was done a year

or so ago and they appear to be due for another program because of the upsurge in the number of complaints that I have received. These dogs are wild dogs and obviously do not belong to anyone. At times, people have feared for the safety of their small children in the cleared area of their properties. Very responsibly, the joint councils had a baiting program that was approved by the department and they wired the baits. They were plotted on a map so that all of the baits were numbered and known, and there was a significant reduction in the number of wild dogs in those areas.

The possibility of a child or a domestic dog taking a bait was minimised simply because the baits were wired, they were tied and they had to be collected after a very short period of time. It was well-controlled and well handled. It was organised by the animal control person at Calliope shire. The results were very positive and I hope that that option remains available to local authorities and to the department in those areas that are fast developing in many parts of Queensland; that is, the large home sites or rural residential blocks.

My one concern with the bill is what appears to be a proliferation of committees and groups that have to be formed and then meet. Albeit I think the minimum of one of the groups is that it must meet at least yearly. There is a proliferation of these committees and almost a bureaucracy to oversee what has been in many cases, as far as local government is concerned, a well managed problem in the state in the past. The majority of local authorities—not all, I acknowledge—have a responsible attitude towards plant and pest management and it would be a shame to see some of the interest by local authorities deteriorated because of these layering of committee meetings.

I was a bit concerned that, 'A pest management committee is to be established for the purposes of overseeing the implementation of plans for the management of declared pests on state-controlled land to ensure consistency of pest management plans through coordination and to integrate plans for managing declared pests on state-controlled land with broader natural resource management strategies and planning processes.' That is one sentence in the stated aims of the bill.

The wording clearly demonstrates that it was written by somebody who probably does not live in rural Queensland. It has all the hallmarks of a theoretical plan. I hope those committees will have a significant number of people with a rural background and know what it is to manage plant and pest populations, and that they are not all urban people who have no idea of the realities of rural life. I do not mean that to be as insulting as it sounds. However, it states that there should be departmental representatives. If they are stock route inspectors and the like, that will be fine. However, if they are people who do not know the problems faced by rural Queenslanders—and some committees that have been set up consist of bureaucrats who live in the city—then there will be some problems in the way those committees will proceed. Judging by the reaction of the minister, I am sure I will be corrected on that matter.

Mr Robertson: In a very gracious way.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

I had some consultation with a number of entities, local authorities and some of the grazing authorities. In the main, they all seemed to be very happy with the legislation, including the Queensland Farmers Federation, Agforce, several of the local authorities in my electorate area and also the LGAQ. In the main, the LGAQ has said that local authorities have responded very positively to the legislation, that the legislation and the consultation process has been in place since 1987 and that in the majority of cases the councils are happy.

One issue which was raised with my office was that one of the councillors was not happy with the fact that much of the stock routes in his local authority area are in the Main Roads road reservation and the council felt that it was perhaps inappropriate for the council to have to prepare and maintain a management plan for those stock routes. They were overruled and I understand that they will be required to prepare a stock routes management plan, but I raise that concern.

The bill states that an obligation of the landowner has a number of elements. A landowner must take reasonable steps to keep the following land free of class 1 and class 2 pests: the private landowner's land; unfenced land comprising part of the road or stock route that adjoins or is within the landowner's land; land that is fenced in the landowner's property; the banks of water courses on the landowner's property and to the centre line of a watercourse that forms part of the boundary of the owner's land.

Where a landowner gains benefit from land that he or she does not own—that is, a stock route that they have been allowed to fence in, in the past, for various reasons and through various permit processes—then yes, they are getting the benefit of the land and it is only reasonable that they be asked to maintain and control pests, both weed and feral animal. I do have some problems—and it may not mean this—when it appears that a landowner could be required to maintain land over which he or she has no control, over which he or she does not run cattle, even though it is a stock route, it does adjoin their land but they gain no benefit from it. If it is only intended that those landowners be responsible for pest eradication on land from which they gain a benefit, then I believe it is eminently fair and suitable. However, if it is more than that, I believe that there will be justifiable complaints.

I would like to clear up an incident about which I have written to the minister's office. It is not in relation to pest management, but in a different genre. In my electorate, a husband and wife who are landowners have a property and in excess of 60 per cent of their property cannot be used by them because it has been deemed to be threatened or endangered. Under this legislation, they will be required to control feral and noxious pests on that property. However, they can get no return off that property. I am dealing with the department in terms of 'other issues' and the ability of that landowner to get a rate of return on the property when 60 per cent of the property has been deemed to contain threatened or endangered species and, therefore, they cannot use it.

I ask the minister: will there be an opportunity for landowners who have within their freehold title land that will effectively become pseudo national park or pseudo declared land for protection? Will they or will they not be able to obtain government assistance for the cost of eradication of pests?

The only other element of this bill that I wished to raise with the minister—and the former minister would have had this issue raised with him—relates to the management of fire hazards. The bushfires in New South Wales highlighted that fire management is crucial. Fire is not a respecter of boundaries or places. However, again in my electorate, the greatest offender in terms of mismanagement of property and the generation of a body of grass that dries and becomes fuel for fire is the state government and its management of national parks and forestry reserves. It is fine to require landowners to manage their properties for pests, both animal and plant, and also fire hazards. However, the government, whether it be Labor, the coalition or whatever, must also place on itself the same obligation to manage fire hazards. In most instances, the fires come down from Kroombit Tops and burn out the valley completely. Whatever constraints the minister places on individual landowners, some of whom are significant custodians of property, the government must also accept that same obligation and responsibility. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (5.20 p.m.): Approximately \$600 million is lost annually in Queensland to pest animals and weeds, which suggests that our priority should be the prevention of pests entering rather than attempting to manage them once they are here. The principle of prevention, the cornerstone of this bill, is established to prevent the spread of pests, especially by human activity, and to ensure early detection of and intervention to control new pests.

One of the core commitments in this regard is the development of state strategies for weeds and pest animals to guide future pest management. Those strategies will provide a whole-of-community approach to pest management as well as address the responsibilities of state and local government land-holders. The pest categorisation system outlined focuses on guarding against the introduction of potential pests. These are referred to in the bill as class 1 pests.

The permit system for exotic pest animals is designed to limit the introduction of pests. Farmers are often the first to notice strange and new plants. This frequently occurs when a drought finally breaks. In the current picture of world trade, the quality of our farm product is important for world markets, and the practice of farm hygiene can guard against the spread of pests.

The proposals in the legislation are designed to support improved practices within industries—not just amongst producers—and prevent weed seed spread. Seeds and other parts of some weeds, such as parthenium weed, giant rat-tail grass and prickly acacia, have physical characteristics that make it easier for them to be transported long distances from their source. Consequently, they can readily spread to and colonise new areas. Prevention of weed seed spread is specifically addressed in the new legislation. It is proposed to have some new offences,

and expanded powers to search vehicles, machinery or loads, designed to prevent contamination with and new infestations of pest plants.

A new offence, that of releasing declared pests, addresses deliberate and negligent releases of declared pests, such as viable parts of a declared aquatic weed, into public waterways. Last year, the aquatic weed harvester brought into the Burdekin cleaned up the lagoons and got rid of a lot of the weeds clogging waterways and causing a hazard. The aquatic weed harvester is now working in Townsville. I encourage all honourable members in rural areas to look at the work of that harvester. It is commendable for ridding weeds from waterways.

If a product, such as fodder, grain, gravel, machinery, vehicles, mulch, packing material, sand, soil, stock, and water, is contaminated with a class 1 or 2 pest that is notified in the regulations, the seller must declare this risk in writing to the purchaser. There will be a requirement to wash down or clean vehicles or machinery leaving pest infested sites and to contain products against spillage or release of seeds or reproductive material of declared pests.

The potential economic, environmental and human amenity impact of spreading weeds is already a strong incentive in preventing weed seed spread amongst those most affected—the producers—and also many industry groups, utility providers and private companies. Prevention of weed seed spread in Queensland is difficult, because there are so many land types, industry groups, service utilities, primary producers, tourists, highways and road networks. Awareness and education for key client groups in the identification of weeds and preventing their spread is a high priority for the department and many local governments.

Legislative support for the recent best practice developments is seen as the best way to foster a community wide culture of weed seed spread awareness and prevention. Under the bill, local government area pest management plans will be required to reflect the weed seed prevention provisions of both the state weed strategy and the principles contained in the legislation. To cope with the potential new incursions into Queensland an emergency declaration of a new pest may be made for up to three months. This will give a range of powers to control the pest on private land.

Property and quarantine powers are extended to a wider range of pests and are available to prevent movement of a serious declared weed from an infested site. These powers allow the destruction of things containing the reproductive material of the weed and restriction of activities on the site.

This bill makes provision for significant improvements in how our state manages the issue of unwanted plant species. This bill makes an important contribution to the future management of pest plants and animals in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.26 p.m.): I rise to support the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill. This bill focuses on the important need for firm controls to be established to minimise the risk of unwanted pest plants and animals establishing themselves within Queensland. Many non-indigenous exotic animals and plants have the potential to enter Australia accidentally or otherwise. Already more than 25 species of non-indigenous vertebrate animals and at least 1,126 species of exotic plants have become pests within Queensland. Examples include the European rabbit, European fox, lantana, cane toad, prickly pear and parthenium weed. These pests cause substantial damage to the economy, the environment and human welfare.

It is estimated that pests cause the loss of \$600 million annually to Queensland in terms of costs of control and lost production. Exotics already established in Queensland represent only the tip of the iceberg, as many exotic plants and animals have the potential to become major pests if imported and released, or if they escape from safekeeping. Some examples of potential pests include Indian palm squirrels, cobras, poison-arrow frogs, Mikania vine and Siam weed.

Commonwealth quarantine and conservation agencies restrict the import into Australia of some potential pests. This provides the first barrier against the introduction of potentially harmful exotic plants and animals. However, the states and territories are responsible for interstate trade and the keeping and sale of exotic species that are already within Australia.

Restricting the number of potential pests that can be kept, and the number of places where they are kept, minimises the risk of escape and establishment. This approach is sound risk management. An alternative to risk management is risk avoidance, where there is a complete exclusion of the exotics in question. This option is preferred when dealing with extreme risk species. Improved community awareness of the risks associated with exotic species can also help prevent their entry, escape and spread. Minimising risk means it is vital that people report

cases of smuggled exotic animals and the illegal keeping or sale of high risk and exotic plants. To assist the community to identify and report illegally held exotic species, we need to make readily available a list of species that can be kept under permit and what institutions are able to keep them.

One of the aims of this bill is to make it clear that there are restrictions on the purposes for which exotic animals can be kept and conditions on the keeping of permitted exotic species. Regulations under the new bill will list the species that are able to be kept. This will enable everyone with an interest—the community, zoos, wildlife and theme parks, botanical gardens, universities and local governments—to understand what can and cannot be done. The listing by regulation of exotic species that may be kept under permit will make pest legislation easier to understand and be more transparent. The regulations will clearly identify institutions that may keep exotic species for an approved purpose.

Measures contained in this bill will go a long way towards helping Queensland protect its natural resources from the introduction of unwanted exotic pest animals and plant species. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (5.30 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill and I would like to stress the following points. There is no doubt that a lot of weeds, animals and other plants affect our primary industries, and especially our environment. We must especially focus on the spread of some of these pests by human activity.

It is not just rural producers who have to take this on board, but everyone, including travellers and people moving pets. Often someone will stop a vehicle and let a dog out for a walk. Who knows whether the country is infected with, perhaps, parthenium or other noxious weeds. The seeds of these plants are very easily spread. They are carried on the animal's feet or body. Quite often, vehicles travel on muddy roads after rain and the mud gets up in the wheel hubs. This mud is carried back to town. Primary producers will be made to spray mud from headers and farm machinery and keep a careful eye on such things as gravel being carted. We must also look at visitors to the bush.

With regard to local government, I am concerned that our shire councils will have a much larger workload placed on them. They will have to police the day-to-day management of the stock route network. My electorate contains a massive network of stock routes. My property is bordered by a stock route.

One section of this bill deals with the building and maintenance of fences in order to stop declared pest animals moving from one part of the state to another. Does the land-holder have to face the cost of the building and maintenance of these fences? What if the property borders a forest or a national park? How are the land-holders going to stop the feral pigs and dingoes, as well as feral deer, which the Crows Nest area is experiencing at the moment. It is extremely hard to fence out feral deer. Our avocado and flower farmers are experiencing terrible problems with feral deer.

The dingo barrier fence also forms part of the boundary of my property for some two kilometres. The fence is patrolled once a week and quite often needs repair. The point I make is this: the maintenance of any kind of feral animal fencing is extremely expensive and I do not believe it is fair to impose all the costs on rural producers when the government cannot clean up the numbers of feral animals in our national parks and forests.

One section of this bill refers to the monitoring, surveying and control of pests and feral animals. This is a very much needed form of protection for our rural land and environment.

I know for a fact that there are a lot of extremely capable people who can safely control feral animals. I instance the Crows Nest area and the problem it faces with deer. I know a bloke over there, Mr Jim Perron from Crows Nest, who wishes to open a wild game box in that area. I believe this project has merit. Jim already has the runs on the board as a safe, experienced and keen shooter. He would well and truly be capable of being employed to control such things as feral deer in the Crows Nest region. He is a local and he knows the animal as well as any other man. We have to look at such measures if we are going to control feral animals. With regard to monitoring feral animals, no-one knows what animals are where better than rural producers and these people must be consulted when monitoring feral animals.

As for dingoes and wild dogs, I welcome the approach of the government and I warmly welcome the clause which states that we can control wandering dogs which may pose a threat to our livestock. As I was a dairy farmer myself before I was elected, I can now share some of my

experiences with dingoes on my own property. We had to always calve our cows close to the house as sometimes, as cows were calving, dogs and dingoes would not just kill the calf; if the cow had trouble getting up after calving, they would eat into her back end and she would have to be destroyed. That happened quite often.

I was also employed by the local shire as a dogger and I am extremely experienced in trapping dingoes. I am well aware of their habits. Only 18 months ago the electorate of Darling Downs had dingoes in plague proportions. I am happy to say that nearly all the farmers had a role to play in a 1080 baiting program which involved a number of shires getting together and baiting at the same time. I believe the results were the best that could have been achieved. We more or less wiped out the massive population of dingoes and wild dogs in that area.

This form of baiting does not wipe them out completely as the older dogs tend not to take the baits. Thus, it is not a question of annihilation of the animal. Since the baiting has taken place we have seen the return of bandicoots, hares and some species of wallabies which have not been seen for years. So from an environmental point of view I can only welcome the control of feral pest animals.

To return to the question of fencing of stock routes, I ask this question: what about the farmer who has never fenced the stock route? I believe we must allow these people a cooling-off period in order to allow them to fence the stock route. They must be educated in this regard. If the fence is found to be inappropriate after an inspection, the farmers must be given 12 months to fully fence their side of the stock route.

I believe that the fines for wandering stock are simply ludicrous and are out of touch. We can be fined less than \$1,000 for drink-driving and other offences. However, if we allow more than 10 head of stock to wander on to a stock route we can be fined \$30,000—400 points at \$75 a point. That is simply ridiculous and stupid.

In conclusion, I might mention that a lot of stock routes have not been used for a number of years. Usually they are used only during periods of drought. However, I am in favour of protecting our stock routes as it is a way of using corridors of land which are of advantage to our rural producers.

The electorate of Darling Downs, and neighbouring electorates, have extensive agriculture and some parts of the stock routes are fully cultivated and do not contain such a thing as a fence post. Are we going to tell these farmers that they have to fence that land? We must consider the weed problem that we would face if that occurred.

Mr STRONG (Burnett—ALP) (5.37 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill and draw the attention of honourable members to aspects of financial management and incentives affecting local government with regard to stock route management.

The present approach to pest and stock route management is steeped in the era when local governments were supervised by the state in relation to the many roles and functions they were given to perform. These days, local government has a valued independent role in many areas of natural resource management. Local governments also need to have responsibility for their budgets in full. The bill ensures this, and it also ensures that contemporary approaches to performance management are implemented. With the release of the consultation draft of this bill many local governments were encouraged to develop and implement high-quality pest or stock route management plans with achievable objectives, strategies and activities. They took on the responsibilities for achieving the objectives as well as reporting on performance.

The bill proposes that the present repayment system will be replaced and the planning processes will steer pest and stock route management within local government areas. The existing legislation was based on control and coordination and provided mechanisms that were to raise the necessary funds for the activities of pest and stock route management. This payment and reimbursement system has been criticised by local governments because it does not recognise their financial independence and accountability. It also does not fit the model for a true partnership arrangement with the state. Under the new bill this system is replaced by one more appropriate to the 21st century where local governments determine their priorities for pest management through a structured planning process and set performance measures consistent with those needs.

Local governments will develop pest and stock route management plans for their areas in consultation with the local community. Plans will be subject to a state interest check. The whole

of Queensland is intended to be covered by pest management plans with input from state agencies from the lands that they manage themselves.

The budget to drive the plans will remain with local governments and performance will be reported against targets in the plan. Payments to the rural lands protection fund that contribute to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines's general or specific pest control activities will continue as they have benefits for all local governments. These moneys will be used, for example, to fund activities such as those related to the functions of the wild dog barrier fence or for pest management research and technical, planning and education activities.

Limits based upon population statistics and levels of service will be placed by regulation on the amount that an individual local government may be called upon to contribute. These limits are to be expressed as a percentage of general rates revenue. This new system meets the concerns of larger urban councils with high general rate revenues.

Local governments act as the day-to-day managers of the stock route network, but currently they receive no revenue from fees. As an incentive for sustainable management of the stock route network, the bill proposes that a fifty-fifty sharing of stock route fees be instituted. The stock route fee structure will be examined so that it may become more market based and flexible and reflect the different types of pasture and the condition of pasture that may be available on the network. The inclusion of these financial and land management aspects in the bill is recognition of the partnership and dual roles of the state and local governments in managing Queensland's stock route network and pest management. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (5.40 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001. The majority of landowners I know are extremely responsible people who make every reasonable effort to keep their properties clean and free from the incursion of pest weeds and animals. It is in their interests to do so. They normally take great pride in the land they own and are usually greatly receptive to new ideas which can help them in keeping their properties clean.

This, unfortunately, cannot always be said of government owned and controlled land, especially in more recent times, as the Beattie government resumes more and more areas of leasehold grazing land which is in addition to the large tracts we already have locked up under World Heritage conservation areas, national parks and native title. The government does not have the manpower on the ground to control pest weeds and animals that are now appearing in increasing numbers on this land. Stories abound these days of the pest animals and weeds coming out of crown land controlled by the state which were not there, say, five or 10 years ago.

Mr Welford interjected.

Ms LEE LONG: No, public land. That brings to mind what many people may not yet know—that government has substituted the word 'crown', as in 'vacant crown land', with the word 'state', as in 'unallocated state land'.

A government member: We did that eight years ago.

Ms LEE LONG: I know, but a lot of people do not know that. It seems that we are being conditioned for the republic we have to have, even though the majority voted against it just a few years ago.

No-one denies that our land in Queensland, and Australia for that matter, should be protected from pest weeds and animals. In the past, we remember well when AQIS had very strict rules for letting in imports from countries, some of which have extremely serious diseases. AQIS is certainly not doing the same job it used to do. Under the globalisation regime, we Queenslanders and Australians are told that we must drop tariffs on all imports and we must also risk the importation of the most serious diseases from other countries. This is irresponsible government.

Once these pests are allowed in, who do members think is then responsible for getting rid of them? According to this bill it will be innocent land-holders. This was confirmed at a briefing I had with the minister's advisers. They said that the government's only role was to do research and come up with cures—poisons and so on. From there it is up to the land-holder to buy the poisons, at great expense to themselves, apply them in their own time and use their own equipment. For example, the most effective poison to contain giant rat-tail grass costs around \$900 for 20 litres. On a large property, 20 litres goes nowhere, and with giant rat-tail grass spreading profusely it will be a high cost to control it.

The very least government can do is supply the poisons free of charge or greatly subsidise them to the land-holder. The impost to the land-holder, on his time and equipment, is more than government should expect. After all, this bill has identified an entire range of other interests—environmental, tourist, social and cultural—which benefit from these activities, so should they not reasonably be expected to help foot the bill?

Farmers' and graziers' time is worth as much as any other professional's in their field. While they are trying to control pests, they are not making a living for themselves and their families. This situation is very much taken for granted by the Beattie government. It is similar to the collection of the GST—done free of charge by ordinary Australians for the federal government.

As we are all aware, at least 26 new pests have been introduced into this state in the last 12 months—another indication that AQIS is not doing its job. The government has contained some. Others are still causing havoc. Black sigatoka is a major problem in our banana industry, and our federal government is still considering importing bananas from the Philippines. Not only is black sigatoka flourishing in that country; other serious diseases are flourishing. Combined, these diseases are called the black plague. Farmers have not heard the Beattie government crying out or protesting on their behalf to the federal government. Farmers have not heard a whimper.

In far-north Queensland the Beattie government continues to lock up Cape York Peninsula, often by not renewing leases on grazing properties as they become due. The land is left idle and becomes a breeding place for pests, as the government is not putting the manpower on the ground to control them. In recent times the very serious mango pest the red-banded caterpillar has been sighted in the peninsula. One has to remember that Cape York Peninsula is equivalent in size to the state of Victoria. To the Beattie government's credit, it has put in an inspection station at Coen, but this station is manned for only eight hours a day. So much for the other 16 hours of the day! We may as well put up signs saying welcome to the red-banded caterpillar after hours. It is the off-season for mangoes now, but there was no difference when the season was in full swing. Mango growers are very concerned at the apparent casualness of the Beattie government's Department of Primary Industries. The attitude seems to be one of, 'Oh, well. If it gets in the farmers can deal with it.' Not good enough say the farmers.

The papaya fruit fly is also a continuous threat in this most vulnerable part of Queensland and Australia, Cape York Peninsula. It caused enormous problems and cost in this state only a short time ago. Then there is the screw worm and the fear of foot-and-mouth disease coming through a closed down Top End.

With the demise of the tobacco industry in the Tablelands electorate, whilst government chooses to import tobacco, some growers have diversified successfully into growing table grapes, only to find once again that the federal government, with its globalisation policies, is now considering the importation of these from California. Californian grapes are susceptible to attack from the glassy-winged sharp shooter. Once again this is an enormous risk to our own growers—not only having to compete financially but also risking another serious pest coming into this state. Once again we hear only silence from Premier Beattie and our Minister for Primary Industries. But what else can we expect from a government which supports one-world globalisation at the expense of jobs for its own people?

The lychee growers have been told that it is more important to preserve the lives of the pest flying fox than to preserve the livelihood and jobs of farmers and their employees. Government says that it is more humane to club flying foxes to death under nets than to use electrocution. We have a long way to go before becoming the Smart State.

Certainly there are a number of pests which have been around for a long time, and these were kept under control by and large in the past by land-holders, local government and state governments. The big concern is the number of new pests being introduced through the so-called tearing down of our borders and cross-trading of our products, which is devastating rural and regional Queensland under this globalisation regime. City people have not felt the effects yet, but as the rural areas grind to a halt they will feel the repercussions also. They will not be immune from the effects in the longer term of decisions made not only by the federal government but also by state governments, who all support globalisation.

On Monday, 25 March and Tuesday, 26 March it was widely broadcast on news bulletins and in print media that Professor Bob Stimson from the University of Queensland advised that the Queensland government should relocate people from rural and regional Queensland into the cities now, instead of throwing subsidies at them and prolonging the inevitable as governments know that that is where the population will all be within the next 20 years if globalisation goes to

plan. This is in line with what many other people and I heard about two years ago when attending a major primary producers seminar in central Queensland. The lecturer left us all gobsmacked when he said words to the effect that the governments of today do not want small towns and they do not want even larger regional towns. They want us all in a few cities on the coast or in the south-east corner. That goes together with the revelation by the Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party, Mr Anderson, who said to a hall full of farmers in Mareeba about two years ago words to the effect that 'we don't need all of you farmers anymore as we are net importers of food'.

I think it is about time the Beattie government lived up to what it preaches about being an open, accountable and democratic government and told the people of Queensland, especially those in rural and regional areas, what is really going on so that it can be judged for what it really stands for. After all, we never know: the majority may think it is a great idea. Imagine life after being forced off the farm. It may not be so bad after all—living in the city, growing pot plants in the backyard. We could all be vying for the same few jobs, jobs, jobs that will be available, we can all use public transport and the state will save so much money because it will not have to worry about paying for all of that infrastructure in rural Queensland! Is that the plan for the next 20 years? It seems that under globalisation the 'get big or get out' even applies to towns.

Another thing that points to this is the great push by the Beattie government towards tourism and information technology. Are these the only major industries mapped out for Queensland in the future? It would be nice for rural people in small business and farmers and graziers to know. If that is the case, then farmers may as well pack up their tents and move to the cities now instead of beating their heads against brick walls, fighting water prices, ILUAs on native title land claims and fighting pest weeds and animals. Another area of concern for the purposes of this bill is that relating to land-holders being responsible for keeping clear of pests all land including on the sides of a creek and to the centre of the creek where it acts as a boundary. The land-holder has no rights to do anything else there but, according to this bill, he will be responsible for keeping it clean at his own cost. Is that reasonable, as to all other intents and purposes, creeks and certain areas either side are considered to be crown or unallocated state land?

For example, if an infestation of a serious water weed came about through no fault of the landowner, should the landowner be obliged to clean it up at this own cost? If the land-holder has the creek fenced off on his boundary line, should he still be responsible for cleaning to the centre of the creek or river, as the case may be? There is also concern that more and more responsibility is being placed onto local government without them receiving adequate funding or resources from the state government. The Beattie government says that it is doing it in partnership with local government, but it seems like a one-sided partnership with the state making all the rules but not adequately resourcing local government. In other words, the state government is loading the bullets and having local government fire them. As local governments find their rate base being depleted and the incomes of land-holders becoming more marginal through globalisation policies, they will find it more difficult to raise rates and get blood out of a stone, so to speak.

Another concern is that the rules of the governing body appointed to manage crown or state controlled land will be different to that governing other land which will be controlled by local government. As I said previously, there is a lot of concern about pest weeds and animals coming out of state controlled land. I note that the state estimates that about 10 per cent of landowners will fail to meet their obligations and so proposes to have pest survey programs in place that will be announced and advertised so that landowners are reminded of their obligations and will know when and where inspections are planned.

It is proposed that this bill will impose strict controls over the movement of vehicles such as heavy machinery and harvesters that may be transporting declared pests either within soil or other organic materials and those involved in the transport and sale of products such as grain, fodder, stock, sand and gravel that are contaminated with the reproductive parts of the declared pest plants. It will be an offence to move or transport things on a road if a person reasonably ought to know that soil or organic material attached to the thing may contain reproductive material of a declared pest plant.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee noted the substantial monetary penalties that can be imposed for offences ranging to a maximum of 800 penalty units, or \$60,000. This is significant indeed. Authorised persons will have the power to stop and search a vehicle if there is a reasonable suspicion that it may contain reproductive material of a declared pest plant. Clause

28 provides for a process where the draft local government area pest management plan must be advertised and be available at no cost to the public and should ask for the public's written comments on the draft within 28 days. This act provides that the declaration of pest plant or animal will be made by way of regulation. Pests will be categorised into classes into which they fit—that is, classes 1, 2 or 3, with class 1 being the most serious, then class 2 and then class 3. For example, Siam weed will fit into class 1 with the parthenium weed, prickly acacia and weedy sporobolus likely to fit into class 2.

This bill states that a landowner has an obligation to take reasonable steps to keep the owned land free of class 1 and class 2 pests unless the owner holds a declared pest permit to allow specified pests to be kept at described locations upon the land. This obligation extends to land where the owner has the use of the land, best access to the land or receives a benefit from the land. Certainly, the ability of local government to force a private landowner adjoining a stock route network to build a stock-proof fence on the boundary to prevent stock on the private land entering any part of the network is onerous indeed. The fence would have to be built and maintained at the private landowner's expense and it would be an offence if the landowner did not comply. If an owner refuses, government can enter the land and perform the work itself. Having to fence off stock routes, especially on the large grazing properties, would be a huge cost to be borne by the landowner. Usually, it is shared by the two parties involved. This is most unfair and of great concern. The debt would be payable by the landowner or jointly and severally by the landowners. If the debt is not paid by the due date, then interest can be charged and recovered in due course by the local government.

As stated previously, state controlled land such as national parks, conservation areas, World Heritage areas, et cetera, does not come under the control of local government but have a separate body of people and rules applying to them. Once again, as with many other bills and amendments that have passed in the last 12 months, there is concern over the wide-ranging powers available to authorised persons to enter a place for the purposes of monitoring or enforcing compliance with the bill. It will be an offence for a person not to give reasonable assistance and not to give required information unless that person has a reasonable excuse, such as a tendency to incriminate the person.

Clause 266 provides an authorised person to enter a place without consent or warrant, with the power to seize a thing at the place entered only if the authorised person reasonably believes that the thing is evidence of an offence against the bill. Again, we see that grey area word 'reasonably' popping up once again. There can certainly be a vast range of interpretations of the word 'reasonable'. If introduced, this bill could further burden land-holders with unwarranted expense and time-consuming measures that could inevitably disinherit them from the land. It could have far-reaching implications, but one lives in the hope that commonsense will prevail and that this bill will not be used as just another nail in the coffin of already overstretched land-holders.

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (5.55 p.m.): This bill represents a milestone in the state government's response to dealing with the significant threat posed by plant and animal pests in Queensland. The review of the existing 1985 Rural Lands Protection Act highlighted the need for a more modern legislative framework as embodied in this bill. 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. This legislation is indeed very significant legislation for Queensland.

In my contribution to the debate this evening I want to focus on one or two particular issues. Importantly, 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. I am pleased that the problems caused by environmental weeds are specifically addressed for the first time and certain invasive plants such as the Singapore daisy, which I have to confess that I myself planted in my garden in my ignorance some years ago, can now be banned from sale. I am pleased to see that. I am sure that I am not the only member who has done things like that in the past, but we all know better now. Control of the 15 plants listed as class 3 pests considered as environmental weeds represents a very positive step in protecting wetlands, rainforest and bushland and their native animal communities.

I have spoken in the House before about the significant threat posed by two particular pests in far-north Queensland. I am pleased to see that feral pigs and thunbergia vine are identified as class 1 pests and will be controlled as such. Over the last decade, eradication of the thunbergia vine from riverine rainforest in far-north Queensland has achieved moderate success, but we would all acknowledge that feral pigs are still the major pest animal species in far-north Queensland. Whilst there has been some success with pig trapping, again we would all acknowledge that more needs to be done. Whilst I was not able to be in the House to hear the contribution of the member for Mulgrave, I am sure he spoke on that issue in depth, as he has been doing some excellent work in that area. We look forward to seeing the results of the trials being carried out.

I personally, however, think that the long-term answer to the feral pig control problem is the development of what is essentially a birth control pill for pigs. I understand that there is in fact research being undertaken in this area. I look forward to the successful conclusion of research which, as I say, is basically going to develop a reproductive control approach for pigs. Until then, like other members in this House, I look forward to more resources being devoted to that issue and a good partnership between local government, state government, industry and landowners.

However, the most significant feature of this bill that distinguishes it from the current act is the focus on strategic planning on the part of both the state agencies and local authorities which will be required to produce pest management plans. Indeed, many local authorities are well developed in their planning processes and are very much supportive and involved in this process. The development of such management plans means that the whole state will be comprehensively covered and the community will be informed about the success of these plans. Indeed, they will be involved in their production. They will be involved by the reporting requirements that exist with respect to performance indicators and outcomes. So we know the progress that is being made in this important task.

I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the concerns the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has with this legislation as it relates to managing exotic animals. I realise that this is not an issue that perhaps concerns many members, but there are some members with wildlife parks in their electorates who realise the important contribution they play in relation to tourism. It is an important aspect, although I admit that it may not be considered a central part of this legislation.

There is no question that in the past the introduction of exotic, non-indigenous animals and plants has had devastating effects on our environment and primary industries—the cane toad, lantana and prickly pear being just a few of which I am aware. Many other exotic animals could become pests if imported and released or if they escape. So this is a vitally important area. The Commonwealth quarantine and conservation agencies restrict the importation of potential pests, while the states and territories are responsible for interstate trade and the keeping and sale of exotic species already in Australia.

Members of the Queensland Wildlife Parks Association, such as Wild World in my electorate, are of the view that the proposed list of exotic animals that will be able to be kept and displayed in wildlife parks in Queensland is too restrictive and will put the Queensland industry at a disadvantage with respect to other states. I became involved in this issue when the application for Wild World to keep certain species of cobras and vipers already held in other states was rejected by the department. Its application specified that animals would be all of the same sex to avoid the population breeding if escape did occur. However, it was still considered that the risk to the public of venomous snakes was too great. I should add that this was despite Wild World's currently faultless record.

The Rural Lands Protection Board passed a motion in July last year supporting a total ban on the keeping of venomous exotic reptiles in Queensland. The minister has supported this ban on the basis of advice from his department and the Queensland Exotic Animals Assessment Committee. However, following a meeting that I organised between representatives of the QWPA and departmental officers, I am pleased to report that the minister has written to me indicating that the department will provide for the greater involvement of the Queensland Wildlife Parks Association and that the views of the zoo industry will be given consideration in developing the regulations which will apply to the keeping and display of exotic animals in Queensland.

I really wish to convey my gratitude to the minister for receiving the representations from the industry so well. I shall table that letter for the benefit of members of this House who may be interested in reading it and I shall refer to it. The Queensland Exotic Animals Assessment Committee will be expanded to include expertise in tourism, education, conservation, primary

production and animal welfare, and there will be a non-voting QWPA representative on that committee. The expanded committee will develop a more transparent and objective assessment process, and assessment criteria will reflect the need for an appropriate balance between positive aspects—for example, education and tourism—and negative aspects of keeping exotic animals, for example, pests of agriculture and threats to human safety.

On request, applicants will be given formal feedback on their applications and an improved process will develop for addressing disputes, with necessary provisions to be included in the land protection regulations. Most importantly, the minister indicated in his letter that the department will cooperate with the QWPA in formulating a whole-of-government policy on the keeping and display of exotic and native animals. This will be supported by a memorandum of understanding between stakeholders, a voluntary code of practice for the zoo and wildlife park industry, and arrangements possibly including bonds for dealing with escapes. Obviously that is a major and very important task. I look forward to working with the minister and with the industry on developing that whole-of-government approach, because the zoo and wildlife park industry makes a very important contribution to our tourism industry. I am obviously mindful of those economic benefits whilst at the same time recognising that care needs to be exercised when dealing with exotic species that may indeed become pests in the future. We really have to be very mindful of getting the balance right, and I am quite sure that the minister, as this policy is developed, will be very mindful of that.

In conclusion, I recognise the minister's contribution and congratulate him on bringing forward these long-awaited reforms. They will be of substantial benefit and will make a significant contribution to improving the way we currently deal with pests, both animal and plant, in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (6.05 p.m.): When I was the minister in 1997 this bill was near completion, but it just seemed to drag on. It was something that even in my time seemed to drag on and on. I am not sure why it did drag on for so long, but it did. I must thank all of the members of the Rural Lands Protection Board, the local government people and the departmental people who slogged on over those years. To say 'The years shall not weary them' is pretty appropriate in this case because they soldiered on, but the process was very slow. The wheels of government do turn slowly, but this was incredible. However, the bill is before us now, and that is good.

Mr Robertson: It is a quality product at the end of the day.

Mr HOBBS: There are a few parts that could be improved. There is general acceptance of the principal behind it, but the shadow minister has highlighted a few matters of concern. In the past, the Rural Lands Protection Board did not really get a fair go from the department. I do not think that there was a lot of recognition of the great work that it did and I do not believe that it had the resources it needed. I am not sure whether that is the case at present, but that was the case in years past. I would be surprised if that situation has changed.

Interestingly, in his second reading speech the minister said that pest plants and animals cost Queensland over \$600 million a year in lost production; in other words, 20 footbridges. I ask members to imagine the annual funding for 20 footbridges going to the western Queensland area, because that is what we lose each year.

An honourable member: A pedestrian-led recovery!

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Anyway, that puts in perspective the vastness of western Queensland. It is very hard to explain such distances to people. When one lives in those areas one tends to get used to the long distances, and when one lives in the city one tends to live in and understand that patch. I guess it is hard to believe that Queensland has 72,000 kilometres of stock route, but we do. The stock routes are a great asset and we must keep them open.

In many instances, legislation has the teeth to ensure that the laws of the land are abided by. However, in many instances we do not have the people to control noxious weeds and feral animals in such vast areas. In many instances areas have been overrun—particularly areas of Crown land—because the government has not done the right thing. We need a mechanism to ensure that legislation is followed, because if one person or land-holder in a group does not want to play the game it can be very hard for the rest.

Weeds are one of the greatest causes of biodiversity loss. In recent years, believe it or not, we have seen more of that in our national parks and Crown land. We are losing biodiversity faster in our national parks than we are in a lot of the normal grazing areas. This is something that people must be made to understand. We just cannot lock up everything.

Mr Rowell: This legislation is not going to do anything for it.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. It will not really affect it. In fact, if anything, it makes the situation on crown land worse. I will give members an example. At one stage I went up to look at the Starcke station in the gulf country. George Quaid had left the place and it had been bought by the state government. At the time Premier Goss introduced legislation into this parliament and he virtually resumed the land. That place was a reasonably well-run cattle station. When we went up there, it was absolutely run down. There were hundreds—probably thousands—of acres of sicklepod, which is a noxious weed, totally out of control. Nobody was looking after it. That is one good example of what was supposed to be pristine country—it was not necessarily, but that was the government's view at the time—that had to be bought and had to be locked up to preserve its great qualities. It is full of sicklepod. Nobody wants it. Even the Aborigines do not want it now. It was probably one of the best bits of land in the gulf. The cost involved in trying to reclaim that land would be quite enormous.

I refer to stock routes. I really believe that many councils do a damn good job. I am not aware of many that do not do a good job. A lot of the councils take their responsibility very seriously and already they have good management plans in place. In many instances this legislation will probably help to formalise them and make sure that there is continuity across-the-board. I do not think that there is any harm in that. Certainly, I believe—and, of course, so do some of the land-holders—that in many instances the councils have done the right thing.

Tonight there has been a lot of talk about wild dogs and dingoes. I will not cover the same ground exactly, but I will say that in relation to wild dogs we are facing a huge plague. I can recall when I was a child in some parts people had to continually maintain their dog fences because the number of dingoes was so bad. Up to about 40 years ago those fences were still being maintained, but over the past 35 years there has not been the same degree of need to maintain them. So now we have the situation where the number of dingoes is increasing. I think that it is probably an evolutionary thing that relates to the type of food that is available for various animals. But there are many dingoes and the state government has to play a role in assisting councils to make sure that people control dingo numbers. They should make sure that people set baits for dingoes or manage them in some other way. If the beef industry or the wool industry is experiencing good times, people should be able to afford to manage the dingo population, because if they do not it will result in a huge cost on society as a whole. For instance, we have heard many reports of people getting out of the sheep industry and going into the cattle industry. When that happens, the population of towns decreases because fewer staff are needed for the cattle industry. A lot of those sheep towns are losing their shearers and other people associated with the shearing industry. So that is a flow-on effect.

The other issue that is particularly very important is one that comes up occasionally—it sneaks up on us—and that is the problem of locusts. For instance, locusts tend to start in one area. They hatch, then they band and away they go. They can be in plague proportions and travel right over the border down to southern areas. At present, locust numbers are building up in a few spots. Basically, they are under control. But every year I find that when we have a locust plague, it is very, very hard to get the plague locust commission involved. Basically, its role is to make sure that it can stop a plague if it goes interstate. But it is really hard to get it to focus on the fact that a plague that is starting in Queensland will be in New South Wales in due course. Often the commission argues about the size of the area in which the locusts are hatching. A lot of times there are difficulties in being able to spray locust plagues in national parks. I know that the minister is not responsible for national parks, but he should talk to his colleague about this issue. What happens if a huge number of locusts hatch in our national parks? We are told that they cannot be sprayed because something else might be harmed. But the reality is that if we do not kill these plagues of locusts on the spot, they will do a huge amount of damage. My view is that if the state government does not manage locusts that hatch in state forests and grow to plague proportions, then the government should pay compensation to those people who lose their grass and their crops because of that plague.

Previously I mentioned the effective management of the stock route network. I think that the local governments have not done a bad job. Certainly, out my way the stock routes are in pretty good shape. I do not doubt that the facilities can always do with a bit more money spent on them to upgrade them—fencing the dams and facilities—but overall they are not too bad. I congratulate a lot of the councils on the great work that they do in that regard.

The local government area plan must also take into account the state, regional or catchment level natural resource management plans and those developed by neighbouring local

governments. That will probably serve a useful purpose. I think that in many areas we have to think more in terms of catchments.

In relation to the spread of noxious weeds and contamination, I can recall that a long time ago I pushed very strongly to get wash-down areas put in from the central highlands so that we could try to reduce the amount of parthenium that was being spread. We did get some of those wash-down areas put in. I believe that they work quite effectively, because whenever I drive past one, I see trucks, headers and tractors being washed down. At least something is being done.

My view is that land-holders should also not let a machine come onto their place if it has come from a contaminated area without that machine being washed down in their backyard. At least if the machinery is washed down in the backyard, land-holders can watch the plants that come up as a result. We have seen instances of outbreaks of parthenium being let go. Once it is out of control, it is so very, very difficult and costly to try to keep it down. We have to do everything that we possibly can. We probably need some sort of ticketing system. I know that it might be a bit expensive to implement, but if, for instance, a header goes into the central highlands, I believe that it needs to have certification that states that it has been washed down. This could be a voluntary type of arrangement. We probably could not get someone to certify all of this machinery, but at least we would have some sort of record of machinery being washed down.

There is an issue in relation to agistment on stock routes. I would not say that that has always been a contentious issue, but it has been an issue that councils have always managed. People put stock on their stock routes, they apply for the council for agistment, and these approvals are approved or denied. In most instances, councils give approvals for probably a month at a time, but usually it is up to about three months. After that time, that stock has to move off. The stock routes should not be used as a spare paddock. People are supposed to make sure that the fodder on those reserves is maintained for future travelling stock. That is pretty important. I do not doubt that there are always people who try to use the stock routes a bit more than they should. In the minister's second reading speech he stated—

Permits can only be issued on the same land for the permit holder for a period up to two months.

I think that two months is probably too short in the areas that are further out. It might be all right in the smaller stock routes, but further out there are stock routes which are quite long, probably 6,000 to 10,000 acres, and they must be well managed. We do not want them flogged by overuse. If a council believes that it can responsibly let it go for three months, I do not see why it should not be allowed to do so. We do not want them to become fire hazards, which does happen. A lot of stock routes do have a build-up of fodder and they certainly can become a fire hazard.

There are a number of issues in relation to land protection and I could continue all night but, generally speaking, I believe that the members who have preceded me today have covered the issues pretty well, and I endorse the words of the shadow minister.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (6.20 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill. I must say at the outset that there ain't too many stock routes in Indooroopilly. However, it is important to place on the record of the House the appreciation the people in my electorate have for the work undertaken by those in the bush. It is also important to record our appreciation for the work that the minister and his department have put into producing such sensible and workable legislation.

The main purpose of this bill is to provide for pest management on land and stock routes throughout Queensland. It will protect land and water from the adverse effects of weeds and pest animals and it will manage the stock route network in a sustainable manner for travelling stock and other purposes. In so doing, it will replace the Rural Lands Protection Act 1985.

There are six major approaches taken by this bill. The first is one of prevention—namely, preventing the introduction of new pest species into Queensland. That includes provisions for emergency declaration, quarantine control and the reduction of spread by human activity. Secondly, there are quite sensible planning provisions. A framework is proposed for the coordinated management of pests and stock routes by key stakeholders. The third approach is one of local government partnership; that is, partnership between state and local governments, with local governments enforcing the provisions of the legislation and operating as the day-to-day manager of the stock route network. Fourthly, there is the suggestion of forming a Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Council, which would provide advice to the minister about strategic issues. It would be a 15 member council, representing not just local

government but primary industry, members of the conservation community, members of the wider community and the affected government departments. Significantly and importantly, it would have an independent chair. Fifthly, there are a set of principles and strategies that have been developed to guide policy and planning. These will be incorporated into state strategies that are required to be developed for weeds, pest animals and the stock route network. Finally, the sixth suggestion is setting guidelines. The chief executive of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will be able to issue guidelines that can indicate the management approach required for a declared pest in a particular part of the state.

I believe that there has been extensive consultation since the release of a discussion paper in February 1994 and, indeed, since the release of a consultation draft of a land protection bill in May 1999. There have been 100 written submissions received on the consultation draft. Community presentations were held at 14 centres around the state, with most interest obviously coming from local governments, government departments, industry, Landcare and conservation groups. On behalf of the residents of Indooroopilly, I am delighted to support this bill.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (6.24 p.m.): The National Party opposition has a range of concerns about this Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001. Queensland is a very big state, covering in the order of 173 million hectares. It is a very large area to look after when we talk about protecting it from pests and diseases. A range of both government type ownerships and private ownerships are in existence. That results in a mix which needs to be looked at very closely. In some respects, this bill attempts to do that.

The main intention of the bill is to provide pest management for stock and land networks throughout Queensland. The bill will replace the existing Rural Lands Protection Act 1985. As my colleague the shadow minister for natural resources has said, it is the private land-holders who will suffer the consequences of the government's misguided approach to protection of land from pests. Under the proposed laws, there will be requirements introduced for private land-holders to control pests on their land or face tough fines if they fail to comply.

However, a clause in the bill specifically exempts the state from the same provisions. That is a major concern which I will speak about later. We cannot have one group doing the right thing or making every attempt to do the right thing and the government abrogating its responsibilities. State government departments should have to exercise the same responsibility in relation to controlling pests on land held by it as private land-holders are required to under this act. A state government department which administers an area of land should be bound by the act in exactly the same way as a private land-holder.

There are elements of sound management included in this particular bill. That is particularly important because we need a regime in Queensland for doing exactly that. The legislation has categorised classes of pests—declared pests and plants—whether they be plants or animals. Class 1 pests are not commonly established in Queensland and have enormous potential to do environmental harm and certainly to cause land degradation. Class 2 and 3 pests are not regarded as being as severe, but there is potential for damage. We certainly must ensure that we do whatever needs to be done to control those pests—whether they are plant or animal pests—irrespective of whether it is state or private land.

The state is contributing something like \$150,000 for the training and implementation of this legislation. I understand there will be transitional requirements. The green paper states that the problem of weeds alone is costing Queensland in the order of \$600 million. That is an enormous amount of money. The member for Warrego has equated that to the cost of the footbridge. I do not think that is relevant in this particular case. We should be looking at reducing the impact of the disastrous results of having weeds and eliminating them in many areas throughout the state.

Fifty million dollars has been spent each year on controlling weeds such as parthenium, rubber vine, prickly acacia, mesquite and Parkinsonia. Managing pests with early intervention is absolutely imperative. When we compare the management of pests on the land with the management of a lot of other pests that come into Queensland, it is quite significant because we find we are not doing a great deal. In relation to the problem of black sigatoka in bananas, there has been an attitude of cooperative participation between landowners, the government and those working in the industry to get rid of this particular disease. However, it is a fungal disease, so it is probably not quite the same as our experiences with weed and animal pests and the issues that we are speaking of today.

The point that I am making is that there is a determination in relation to these pests and diseases to eradicate them, not just to deal with them and manage them. The papaya fruit fly is

another classic example of where an eradication program over a period of about two and a half years eradicated the pest. There was an enormous amount of involvement with DPI and the growers affected. During that period, although there were quarantined areas, roadblocks, the fruit had to be dipped and there were certain restrictions on sending it to market, we continued to trade, with product coming out of north Queensland.

Fire ants were discovered about four years ago. Additional regulations have been brought in by DPI to deal with them. The DPI was slow doing that. It should have had these in place. Back in October, I mentioned this to the minister. It is pleasing to see that at least now these regulations are being brought in to deal with plants that are going from contaminated areas, areas that are quarantined, and certainly machinery. If machinery such as backhoes and excavators are working in areas where there are fire ants and dirt is left on those machines, there is the potential for fire ants to remain in the dirt and be transported to another area. Those are the sorts of things that the DPI has done in the past. There has been support and a determination for the eradication of the crazy ant where there was early detection. That campaign was more successful. We have to detect these pests early and deal with them quickly, otherwise they get out of control and seasonal conditions that favour pests can result in a rapid escalation of their spread.

We are looking at weeds of national significance. Importantly, the Commonwealth has entered into an arrangement with the states to provide 50 per cent funding for plant pest eradication. I believe in 1999-2000 the Commonwealth provided \$2.4 million to the states and territories for feral animal control. In 1999 I believe Queensland received about \$141,000 for the national weeds program and something like \$160,000 for the feral animals program. Unfortunately, the legislation does not emphasise the need for management of state controlled lands as against local government land.

Clause 78 states clearly that an owner does not include the state. The shadow minister has raised this issue. Yes, there is some concern. But what brings home to me that there is no great support for the eradication of pests is the statement in the explanatory notes that 'in this clause, landowner does not include the State'. So a pest control notice cannot be issued on the State. I would like the minister to look at that very clearly, because it confirms my fears about this legislation.

If the state is not going to be fair dinkum in its attitude towards controlling pests—I am talking national parks, forest areas and so on that come under state control—anybody who has properties adjacent to national parks and forestry will have enormous problems. It is essential that this section be taken out. I believe the shadow minister will recommend some amendments to legislation so that that section is taken out. As I said, we are talking about forestry, national parks, World Heritage areas and so on. This represents almost 7 per cent of the state landmass.

I wish to refer to the research that I have done on this issue. Queensland covers approximately 173 million hectares. The area of Queensland is approximately 22 per cent of the total area of Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Yearbook 2001, approximately four per cent of the state is classified as protected land, such as national parks. A further 2.4 per cent is classified as timber or forest reserves. As at 30 June 2001 there were 212 state-owned national parks and seven state-owned specific national parks in Queensland.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency, manages the national parks. It is quite clear that the EPA has a responsibility to national parks. I wish to refer to the 1999-2000 financial year, where 425,000 hectares of Queensland state forests and timber reserves were transferred from the Department of Natural Resources to the EPA as part of the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement. I would hope, but I have got my doubts, that while they were under forestry reserves there was a great deal more vigilance going on with respect to pests and diseases that had to be controlled in those areas where forestry had its former responsibility.

I am aware of problems in national parks and world heritage areas in my part of the world. For example, pigs are invading farms adjoining national parks and are destroying sugar crops. Weeds such as sicklepod are spreading across the boundaries of national parks and onto private property. It now appears that there will be no responsibility on the part of the state as an owner. Under this legislation, no protection notices will be taken out over national parks. It is extremely disturbing that notices will be sent out to private property owners but not to the state government as the owner of national parks and forestry. The pest control notices cannot be issued in respect of the state. That is contrary to the intention of this legislation. I hope that the minister takes some notice of this, because I believe the intent of the legislation is to clean up the mess and

get things better organised. The minister is abrogating the state of its responsibility in terms of the work that needs to be done in cleaning up national parks, forestry and other land that belongs to the state.

There are some other issues in relation to state government corporations, such as Ergon, Energex and Powerlink. There are thousands of kilometres of conductors along the countryside. In many instances, these areas are easements. They are not necessarily owned by those entities. But the point that I am making is: whose responsibility is it on an easement used by Powerlink, Ergon Energy or Energex to run their conductors to manage pests? For the larger conductors, such as the 132,000 and 275,000 lines, the easements are quite wide. We are not talking about small areas; we are talking about considerable tracts of ground. In some instances, they are going through world heritage areas. If pests are not managed in those areas, that could be detrimental to the national park and any property holders whose land they might be going through.

SunWater has large expanses of water under its jurisdiction that have the potential to be infested by weeds such as salvinia and hymenachne. If the state is going to abrogate its responsibility, a dam could be a host area, say, for salvinia weed, hymenachne or hyacinth. In a flood some of that would find its way downstream following an overflow of the dam. It would then fall to property owners to manage those pests. Pest control notices will be issued to those owners. If the streams and tributaries going into the dam are infested from areas that are under state control it will make the situation even more difficult. These people will be penalised if they do not do the right thing.

As far as hymenachne in streams is concerned, we are doing something about the matter. We recently went to the NRA and were allowed to spray some of those areas with Roundup. I wrote to the minister and received his support. If the minister has hymenachne problems in a dam controlled by SunWater he could do the same thing. A lot of work was put into this.

There are some variations between the state's pest management plans and the plans of the local government authorities. Plans for managing pests on state controlled land are to be managed by the DPI, the EPA, the Department of Main Roads and DNR. The plan has a life of five years. However, clause 19 of the legislation does not disclose whether the plan is to be renewed. I would like the minister to respond to that.

Local authorities have to renew their plans after a period of four years. However, this legislation contains no requirement for DNR to renew its plan for state controlled areas. It appears that state controlled land may not have to comply with the LGA management requirements. Under clause 78 a pest control notice cannot be issued on the state. We have been through that matter.

The state areas have major concerns. However, local authorities have to administer part of the act and they have to have plans. They are told that if they have private land which contains a pest they have to pursue the issue. However, there is no responsibility as far as state lands are concerned. We cannot have local authorities saying, 'We want to issue a notice on a national park or a forest area.' Under this legislation they have no power to do that. The minister is abrogating his responsibility. The whole essence of what we are trying to achieve has been lost.

For the state plan public submissions do not have to be called, unlike the situation that applies to local government. The state plan does not have to be advertised. A copy of the plan is available from each department. As mentioned in clause 17, there is provision for an inspection by departmental staff to take place.

In essence, I have no problem with the structure of what the minister is trying to do. The Local Government Authority has to comply with some areas only to find that the state is coming over the top and making plans. In this instance, the state is abrogating its responsibility.

The pest management plan for local government areas has a degree of flexibility, and I believe that is fine because every area will be marginally different. I can picture areas in the hinterland behind where I live that would want to retain hymenachne because it could be of some advantage. In the coastal areas where we have constant wet weather there is a need to eradicate hymenachne. It is bad news in those areas. There are some good things about the degree of flexibility.

Time expired.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (6.43 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill and I start by acknowledging that there are not too many existing

stock routes through the electorate of Kawana, but I am proud to say that my ancestry worked the land around Upper Freestone in the last century and the century before that. In fact, J. P. Dempsey was well known in that area.

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

The bill before us tonight provides an opportunity for partnerships in pest and stock route management and for more effective action on the issues of greatest concern across 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.

Planning is necessary for a sustainable future. 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. As we know, many weeds are extremely invasive and are spread by water, wind and animals, including birds.

I believe it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who once claimed that nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. I know that the minister is enthusiastic about his portfolio and, indeed, this bill. In fact, both sides of the House have raised many valid and interesting points.

I must comment on the new-found enthusiasm from the National Party, as it has now become obvious that the member for Southern Downs is no longer interested in leading the National Party. We see the gutter politics of the member for Callide being adopted and we will watch with interest his ongoing leadership challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—Ind) (6.47 p.m.): I rise to address the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill with disappointment. The cane farmers, graziers and primary producers within my electorate and, indeed, within Queensland were hoping that a series of state wide integrated effective and equitable plans would emerge from this legislation. But the distinct differentiation between state owned and privately owned land, and the different obligations of private land-holders and the state, destroy any chance of integrated effective plans emerging.

The member for Callide has covered the general shortcomings of this legislation very well. I strongly endorse his remarks and intentions. I look forward to supporting his amendments. Other speakers have spoken about particular problems in north Queensland, particularly feral pigs. Again I agree. The fact that national parks currently represent a breeding ground and sanctuary for feral animals and some weeds has been highlighted. Again, I agree strongly. I agree strongly from personal and bitter experience.

The member for Callide also drew attention to the danger of a land-holder being compelled to remove a non-declared pest from an environmentally sensitive area. I have received phone calls from all over Queensland concerning the dangers inherent in this section of the legislation. This afternoon the Canegrowers Association rang to register its discontent and dismay.

The danger lies in the interpretation of the words 'environmentally sensitive'. Graziers with country similar to mine rely heavily on introduced species. I have had rabid greenies condemn our planting of species such as leucaena—a most productive pasture plant and a soil and fertility retraining tree. But such remarks are only made by the inexperienced. I can assure members of this House that such colourful, productive species are only too easy to eradicate.

I invite the minister and his advisers to ask my neighbours, who have spent 40 years trying to control indigenous species such as black wattle and even blue gum, which species present the greatest problems. It comes back every time to the indigenous species. I am constantly amazed that government advisers and people who have unusual access to those advisers do not recognise the resilience and persistence of most native forests. The great majority of land which we have arduously and painfully cleared to increase its productivity would revert to native forest very rapidly should we relax our control measures or grazing.

An ironic example of this resilience has occurred near Kilcoy. DNR in its wisdom decided that several bald hills were of visual value and should be preserved for posterity. Thus grazing was restricted to protect these visual treasures. With the removal of grazing, trees are germinating densely and rapidly on the so-called bald knobs. Knowledgeable locals predict that the bald

knobs will be densely timbered within a few years. Being well timbered is probably an improved state for those steep hills, but the fact that such an improved state has resulted from strategies introduced to keep them bald reflects the depth of ignorance of some bureaucrats.

I invite members who are genuinely interested in the resilience of native forests to look at Leon Ashby's web site. Its title is Barcoorah. Leon runs cattle on floodplain country at Aramac. He has time series photos of the same land demonstrating rapid revegetation. Leon is a great example of a very responsible land-holder studying and adopting new technologies.

I am also dismayed at the lack of appreciation within this House of new technology available to graziers and silviculturists. The most outstanding example, one which I have seen used to very good effect, is the modelling study by Bill Burrows. Given the latitude and longitude, soil type and rainfall, Bill's model will identify the optimum density of trees to maximise the productivity and sustainability of grazing and silviculture, that is, timber production. Thus, the real environmental and diversity values of that land are preserved.

I will address some issues in my electorate. We have large areas of pine plantation and national park. In the main, these areas lie directly south of my grazing property. When Forestry was properly funded, it was responsible and a good neighbour. On a personal basis I know that the Forestry officers are still good neighbours, but because they do not have the funds they no longer control groundsel, lantana, feral pigs or wild dogs. Several local governments further south, such as Noosa, have given up trying to control groundsel. It is interesting to note that Fraser Island, a World Heritage area controlled by National Parks, has severe concentrated infestations of groundsel. Whenever we have a good south-easter blowing in autumn we have clouds of groundsel seed riding the wind and reinfesting our land, compliments of state controlled land. The member for Gregory has already said that unless pests are controlled on state controlled land then private land-holders are literally struggling against hopeless odds. That member is correct.

The member for Gregory went on to identify the need for education. He is correct again. In my electorate there is an acute need for education to enable people to identify rat-tail grass from the closely related species. I was amused last week when reading the information kit which the department has put out to explain this legislation. I congratulate the minister on that kit. Mother-of-millions, a very toxic plant to humans and animals, has been scheduled as a pest. A woman from Tiaro, confronted by a bad infestation on a neighbour's property and a lack of action from her local authority, brought some mother-of-millions into the DNR office for identification. DNR personnel could not identify the weed and the woman and the suspect plant were sent to my office.

I turn to the issue of feral dogs. My neighbour and I legally lay 1080 baits along our southern boundary once every month—500 baits a month. That gives our cattle protection for two weeks. After two weeks a new pack of dogs has started to move in. Our cattle are largely purebred Brahmans. In the past, purebred Brahmans would repel dingoes, but not now. These large, strong hybrid dogs have pulled down cows while I have been watching or racing home to get a gun. We lay our baits very carefully, on the edge of a property road. We bury them and we cover them with a small log. We go back each day and inspect them. After a week we retrieve any that are left. As far as we are aware, we have not killed any non-target animals such as wedge-tailed eagles, many of which nest on my property.

As a final year student I wrote a thesis on 1080. In experienced hands it is a very useful and very valuable chemical—much better than strychnine. Its benefits are much less pain and more certainty. For public comfort there is an acute need to publish the relative toxicities of 1080 for different species. For instance, if you rate a dog as having a susceptibility of one, then a hawk has a susceptibility of 100. In other words, a hawk needs a dose rate per body weight 100 times stronger than a dingo to be killed. The minister has published that information, and it is a very good publication. He just needs more of his people to read it. There is a need for DNR to improve the knowledge level of its own officers. DNR has published an excellent pamphlet on 1080 including relative toxicities but, unfortunately, not all DNR officers have read it. This again raises the question of adequate funding to implement this legislation.

Three years ago my neighbour and I were assured by DNR that a survey of the national park immediately south of us had shown that that national park did not harbour any dingoes so they were not prepared to bait. But the national park to the south-west of us harboured a lot of dingoes. DNR, to its credit, baited. However, the two national parks are separated by only a bitumen road. When DNR staff make such claims their standing with the grazing fraternity falls, and that is a shame.

As well as an unprecedented outbreak of wild dogs we have an unbelievable outbreak of feral pigs. I estimate that pigs harvested some 25 per cent of my cane last year, and I know other cane farmers in the Maryborough catchment area who were more adversely affected. In the last 12 months I have not driven from Maryborough to Poona through the forestry without seeing a mob of feral pigs. Again, as soon as we eradicate one mob another moves in.

I realise that bills such as this require intense consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders need to feel ownership of legislation, and good legislation comes from the grassroots upwards. We the grazing industry, the stakeholders, realise that it is difficult for any minister to consult extensively and intensively with a great number of grassroots people in all areas of this state. For that reason a group of us—simple, grassroots graziers—have been working on the feasibility of interactive satellite TV conferences. This is now highly feasible.

Austar has some 400,000 watchers in Australia and Westlink through channel 23, which is a free-to-air station, has some 27,000. It appears now that for about \$1,000 an hour the minister—any minister—interested in grassroots opinion and the opinions of experienced practitioners, not theorists, will be able to tap that collective wisdom from the comforts of his office via satellite television. Natural resource use and protection will always be a controversial, emotional and difficult subject, and I sympathise with the minister because of that. Thus, I look forward to the day not far away when legislation will be written following better consultation than is possible today. As a result, the need for long and often diametrically opposed debate such as we have had today will be unnecessary. We will all be better informed and the rural/city divide will not exist.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Pratt, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (7.01 p.m.) I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Banana Industry

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (7.01 p.m.): Banana workers in north Queensland are in the process of planning a rally to protest against the threat of banana imports which would impact upon their livelihoods, their towns and regional communities. At a recent meeting at Silkwood concerning the threat of banana imports, there were approximately 125 banana workers from the Tully-Innisfail area as well as interested community members who voiced their support for a rally to take place in Cairns this Friday, 12 April. In recognition of the support for the cause, 30 workers present at the meeting volunteered their services to be part of the protest organising committee in an attempt to stem banana imports and protect their jobs. The main aim of the rally is to ensure that the voices of the banana workers are heard and that recognition is gained for the fact that the future of banana farming is bleak when having to compete with cheap imports.

Those who attended the initial meeting expressed concern about what the future holds for the banana growers, workers and others who are dependent on the industry for their main source of income. With the difficulties experienced as a result of the downturn in the sugar industry in recent times, many rural towns are already feeling the effect of reduced income, which of course has a flow-on effect to the loss of other jobs as businesses feel the impact. The last thing that these struggling towns need is for banana imports to be validated, resulting in reduced employment for those living in the production areas of this crop. To rub salt into the wound when referring to these imports, if the threat of reduced employment is not enough, the prospect of introduced crop diseases is enough to break the back of the industry, which is already suffering from the ill effects of black sigatoka.

I understand that the federal government will make a decision regarding imports from the Philippines based on the findings of an impact risk analysis which is currently being undertaken by Biosecurity Australia. If the impact risk analysis indicates that there are no risks associated with the spread of disease in banana crops, the information will do nothing to warm the hearts of those who will look like losing their farms, jobs and businesses as a result of imports from countries that have lower standards of living than we have in Australia. It will be absolutely detrimental if these imports come in. It is the age-old story of Australia trying to compete against

low-cost labour countries such as the Philippines. Of course, whether it is the sugar industry, the banana industry or whatever industry, we have to compete against countries that have a lower standard of living and certainly lower wages.

Mrs P. Collins; Multicultural Association of Caboolture Shire Festival

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (7.04 p.m.): This evening I rise to talk about two wonderful events held recently in the Glass House electorate. The first was a morning tea to celebrate all of the good work done by Mrs Patricia Collins from Landsborough in the community over the past 40-odd years. This continues from the International Year of the Volunteer ceremony held last year. Landsborough certainly was well represented. I gave two medallions—one to Doris Morris for outstanding work for the CWA and so many other charities in the area that it was almost impossible to collate them and the other to Mr Greg Poultney, who has worked tirelessly for the last eight years in his community organising the torch relay, working with young people and getting a BMX club up and running so that the young people have things to do.

Adding to that, we were celebrating the work that Patricia Collins has done, and I will mention a few things that she has done. She was secretary of the Brownies and Guides for 18 years. She was secretary for the Landsborough School of Arts Memorial Hall for 27 years. She has been working with the Catholic community since the early 1960s. Even on the morning of the morning tea, she was organising the next bus trip for the Catholic ladies of Landsborough, who were going to have a fantastic day. She has also been on the Landsborough State School P&C. She was also the tuckshop convenor. She was the school librarian. I have to mention that amongst all of this amazing work Patricia has done over the years she has managed to raise 14 lovely children, all of whom are still very involved in their communities as well, with the very good support of her husband. It was really wonderful that the community got together and put on this morning tea for her. We presented her with a certificate and lapel badge. The council was there to honour the work that she has done in the community. All in all, it was just a wonderful morning. I wish we could do that for every single volunteer, but Patricia is most definitely an outstanding member of our community. That was one of the great events.

The other great event held on the weekend was the Multicultural Association of Caboolture Shire Festival. I put on record the wonderful work done by the organisers with Ces Conte, Jay Datugan, Desley Matthews and Jeremy Liyanage, who works for council as the multicultural officer. They worked so hard for the past couple of months. They got funding from the Multicultural Affairs Queensland to put on this wonderful day. There were dancers from all sorts of cultures. Different ethnic communities were there and everyone supported it. When I turned up for the opening, I was surprised to see hundreds of people ready to see what the day had to offer. I have to say that they sat through our speeches very patiently and then the entertainment began. We had some really wonderful Filipino dancers. The Swiss sang and played the accordion. We had such a fantastic day. It was great to see everyone coming together and working to show how wonderfully diverse our communities are and how much they can do.

Suicide, Older Males

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (7.07 p.m.): Over the weekend I attended a conference on the Sunshine Coast. Another attendee at that conference, Mr Jack Backer, Treasurer of the Association of Independent Retirees, gave me a paper to read entitled *Suicide: a growth industry*. I will table a copy of the paper so that interested members can read it for themselves. Mr Backer made some interesting or, perhaps more appropriately, frightening or disturbing observations. These are points that I should have known and other members in this place may know, but we do not hear them regularly enough to fully appreciate their significance. Mr Backer's paper is concerned principally with older males. He makes some very telling points, and they are things that we in this place ought to be concerned about. He makes the point that more than twice as many people die by their own hand than are killed in road accidents.

In particular, it is a little known fact that older men have a very high suicide rate. What surprised me was that from 1990 to 1996 in Queensland the rate for men aged 65 to 74 was 25.54 per 100,000. The rate for men aged 75 and over was 42.57 per 100,000. This compares with 30.9 per 100,000 for the 18- to 24-year-old age group 10 years ago and 23 per 100,000 at present. Most of us in this place are aware of the tragic situation of youth taking their own lives, but many of us do not fully appreciate that in fact older males take their lives at nearly twice the rate of younger males.

As our population ages, this is likely to increase. There is no doubt that suicide is a very complex issue, but some of the risk factors for older males to which Mr Backer refers are declining physical health, depression and other mental illnesses, loneliness and social isolation—which we know is a real problem for the aged—and of course loss of loved ones and other major life changes. In fact, stress in anyone increases considerably when one changes jobs, retires or moves house. It becomes a major problem when one is older. It is a concern, and I know that the state Department of Families and the relevant Commonwealth departments are considering these issues in a very serious fashion. When one is confronted with and reads Mr Backer's presentation, the stark reality hits home.

Mirikai

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (7.12 p.m.): Unless one has had a child involved in the use of illicit drugs, it is impossible to imagine what parents and families go through. To raise a child and to see that young person become a stranger who no longer cares about himself or his life must be tragic. It was with pleasure, therefore, that I recently attended the graduation ceremony of a number of young people who had completed a drug rehabilitation course at Mirikai in the Burleigh electorate.

Speaking with these young people, their parents and friends, I was reminded again of the commitment of the staff and volunteers at Mirikai and the wonderful work they do. Young people who have hit rock bottom, who are no longer accepted by mainstream society and who are rejected by their peers and often their families find an environment in which they can rebuild their lives, rediscover their self-worth and become valuable members of society.

Mirikai began as a drug referral centre in 1971. Since then, it has grown to become a quality provider of alcohol and drug education, prevention, assessment, referral, detoxification and rehabilitation services. Recently, Mirikai was awarded a certificate of national quality accreditation. The awarding of this certificate from the Institute for Healthy Communities Australia followed a four-day review that was the final stage of a process initiated in 1997 and supported by Queensland Health. Mirikai is the first drug and alcohol treatment centre in Australia to receive national accreditation. During the process this centre was awarded not fewer than 10 commendations, where the normal maximum is three. Mirikai is not just the first; it is the best, and has set a standard for other organisations.

I take this opportunity to applaud Mirikai for its outstanding work, in particular Mary Alcorn, the clinical director of Mirikai, a real inspiration to the residents. Her team of dedicated workers creates miracles every day of the week. Where many in the community tend to dismiss drug and alcohol problems as too hard, Mirikai has tried and succeeded. I have long been a supporter of Mirikai and have undertaken its drug awareness course to give me a better insight into the problems of addiction.

Young people who have been through the program describe how Mirikai provides a feeling of safety within the therapeutic community, how it provides non-judgmental, holistic care and how it empowers clients by giving them a significant role in the operational running of the centre. Seeing all this come together at the graduation ceremony was a valuable lesson for me. The support of family and friends, together with assistance from Mary and her team, has provided amazing outcomes. I congratulate all involved with Mirikai on their triumphs and look forward to sharing many more with them.

Tailor, Fraser Island

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (7.16 p.m.): Recently, I had occasion to visit the Warwick-Allora-Clifton fishing club at a meeting held in Allora. The reason for the meeting was to discuss the issue of the impending bag limits for tailor in Queensland. The people who attended the meeting were extremely responsible fishermen. They felt that there was a great necessity to preserve this natural resource, whether dealing with fish in fresh or salt water, and that therefore proper management strategies are extremely important. Being fishers from regional areas who often travel a long way to enjoy their sport of tailor fishing once a year, they did raise a number of concerns.

We know that there has been a significant degree of media publicity and concern expressed—and also support expressed—for the government's proposal to limit tailor-taking in Queensland to 20 on the mainland and 30 on Fraser Island. There is an issue here which

probably has gone unrepresented and which really needs to be considered. From my part of the world, when somebody decides to go on a once-a-year fishing trip they plan to go for about a week and to spend a lot of money. As some people said to me the other night, their once-a-year trip to Fraser Island costs them a minimum of \$500 and up to \$1,000. They get three, four, five or six people together and in many cases make a family week of it or it is basically a holiday for a few mates. They are telling me—and this is a very fair contention—they will not go there if they are able to bring back effectively only 30 tailor. Whilst 30 fish may seem a reasonable catch, when dealing with chopper tailor it is not.

These people indicated that they would happily accept a limit of 20 fish on the mainland but that 30 on Fraser Island is insufficient. The effect of this limit is that those people will not go there. There will be a significant impact on the economy in terms of the cafes, tackle shops and service facilities all the way to Fraser Island which they frequent. They told me that they will target other species. They might go down to Jacob's Well and target bream or other species. But that part of their outing which they do annually will be extremely affected by this. They are very happy to accept the extra month's closure at Indian Head and feel that that is something which is practical and makes a lot of sense.

The government needs to reconsider this issue. Sure, we have to preserve and protect this resource, but when one considers the unique nature of Fraser Island and the way these people holiday on these fishing trips each year, 30 is insufficient and it should be modestly reviewed upward.

Mudgeeraba Heritage Festival

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (7.17 p.m.): Mudgeeraba is a community which is continuously celebrating and reinventing itself, sometimes just to have a reason to celebrate. Seeking to repeat the success of last year's heritage festival while considering new ideas to spark up the township's annual event, the Mudgeeraba Community Association has gone mad—pumpkin mad that is!

Mudgeeraba has been preparing over the past few months for a day of pumpkin madness. On Saturday, 11 May it will hold the first ever Mad Pumpkin Party. Cooked up by the association's effervescent treasurer, Earl Hinschen, the Mudgeeraba Mad Pumpkin Party will be a community festival like no other. I take this opportunity to invite all my fellow members to come along and join in the fun at the Mudgeeraba showgrounds next month. I can see that many of them already look like they would like to participate.

Mr Springborg: You wear a pumpkin mask.

Mrs REILLY: You could wear a pumpkin mask. Just wait—there is more. This community association has always sought to promote Mudgeeraba, local business and local tourism while celebrating its unique heritage. The Mad Pumpkin Party is just another way to promote the local area and to provide a safe, fun place for children, adults and families to come together and have a good time.

This event is shaping up to be a great success. It already has great support from schools and youth and community groups and so far is enjoying great support in the community. In fact, everyone in Mudgeeraba is talking about pumpkins. A recipe book including over 100 recipes submitted by local residents is being printed and some 400 entries were received in the Name the Pumpkin Mascot competition. So, if members attend the Mudgeeraba Pumpkin Party they will see Percy the Pumpkin.

On the day there will be an art competition and a cooking contest. One can come dressed as one's favourite vegetable or garden character. There is a Cinderella contest, a Prince Charming contest and even an Ugly Sisters contest. I will be judging rather than entering these competitions. Hopefully, I will also be judging some of the pumpkin olympics events which will include seed spitting, a contest I definitely will not be entering. There will be a picnic concert, a bush band, a jack-o'-lantern parade and a jack-o'-lantern bush ball. It will be great fun; I cannot wait. I will take my mother and my little boy; I cannot think of a better way to spend the day before Mother's Day. I congratulate Earl and the Mudgeeraba Community Association. Both the past and the present executive of this group have put their energies into this innovative, interesting and unusual event and everyone associated with it deserves to be congratulated. I am sure it will be a great success and I certainly hope that after midnight at the end of the ball we do not all turn into pumpkins.

Problem Tenants

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (7.19 p.m.): I wish the member a lot of success, because I know that the pumpkin festival in Goomeri is a huge hit.

I have been very aware of the problems faced by landlords who have been unlucky enough to have bad tenants. However, the injustices suffered by those who rent their properties to negligent tenants, who often get off scot-free, has been more clearly brought to my attention recently through one very angry landlord who came to see me.

My constituent has various rental properties for which he worked hard and saved for most of his life with a view to financing his own retirement. His tenant was many thousands of dollars behind in her rent payments. My constituent took the matter to the court, which is the correct way, and was awarded \$2,000, which was far and away a lot less than he had lost. The ex-tenant still refused to pay the \$2,000. A debt collector was sent to her, but because the debt collector had never seen the woman, she was able to deny that she was, in fact, Mrs X and there was nothing that the debt collector could do. My constituent now has to go to the trouble of finding time to accompany the debt collector to the house for a positive identification. There is a high chance that this tenant will move on before she is caught and will then repeat the whole cycle over and over again, inflicting the same problems on future landlords.

In the case of people whose properties are ruined, the bond money is never sufficient to repair the damage done. I can attest to that after recently having to spend \$5,000 on a house that was damaged. This means that these people get off absolutely scot-free and go on to damage more and more properties. It seems that no-one has the guts or the backing of the law to tell these people to go and live under a bridge, because that is all they are capable of caring for.

My constituent wants to see the law amended so that those who rent out their properties have not more protection but equal protection to that of the tenant. He has some suggestions that I am about to pass on. The Rental Bond Authority could maintain a database where a property owner can lodge a complaint about a tenant who may have caused damage or refused to pay their rent. The bond authority could issue a number to every person who rents and allow all rental agencies access to the database so that when someone tries to rent, their number could be checked on that database. Problem tenants should not be permitted to rent again until outstanding problems have been resolved and any damage paid for. This would hopefully make most renters very quickly become more responsible for the way in which they treat other people's property.

References from past landlords have often been rigged and written by friends claiming to be ex-landlords. So these are now open to suspicion and most people renting would not even look at them twice. It has been said that rental agencies have their own database, but this is far too fragmented. One central database is needed so that all agencies can access that database and know that they are getting the same information.

The bottom line is that landlords are losing very large amounts of money, which must surely impinge on taxation revenue, not to mention exacerbate ever-increasing insurance premiums. My constituent is seriously debating giving up renting out his properties. He says that it is not worth the trouble. If every landlord were to reach that same conclusion—and I, too, am getting that way—this state could be in serious trouble. I earnestly ask the minister to think about it.

Gold Coast Health Services

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (7.22 p.m.): I would like to draw the attention of the House to some achievements of the Beattie Labor government in the area of health. In 1999, Hards and Associates were retained by the AMAQ and the Gold Coast City Council to independently review funding to the Gold Coast Hospital. The report found that in 1997-98, the last year of the Borbidge government, the hospital received \$10 million less than it required under a nationally recognised hospital funding formula. Consecutive Beattie government budgets corrected the funding shortfall.

The report found that funding for the Gold Coast Hospital for 1999-2000 had increased to a level of \$5 million more than the national funding formula called for. The report also noted that the Youngman report, carried out by the Beattie government in response to the local campaign, had addressed the major concerns of the Gold Coast Hospital.

The Beattie government now makes available \$22.9 million a year to the new Robina Private Hospital for public services. Mental health services have expanded on the coast with a boost of 11.5 new staff positions. The Gold Coast Hospital receives \$1.1 million to refurbish the mental health unit. School nurses have been allocated to 11 Gold Coast high schools. The Beattie Labor government has appointed a full-time paediatrician and completed a \$2.23 million refurbishment of the paediatric unit at the Gold Coast Hospital. We have appointed an additional orthopaedic surgeon and an additional obstetrician as well as more nurses and administrative support.

The Gold Coast's combined public health services are now conveniently located together at Southport with the completion of the Gold Coast public health unit. Two dental therapist graduates were appointed to work for the Gold Coast District Health Service to provide care to school students. Public dental health services were expanded with the arrival of a new mobile dental clinic on the coast. We have announced a \$2.3 million boost for Gold Coast Hospital's equipment, health services and facilities. These include \$2 million for the MRI scanner to improve patient safety and provide quicker and more accurate diagnosis and an extra \$200,000 a year to improve ophthalmology services, including an additional four ophthalmological sessions a week at the Gold Coast Hospital.

There is an extra \$50,000 a year for drug rehabilitation at Mirikai. We have provided an increase of \$1.7 million in Home and Community Care funding to the Gold Coast community care organisations. We have developed and opened a \$4.8 million Palm Beach community health centre. We have established Positive Parenting Program units at Palm Beach, Southport and Beenleigh. We have appointed a child-care behaviour specialist to work with parents experiencing difficulties. The free, specialised programs for Gold Coast children, adolescents and their families focus on early intervention. A further \$12.245 million is being spent on completing the \$54 million Gold Coast Hospital redevelopment in 2002. This is an example of the Beattie government providing health services for the Gold Coast.

Sunshine Coast Youth Crime

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (7.26 p.m.): The Beattie government's failure to target youth crime issues on the Sunshine Coast is astoundingly bad policy. This week, the Labor government announced that a range of other areas would receive youth crime prevention funding and that these communities would in fact be target communities. But the Sunshine Coast was not included among this number. That is extremely short-sighted.

Despite the fact that most young people are law abiding, there is a growing and significant youth crime problem on the Sunshine Coast. It has some of the worst juvenile crime figures. I am calling on the state Labor government to properly fund intervention programs on the Sunshine Coast to help nip in the bud troubled youths' downward spiral into a life of crime.

It is also totally stupid to put young people into a youth shelter that does not have properly funded programs to break the cycle of personal trouble. They do not even have room to bounce a basketball, but they have plenty of time. We know that there is a growing problem with chroming, with kids getting access to paint solvents and other substances and basically blowing their brains out. The programs to assist them in getting off these substances and divert them into more worthwhile activities simply are not there.

It is also incredible that a region that has a high rate of juvenile crime such as the Sunshine Coast has not received funding to set up community conferencing to bring victims and their juvenile offenders together to impress on the offenders that their crime has an impact. The police want to see this happen. Many victims want this choice. It is provided for in state legislation, but it is not funded to occur on the Sunshine Coast.

Why have legislation if the government does not implement the programs that are supposed to come under it? I have raised this issue a number of times. I have met with police and I have met with the Department of Families. I have written to the department with particular regard to the youth shelter problem. If we have a lot of young people in emergency housing but we do not provide the necessary intervention programs, more problems can be created than we are trying to solve. I know that workers are trying to do their best to help these young people, but for them to be in a situation where they literally do not have any recreational area other than outside the shelter is a recipe for disaster. It has impacted negatively on the community and it is not helping those young people.

I renew my calls for assistance from the government to address the issue of appropriate emergency housing for youth, not the creation of other mini institutions that in themselves are problematic. Money must be applied in the area of youth conferencing. I have called for this before and I am again calling for it. I appeal to my other colleagues across the political divides on the Sunshine Coast to support me on this issue. I will certainly be following up this matter with them further because if we break the cycle of youth crime we are potentially stopping another generation of criminals, or lessening the chances of these young people growing into adult criminals. At the moment, we have no funding to implement the community conferencing. That is a backward step.

National Foster Care Day

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (7.29 p.m.): In a perfect world, all children would be loved and nurtured, would have ample food and shelter, would be intellectually and physically stimulated and motivated, and would have an unerring sense of security and belonging. Sadly, this is not the case for some children and young people in our society. For a whole variety of reasons, some parents are not able or equipped to provide these basic needs for their children. Even more disturbingly, some parents are not able to protect their children from a situation in which they experience neglect or abuse.

It is not our role to judge these people. Rather, we should and do provide support so that they can put their lives back on track. However, it is our role to provide protection for children who suffer abuse and to provide a home for those who need care. Very often the people providing an alternative home and family life for these children are foster carers—ordinary men and women who provide an extraordinary service in our communities.

The work of these remarkable people has been recognised this year through National Foster Care Day. On 24 March people across the nation came together to celebrate the enormous contribution made by foster carers towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in need of care and protection. The day provided an opportunity to say thank you for doing a very important job that for too long has gone unheralded.

I was fortunate to be invited to attend the Mackay-Whitsunday Foster Care Day celebrations, which were held at Queens Beach in Bowen. It was a wonderful day with foster carers, their children and community members coming together to share lunch, some excellent entertainment and to reflect on the ups and downs in providing foster care for children and young people in need. Indeed, one family travelled from Mackay—some 200 kilometres—to participate in the celebrations.

Speakers on the day included James Gaston, an elder of the Girru Dala community, who provided a welcome to country, and councillor Rod Mackney. Rod was full of praise for local foster care providers and gave recognition to the important role they play in the Bowen community.

The Mackay/Whitsunday Regional Director of Families, Michael Bishop, spoke about the determination of his department to support foster carers through a range of structures and facilities. These initiatives include a collaborative research partnership that has been set up with James Cook University to examine issues relating to foster care and to provide a forum for discussion and consultation, resulting in the recognition of needs and a proactive response opportunity.

One person who could not be with us on the day in Bowen was local foster parent Annette Power, but this was for a very good reason. Annette was in Brisbane, where she was honoured for her dedicated contribution to children in care through the presentation of one of nineteen 2002 Queensland Foster Care Excellence Awards. I congratulate Annette on receiving this award.

National Foster Care Day gave me the opportunity to say thank you to the generous people in my region who, through sharing their homes and lives with children and young people in need, help to nurture our most precious resource—our children. I repeat that expression of appreciation here tonight by putting on record my deep respect and gratitude to foster carers everywhere.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.32 p.m.