

TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2002

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Government House
Queensland

20 May 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 17 May 2002:

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation administered by the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Main Roads, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act relating to building work carried out on the Brisbane Markets site and the use or occupation of the site or a building or other structure on the site"

"A Bill for an Act to amend Acts administered by the Treasurer, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the State Housing Act 1945, the Local Government Act 1993 and the City of Brisbane Act 1924"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Adoption of Children Act 1964, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Amendment Act 2001"

"A Bill for an Act about residential service agreements, and related matters"

"A Bill for an Act to regulate the conduct of residential services".

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

Government House
Queensland

24 May 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 Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 23 May 2002:

"A Bill for an Act to amend the criminal law, and for other purposes".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison

Governor

PRESIDING OFFICERS AND CLERKS CONFERENCE

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, the Queensland parliament is hosting the 33rd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in the Legislative Assembly from 1 to 4 July. I therefore request all honourable members to clear their desks of any papers and personal belongings prior to that week.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr C. J. Bennett, MP

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Colin James Bennett, a former member of the parliament of Queensland;
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the parliament of Queensland, for the loss they have sustained.

Colin James Bennett was born on 10 May 1919 in Townsville, Queensland. He was educated at the Catholic primary school and state school in Ayr; St Joseph's College, Nudgee; and the University of Queensland, where he gained a Bachelor of Laws degree. Col became chairman of the Queensland University Students Council and a member of the Newman Society. Before entering politics, he was engaged as a law clerk in 1941, the maths master at Brisbane Grammar School in 1942 and served with the Royal Australian Air Force from 1943 to 1945. After the war Col served in the Commonwealth Crown Solicitors Office from 1945 to 1948 and then entered private practice as a barrister. From 1949 to 1960 Col served as an alderman on the Brisbane City Council, becoming vice mayor from 1952 to 1955.

Col Bennett held office in the Labor Party for many years, including secretary of the Coorparoo branch; leader of the Municipal Labor Party for 10 years; and president of the Griffith federal division executive for 20 years. Col won the seat of South Brisbane in the state election on 28 May 1960 and held it till 27 May 1972. Col stood for parliament in the 1960 election. He chose the biggest and most formidable opponent—former Premier Vince Gair—in a bitter contest for South Brisbane. The Liberal candidate polled 2,630 votes, Gair 2,738 and Bennett 4,250. In one of his first speeches in parliament, Col said—

It is rather amazing that at the CI Branch very few, if any, voluntary confessions are obtained from people who are allegedly invited to enter the CI Branch while in the company of friends ... But not long after they are separated from their companions, out pops a confession, freely and voluntarily admitting every element of the offence in such a fashion that one might believe that the accused was a lawyer who understood how to make admissions acknowledging the truth of every aspect of the charge.

Col Bennett's questions about rorting by ministers and by crooked police led to the government doing everything it could to gag him. On 8 November 1960, he only got as far as saying 'Having given notice of a question' when Premier 'Honest Frank' Nicklin jumped up and interrupted, saying that the question contained a statement. The Speaker ruled: 'Order! I thank the Premier for drawing my attention to the question, but I might say it was not necessary because on several occasions already I have had to delete certain sections from questions asked by the honourable member for South Brisbane which in my opinion, and according to standing orders, were provocative.' How things have changed, and thank heavens, Mr Speaker, for the changes! These days I seldom hear an unprovocative question in this House. In August 1961 he was again gagged when his questions were withdrawn by the Speaker.

Col Bennett waged a long and fearless campaign against corrupt Police Commissioner Frank Bischof and two of his hand-picked detectives, Glen Hallahan and Tony Murphy, whom Col named in parliament. He also had to withstand fierce attacks from the *Sunday Truth*, a great supporter of the corrupt commissioner. On 20 October 1963, Col launched another attack on Bischof, Detective Glen Hallahan and the *Sunday Truth* for being in league with the officers. The newspaper's headline was: 'Wild claims: Bennett is way off the beam'. But the article was revealing about Col's unusual lifestyle. The *Sunday Truth* said—

Mr Bennett—the sometimes likeable, always unpredictable man of law and parliament—over the past few years has been involved in more touchy situations than any 10 other members of Parliament.

The facts are that Mr Bennett knocked off from appearing in court for a policeman named O'Malley.

You see, Mr Bennett, although he is a member of Parliament, still is one of the most constant legal practitioners in Queensland, whether or not Parliament is sitting.

Down he raced to Parliament late on Tuesday and immediately launched into an attack on Detective Glen Hallahan, Police Commissioner Bischof and *Sunday Truth*.

It was a double life but one in which the criminal grapevine gave him an insight into the corruption in Bischof's force, and he used this information frequently in parliament to denounce the corruption. Prostitute Shirley Brifman told Col how detectives and even Bischof were involved in a callgirl racket at the National Hotel. Col said in parliament on 29 October 1963—

... the Police Commissioner and his colleagues who frequent the National Hotel, encouraging and condoning the call girl service that operates there, would be better occupied in preventing such activities rather than tolerating them.

On 3 November 1963, the *Sunday Truth* attacked Col for having exposed Bischof. Its front page leader said—

The campaign Mr Colin Bennett MLA is waging against the Police Commissioner Mr Bischof is now completely out of control and in the public interest the State Government can move in only one way. It must order an immediate Royal Commission.

It said—

The facts are that the honour and integrity of the Queensland Police Commissioner have been attacked ... His name has got to be cleared.

In other words, the Police Commissioner should be found not guilty. As the Fitzgerald report made clear, the royal commission did not uncover the corruption and he was cleared—a sad day in the history of this state. When Col denounced the inquiry in a speech in parliament and ordered 3,000 copies of the speech, the government refused to print the speech. In March 1965 he was kicked out of parliament for a week after a row with the Speaker about a question he wanted to ask.

In 1967 the *Sunday Mail* received a letter from notorious Sydney gangster Ducky O'Connor saying he was going to get Col. When he arrived in Brisbane, O'Connor was confronted by Bennett and said that he had travelled all the way from Sydney to assure Col he did not intend him any harm and the letter had been a forgery. Col continued his fight against corruption until 1972 when the boundaries of his seat were redrawn and he was not re-endorsed by the Labor Party. He first stood as an Independent and then, so angry was he at the decision, he even stood for the National Party, despite having fiercely attacked Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen for some of his business dealings.

Col believed in finding solutions and his commitment to assisting local communities extended to involvement in numerous community groups and organisations. This was highlighted by his work as co-founder, with his wife, of the St Veronica Welfare Centre, an association for underprivileged children. He was also a member of the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast Hospital Boards, the Australian Workers Union, Lions and Johnsonian Clubs, patron and life member of the South Brisbane Returned & Services League, and patron, member and honorary legal adviser for many sporting and charitable organisations. Mr Bennett is survived by his wife, Eileen, and children—Mary, Judith, Christian, Bridget, Walter and Imelda—and their families.

Col Bennett was a man of courage. I went through that little bit of history to show how strong that courage was. Queensland was a corrupt place in those days. It was a place that really was a shame on the history of this state. It did require some people of courage to take on that corruption. It was a corruption that pervaded all sections of government and particularly the Police Service. As we have seen, it also had support from the then *Sunday Truth*. It was very difficult for an honest man to break through. Col Bennett did. I know that Col Bennett left the Labor Party and eventually ran for the National Party. He was also an Independent. He was also a man of strong will and strong views which, in a sense, explains why he took the position he did.

I remember Col Bennett from when I was a university student. There was a public forum at the University of Queensland in 1971 which I went along to. Col Bennett was giving forth and when he had finished his speech he took questions. I got up and asked a fairly provocative and innocent question, and he looked at me and said, 'You'll never amount to anything. You don't have a bright future. I don't know why you're even asking me a question.' Well, he was not right on everything!

I have to say that I admired his guts. I admired his courage. This parliament is a better place for the fact that he had the courage and commitment to pursue the views he had. I extend my sympathy and the sympathy of the government, the whole Labor Party and this House to his family.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.41 a.m.): On behalf of the opposition I join with the Premier and second the condolence motion for Colin James Bennett. Colin James Bennett left this parliament some 30 years ago after serving 12 years as the Labor MP for South Brisbane. As the Premier has said, he then went on to join the National Party. He certainly had a consuming interest in politics and was a person of very strong and passionate beliefs.

The place that he left has changed, not only in terms of the demographics of the chamber, but it remains the people's house. Queensland has changed, too. It is still the people's Queensland. Lives such as those of Col Bennett show us that Queensland is a truly great democracy and a place where everyone is free to hold a point of view and to argue it.

On occasions such as this, when we as members of parliament pause to recall those who were here in times past, it is good to remember why our democracy is so full of life. Col Bennett was a Townsville boy, though of Darling Downs parents. He adopted Brisbane as his home. He was a city alderman and later a vice-mayor. We can really talk about consensus in this place when we look at the various roles Col Bennett undertook. He was a strong advocate for Brisbane—quite partisan in the cause of the capital city. In his inaugural speech to this parliament in 1960 he made it plain that he had little time for a government that was, as he put it, capable only of blaming every ill on the former government. It seems the more things change the more they do indeed stay the same. In that regard it is worth noting that as long ago as 1960—42 years ago—people were talking about and trying to find ways to solve the traffic problems of the city.

Col Bennett was a barrister, having been educated at St Joseph's College, Nudgee, and the University of Queensland. He served our country well in the RAAF during World War II and spent a time prior to that service teaching mathematics at Brisbane Grammar School.

I had the privilege to know the Bennett family. His daughter went to St Ursula's College at Dutton Park with my sister. We thus got to know the family quite well. It was also a fairly turbulent time in the area of Brisbane where I grew up because Vince Gair was a senior parishioner at the Mary Immaculate Parish at Annerley. It certainly was a turbulent time for the Labor Party. As a young person I remember that Col Bennett was a person of very strong and strident views. He was a wonderful family man. I am sure his family will miss him greatly. On behalf of the opposition and the National Party I provide our sincerest condolences.

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.44 a.m.): As the current member for South Brisbane, I rise to lend my voice to the condolence motion for a former member for South Brisbane, Mr Colin Bennett. Colin Bennett's commitment to public duty began, as it did for so many young men of his generation, with service to his country during war when he served in the RAAF from January 1942 until July 1945. Upon returning to Queensland he served as a barrister, but not long after he was elected as alderman for Brisbane City Council in the Kurilpa ward in 1949 and served as vice-mayor for three years from 1952 to 1955. He was also the leader of the municipal ALP for 10 years.

On 28 May 1960 he became part of the ALP's more colourful history when he defeated Vince Gair and became member for South Brisbane until 1972. During his time as the member for South Brisbane he was an active and dedicated participant in the life of the local community. He was patron and honorary legal adviser and honorary life member of Souths Rugby League Club and was instrumental in starting Souths Juniors. He was also involved in many community groups, including the Davies Park-Musgrave Park Swimming Club, the Kurilpa-Yeronga Lions Club and the Coorparoo RSL.

Mr Bennett was an enthusiastic sportsman in his earlier years, with a particular interest in swimming and football. He remained involved with many sporting clubs and charitable organisations, often in the capacity of honorary legal adviser. Mr Bennett was also the president of the Nudgee Old Boys Association for three consecutive years.

From the opposition benches he convinced the government of the day to introduce legislation allowing a person injured in an accident by an unidentified driver to claim against the nominal defendant, as well as the right of a spouse to sue their husband or wife. In fact, in relation to the rights of a spouse the headlines of the day were 'Your paramour, your lover can sue, but your wife cannot'. This action reflects Mr Bennett's strong sense of social justice. He was also active on other issues and was instrumental in bringing about, as we have heard from other speakers, the Gibbs royal commission into corruption in the police force, which was an early precursor to the Fitzgerald inquiry.

On a personal level, Mr Bennett and his wife, Eileen, founded the Hong Kong Catholic Refugee Appeal in 1956—an organisation which later became the St Veronica Welfare Committee. This organisation has distributed in excess of \$1 million to help provide for underprivileged children overseas. As I have outlined, Mr Bennett was a man with a keen sense of his civic and social responsibilities. Mr Bennett is survived by his wife, Eileen, daughters Mary, Judith and Imelda, sons Christian and Walter and grandchildren. He will be sadly missed by family and friends and I extend my sympathy to them at this time.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.47 a.m.): The Liberal Party joins in paying tribute to the colourful and distinguished service to this parliament and the state rendered by the late Colin Bennett. His passing marks yet another severance of the links with one of the most momentous events in the history of Queensland—the great Labor split of 1957. At the time of the split Mr Bennett was Leader of the Opposition in the Brisbane City Council, having served a term as vice-mayor. His council ward covered the state seat held by the Labor Premier, Vince Gair. The split brought about the breaking of many friendships, and that between Colin Bennett and Vince Gair was one of the more spectacular casualties.

In 1960 Colin Bennett was chosen by the Labor Party to oppose Vince Gair in the South Brisbane seat he had held for 28 years. By 1960, Vince Gair was leader of the Queensland Labor Party in this House. Colin Bennett's defeat of Vince Gair marked the beginning of the end of the QLP in state politics and the beginning of a 12-year career which would mark Colin Bennett as one of the most controversial, colourful and effective members in this House. Anyone who reads the *Hansard* of the period will be impressed by the obvious clarity of his speeches and his single-minded determination to expose what he believed to be widespread corruption in the Queensland police force during the 1950s and 1960s.

There can be no dispute that the 1963 National Hotel royal commission, headed by Sir Harry Gibbs, was the result of his campaign. Even though the inquiry rejected most of Colin Bennett's claims, it is worth noting that it took a further 25 years to substantially, if not totally, vindicate his claims. The Fitzgerald inquiry uncovered police corruption that certainly had its genesis in the 1950s and 1960s and involved some of the names Colin Bennett had made allegations against a quarter of a century earlier. In politics vindication can take a long time. I am sure Colin Bennett felt totally vindicated by the revelations of the Fitzgerald inquiry.

The term 'colourful political figure' is often used too loosely, a bit like 'well-known racing identity', but it undoubtedly applies very aptly to Colin Bennett. He was not only a controversial and effective member and an opposition spokesman, but for around 50 years he was one of the leading barristers in this state in the criminal law area. Indeed, he maintained a substantial practice right through his council and parliamentary careers and continued at the bar for years after he left this House in 1972.

The manner of Colin Bennett's parting from the House and the Labor Party reflects the uncertainty and volatility of Queensland politics over many generations. Prior to the 1972 state election there was a major redistribution of electoral boundaries, and the seats of South Brisbane and Norman were effectively amalgamated. In the resulting preselection battle, Colin Bennett lost out to the member for Norman, Mr Fred Bromley, and left parliament at the 1972 state election. However, his involvement in politics was not over and was to take quite a dramatic turn. He resigned from the Labor Party and contested the 1974 state election as the National Party candidate for the neighbouring seat of Kurilpa. He was not successful, and the seat was held for the Liberal Party by Mr Sam Doumany.

Colin Bennett was not only a distinguished member of this House and alderman of the Brisbane City Council; he was also a leading barrister for the best part of 50 years and a respected member of the community. It is appropriate that this House today pays tribute to his service and his colourful career and extends to his widow and family its sympathy at his passing.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.51 a.m.): I rise to pay tribute to the late Colin Bennett as a barrister and as a member of parliament. I knew him at the bar, and he was friendly to me as a newcomer to the Queensland bar in the early eighties. In about 1987 I appeared with him in a four-day trial in the District Court at St George. He appeared for a co-accused. It was summer. We appeared in wig and gown over four days in a non-airconditioned court room; and if ever there was a test of the good humour of a colleague, it was then. I should say that both our clients came equal second in that particular trial but did a little better on the appeal.

Reference has been made by the Premier to the healthy scepticism which Colin Bennett showed towards the free and voluntary confessions that flowed out of a deep sense of contrition that seemed to overwhelm people in the Criminal Investigation Branch. I well recall his speech to the jury which showed a similar scepticism towards the Crown in general. My client gave evidence, his client did not. As a consequence, I addressed first, the Crown addressed second and he addressed third. He said, 'Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you will observe that my learned friend Mr Foley has spoken first, the Crown second and I third. That is because the Crown should always be sandwiched between the defence at any possible opportunity.' That and similar blandishments to the jury proved to have little effect in that case.

Colin Bennett was a supporter of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal rights, and when he served as a member of parliament he often had Aboriginal constituents from South Brisbane attending on his chambers at the Inns of Court, which raised the eyebrows of some in those chambers. He was a person for whom the phrase 'the independence of the bar' meant something.

I turn my remarks now to the ladies and gentlemen of the jury up there in Labor heaven, for I would like to plead the case in mitigation for him. I would say to the court that he did a lot of good. It may be said that he got in with the wrong crowd at a certain time in his life, but that is what happens to our clients from time to time. He was a supporter of Aboriginal people. He was a supporter of the rule of law. He had a great sense of humour, and I hope that he is able to enter into Labor heaven with the recognition that he deserves.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (9.54 a.m.): As a former member for South Brisbane I, too, would like to join in this condolence motion on the death of Col Bennett. Other members have spoken of his war service, his professionalism as a barrister, his 12 years service as a city councillor and, of course, his 12 years service as the member for South Brisbane.

There is no doubt that Col Bennett was always colourful, he was often provocative, and he was a great debater. One of the interesting aspects of his life in this chamber was that quite regularly he was sent to the sin-bin. There was a story doing the rounds that he would come in here—having to appear in a court case in the afternoon—and provoke Mr Speaker to make a certain decision. Nevertheless, he was a man who would not take a backwards step.

In his maiden speech, which I read just before coming into this chamber, he went to great pains to show how disadvantaged the city council was at that time under a Liberal administration. He was particularly concerned that the Brisbane City Council's electricity department was going to be transferred to the state, because at that time it was making a profit of 500,000 pounds a year. Other people have spoken about that in the past.

I would like to speak now about Col Bennett the local member for South Brisbane. When I was doorknocking in 1976 to convince the locals of that electorate that I should be the next Labor member for the area—the seat had been lost by the Labor Party in the great swing in 1974 when we became a cricket team—I was told by everybody that I had some very big shoes to fill. Col Bennett was a real character, and he was known to be a fighter for his constituency. As Matt Foley just said, people would go to Col's legal office to see him about parliamentary business because in those days, prior to 1974, there were no electorate offices and no electorate secretaries. Col Bennett was well known in his electorate for setting up an office every Saturday morning, particularly in front of the Melbourne Hotel. He would be there at the office from 10 o'clock to 1 o'clock; people would go by, and somebody would buy him the odd beer.

The other thing I should mention is Col's passion for Souths Rugby League Club—a passion we both shared. I was actually on the committee of Souths and Col was a patron for many years. I join with other members here today in praising the achievements of Col Bennett. He was truly a great Queenslander and a great parliamentarian, and we are all sadder for his passing.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr W. R. J. Bousen, MP

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.57 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late William Raymond James Bousen, a former Member of the Parliament of Queensland; and

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

Mr William Raymond James Bousen was born on 13 January 1911 in Toowoomba in Queensland. Mr Bousen was educated at the Toowoomba North State School and the Toowoomba Technical College. Prior to entering into politics, Mr Bousen worked with Queensland Railways from 1925 to 1952. He attained various positions throughout his tenure of service, ranging from porter at Murphys Creek in 1926 to that of guard in Toowoomba from 1946 to 1953.

Mr Bousen held office for several organisations following his service with the railways. From 1953 to 1969, Mr Bousen was the Toowoomba district secretary for the Australian Railways Union—something of which he was very proud. From 1957 to 1969, he was president of the Toowoomba Trades and Labour Council. From 1958 to 1961, he was the president of the Toowoomba Trades Hall Board and its secretary from 1961 to 1969. Mr Bousen was also the Australian Labor Party's campaign director for state and Commonwealth elections from 1957 to 1969.

Mr Bousen won the seat of Toowoomba West in the state election on 17 May 1969 and held it until 27 May 1972. Following boundary alterations to the seats of Toowoomba West and Toowoomba East, Mr Bousen won the newly created seat of Toowoomba North, which he held until 7 December 1974. In his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly on 28 August 1969, Mr Bousen noted—

Our job, with the help of skilled public servants, is to use our resources in the most productive and efficient way to improve the State of Queensland and the nation to which we belong.

Mr Bousen also stated—

A great responsibility falls on all of us to make, according to our talents, the best contributions that we can for the welfare of our fellow citizens.

The sentiments expressed by Mr Bousen in his maiden speech were echoed in his career. During his term in office, Mr Bousen strove to represent all members of his electorate to the best of his ability and he had a reputation as being a member who got out and about and was seen as a hard worker in his electorate, as indeed he was.

Mr Bousen was involved in numerous community groups and organisations in Toowoomba. This was highlighted through his association as the Patron of the Subnormal Children's Association, the Senior Citizens Club, the Australian Pensioners League and the Civilian Widows Association; Vice-Patron of the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Association; and a member of the Toowoomba Bowling Club and Newtown Rugby League Club. Mr Bousen is credited with being the first local member to seek an additional high school in the city at Wilsonton. This became a reality in the late 1990s. He was also a keen advocate for Newtown's Gladstone Street Special School and the Harlaxton State School preschool. Mr Bousen is survived by his daughters, Shirley and Norma, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

I knew Mr Bousen quite well. He was a decent person. He was a stalwart of the Labor Party in Toowoomba. He was one of the people who encouraged me when I was party secretary for some time to remember that we could win seats in Toowoomba if we had good candidates and we worked hard at it. I have to say that with Kerry Shine in Toowoomba North we have achieved both those things. Mr Bousen would be very proud of the fact that Toowoomba North is held by the Labor Party today because he was a very committed unionist and a very committed member of the Labor Party. I had a very good relationship with him, because with my former association with railways as state secretary of the Queensland Railway Station Officers Union we had a bit of friendly rivalry between my union and the ARU, something we used to joke about from time to time.

But Mr Bousen was down to earth. He was decent. He was solid and he was someone who all members of my party were very proud of. I know he was very well regarded in the Toowoomba area and very well regarded in the Toowoomba Labor Party in particular. As I visited there in my many capacities over the years, he was one of the people who was supported by everybody. That is not always the case in my great party. It was unique that everybody was warm about him. If only I could achieve such a thing myself, Mr Speaker. I extend my sympathy and that of the Labor Party, the government and all members of this House to his family. He will be sadly missed by all of us.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.02 a.m.): It is a great privilege to join with the Premier in providing condolences through this House to the family of

William Raymond James Bousen, or Ray Bousen as we all knew him. Ray was a lovely man. He was a true gentleman and greatly admired throughout Toowoomba. He was born in Toowoomba and worked mostly in Toowoomba and around Toowoomba, although he was transferred to a number of other places in his job as a railway man. He represented the seats of Toowoomba West from 1969 to 1972 and then Toowoomba North from 1972 to 1974. I think it is worth while in looking at the contribution of Ray Bousen to our city and to Queensland to look at the long and loyal service that he gave to Queensland Railways.

Ray Bousen was an employee from 1925 to 1952. He commenced work as a lad porter at Murphys Creek in 1926 and served at Haydon, Cooyar, Roma, Bundaberg and then back to Roma. He was promoted to a shunter at Toowoomba in 1941 and then served the railway at Cloncurry, Cairns and Charleville and was then promoted to a guard at Toowoomba, where he worked from 1946 to 1953. He gave distinguished service to the trade union movement, particularly the Australian Railways Union. He was well known and liked in that area of Toowoomba where the railway men and the police officers used to mingle at the National Hotel in Russell Street. He was often spoken of very highly. He also gave much to our city. The Premier has already mentioned his contributions as Patron of the Subnormal Children's Association, the Senior Citizens Club, the Pensioners League, the Civilian Widows Association and Vice-President of the TPI Association. He was also a member of two icons of Toowoomba recreation and sport—the Toowoomba Bowling Club and the Newtown Rugby League Club.

Anybody who knew Ray Bousen could not help but admire him. He was the sort of fellow who brought great credit upon politicians because he was genuine, he was sincere and he was there simply to work for the people he represented. I think we can all take great honour and heart to know that a person such as Ray Bousen has been a member of this parliament and he has certainly set a high standard for the rest of us to follow. He was a wonderful family man and a wonderful person who loved Toowoomba and loved the people of Toowoomba and loved the railway system in which he worked before coming into politics. On behalf of the National Party and the opposition, I do provide to his family our sincerest condolences.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.05 a.m.): It is an honour to rise as the current member for Toowoomba North to support the motion of condolence on the death of William Raymond James Bousen, known as Ray, who was born on 13 January 1911 in Toowoomba and died on 28 May this year at Coolum. He is survived by his two daughters, Shirley Grayson and Norma Walker. His funeral was held at the St James Anglican Church at Toowoomba on 4 June. The eulogy was given by Peter Chippendale, the chairman of Ray's branch and his campaign director. Ray was born in Toowoomba on 13 January 1911. He was the fourth of nine children. He attended the Toowoomba North State School but left at the age of 13. I note that the Premier has remarked that he then attended the Toowoomba Technical College, no doubt at night. He regretted not having had more education but was philosophical and often said that his education really started when he left school.

It was thought natural for Ray to enter the employ of Queensland Railways, as his father had been a member of the Australian Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association. He commenced service with Queensland Railways in 1925 at Murphys Creek. He was then moved to Cooyar on railmotor service. It was at Cooyar that he met his future wife Doris, called Dorrie. In the 1920s he became the Secretary and Treasurer of the Australian Railways Union sub-branch in Toowoomba. He would have been still in his late teens. In 1945 he was a railway guard at Toowoomba and at that time was his union's delegate to the Brisbane state administration. He was also president and campaign secretary of his ALP branch. In 1953 he resigned from the railways and became the full-time secretary for the south-western division of the ARU sub-branch in Toowoomba. He was also Secretary of the Toowoomba Trades Hall and Labour Council and president of its board, as has been referred to by the Premier. He was a union delegate to the state ALP.

Ray joined the ARU in the turbulent mid-1920s, at about the time the ARU either left or was expelled from the Labor Party. He was an active member during the bitter strike of 1948 and a full-time official during the 1956 industrial troubles preceding the Labor split. He worked with the legendary secretaries of that union—Moroney and Nolan. He knew what unions were about. He knew what Labor politics was about. Ray joined the ALP in about 1930 and was made a life member in 1978. In 1969 he succeeded the former Leader of the Opposition, Mr John Duggan, in the then seat of Toowoomba West. He was a prolific doorknocker. Many residents of Toowoomba North still relate to me quite often the fact that he visited them in their homes. He puts a burden on the current member to repeat the effort from time to time.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SHINE: Thank you. As the member for Toowoomba West in the state ALP opposition, he was the shadow minister for land and forestry. As the Premier said, in terms of his achievements during his parliamentary term, he was very proud to have been responsible for the establishment of the preschool at Harlaxton and the special school at Gladstone Street. He lobbied vigorously for the establishment of a high school at Wilsonton, the first of about half a dozen to do so. He was defeated in the anti-Whitlam landslide in 1974. Ray was a devoted member of the congregation of St James Anglican Church and also supported and attended St Albans. He was heavily involved as a member of the West Toowoomba Bowls Club.

As well as the community and sporting bodies mentioned by the Premier and by the Leader of the Opposition, Ray was General Vice-President of the Queensland Sub-normal Welfare Association and was active in the Red Cross Society, Toowoomba Rugby League and Soccer. He took an active interest in the Toowoomba Marching Girls Group and was state secretary of the Queensland Marching Girls Association and subsequently was made a life member of the Australian Marching Girls Association.

His wife Dorrie died in July 2001. I met Ray at the funeral, and it gave him a great deal of pride to know that his old seat was again in Labor hands. Ray will be remembered as a man who had great faith in his family, in his church and in the Labor Party. Ray was a person who, if presented with somebody's problems, took them on as being his own. Peter Wood, Toowoomba's current deputy mayor, who held the adjoining seat of Toowoomba East, then South, at about the same time that Ray served in parliament perhaps best summed up Ray Bousen: 'He had a very simple idea in his union and parliamentary work; that is, he thought he could be of some use to his fellow workers.' He had no grand ideas about himself, either in union matters or in politics. There was no self-promotion about him. His simple belief was that he may be able to help people.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.12 a.m.): The Liberal Party also extends its condolences to the family of the late Ray Bousen, who came to this House as the member for Toowoomba West. Ray Bousen succeeded Jack Duggan in the 1969 election after being a long time campaign supporter of his predecessor. He was a strong unionist and a staunch supporter of the ALP. As many members in this chamber have said today, his community involvement in Toowoomba was well known. That he served only two terms in this parliament is yet another measure of the uncertainty of politics in a seat held by the ALP for generations. Mr Bousen lost to the Liberal candidate, Dr John Lockwood, in the 1974 coalition landslide along with 21 of his colleagues. The Liberal Party joins with other members of the House in supporting the motion.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

Racial Discrimination

Mr Fouras from 466 petitioners requesting the House to enact legislation against acts of racial harassment, racial profiling and discriminatory practices affecting indigenous peoples by the review of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

Commercial Development, Broadwater

Mr Lawlor from 312 petitioners requesting the House to advise the Gold Coast City Council that the House will not agree to the recommendations 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.

Access Bridge, The Caves

Mr Schwarten from 85 petitioners requesting the House to build an overhead access bridge to give safe, uninterrupted access off the Bruce Highway into the township of "The Caves" that will carry all vehicles.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

17 May 2002—

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Education (Ms Bligh) regarding the Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School Annual Report 2001

21 May 2002—

Report of the Attorney-General to the Legislative Assembly under section 10 of the Attorney-General Act 1999 dealing with an application by Mr Edward Ned Kelly for the grant of a fiat

24 May 2002—

Board of Trustees of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School—Annual Report 2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Education (Ms Bligh) regarding the Board of Trustees of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School Annual Report 2001

30 May 2002—

Childrens Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2000-2001

31 May 2002—

Report of the Queensland Ombudsman—An investigation into the adequacy of the actions of certain government agencies in relation to the safety of the late Brooke Brennan, aged three

5 June 2002—

Freedom of Information—Annual Report 2000-2001

6 June 2002—

Government Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to Report No. 50 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee entitled Report on the declaration of members' interests

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 103

Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2001

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 104

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 105

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 106

Community Services Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 107

Mineral Resources Act 1989—

Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 108

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2002, No. 109 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 109

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 110

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

Government Owned Corporations (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 111

Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 112

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2002, No. 113

Motor Vehicles Securities and Other Acts Amendment Act 2001—

Motor Vehicles Securities and Other Acts Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2002, No. 114

Public Records Act 2002—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 115

Thiess Peabody Coal Pty. Ltd. Agreement Act 1962—

Thiess Peabody Mitsui Coal Pty Ltd Agreement Regulation 2002, No. 116

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998—

Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 117

Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act 2001—

Electronic Transactions (Queensland) (Postponement) Regulation 2002, No. 118

Electoral and Other Acts Amendment Act 2002—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 119

Forestry Act 1959—

Forestry Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 120

Child Care Act 1991—

Child Care (Child Care Centres) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 121

Acquisition of Land Act 1967, Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, Explosives Act 1999, Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, Fossicking Act 1994, Land Court Act 2000, Land Act 1994, Land Title Act 1994, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, Petroleum Act 1923, Rural Lands Protection Act 1985, Surveyors Act 1977, Valuation of Land Act 1944, Valuers Registration Act 1992, Vegetation Management Act 1999—

Natural Resources and Mines Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 122

Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990—

Fire and Rescue Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 123

Meat Industry Act 1993—

Meat Industry Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2002, No. 124

Electoral Act 1992—

Electoral Regulation 2002, No. 125

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries (Spanner Crab) Amendment Management Plan (No. 1) 2002 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 126

Parliament of Queensland Act 2001—

Parliament of Queensland Regulation 2002, No. 127

Casino Control Act 1982, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997, Wagering Act 1998—

Gambling Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 128

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 129

Major Sports Facilities Act 2001—

Major Sports Facilities Regulation 2002, No. 130

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 131

Justices Act 1886—

Justices Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 132

Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 133

Collections Act 1966—

Collections Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 134

Ambulance Service Act 1991—

Ambulance Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 135

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

Community Services (Aboriginal Council) Accounting Standard 2002, No. 136

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

Community Services (Island Council) Accounting Standard 2002, No. 137

Casino Control Act 1982, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997, Wagering Act 1998—

Gambling Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 138

Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 139

Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2002—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 140

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962—

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 141

Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977—

Brisbane Forest Park Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2002, No. 142

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 1988—

Environmental Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 143

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991—

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Regulation 2002, No. 144

Public Service Act 1996—

Public Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 145

WorkCover Queensland Act 1996—

Governor in Council approval of expenditure by WorkCover Queensland to the Department of Industrial Relations for the prevention of injury to workers, notified in the Queensland Government Industrial Gazette on 31 May 2002

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mrs Sheldon from 1,870 petitioners, regarding the Caloundra Health Service—

24 May 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 11 April 2002, enclosing a petition from the residents of Caloundra received by the House on 10 April 2002, regarding the Caloundra Health Service.

The Caloundra Hospital was recently redeveloped and opened as the Caloundra Health Service on 1 April 2001. Service provision and staffing levels at Caloundra have increased considerably since that time aided by an additional \$1 million funding in the 2001/2002 financial year. Service enhancements include:

An enhanced Department of Emergency Service including increases in medical, nursing, and administrative staff. Twenty-four hour medical coverage is now available;

An increase in inpatient beds and increased occupancy levels including Monday-Friday use of the 14 beds for day only procedures;

Increased theatre utilisation from 65% to 85%. The second theatre is available and is used on a needs basis and to provide future capacity; and

There has been an increase in the number of specialists visiting the hospital providing clinic services, ward rounds, and operating theatre sessions. Increased Specialist Outpatient Clinics are now provided in the areas of medicine, surgery, and orthopaedics, and new services including pre-admission clinics and a sexual health clinic have commenced.

I am advised that the provision of outpatient physiotherapy services by acute care facilities is determined by clinical priority. Accordingly, outpatient physiotherapy services are provided to patients in acute/sub-acute priority groups at Caloundra.

The Sunshine Coast Health Service District is currently progressing the establishment of a 17-bed Rehabilitation Unit at the Caloundra Health Service.

The District has had difficulties recruiting dentists and outsourcing of some dental services at Caloundra has commenced to assist with managing the demand for oral health services until full staff complements can be recruited.

The Caloundra Health Service forms part of the Sunshine Coast Health Service District's network of services providing a comprehensive health service to the Sunshine Coast community. Queensland Health acknowledges that health care is an important issue for local communities. Please be assured that future service enhancements in the Caloundra area will be funded and provided in line with service needs and District priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Wendy Edmond MP

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

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mr Beattie from 11 petitioners, regarding irradiation of food and the proposal to construct a gamma irradiation plant at Narangba—

15 May 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 10 April 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) 62712278.

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

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Wendy Edmond MP

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

Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province (Mr McGrady) to a petition presented by Dr L Clark from 3,353 petitioners, regarding the use of hand-held metal detectors in nightclubs—

13 June 2002

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

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter dated 8 March 2002 in relation to petition number 2240 that was received at the Queensland Parliament on 7 March 2002 concerning a request that legislation be implemented to regulate the

use of hand-held metal detectors to ensure persons who enter nightclubs are not armed with weapons, particularly knives.

In compliance with Standing Order Number 238A of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, the wording of this petition was forwarded to my Office for appropriate action or comment on the basis that it related to my police portfolio responsibilities.

However, the sought after amendment would appear to impact principally upon either the:

Liquor Act 1992 that is administered by the Liquor Licensing Division, Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading; or

Security Providers Act 1993 that is administered by the Office of Fair Trading, Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading. This Act provides for the licensing of security officers and crowd controllers, including "bouncers" at nightclubs.

The Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading is within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I have provided that Minister with a copy of the petition.

However, because the prevention of crime and detection of offenders are functions of the Queensland Police Service, a response to the principal petitioner has been drafted under my signature. This response has been referred to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading and has her concurrence.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

TONY McGRADY

Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province

Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) to a petition presented by Ms Molloy from 748 petitioners, regarding the mining of gold and Papillon Mining and Exploration Pty Ltd—

14 June 2002

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

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 2002 concerning a Petition that was received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, regarding opposition to the mining of gold and any other mineral undertaken above or below the surface of land designated by the present Mining Lease Number 50124 and Mining Lease Application Number 50184, taken out by Papillon Mining and Exploration Pty Ltd.

The issues outlined in the Petition involve both the current operations and the application for mining lease to extend those operations. Currently, the operator is complying with the conditions of both the environmental authority and the mining lease. Monitoring of the mining operations by my Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the Environmental Protection Agency and the mine operator is ongoing.

Regarding the application for a new mining tenure over the area partly surrounding the existing operation, I advise that the application is being processed within the terms of the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Environmental Protection Act 1994. Objections to either or both the mining lease application and the environmental authority draft conditions closed on 20 May 2002. Approximately 30 objections were received.

At this stage, the mining lease application, draft environmental authority and all the objections have been referred to the Land and Resources Tribunal by the Mining Registrar. The tribunal has set a date for a directions hearing on 24 June 2002.

I can assure you that compensation for damage caused to property due to mining activities is addressed in the provisions of the Mineral Resources Act 1989. The Act establishes jurisdiction for the Land and Resources Tribunal to assess damage, injury, or loss arising from activities purported to have been carried on under the authority of the Act or any other

Act relating to mining. Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Stephen Robertson MP

Response from the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) to a petition presented by Ms Male from 2,173 petitioners, regarding objections to Caloundra City Council's proposed provision of water to Maleny through a pipeline from Lander's Shute water treatment plant—

4 June 2002

Mr R Doyle
Clerk of the Parliament
CENTRAL DOCUMENT EXCHANGE M29

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 12 April 2002 regarding the petition lodged in the Legislative Assembly on 11 April 2002 dealing with objections to Caloundra City Council's proposed provision of water to Maleny through a pipeline from the Lander's Shute water treatment plant.

I wish to advise I have considered the issues and responded directly to the Principal Petitioner.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Nita Cunningham MP

Minister for Local Government and Planning

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer)—

Ministerial Transport Trade Mission—India, Italy & Ireland May 2002—Official Report

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.13 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report on my recent ministerial trade mission to India and Italy during May 2002.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Liability Insurance

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: Later today the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice will introduce a raft of reforms that aim to ensure that Queenslanders have access to affordable insurance. In fact, Queensland leads Australia in tort law reform and in dealing with this issue of insurance. Our reforms are aimed at reining in rising payouts for personal injuries compensation and restoring commonsense to court awards. One of the many beneficiaries of the more balanced and sensible insurance environment will be the medical profession. On Sunday, the Health Minister and I announced separate reforms that deliver even more certainty to doctors, especially rural doctors, and these were approved by cabinet yesterday. Queensland Health, which already indemnifies all doctors who treat public patients in public hospitals, will extend indemnity to more rural doctors and medical specialists. The government will fully indemnify 55 private rural GPs who do private specialist work such as obstetrics, anaesthetics and surgery in public hospitals and Queensland Health approved facilities.

The new system will replace the generous subsidies currently provided to private rural doctors. We will also guarantee protection for Queensland Health doctors relieving in rural areas who treat private patients. Sixty rural medical superintendents and senior medical officers with a right of private practice are already covered for treating their private patients. This means rural doctors can continue their essential work with more certainty that they are covered for claims against them. Importantly, rural communities can continue to have full confidence that their doctors are capable of delivering an uninterrupted, high-quality service, can continue to deliver their babies and can continue to perform surgery in a safe professional environment. In addition, we will extend indemnification to the informed consent process for 1,100 visiting medical officers, VMOs, who refer their own patients for treatment as public patients in public hospitals. The extension of indemnity cover to rural GPs and VMOs would be under strict conditions including a requirement that the practitioner agrees to quality control procedures laid down by Queensland Health. They are protocols which we believe the profession will find acceptable.

Health Minister Wendy Edmond has had ongoing discussions with the Australian Medical Association Queensland on the question of specialist VMOs who want to refer their private patients to be treated as public patients in public hospitals. The informed consent process itself, for example the explaining of a procedure's risks, will now be indemnified. When the VMOs perform the procedures themselves, we will indemnify them for the consent process, which involves giving a patient information about the risks. This gives more certainty to the state's 1,100 VMOs when they refer private patients to be treated as public patients in a public hospital. These measures, in tandem with the robust reforms to be introduced by the Attorney-General, will consolidate Queensland's position as the national leader of the liability insurance reform process.

This proves that we are a government for all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live. It also puts pressure on the insurance industry now to start announcing reductions in premiums. There needs to be a response from the insurance industry to bring premiums down, otherwise

they will end up with a huge windfall. That is not what this is about; this is about protecting Queenslanders. Finally, the minister also announced yesterday a \$2,000 incentive to encourage rural doctors as well.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart State Research Facility Fund

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: The state government has acted to ensure that we continually add to the infrastructure necessary to enable our Smart State strategy to flourish. We announced a \$100 million Smart State Research Facility Fund in the budget last year to help provide this infrastructure. While I was in Toronto with Innovation and Information Economy Minister Paul Lucas for Bio2002, the world's biggest and most important biotechnology conference and exhibition, we announced four major initiatives using money from this fund. We were joined by three other members. The four projects are—

\$22.5 million to an Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at the Queensland University of Technology;

\$7.8 million for an Australian Tropical Forest Institute in Cairns;

\$1.5 million for a cryo-electron microscopy facility at the University of Queensland; and

\$4.5 million to an Australian computational earth systems simulator at the University of Queensland.

These diverse and far-reaching initiatives will add to the research capabilities of the Smart State and will complement existing programs and others which are in the process of construction.

The Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at the QUT's Kelvin Grove campus will cost \$70 million in building and initial projects and enable research into advanced diagnostics, injury prevention and rehabilitation, molecular farming, health development, tissue bioregeneration and vision improvement. By combining health, biomedical science and engineering, this institute will allow major research into innovative, cross-discipline projects in markets which are growing because of Australians' increased life expectancy. It is scheduled for completion in late 2004.

The cryo-electron microscopy facility, to be established at the University of Queensland at a cost of \$5.2 million, will help researchers design and develop new drugs. This facility will help give our researchers a leading edge because the cryo-equipment allows active compounds to be chilled to the point where they stop moving so that researchers can study them under a microscope. This will mean that researchers can then reconstruct three-dimensional models of the compounds and use this information to better design drugs and vaccines.

The new Australian computational earth systems simulator, to be established at the University of Queensland at a cost of \$13.5 million, will put the Smart State at the heart of mining safety. This funding is designed to enable the centre to develop high-capacity, high-speed computer models to improve mining safety and make exploration more efficient. It is about improving the way mining companies do business and ensuring that they have the knowledge to conduct exploration in the safest and easiest way possible.

The Australian Tropical Forest Institute will be established next to the James Cook University in Cairns at a cost of \$33 million. The institute will investigate how to best use and conserve tropical forests in Australia and overseas and conduct research aimed at discovering new herbicides and fungicides as well as the creation of new sustainable rural industries such as new tree crops. The \$7.8 million has been allocated from the \$15 million Biodiscovery Fund, which is part of the Smart State Research Facility Fund. Construction is due to start in January next year for completion in June 2004.

Our five-year \$100 million Smart State Research Facility Fund is designed to help fast-track quality research programs to produce new and improved products and services and high-value jobs for Queenslanders. We do not want to see our Smart State ideas in the Smart State left on the shelf or lost overseas. This fund can help improve our research capabilities, help take those ideas to the marketplace and position Queensland as a leader in research and development. It will also enable us to develop the science and technology infrastructure that is vital if we are to be a leader in the knowledge economy.

I want to thank Paul Lucas for his support at BIO and these announcements. I also want to acknowledge the Leader of the Liberal Party, Lawrence Springborg and the Leader of One Nation, who were also at BIO and who played a very constructive and positive role. I want to thank the three of them for doing so.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism and Fair Trading Minister, Allegations of Bullying

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.22 a.m.), by leave: In the past week I have been accused of bullying my staff. The allegations came from a former driver whose employment of a little over a three and a half month period with my office was terminated almost 12 months ago. I am not a bully and my ministerial and electorate office staff will confirm this. My staff are hardworking, diligent and competent. They are true professionals in every sense of the word—and they are loyal.

The allegations against me are without foundation. They are simply untrue. The person concerned chose not to pursue an action against me. However, as I have said, I will not be drawn into a public slanging match over this issue. That is just not my style. Success in a WorkCover claim does not constitute bullying. The Premier at that time reminded me of my obligations as a minister and as an employer.

Ministers and ministerial staffers work under enormous pressure. That pressure can create a tense environment. That is the nature of politics. Politics, as the Premier has said many times, is a hothouse. There are enormous pressures—both on ministers and on their staff.

I am proud of my achievements as a minister, firstly in Emergency Services and now in Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading. Our \$14 billion a year tourism industry is getting back on its feet, thanks in part to the immediate response from the Beattie government to the dual crises of last year. We have run the two-tiered property marketeers, who so damaged the state's reputation, out of town and are pursuing them into the courts. Queensland consumers are more aware of their rights and traders of their obligations to their customers. The racing industry now has the appropriate structure to take it into the future.

I take my job as a minister very seriously. I set high standards for myself in my ministerial duties. I expect high standards from all my staff. I am grateful for the magnificent work put in by my staff every day. Some of my staff have been with me from the day I became a minister—four years ago.

Not everyone is suited to the hothouse of politics. My ministerial office staff yesterday presented me with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a card. It was their way of showing their support. I have been deeply touched by the messages and letters of support both to my ministerial office and my electorate office from former staff, bureaucrats and members of the community I have worked closely with, both in my current portfolio and my previous Emergency Services portfolio. I have received messages from senior bureaucrats in the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Department of Emergency Services, and from the tourism industry and from within my electorate. That support means much to me.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Literacy and Numeracy

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.25 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland School Curriculum Council 2001 report: *Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program—Statewide Student Performance in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy* has now been published. I seek leave to table the report.

Leave granted.

Ms BLIGH: This report is prepared annually and provides the latest data on the literacy and numeracy achievements of Queensland students. About 160,000 students in years 3, 5 and 7 from state and non-state schools sat the tests in August last year. It was the first time the year 3 test had been carried out as a census test. Previously, only a sample of students were tested.

The tests cover reading and viewing, spelling and writing in the literacy area, and number, measurement and data and space in the numeracy area.

The primary purposes of the testing program are to provide a statewide overview of student performance in aspects of literacy and numeracy as well as more specific reports to schools and parents on the progress of individual students and class groups. This year's results show that Queensland students have maintained high standards from 2000 to 2001 in most of the areas tested. In literacy, Queensland students performed particularly well in reading and viewing and in spelling, and also in space in the area of numeracy. Year 3 students in general have similar performance levels to 2000 in all the areas of literacy and show improved scores in all areas of numeracy. Year 3 performance in measurement and data improved on last year, and it is particularly encouraging. Year 5 students have clearly improved in all areas of literacy, but are slightly down on the 2000 performance in all areas of numeracy. Year 7 students show some improvement in reading from 2000 but are slightly down in the areas of spelling and writing. In numeracy, year 7 students scores are better than 2000 in all areas.

The report also examines the performance of different groups of students. It found, in all areas of literacy across the three year levels, girls continued to outperform boys, with the most noticeable differences in the area of writing. However, this performance is reversed in numeracy, with boys performing better than girls in all aspects of numeracy except in year 3 and year 5 space. Indigenous students continue to experience difficulties in all areas of literacy and numeracy.

The state government has embarked on a major education reform agenda which we believe will give students a better grounding in the early years and improve their chances after school. The trials of a preparatory year of schooling before year 1, combined with the continued work around the *Literate Futures* report into literacy will make a positive impact on the literacy and numeracy performance of Queensland students.

Late last year, the council provided parents and schools with detailed reports on the achievements of individual students and class groups in the 2001 tests. However, when this year's tests are carried out, it will be under the charter of the new Queensland Studies Authority, which comes into effect in July. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Queensland School Curriculum Council for their work in developing and administering Queensland's testing program. I am confident that the new studies authority will continue to build on the council's work in this area and will complement the government's education and training reforms.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.29 a.m.), I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 5 of 2002* and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

State Budget

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 a.m.): Recently, the federal Labor opposition's Treasury spokesman, Bob McMullan, gained widespread attention when he admitted that when it comes to economic management, people do not think that Labor can be trusted. If we look back at Paul Keating's recession that we had to have, the \$96 million debt that the last federal Labor government left, WA Inc and all the rest, we see the legacy of bad economic management by Labor.

Today, the state budget will be delivered. In 2001, the state budget predicted a \$28 million operating surplus. Instead, it delivered a \$20 million deficit plus the losses of the public trading enterprises. Today, we are going to see another massive loss—the second loss in a row—which really should start to ring alarm bells for Queenslanders. This government is about arrogance, bullying and massive budget deficits and mismanagement.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Tourism and Fair Trading Minister, Allegations of Bullying**

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Premier to the claims of workplace bullying and harassment against the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading made by her former staff. On the evidence to date, the minister has potentially breached the Public Sector Ethics Act, the Workplace Health and Safety Act, the Crime and Misconduct Act, the Ministerial Code of Ethics, the Queensland Ministerial Handbook and the Workplace Bullying Employers Guide, which is posted on the web site of the Department of Industrial Relations.

In the finest tradition established by his Health Minister in attacking Wendy Erglis, the Premier has vilified the victims in the media by claiming they just did not want to work. The Department of Industrial Relations employers' guide to workplace bullying states that employers should ensure there is no retaliation against workers who report bullying. Why has the Premier broken his own guidelines and vilified victims once again? Also, given that he has now had to counsel the Minister for Tourism four times, when will he be a responsible employer and sack her?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have not vilified anyone. As members know, sometimes relationships do not work and sometimes employees take actions and resign.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEATTIE: We need to be very careful about what is referred to as actual fact because, as the Leader of the Opposition would know, sometimes staff leave. For example, Shelly Waller worked as a media adviser for the Leader of the Opposition; she resigned. Sue Ferguson worked as a media adviser for the Leader of the Opposition; she resigned. John Stock worked as a senior media officer for the Leader of the Opposition; he resigned.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. Order!

Mr BEATTIE: Chris Leslight worked as a media officer for the Leader of the Opposition; he resigned. Keiran Toohey worked as a media officer for the Leader of the Opposition; he resigned.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, five people who have been employed as media officers for the Leader of the Opposition have resigned since he became leader on 2 March last year.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I intend to hear the answers to these questions. The constant interjecting does not enable anybody in this House to hear. I intend to hear it. If the members of the opposition constantly interject, they will not be hearing the budget being delivered in this place this afternoon. That is my final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The reality is that the Leader of the Opposition has had five media officers since 2 March last year—five! He has had five media officers, five of whom have all resigned.

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. Nobody was bullied. All of those people went to jobs, for example, with the Prime Minister or with people in other positions or travelled overseas. It had nothing to do with bullying.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Resume your seat.

Mr BEATTIE: Don't try and bully me! Let me assure you, Mr Speaker, that I will not be bullied by the Leader of the Opposition. This is the point I am trying to make: what did the Leader of the Opposition do when I announced that a number of employees had resigned? He reacted. People resign for various reasons. I have not said for one—

Mr Johnson: False accusations.

Mr BEATTIE: When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Transport, there were stories doing the rounds that two people left him because of bullying—two people.

Mr Johnson: Is that right?

Mr BEATTIE: That's right.

Mr Johnson: I don't think so.

Mr BEATTIE: The point is that I do not accept rumours.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I find that offensive and I ask the Premier to withdraw that.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to withdraw that. If ever there has been a case of bullying, members are seeing it right now! I cannot even get an opportunity to answer this question. I am simply trying to say, in very simple terms, that people—there you go! My time has run out so I cannot answer the question. Please do not bully me during my next answer.

Ministers, Allegations of Bullying

Mr HORAN: I refer the Premier to a Labor caucus meeting on the Sunshine Coast late last year which erupted into a discussion on ministerial bullying, during which the members for Glass House and Whitsunday made serious complaints about the treatment of them by the Minister for Tourism. I also refer to the Premier's claims during yesterday's press conference that he was unaware of any bullying allegations against ministers other than those that had been made against the Minister for Tourism and Racing and the Minister for Fair Trading. Yet at the same caucus meeting, Labor MPs also complained about the conduct of the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth.

Ms MALE: I rise to a point of order. At no time during the Labor caucus briefing up the coast did I mention any issues about bullying by the Minister for Fair Trading. I ask that that comment be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I take it the member finds it offensive?

Mr HORAN: It is a question for the minister.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to withdraw that.

Ms MALE: I rise to a point of order. I find the comment offensive and untrue and I wish that it be withdrawn.

Mr HORAN: I withdrew it.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has withdrawn it.

Ms JARRATT: I rise to a point of order. At no time during the caucus retreat last year did I make comments in reference to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I find the member's comment offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr HORAN: I withdraw. At the same caucus meeting Labor MPs also complained about the conduct of the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth. Is it not true that the Premier has been turning a blind eye to bullying for a long time, even within his own Labor caucus?

Mr BEATTIE: I must say that the member, having had to withdraw most of his question, there is not much left. I am not quite sure what I have to respond to.

People in glass houses should not throw stones. The reality is that I will not under any circumstances accept bullying by anybody in my government, and I made that absolutely clear. However, I will not have bullying used as an excuse for people not doing their work. As I tried to highlight in my first answer, the reality is that people will come and go, people will have differences—and people like media officers will leave the Leader of the Opposition because they do not think he is performing. That does not mean he has bullied them. People will have some differences. People will be employed for short periods of time. I am happy to set out how short a period of time some of these people worked for the Leader of the Opposition, if he wishes.

My point is that I will not tolerate bullying of any kind by anybody. I make that very clear. However, there are some people who believe that they should not take instruction, that they should not work. I am afraid that I expect my ministers to work and I expect their staff to work. I will not have anybody use bullying as a red herring to avoid their responsibilities. I remind them all that they are paid for by the taxpayer. They are not on holiday; they are working. They are paid for by the public and I expect them to work. I will not accept any excuses to the contrary.

There are people who find it difficult to take instructions. For example, I occasionally run into men who find it difficult to take instructions from women. There are people in that category in the

community. However, this is a changing world and those people who cannot take instructions from women have to learn that that is part of the modern world.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No, I have never said that. The member has come in here and embarrassed himself twice. I would think he would be quiet for the rest of question time. The reality is that bullying is not acceptable, but I will not have a position where bullying is used as an excuse for people not to do their work. All sorts of rumours often do the rounds, and I made reference to one in relation to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do not accept that that is the case, let me make that clear. I was not saying that I accept it.

Mr Johnson: Name the people. Name the people.

Mr BEATTIE: What I am trying to say is opposition members should not operate on rumours because we do not. That is the point I am trying to make. There are all sorts of rumours that do the rounds against all of us

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I find it offensive that the Premier refers to this situation regarding when I was minister. If there are people there who I bullied or who my staff bullied, I would like to know who they are. Put it on the record, bring it out in the open!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Johnson: No, Mr Speaker, you listen here for a minute.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHNSON: The situation is again that the Premier should go and ask the department.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Premier.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: And so does my wife when members opposite go out and misrepresent things in the press, so don't come in here trying to be holier than thou with me. The member is a fraud. He should not come in here and pretend otherwise.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members will stop the conversations across the chamber. Before calling the member for Redlands, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from The Gap State Primary School in the electorate of Ashgrove.

Biotechnology

Mr ENGLISH: I refer the Premier to the government's commitment to the Smart State, and I ask: has the Premier any recent examples of Queensland companies that have made major biotechnology breakthroughs that could lead to commercial success?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, I have. My government has a Smart State strategy, as all members would know, designed to harness the results of research and development so that commercialisation takes place in Queensland, creating new jobs.

I congratulate Queensland biotechnology company CBio Ltd on the world's first successful production of a promising drug treatment for crippling auto-immune diseases such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis. CBio might not have solved the mystery of what causes multiple sclerosis, but it has scored a major breakthrough in the mystery of how to treat it successfully. It means that CBio Ltd can prepare to conduct clinical human trials of the drug called Early Pregnancy Factor—EPF—having demonstrated that it can be manufactured to an extremely high quality and in commercial quantities.

Human clinical trials of EPF are set to begin in Brisbane early next year. The success of this initial production phase brings the commercialisation of EPF another step closer. This is yet another demonstration of the quality of biotechnology research and development taking place in the Smart State. The state government is doing everything it can to enable the commercialisation of research like this to take place in Queensland so that we can benefit from the jobs created.

While Paul Lucas and I were in Canada for Bio2002, the world's biggest and most important biotechnology conference and exhibition, the company met with parties in Canada and the United States that are interested in the development of EPF. The Queensland government helped arrange meetings and presentations scheduled for Seattle and Vancouver. It is the first time that a synthetic version of EPF has been successfully produced. EPF is a protein that occurs naturally

in the body. It was discovered in the 1970s and has been researched since then by Queensland scientists Dr Halle Morton and Dr Alice Cavanagh. Many honourable members on my side would know Dr Alice Cavanagh. She was a long-time member of the Labor Party and member of the administrative committee and conference delegate, and is now a great researcher of whom we are very proud.

EPF's discovery followed research into the reason why women suffering from auto-immune diseases often went into remission during the early stages of pregnancy. It is believed EPF can be used to treat an overreaction in the body's auto-immune system which leads to auto-immune disease. EPF also has potential to be used for healing burns and ulcers, assisting with skin grafts and organ transplants and in cancer treatment. I wish CBio every success with the clinical trials.

This is a practical application of Smart State. This is what Smart State is about. It is not the only part but a key part of it. It is about improving lives, tackling auto-immune diseases such as MS and rheumatoid arthritis. This is about improving the quality of life of Queenslanders and people around the world. We are leading in these areas. This is why we should be so proud of what our scientists are achieving. That is why we are so committed to the Smart State.

Mr M. Catton, Alleged Interference in Superannuation Claim

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the Premier to his Sergeant Schultz comments in the *Courier-Mail* today where he claimed to know nothing about the interference by his department in the independent statutory decision-making process undertaken by the Government Superannuation Office in the reclassification of former driver Mr Michael Catton's superannuation claim. The Premier knew nothing about electoral rorters and cheats in the Labor Party, either. I ask: how can he honestly expect the people of Queensland to continue to believe that he knows nothing about politically embarrassing issues? Did the Government Superannuation Office make its determinations on 18 and 22 June last year both based upon medical grounds? What was the basis for his department's intervention and was any contact made by staff of his ministerial office to either his department or the Government Superannuation Office in relation to this matter?

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, you can understand why this is one of the reasons my wife absolutely hates politics and hates the whole process of it, because here—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. At no time have I mentioned the Premier's wife. I find it offensive. He is the one who mentioned his wife, not me.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Mr BEATTIE: As I was saying, this is one of the reasons why my wife absolutely hates politics and the mud that goes with it. Here is the situation: Michael Catton, who drove partly for myself and for my wife, had a disagreement in his mind simply because he was in a position where he did not like taking instructions from a woman. My wife is one of the nicest people on this planet. We have behaved appropriately in all these matters. There has been no interference from my office or me. Indeed, the Q-Super board acts on these matters of its own accord. As the Treasurer illustrated in a statement he gave yesterday, 'On the information available to me, the Q-Super board delegate who made this decision acted appropriately, and in all circumstances the proper process was followed.'

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he wants to take this to the Ombudsman. He can take it to the Ombudsman. He can take it to the CMC. He can take it to the Norman Luboff Choir for all I care. I do not care where it is investigated. I do not care where he takes it. I never act inappropriately in these circumstances in any way and never would.

Let me make this point: Michael Catton was unhappy; he wanted to be sacked because he was going through some emotional trauma in his life. The difference was this: had he been sacked, he would have received a \$28,042 payout; if he had resigned at that time he would have been paid \$7,700. That is a pretty big difference—\$20,000. Would we sack him? No, we would not! If he wanted to continue to drive for Heather and me, he had a job. We made that clear to him. He had difficulties in doing that, but that was a matter for him, not for us. We did not sack him, nor did we intend to.

However, there were some matters about his behaviour that I found unacceptable, and that was a number of comments he made about people for whom he used to drive. On one occasion, for example, he indicated—and I think this is inappropriate for a driver; if we are going to have these questions, I will give an answer, and the answer is this—that when he drove for Ray Connor the member missed a division in the House. Michael Catton said that Ray Connor had been

drinking, had gone to sleep and, as a result, he missed the division; that he and Ray Connor had made up the story about his bung knee as to why he missed the division. I believe that is totally inappropriate for a driver. What transpired between him and Ray Connor, David Watson, Margaret Woodgate or anybody else is a private matter. It is not a matter that should be shared with me or anyone else. Let me tell members opposite this: if they want to raise these questions in here, I will give a full answer and share the lot with them.

Gene Technology

Ms MALE: I refer the Premier to the state government's strategy of transforming Queensland into the Smart State and in particular to the Premier's focus on biotechnology. Some sections of the community are worried about gene technology, and I ask: can he give an example of the work being undertaken in Queensland on gene technology that will benefit mankind?

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: It was not as disgraceful as the attack on my wife. If the member wants to get in the gutter, he will get the facts. He should not waste his time getting sanctimonious about this rot.

The Smart State scored another coup recently when local company Benitec announced what has been hailed as the most important technology to be developed in biotech in the past decade. Benitec, headquartered in Brisbane, has unveiled technology which selectively shuts down or silences target genes in any organism—human, animal, plant or pest. It sounds like the gene equivalent of a super-accurate cruise missile, able to seek out and eliminate rogue genes—genes that cause terrible and debilitating diseases. This is exciting news which has the potential to eventually result in far-reaching positive effects for millions of people.

I am proud to say that Benitec is in partnership with the Smart State's Department of Primary Industries. Benitec and the DPI jointly own the core technology, with Benitec having exclusive worldwide rights of commercialisation. This is exactly the sort of result we are seeking to encourage with our Smart State strategy.

Professor John Mattick, a non-executive director of Benitec Ltd, has said that its potential human applications include treatments for diseases such as cancers, psoriasis, HIV, AIDS, hepatitis C and Alzheimer's disease and major Third World parasitic diseases including malaria and sleeping sickness. The company is now moving into a global commercialisation phase, targeted initially at the North American market. For animal health, the technology offers the opportunity to produce livestock resistant to major infectious diseases such as foot-and-mouth and swine fever and without the capability to act as carriers of these diseases.

Once again Queensland is holding up its reputation as the Smart State, being first to recognise and capture the value of gene silencing technology for the biotech industry. It is a shining example of the excellent partnerships between public and private entities in Australia—taking leading research through to its commercial potential. Here again is another example of the Smart State in operation. This is about prolonging life. This is about saving life. This is about the technological and scientific advances we should all be committed to and proud of.

The state government's Smart State strategy also has a focus on creating a critical mass of high technology research, development and commercialisation in Queensland so that researchers and businesses are drawn to this state. We have been very successful with this strategy, especially in information technology, communications and biotechnology.

I can report that another biotechnology company has decided to establish a presence in Queensland. Australia's leading biotechnology equipment manufacturer, Sydney based Corbett Research, has chosen Queensland to establish a new company, Corbett Robotics Pty Ltd.

Mr Lucas: The good news just keeps on coming.

Mr BEATTIE: Absolutely. The good news does keep coming. Corbett Research's decision to establish its robotics company in Queensland is an important vote of confidence in my government's Smart State strategy, which is about creating jobs in emerging high-tech industries.

Mareeba Hospital, Eye Surgery

Ms LEE LONG: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Recently, eye surgery services ceased at the Mareeba Hospital as it was claimed that no doctor was available to perform ophthalmic surgery treatments at that hospital. Will the minister guarantee that these services will be restored at the Mareeba Hospital if such a doctor is found?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for the question. Yes, private ophthalmology surgery has been offered at Mareeba Hospital, and public patients have also been referred to those private specialists in the past. However, the equipment no longer meets standards and will cost \$80,000 to upgrade. This expenditure is not considered viable unless a public list can be offered. It is in a public hospital. The manager of the northern zone is prepared to consider funding the equipment replacement and a public session if specialists are available. So far I am advised that no specialist has been available to provide visiting medical officer public surgical sessions.

Patients will of course continue to have the option of accessing treatment publicly through Cairns Hospital or privately. Despite the loss of this private service, Mareeba Hospital continues to play a vital role in the community, providing a wide range of health services. I understand that all other services are going very, very well.

Education Reforms, Regional Areas

Mr PEARCE: Has the Minister for Education had the opportunity to visit parts of western Queensland to hear the views of those communities in relation to the government's education reforms?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question. I am pleased to advise him and the House that I have visited a number of parts of western Queensland over the last couple of weeks as the government has been out talking to the people of Queensland about our education reforms. In the last three weeks I have visited Longreach, Mount Isa, Blackall, Charleville, Yeppoon, Weipa and Thursday Island, all of which I think are fitting in the Year of the Outback.

Queensland, as our most decentralised state, has many schools which are outside of urban centres. I have spoken with teachers, parents and students, who have raised many issues of particular concern to rural Queensland. I and the government are aware of some of them, and others have been brought to our attention. This includes how the reforms will affect those who are attending schools of distance education, particularly the effect on those who are parental tutors at home, the effect on one- and two-teacher schools and the transport needs of people involved in this reform.

I have been impressed by the enthusiasm for education that is evident in these communities and am particularly pleased to see that 25 per cent of the expressions of interest in conducting a trial for a preparatory year of schooling have come from rural and remote communities. That is out of 200 applications.

I think everyone here would agree that one of the hallmarks of a visit into the Queensland bush is being constantly impressed by both their generous hospitality and innovation. I had the opportunity to visit Blackall and was very impressed with a project that is occurring there. One of the local parents has bought the closed cinema and is working with the school, using school trainees, to renovate that site. It will then be used as a P&C fundraiser, as well as a place for training in areas such as hospitality. It is that kind of innovation that marks the town of Blackall—which, as everyone knows, has a great and strong Labor history.

I was very pleased when the P&C from the Blackall State School made a very special presentation to me. I would like to share it with the House. These shears were presented to me with a little tag that says, 'These blades are believed to be dated from the shearers strike in 1891. They are a tangible artefact from the hands of these workers into your hands across the century and are symbolic of the Labor Party.' I was handed these at a very generous morning tea.

I made the point to the P&C mothers who were there that this is the kind of thing that might come in just as handy in my profession in 2002 as it was in another profession 100 years ago! I am pleased to advise the local member with responsibility for the school at Blackall that a number of mothers spoke up immediately and said, 'Please don't use them on Vaughan.' I was happy to advise them that I would be doing no such thing. But he may be worried to see that on the outside of the blade is a 5c piece, which they said was money for luck because they were keen to see the Labor government re-elected at the next election.

I thank them and all of the other people of rural Queensland for the work they have done in making sure that the voice of rural and remote Queenslanders is heard in the government's discussion about our education reforms. I am also happy to congratulate those members of the opposition who have participated in their local areas in the consultations that have occurred.

Tourism and Fair Trading Minister, Allegations of Bullying

Mr HOBBS: My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism and Racing. Good morning, Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HOBBS: I hope you have had a good heart-starter for the beginning of the week.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is unparliamentary. Withdraw it.

Mr HOBBS: I am sorry, Mr Speaker. I was not being nasty about it.

I refer to reports on ABC Radio, quoting from WorkCover documents, of a claim made by the minister's former driver in relation to her 16-hour session at a Gold Coast Surf Life Saving club. What government business was the minister on during this 16-hour session that would necessitate her ministerial limousine and chauffeur being required to wait for such a long period of time?

Mrs ROSE: It is very easy to make a statement like that when there is absolutely nothing to substantiate it. I do not ever recall being anywhere for that length of time. The member is quite right: there is absolutely no reason for anybody to be anywhere for that long.

A government member: It wouldn't even be open that long.

Mrs ROSE: That is right. As minister responsible for liquor licensing, I would be very surprised if they were open for that length of time anyway.

There have been a lot of statements made. As I said in relation to that former driver, she was in my employment for about three and a half months. I had some issues with her performance as a driver. I have said that I will not get into some sort of public slanging match about what those issues were. I advised the Premier's office. The Premier's office met with her and worked through due process. She was asked whether she had any complaint. She said no three times.

I will mention one particular instance she referred to in her statement to the ABC. She said that on a visit to Inglewood she thought she was expected to sleep in the car because there was no accommodation. I have three travel requests—for me, for my media adviser and for the driver concerned. The charged nightly rates for each are identical—\$55 for me, \$55 for my media adviser and \$55 for the driver concerned. In relation to the allegation—that outrageous statement—that she was expected to sleep in the car, as I said, I have the evidence here to show that that was not the case.

But I am very happy to talk about my other staff. I have officers in two incredibly busy offices—one is at Palm Beach in the electorate of Currumbin and the other is my ministerial office. Over the past few days my staff have been incredibly supportive. They work so hard. There is a very difficult working environment in all ministerial offices and in all electorate offices, particularly in an electorate such as the Gold Coast. I have had incredible letters of support from former staff members who worked in my electorate office and support from former ministerial staffers. I have had staffers who have been with me since day one as a minister, and we will be enjoying my fourth anniversary as a minister in a few weeks. They work incredibly hard. They give complete loyalty to me. They are very dedicated to the job that we are doing. In government I take my portfolio responsibilities very seriously. I set very high standards for myself as a minister in carrying out my ministerial duties.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Charters Towers, I welcome the second group of students and teachers from The Gap State Primary School in the electorate of Ashgrove. Welcome.

Coal Seam Gas Industry

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: I refer the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines to the Premier's recent announcement of a \$500 million Townsville power station project to be fuelled by Queensland produced coal seam gas. I ask: what progress is the government making

in developing a legislative and administrative framework for the emerging coal seam gas industry in Queensland?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The coal seam gas industry is potentially a very lucrative one for Queensland, which has vast coal resources and is the largest seaborne exporter of coal in the world. Coal seam gas is also a more environmentally friendly source of alternative energy that will help reduce Queensland's reliance on fossil fuels. Because of the importance of the emerging coal seam gas industry, the Beattie government is currently finalising Australia's most comprehensive regime of legislative and administrative arrangements to govern the industry. Implementation of the new coal seam gas regime will allow explorers and developers to invest in coal seam gas projects with certainty and allow greater access to the state's potentially huge coal seam gas resources.

In February I released for public consultation a discussion paper outlining the proposed coal seam gas regime and in March I also established an independent review panel to progress the development of the regime. The review panel is headed by former Criminal Justice Commission Chair, Mr Frank Clair, and comprises Professor Don McKee, Head of Department of Minerals, Mining and Material Engineering at the University of Queensland, and Mr Peter Dowling, company director and former Ernst and Young minerals and energy partner. This panel is reviewing stakeholder submissions to the discussion paper and will make recommendations to me about the regime that will provide a clear administrative and legislative basis for cooperation between the petroleum and gas sectors to foster development of this valuable resource.

A total of 20 submissions were received from the two industry peak bodies, petroleum companies, coalmining companies, energy users, traders, government agencies and consultants. On 20 May the panel met with representatives of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, or APPEA, and the Queensland Mining Council, which included representatives from the Oil Company of Australia, Queensland Gas, CH4 Pty Ltd, MIM, Anglo Coal and BHP Billiton. The representatives made presentations on the operational and practical issues of their exploration and production activities and issues relative to the coal seam gas regime, particularly the interactions of one industry's activities on the other.

Last Sunday the panel visited the Oil Company of Australia Dawson Valley coal seam gas project near Moura, Anglo Coal's Moranbah North underground coal mine north of Moranbah and CH4's Grosvenor coal seam gas project north of Moranbah to gain first-hand experiences of the issues. It is anticipated the panel will be in a position to report to me in the next few weeks. This will result in a speedy finalisation of the regime and allow the legislative drafting and implementation process to proceed with the intention of introducing legislative arrangements later in the year.

Farrhome Nursing Home

Mrs PRATT: I ask the Minister for Health: with all indications from Queensland Health that Farrhome Nursing Home's closure is inevitable, will the minister end the uncertainty and concern of residents, their families, future residents and staff by naming the closure date and announcing where the beds/patients will be relocated?

Mrs EDMOND: As I have mentioned privately to the member, I am happy to brief her on this situation. In fact, I encouraged her to go and speak to the district manager, and she has done that, because there are a number of issues to be resolved in the South Burnett area. A number of the people at the nursing home attached to the Kingaroy Base Hospital actually come from Wondai, Nanango and other parts of the South Burnett. There certainly is planning in process to provide nursing home places for them. This has been seen as part of a larger picture of upgrading our nursing homes, an election commitment we gave last year, in compliance with the federal government's new regulations. We had hoped to have that finalised before this, but the federal government once again changed its guidelines last year after we had done a lot of the planning work. We have had to go back and change our plans in conjunction with the new guidelines.

In actual fact, it makes it easier for us to comply with those legislative requirements before the time frame of 2007 when we will have to make these decisions. That is because the federal government gave approval that currently built nursing homes which were going to be impacted by the constant changing goal posts would now not have to conform but only nursing homes built after those requirements came in. We would have been in the invidious position of having to

almost rebuild nursing homes that were only five and 10 years old because of the changes at the federal level. We are now going through that planning process and will be able to now meet all of the requirements, but it has meant that we have had to go through some of that process again and delay the decision making. I am hoping to make those final decisions in the very near future.

Meat Processing Industry

Mr PURCELL: I ask the Minister for State Development: as the minister responsible for the Queensland Food and Meat Task Force, can he outline any recent developments in the meat processing industry that are of benefit to the state?

Mr BARTON: I thank the member for the question. Of course, nobody takes a greater interest in the meat industry than does the member for Bulimba. But I must advise that on Friday of last week I was at Beaudesert at the plant of A. J. Bush and Sons. It is a \$25 million rendering plant which sadly was devastated by fire 12 months ago last Saturday. A. J. Bush and Sons operate the largest meat rendering plant in Australasia. It has been not only reopened and rebuilt but also expanded following that disastrous fire at its Bromelton facility last year. Out of the ashes a great new business has triumphed. Fortunately, no-one was hurt. The fire could be seen up to 30 kilometres away. It caused in excess of \$25 million worth of damage. My Department of State Development and particularly the meat and allied industries task force that is managed through my department was instrumental along with other departments, including the EPA, to make sure that we did get that plant operational again as soon as possible.

We worked with management at the plant because it was absolutely crucial that we not only save the 90 direct jobs at Bromelton near Beaudesert but also avoid the disastrous impact that that would have had on the entire chicken processing industry, the meat industry generally and the hundreds of butcher shops around south-east Queensland that relied on that plant. In fact, there were literally thousands of jobs at risk when that plant burnt down. I am very pleased to say that we were able to put in emergency procedures for a period of time to ensure that the product it takes from other meat processing areas was serviced and also to get them back in action in a temporary way while they rebuilt. It is also worth noting that A. J. Bush and Sons exports around 85 per cent of its products, which is around 60,000 tonnes every year, throughout Asia.

It is just one example of how my department has also been able to assist them in terms of rallying around to get further exports as well as rallying around to make sure that we did rebuild that plant. I should go through a short list, because we have lent assistance on a number of the company's projects, including: a business plan and assessment for a continuous flow biodiesel facility; a strategic plan and marketing feasibility study; an odour abatement study; assistance with dumping expenses following the fire; and funding for land, services and infrastructure to assist the company's relocation a number of years ago to the Bromelton site from Murarrie in the member's own electorate. In fact, shifting this plant to Bromelton at that point in time, with government assistance managed through my department, was crucial to that move, as was the management of the assistance and working with the very professional management of this company following the fire a year ago, which saw this plant rise from the ashes and secure all those jobs.

Tourism and Fair Trading Minister, Allegations of Bullying

Mr SEENEY: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to allegations that the Minister for Tourism and Racing was chauffeured down the M1 motorway while standing on the seat of her government limousine, protruding through the sunroof and dancing to the tune of her favourite song. I also refer the minister to his colleague's admission yesterday that she forced her driver to overload the same government limousine to take her friends from the football to a hotel. Given the minister's strident criticism of such loudish, dangerous and illegal behaviour, will he refer his colleague's action to the police for investigation?

Mr McGRADY: As I have tried to explain to this parliament on many occasions, the role of the Minister for Police is to determine policy matters. Matters such as this are operational matters, and I would suggest that the member ask the police commissioner the question rather than the Police Minister.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Ministers, Allegations of Bullying; Question by Leader of Opposition

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.14 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I have just seen the second question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I did not hear it properly when it was asked, because quite appropriate points of order were being taken by the members for Glass House and Whitsunday. In the question the Leader of the Opposition states—

Yet at the same caucus meeting, Labor MPs also complained about the conduct of the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth.

I want to make it absolutely clear to the House that that is not true. I have just doubled checked with the caucus secretary and the caucus president. That is not true, and I want the record to show that it is not true, not, true, not true.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

Adulterated Fuel

Mr CHOI: My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I am aware from reading reports that the practice of selling adulterated fuel is of concern to federal authorities and agencies in southern states. Will the minister advise the House whether Queensland has a similar problem and, if so, what is being done to ensure motorists are not detrimentally affected?

Mrs ROSE: This is a very serious question and a very serious issue, one that I will happily answer. But very quickly, just so that the House can be reassured: no, I did not stand up in the car and travel down the highway dancing to my favourite song, but I did admit—

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs ROSE: I do not know; I have several favourite songs. I have admitted to the overcrowding issue. I have also offered to pay the fine, but I did not do the other. As I said, I thank the member for his question. Fuel quality is an issue which comes under the umbrella of the Office of Fair Trading. The task of checking fuel to ensure bowsers are operating correctly and measures are accurate sits with the Office of Fair Trading's trade measurement division. I can report that fuel supplied by Queensland service stations is being tested to ensure it meets new national standards. The Office of Fair Trading has implemented a fuel sampling and enforcement regime throughout the state in partnership with the federal government. The testing is part of a nationwide program, funded by the federal government, to improve fuel quality standards for motorists and to stamp out the sale of adulterated or poor quality fuel. Additives can include water and excessive levels of ethanol. The use of clean fuels reduces toxic vehicle emissions and results in improved air quality.

Over the years, there have been allegations of excessive amounts of fuel additives being blended with petrol and diesel in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. The allegations have suggested the practice is more prevalent in New South Wales and Victoria than here in Queensland, but we have had reports here. This practice is used to gain a price advantage, and it can cause damage to engines and fuel systems. Mandatory national standards have been developed to stop this type of fuel adulteration.

Fair trading investigators have begun collecting fuel samples from south-east Queensland fuel outlets and are undertaking investigations on behalf of Environment Australia to ensure compliance with the National Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000. Those samples are currently being tested. The Fuel Standards Act provides a regulatory framework to control the environmental impact of fuel supply and usage and monitor the adulteration of fuel. It sets a maximum level of fuel additives which can be used.

The Office of Fair Trading will conduct regular fuel quality checks to ensure Queensland motorists are not purchasing fuel which is detrimental to the environment and which could cause damage to their vehicles. Breaches of the law can bring fines of up to \$110,000 for individuals and \$220,000 for companies. If outlets are found to be misrepresenting the product, they could also be liable for prosecution under the Fair Trading Act, facing fines of up to \$40,500 for

individuals and \$202,500 for companies. Our inspectors can turn up at any place in the state at any time. We will not hesitate to prosecute anyone caught breaking the law. Fair Trading inspectors are currently investigating allegations levelled against a south-east Queensland outlet.

Public Sector Staffing

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier in his capacity as the minister responsible for the Public Service. According to the annual reports of the Office of the Public Service, Merit and Equity, since this government took office at the end of June 1998 to the end of the 2000-01 financial year, the size of the Public Service grew to 177,500 employees, an increase of nearly 24,000 over that period of time. Comparing this growth with that of the overall Queensland labour market for the same time frame, it shows that over 25 per cent of all new jobs created in Queensland under this government were in the Public Service. Is this the cornerstone of the Premier's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle and, if so, does the Premier believe that such jobs growth within the Public Service is sustainable?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for his question and I also thank him again for the positive role that he played at Bio2002—and he did play a positive role.

Mr Schwarten: And it is a sensible question.

Mr BEATTIE: No, it is an important question, but there is a very good answer to it. I want to make this clear: I am proud of the fact that we have increased the number of teachers, the number of nurses, the number of people working in Families, the number of police. We are on public record for—

Mr Quinn: That's less than half.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on; I have not finished my list, Bob. Do not forget, every year we promised an additional number of police, an extra 300 police. Families has been an area which, frankly, has needed significant support—

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed. I take the interjection from the minister. When the Treasurer brings down his budget later today, there will be a significant component for Families funding. We have increased the number of teachers. We are a growth state. As we saw from the census today, our population growth was 8.5 per cent. We are the boom state of Australia. The *Courier-Mail* quite correctly headlined that today. If one wants to live anywhere in Australia and one has a brain, one lives in Queensland. That is the way it is. Out of that comes extra pressure on our schools. We are indeed the growth state. However, there has been an increase in the public sector generally; that is true. Indeed, if one looks at the public services around Australia and compares the last 10 years—and they are the figures I have looked at recently—both Queensland and the Northern Territory are the only two states where there has been an increase in the public sector. Some of that is due to the decentralised nature of the state.

All of those here who represent rural electorates would know that it is important that we maintain public services in those electorates. Indeed, those from provincial cities will know that this government has been committed to providing public services in those communities. That is one of the reasons why there has been some growth in the public sector outside the service delivery areas to which I referred specifically, although they are all service delivery areas, because they serve the community. For example, the member for Hervey Bay has consistently argued for additional staff in that area. If members look at every one of the regions and in the bush—whether it is in Burnett, Hinchinbrook or wherever it is—they would know that this is about ensuring government services.

However, I am happy to report that on 18 April 2000 I advised the House that as at June 2000 there were 576 staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In his earlier attack on sensible governance, the Liberal Leader raised the issue of the size of my department. My Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2002-03 to be released with the budget papers will show a decrease in the departmental work force to 504—a 12.5 per cent decrease.

Mr Quinn interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Don't you just love it!

Employment

Mr RODGERS: I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth to the Queensland government's ongoing initiatives in job creation, and I ask: are there any encouraging indicators for Queensland on the job front?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a sad fact that unemployment remains unacceptably high in Australia and in Queensland and it is one of the most urgent issues that we face. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that there are some encouraging indicators for Queensland on the jobs front. Last month, I was delighted to announce that the number of jobs created under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative had surged past the 40,000 mark. Today, I want to report on extremely encouraging employment data just released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the ANZ job advertisement series and the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Combined, they demonstrate the effectiveness of the Beattie government's policies on employment, central to which is the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

ABS labour force data for May 2002 released on 6 June shows that unemployment in Queensland continues to fall. The latest figures from the bureau show that in the year to May 2002 the number of people unemployed in Queensland fell by 11 per cent to 141,800. At the same time, Queensland employment grew by 2,500, or 0.1 per cent over the month. Estimates indicate that 48.4 per cent of the national growth in full-time employment for May 2002, 6,200 people, can be directly attributed to growth in employment in Queensland. Over the year to May 2002, full-time employment increased by 35,600 persons in Queensland. This represents a contribution of more than 75 per cent to the national increase of 45,800 persons. We should be proud of the fact that since August 2001, annual employment growth in Queensland has topped Australia. This month, we were the second highest nationally at 2.8 per cent. South Australia achieved 2.9 per cent.

The monthly ANZ job advertisement series historically has proven a very good indicator of future labour market conditions. The ANZ series measures the number of jobs advertised in the major daily newspapers and Internet sites covering the capital cities each month. These statistics are used extensively for forecasting employment growth. The ANZ figures for May 2002 show that job advertisements in Queensland increased by 2.3 per cent compared with a national increase of only 1.4 per cent. In addition, the ANZ statistics show that over the year to May 2002, job advertisements increased by a massive 29.3 per cent.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr FOLEY: I thank the Premier for his strong support for employment initiatives in Queensland. Nationally, the figure was only 9.8 per cent for the same period.

Other good news comes from the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, which has just released data for the March quarter 2002. The small area labour market statistics confirm that there has been strong employment growth right across Queensland.

Medical Indemnity Insurance

Miss SIMPSON: I refer the Minister for Health to her failure to address a promise guaranteeing a reduction in the statute of limitations for which obstetricians can be sued. I also refer to the fact that eight positions are available in obstetrics training in Queensland this coming year, according to AMAQ—three below the state's minimum requirement. Bearing in mind that there were 26 doctors training in obstetrics in 1999 and 14 in the year 2000, this clearly shows that the indemnity concerns have been looming for some time and the minister has not acted. I ask: considering the massive shortfall of obstetricians in Queensland today, how can the minister not address the statute of limitations by including it in the upcoming bill and then have the audacity to accuse doctors of scaremongering about the medical insurance crisis?

Mrs EDMOND: I am delighted to take that question, because I can announce today that—and obviously the member opposite does not know it—my colleague the Attorney-General is bringing in a bill addressing many of these issues as well as other public liability issues. Can I say that I will not give in to the AMAQ's demands to set the statute of limitations at three years. That is what they are demanding and I will not do it, because it currently is three years. So I am not going to give in on that. I am not going to give into their outrageous demands that we change it to three years. They are just copying what New South Wales did. They did not bother to check

the statute in Queensland. I do not know how long it has been three years. Maybe my learned colleague the Attorney-General—

Mr Welford: 1974.

Mrs EDMOND: The statute of limitations has been three years since 1974.

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. It is not three years for children. They have to reach year 18. They have to reach their majority. The minister is misleading the House. That is 21 years.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. We are not going to have a debate.

Mrs EDMOND: I guess the member is admitting that she did not know what she was talking about. The statute of limitations applies from the time they are an adult. It is the same statute of limitations. So the statute of limitations will not change. The statute of limitations applies from when they achieve adulthood. It is still three years and that is what the member is talking about. So the member did not know what she was asking; she was just parroting what had been said.

In terms of the shortage of obstetricians, some of the moves that we have made in recent times have done more to relieve that pressure than anything else. The member may not be aware, but I know that the rural and regional backbenchers on my side are aware that just in the past couple of days we have announced that we are going to be providing indemnity cover for rural GPs who are working in obstetrics. That is a great move. Also, we have taken away some of the grey areas in regard to VMOs in that, where they seek informed consent—and they do it appropriately—they will be covered. Queensland Health has set the standard on that by providing a whole range of explanatory material and protocols for almost all the procedures that we could name.

In terms of the review of training places, I am advised that there has been one going on. I am also advised that we have filled every accredited position. AMWAC is an advisory body which gives advice on how many positions there should be. But we also have the colleges that need to accredit positions. The last advice that I heard was that all of our accredited obstetric positions were filled. So maybe if the member has an issue, maybe if the AMA has an issue, they should discuss it with the college of obstetricians and gynaecology.

Child-care Industry

Ms STONE: I direct a question to the Minister for Families. What is the government doing to enhance training for workers in the child-care industry?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the honourable member for the question and I would like to acknowledge her long-term interest in the issue of child care. Last week I was pleased to join the Minister for Employment and Training in launching Australia's first ever apprenticeship in the child-care industry. The apprenticeship will lead to a Diploma of Community Services in Children's Services. It has been devised by the Community Services and Health Industry Training Council. It offers nationally recognised qualifications for people wanting to be group leaders and assistant directors.

This apprenticeship, which will take three years, will for the first time offer flexibility and on-the-job training in the child-care industry. The woman who has had the privilege of becoming the first apprentice in that area in Australia is indeed a mum with two young children. She appreciates the opportunity to have this on-the-job training rather than go to TAFE training after her working hours.

Members would be aware that the Department of Families is at present undertaking extensive consultation and is preparing new legislation for child care in this state. One of the aspects that we intend to introduce in the new legislation is improved qualifications for all workers in the child-care industry. At the base level, workers must have a certificate 3 qualification and for the first time we will be introducing the necessity to have qualifications in after-school hours care.

This need for upskilling and qualifications in the child-care industry is something that the industry itself supports. It acknowledges the need to upskill its workers. That is why the government has committed \$4 million over the next three years to train child-care workers—a subject that I have previously spoken on in this House. We are preparing ourselves for this new industry regulation.

This is a good news story for families. This government places Queensland families as its top priority. There is nothing more important than the care of our children. That is why it is important to

see that workers in our child-care industry who look after the social, emotional and physical care of our children and babies are appropriately qualified. It is a great day for me to announce the new child-care apprenticeship.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Tourism and Fair Trading Minister, Allegations of Bullying

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): The main difference between a computer and the Labor Party ministry opposite is that you only have to punch information into a computer once. Yesterday the Premier punched into them for the fourth time that they cannot bully workers because it seems they just have not got the message yet after only three lectures on the subject.

Why was this necessary? It was necessary because one of the victims of Minister Merri Rose's workplace bullying had the courage to stand up and speak out. Last week someone who those opposite always thought would take the abuse and shut up and move away actually stood up for herself. I feel that it is important that the House hear some of the statements the former driver aired last week. The woman told ABC radio the following things about Minister Rose—

I did ask her at one time not to keep putting me down. I said, 'Are you trying to put me down?', and the response I got from her was just more abuse, so I thought okay, just don't say anything.

She went on to state on that radio program—

Time went on and I got to the stage where I was really very afraid, I was very intimidated.

Further, she went on to state—

Many times she would say things like 'I am the minister', 'Everybody hates you'. I have never come across anyone that would speak down, and treat an employee in such a degrading fashion as she did to me.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr HORAN:—

Things like getting wet and not being allowed to go home and change my clothes.

Further, she went on to state—

The minister wanted me to take her to David Jones to do some shopping and she just casually mentioned that she needed to take a toilet break and I said, 'Oh, you know, so do I', and she just snapped and she just looked at me and said 'Tough'.

How did it make you feel?

Like nobody. I don't know how to describe it. It's like you don't treat a dog like that and I just felt that I was being treated very, very badly.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr HORAN:—

I felt that she was bullying and very intimidating towards me. This lady drove—

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! The member for Stafford will cease interjecting. I will warn him next time.

An Opposition member: Warn him this time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will warn him next time—I will. Guarantee it!

Mr HORAN: This lady drove for Minister Rose for three months. At the end of that, after another late-night abusive ministerial tirade, she and Mrs Rose parted ways, with the driver apparently told to find her own way back home to the Gold Coast. The woman thought she was going to be found another person to drive for, so it is hardly surprising that she declined to make a complaint. Like most people in her position, she wanted to keep her job. She went on leave until a new driving task was found and did not make a complaint. However, instead of getting a new job, she got the axe.

On 13 May this year the Premier released a press release entitled Queensland Government Gets Tough on Bullying. I cannot find a crueller hoax on the workers of Queensland. The rhetoric pumped out by the Premier's bloated media machine is matched only by the sheer hypocrisy of his 'Do as I say, not as I do' approach to government, egged on and flagged on by the massive majority that exists in this parliament.

The Premier flew back into this storm on Sunday and, even accounting for jetlag, his performance was pathetic. He started his defence of Mrs Rose by blaming the stress of politics. Then he blamed the media. Then it all came down to the fact that politics is a 'hothouse'. In other words, the Premier says that it is okay to be a bully as long as the going is tough. As far as the opposition is concerned, it is not okay.

The Premier said the allegations are from an anonymous person. This driver is so anonymous that Mrs Rose knows her, every driver on the government staff knows her, the Premier's Chief of Staff knows her because he has interviewed her, and the Premier knows her. If she was any less anonymous, the lady would be a national celebrity.

The Premier said the allegations against Mrs Rose were unsubstantiated. This driver has received a payout from WorkCover, which does not pay out if people cannot prove they suffered as a result of their work environment. WorkCover is not a benevolent fund, and the Premier knows that. His response on this was completely without conscience—anything to throw reporters off the track; anything to attack the victim.

The Premier also played the victim, saying that everybody likes to attack politicians. Why do they do that? Because people like Minister Merri Rose think that they are above the law. This impotent Premier who refuses to act proves that when he stands by her, even though it is quite obvious that bullying has occurred and she has broken aspects of the Traffic Act.

Just as with the vote rorts allegations, the Premier meekly takes the minister's denial as the gospel truth and does nothing. He even made some frantic international phone calls to his office to get them to scramble and find someone prepared to say something nice about Mrs Rose—which they promptly did—and he produced the gushing testimonials, entirely unsolicited—as he said—at his airport press conference. Those testimonials are worthless. As a journalist commented to my office staff this week, even Chopper Reed can get references. Heck, he even has endorsement from the Queensland Education Department!

Let me read from the Ministerial Handbook, paragraph 1.5.1, Workplace Bullying—Policy.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has a policy in relation to workplace bullying which applies to all ministerial staff.

But not to ministers, it would seem.

The Department considers workplace bullying unacceptable and will not tolerate it under any circumstances.

That is unless you work in a 'hothouse' and unless you are trying to get people to do their job, as the Premier has repeatedly said. It further states—

Any reports of workplace bullying will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially.

Of course, they are just words for this Premier. They do not actually mean anything. Labor has a 66-seat majority and they think they are born to rule and do not have to abide by silly things like ministerial guidelines.

What did the Premier say to Susan Mitchell yesterday on ABC Radio when she asked him what would have happened if a complaint were lodged? He stated—

What would have happened is exactly what did happen and that is that I talked to Merri Rose as ... under the bullying arrangements, the first stage is, if there's an allegation of bullying, then as the senior person, that's me, I will counsel the minister concerned. I've done that.

There is no sign of that investigation promised in the ministerial handbook. Of course, he cannot afford an investigation because he is afraid of what it will uncover. He could have another Shepherdson inquiry on his hands and lose half his front bench.

Minister Rose's antics have prompted a stream of people to call the opposition office and media outlets with new allegations about her behaviour and, frankly, almost any one of them could see her removed by a Premier with a backbone. Another allegation which surfaced this week has the minister doing her Priscilla, Queen of the Desert impersonation through the sunroof on the way to the Gold Coast. Of course, she denies this too, and the Premier says that is fine. There is the allegation about the minister having her ministerial car overloaded on State of Origin night so she could drop people at the pub. She has admitted to that, but the Premier still refuses to discipline her.

There has been no suggestion here of any discipline from the Premier on any of these issues. In any other organisation, public sector or private sector, these would be grounds for dismissal or at least a standing aside until an investigation is undertaken. But no: into it, kicking and screaming, and then he will rewrite history by telling everyone, 'Geez I'm tough.' He has now

attacked the victim with the sly reference that you cannot hide behind bullying allegations to get away from doing your job. Well, WorkCover did not think the driver was trying to get out of anything.

That brings me to potentially the most serious of all the matters to arise out of this series of bullying accusations: the issue of interference in the case of another driver that alleged he was bullied, and the mysterious sudden deterioration of his condition in the eyes of QSuper.

In the space of four days, he went from fit for work to pensionable—all at the request of the Premier's Department. The Premier even went so far as to defame the man by alleging some dodgy scam to get himself sacked. I would be consulting my lawyers, if I was the Premier. Here again the Premier's story falls apart. He says he would not be part of this alleged scam, but when WorkCover told the driver that he could still work the Premier's office intervened to have the decision reviewed.

All of these goings-on prove two things: the Labor Party does not care about the workers of this state, because even the Premier refuses to act to protect them. The Premier has sent the message to all of those overbearing bosses and bullies out there that it is okay to bully if they cannot handle the pressure of their job. He sent the message that if people are bullied and speak up they will be sacked, victimised and bullied again by this bullying government and bullying Premier. The Premier sent out the message that he just does not care, particularly if it concerns his minister.

When this government introduces its workplace bullying reforms every bully in the state of Queensland will have got the message that it is just window-dressing and they do not have to change their behaviour; after all, if Merri Rose can get away with it, why shouldn't they?

Immigration Detention Centre, Meeandah

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (11.40 a.m.): There is strong community opposition to the proposed immigration detention centre at Pinkenba. The community has met and rejected the proposal out of hand. There has been no consultation from the federal government. In April 2002 the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Mr Ruddock, suddenly announced that Pinkenba or, more correctly, Meeandah had been confirmed as the preferred site of a new 550-bed immigration detention centre. He is now down-playing that and saying that it is a 250-bed facility with electric fences.

Pinkenba is a close-knit community that is approximately a 15-minute drive from the Brisbane CBD. Pinkenba is home to a diverse age range of residents, has Queensland's oldest primary school and accommodates some of Queensland's most progressive businesses that are recognised nationally and internationally. Pinkenba is also part of the broader surrounding community, which includes Hamilton, Ascot, Clayfield and Hendra.

Since April 2002, three public meetings regarding the proposed detention centre have been held. Each public meeting has given a thumbs down to the centre. In standing with the community on this issue and in recognising their divergence of views, I wish to make it clear that it is time the federal government listened to the local community. It will not speak with them; it should at least listen to them.

Let me outline some of the points that it should listen to. The proposed centre is in close proximity to major transport routes, homes and schools. It is in close proximity to Brisbane City, there is the effect on prices of nearby properties, the stretching of existing state government resources, a potential increase in protests similar to the recent Woomera events and potential explosive threats to nearby industrial businesses.

Minister Ruddock stated initially in a November 2001 media release that the government has no intention of forcing a detention centre on an unwilling community in Brisbane. This was reaffirmed by the minister when meeting with Premier Beattie on 4 April 2002. Therefore, how does Minister Ruddock come to the easy and clear-cut conclusion that the community wants the detention centre when all three public meetings have clearly outlined their strong majority decisions against it? The answer is: Mr Ruddock's narrow and limited community consultation processes!

Mr Ruddock's consultation process has involved the attendance at one public meeting by the assistant secretary to the DIMA Detention Infrastructure Branch of the federal government. The assistant secretary heard the clear message of opposition at the public meeting. However, this has either not been communicated clearly to the minister or the minister has refused to listen. Yet

Mr Ruddock has had the time to provide a guided tour of the proposed site with the media but refused to meet directly with the community en masse.

A government member: Disgraceful!

Ms LIDDY CLARK: It is disgraceful.

There is a meeting to be held next month with Mr Ruddock and, as requested by the minister himself, with an executive of only three members from the community—a meeting that is clearly not inclusive of the broader community's views. I note that the Liberal councillor is going to that meeting. I suggest that my invitation has been lost in the post.

As mentioned previously, the community does not want the proposed detention centre, based on evidence and majority decisions at three public meetings. In addition to the community concerns, we as members of the state government need to be aware of the financial implications that may not have been previously brought to our attention. Senior officers from the minister's department have stated that the costs of security outside the perimeter of the immigration detention centre will be up to the state government. Has this been discussed with the Premier? Has it been discussed with our Police Minister and with the local Hendra police branch, which is already stretched for resources? It is clear that Minister Ruddock has not listened to and consulted adequately with all relevant stakeholders.

We need to immediately ask Mr Ruddock how this final decision on the detention centre's position has been determined when the community stridently opposes it, and what the real financial implications are for the state government as this detention centre affects the broader Queensland community. I ask Mr Ruddock to stop the lip-service and act on his previous statement about not forcing the IDC on a community that clearly does not want it.

Riverfestival; Riverfiesta

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (11.45 a.m.): As members on both sides of the House would be aware, the Riverfestival held in Brisbane each year has grown from strength to strength since its inception in 1998. It is no secret that since that time the Riverfestival has captured the hearts and imaginations of the Brisbane community.

The river is becoming increasingly important to us. In fact, it is a major concern for many Queenslanders. To our great shame, this has not always been the case. Rivers all over the world have suffered degradation at our hands and we have been slow to recognise their importance to our way of life and to other larger bodies of water into which they flow, such as Moreton Bay, adjacent to my electorate of Cleveland. That is especially true in cities such as Brisbane, which are built around a river system and which can determine the quality of our environment.

Over the past 40 years or so, communities around the world have begun to realise the pleasure the river brings and how reliant on it we are—for example, for transport. In fact, a Queensland government-Brisbane City Council partnership has seen a lot of very hard work and planning go into bringing the Brisbane River back to its former life and beauty—back to a waterway of which we can all be proud and which we can all enjoy. That is why events such as the Riverfestival are so important not only in celebrating our river but also in educating future generations about this important resource and how we can best protect it. Riverfestival captures that beauty and plays a pivotal role in raising awareness of the plight of the Brisbane River and associated waterways.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier with a special responsibility for multicultural affairs, I am pleased to inform the House that this year the Riverfestival will expand to incorporate a very important cultural event—the Riverfiesta, a one-day event showcasing the best of our rich cultural diversity. I am delighted that the Riverfestival committee has taken on board the suggestions of Multicultural Affairs Queensland in choosing to incorporate what will include many firsts in multiculturalism in Queensland and perhaps the world.

To be held on Sunday, 8 September the Riverfiesta will showcase our cultural diversity in three distinct locations along the Brisbane River—at New Farm, South Bank and St Lucia. In addition to a number of live cultural performances and foodstalls, the Riverfiesta will incorporate some exciting concepts. These will be announced at the official launch of Riverfiesta on 14 July.

The staging of Riverfiesta will be a landmark in itself. Queensland is leading the way in promoting cultural harmony within our community and is committed to building on our strengths as a multicultural society. Queenslanders are proud of our cultural diversity. The staging of more

than 30 multicultural festivals throughout Queensland each year attracts many local, state and international visitors. These grassroots activities, including the Riverfestival, play a vital role in ensuring that all Australians have the chance to enjoy cultures other than their own by trying their food, music and dance.

Queensland is part of one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world and Queenslanders are as diverse as our great landscape. In Queensland we have one of the best models of best practice multiculturalism. Our population is comprised of people from more than 150 different countries, speaking over 70 languages and representing over 40 religious beliefs, and yet we live together in harmony. The sharing of traditional cultures with the broader community in such accessible and enjoyable ways enriches society in general, building a more cohesive, unified and genuinely multicultural nation. Our future depends on maintaining and strengthening our capacity to bring together people with many differences and building a strong, cohesive society.

I know that many of the ethnic communities in Brisbane and south-east Queensland are excited by the prospect of Riverfiesta and are now in the full swing of planning and implementation alongside local committees and the Riverfestival organisation. It is hoped that the event will be something the community can take ownership of and eventually develop into the state's key multicultural celebration. I have little doubt that this will be achieved. I take this opportunity to thank the chairman of Riverfestival, Trevor Reddacliff AM and his committee for their continued work in the organisation and promotion of the Riverfestival.

Weapons Licences

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (11.50 a.m.): I rise to put on the record the concerns of residents in my electorate who are licensed weapon owners, particularly those who are members of the district pistol club and the Sporting Shooters. They are concerned not only with the increase in the renewal and first-time application fees but also with the amount of time that it takes for those renewals to be processed. One resident has put forward a suggestion, and I would like to bring it to the government's attention for its consideration.

With the existing infrastructure at Queensland Transport customer service offices and, where there are no transport offices, police stations where drivers licences are issued, the question has been asked why those two venues cannot be used for firearms licence renewals. The process would be that licence-holders would take their current or expired firearms licence, along with proof of membership of their particular sporting organisation or their permission-to-hunt letter, to their nearest Queensland Transport office or their local police station. They would have their photograph taken and their new licence issued on the spot, in the same way a drivers licence is issued. The additional funds that are now required to be paid for the licence could be used to pay for the civilian office staff at police stations or the staff at Queensland Transport.

The resulting licence issued from this process would be no different from the current licence that shooters have to wait weeks for. It would be an identifiable licence. It would contain a photo, date of birth, the expiry date and the weapons classes. It could also contain any other information distributed with regard to safe storage. The issue of security would be no problem. As I said, the person's photograph would be on the old licence. It would be handed in when the new licence is issued—the same as when a drivers licence is renewed.

The proponent of this proposal alleges that current firearms licences are printed in Melbourne. That in itself represents a hold-up. That hold-up would be overcome under this system because the Transport Department or police officers would be able to issue the photographic licence. I commend this suggestion, which I believe has a great deal of merit, to the Minister for Police for his consideration. I believe that by adopting this proposal we could do things locally, efficiently, fast and cost-effectively.

Ethanol

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.53 a.m.): I wish to address the House on the issue of the alternative fuel source ethanol, derived by converting grain into petrol and potential diesel fuels. Despite my region being on the doorstep of the greater Brisbane area, its future depends on growth industries, which it has managed to achieve in many areas such as tourism, wineries and the growing of alternative crops. In many cases farmers are struggling with restricted water access, harsh vegetation management and forest agreements and minimal State Development

funding—more than most other regions in Queensland. These repressive bills, drafted more to suit the green vote than as a practical application to good farming practice, have curtailed the viability of many farming enterprises.

Despite the setbacks, however, the fighting spirit of these rural communities has not been extinguished. They continue to hang on, despite earning less than they could get as welfare recipients. They are creating new ways of rebuilding their lives through these alternative farming initiatives, but that is only the thin edge of the wedge needed to make the region prosper for all—to create the jobs that the government continues to boast it is committed to.

I call on the government to show that it is not just paying lip-service and act on this exciting new fuel concept that relies on grain—grain that is grown in abundance throughout our electorate—and to further investigate and support the possibility of producing the alternative fuel ethanol using grain grown by Queensland farmers.

If ever the government was looking for the blessing of the green movement, then here is the answer. If ever the government was looking for the blessing of farmers instead of curses, then here is the answer. The South Burnett meets the requirements of the site. It has reliable power supply, good grain supply in sorghum and corn, which are the basic grains used in ethanol, and easy market access. It is a major pork producing area. It also has proximity to large-scale intensive animal feeding operations.

Queensland promotes itself as a Smart State. How can it if we are not smart enough to see the endless possibilities of establishing an ethanol based fuel industry—an industry using raw materials produced in Queensland by Queenslanders and for the good of all Queenslanders? If the government is serious about being the Smart State and can see the economic benefits that such a development could bring to all Queenslanders, then I call on it to support the development of ethanol as a viable alternative fuel in the Nanango electorate.

Year of the Outback

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (11.55 a.m.): The Year of the Outback is truly special. When I was elected in February last year I never thought I would be asked to officially open a government event celebrating an unlawful act from the past. I thought of consulting with the CMC but realised that the advice would have to be that if the Premier could celebrate a clandestine cattle drive then I could open an Agfest & Poddy Dodger's Festival in Aramac to celebrate the Year of the Outback. In keeping with our Year of the Outback theme, being centred on the Harry Redford Cattle Drive—that unlawful cattle drive—it was with great pleasure that, together with the Premier, I lent my support.

When launching the Year of the Outback in Aramac in January the Premier made some telling points. He said within 350 kilometres of Aramac Australia's most popular song was written, our biggest airline took flight, the great industries of beef and wool were built from scratch, the Australian Labor Party was formed, the world's only known tracks of a dinosaur stampede were found, Jackie Howe set a world shearing record and the world's greatest clandestine cattle drive began. He asked, 'Can anyone nominate another 350 kilometre area of Australia which is richer in heritage, history or spirit?' As usual he was right. It would be hard to find a richer spot in Australia's heart. For those who were there for the January opening I am pleased to relate the Premier donated the framed pictorial record of that event to the Parliament. It adorns a wall on level 5 of the Parliamentary Annexe.

This year is all about a rightful recognition of the men and women who pioneered this nation's heart and, of course, those who continue to live and work there today. I place on record my best wishes to the Harry Redford Cattle Drive organisers, Paddy McHugh and Andrew Smith, as well as boss drover Bob Marshall and the team. I wish them all the very best for a trip which will culminate in Roma later this year.

I especially congratulate the Aramac Shire Council on being the driving force in making all this happen. This shire and the people of Muttaborra and Aramac are truly a mouse that roars. A shire of less than 1,000 people hosting the state's premier Year of the Outback event reflects well on a can-do community. It is a great example of what the west can do when we work together. They are doing a fabulous job and I am their biggest fan.

The bush is a bit like a family when we have a dispute. Parochialism might have us having the odd internal argument, but when unified we are unmatched in our strength. The Harry Redford Cattle Drive has united this community. They are united in their celebration and in their

sense of purpose, and our state government has assisted in making that unity possible by contributing \$50,000 towards the Harry Redford Cattle Drive. It is the key event in our Year of the Outback. It is an event which embodies everything positive about our great year, and the timing of the Year of the Outback could not be better because this year we have 10 Queensland Heritage Trails Network projects in the outback worth \$27 million. These have either just been completed or are due to be completed later in the year. It is about conserving and protecting our cultural heritage. It is about stimulating local economies and, most of all, creating jobs.

It has been great to hear no Americanisms in conjunction with this cattle drive. In that great John Williamson song *A Flag of Our Own* he says that we are not yankee sidekicks or second-class poms. I am really pleased we have not heard anyone talking about cattle rustling or stampedes and no-one has called anyone a cowboy, because that is a derogatory term in north Queensland. Calling someone a cowboy is definitely not paying them a compliment.

People may well ask why the people of the Aramac shire are celebrating the exploits of a cattle thief. It is not about that at all. It is about recognising and celebrating the skills of our pastoral workers and our bush people, who are the most multiskilled on this earth. Our pastoral workers or our bush people—or our ringers as we sometimes call them; not cowboys—need so many skills. They have to be able to fix a fence, repair a vehicle, pull a bore, ride and fix a motorbike, carry out minor veterinary procedures—or, as I sometimes say, do rude things to animals—and be horsemen and butchers. These are just some of the skills they need. I am sure Harry Redford would subscribe to these sentiments.

As someone who was born in the Kimberley district of Western Australia, who was brought up on station properties in the north and west of Australia and who travelled home from my birth in a Royal Flying Doctor aircraft, I truly understand what the bush is all about. I am determined that while I am a state member I will try to make sure more people from the cities understand how those of us who come from the bush feel about where we live. This is done in today's spirit of celebrating a colourful past and building confidently for an assured future. I ask the Queensland parliament to join with me today in saluting the people of the Aramac shire and the towns of Muttaborra and Aramac for a fabulous job well done.

Sugar Industry

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (12.00 p.m.): The sugar industry is at a crossroads. In the mid-1990s the industry was worth something like \$2 billion. Today the forecast is about \$1.3 billion and falling. Many towns have a dependency on the crop; it is not just the growers. There is an interdependency between growers and towns. Therefore, it is essential that growers are able to produce the crop in a stable way with a stable yield. Harvesters equate to over half a million dollars worth of investment and it is essential that growers have significant capacity for a certain volume of crop to ensure that the investment they have put into that harvesting equipment—many of them have it on hire-purchase, some on lease and so on—is able to pay for itself. There is a need for the mills to have throughput. They need a certain volume to ensure that they are economically viable. Then, of course, there are the town businesses and the services they provide and the credit they provide to growers and people with harvesting operations.

Throughout the whole scenario there are those people who work in all of those particular facets of the industry. Over the last four years there has been unseasonable weather, poor crops, disease and pests. All of these have contributed to very low yields. As a result, many sugar towns along the coast are experiencing a severe decline in their economic capacity and at this point are wondering just where to turn. Over the last couple of years some \$60 million has been provided by the federal government to subsidise replanting of the crop. This was essential, because wet weather conditions in previous years meant that varieties were severely impaired due to those wet climatic conditions and damage was occurring to the stool. It was essential that large areas be replanted. It is unfortunate that the state government provided only \$10 million in the form of a loan for growers, but only \$60,308 of that money was borrowed. The requirements were too stringent. It was too difficult to get a hold of that money. As a result, many growers did not even worry about making an application. However, the federal government did provide some worthwhile assistance in regard to replanting.

The current situation for the industry is that Brazil is a major competitor to the Queensland industry. The real at present has a distinct advantage over the Australian dollar and means that Brazil is able to export on better terms and conditions. It has the capacity for lower costs, particularly lower labour costs. It has also developed a whole range of technology over a period of

time which in many instances has been closely based on the Queensland industry. The production of ethanol is very important to the Brazilians, because they can go from sugar production to the production of ethanol with relative ease. Currently, the world price for sugar is around US5.5c a pound. That is below the cost of production in Queensland. Of course, interest rates are increasing and the Australian dollar is appreciating. All of those factors impact very adversely on the Queensland industry.

There is a necessity for a short-term plan. An injection of cash is essential. There is no capacity in the industry to borrow more money. It is believed that a consumer levy would be the best way to go about this. It could be done on a per hectare basis and support of, say, \$320 could be provided to growers. There is also a need for interest support and a need for Centrelink support. We do not want additional government charges such as have been witnessed in the Burdekin region. In that case, growers have to pay an additional \$8 a megalitre for water through a government corporation. That is absolutely ludicrous. The producers in the Burdekin cannot afford that sort of money. It is just going to be another nail in the coffin for many of them.

There is a need for long-term investment. We have heard about the ethanol industry. The state can mandate a percentage of ethanol for sugar, and it can also do it for the grain industry. There is also a need for extra research into plastics. Sugar cane produces something like 100 tonnes per hectare of biomass. It is important to look at plastics.

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Lockyer, I welcome to the gallery students and teachers from the Silkwood Steiner School in the electorate of Gaven.

One Nation Policies; Domestic Violence; Bullying

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (12.05 p.m.): Absolutely amazing is the tendency these days for some parties involved in the federal arena to lift key One Nation policies to bolster their support. For instance, we have shouted loud and long about our concerns relating to national defence incorporating issues of immigration and outright hostile acts. Indeed, the only reason the coalition government crossed the line with the leap it did—at least at the last election—was due to the timing not only of the matter of MV *Tampa* but unfortunately the terrible tragedy of September 11. In its philosophy there is no room to acknowledge the ideas of others it seems.

It would also seem that politics is rife with plagiarism. Listening to the Deputy Prime Minister on the *Sunrise* program this morning, I was startled to hear Mr Anderson quote a portion of my maiden speech. Mr Anderson was taking part in a fairly light debate bemoaning the passing of standards for family values starting with the 1960s and declaring that, due to the slide commenced in that decade, we have arrived in an age where there is little for the family unit to boast of. During this debate with a representative for the sixties, Mr Normie Rowe, Mr Anderson said that we are in a 'me society' with no personal responsibility. He then said that these days it seems to be 'if it feels good then do it,' a direct lift in context from my speech. Mr Anderson, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and I thank you. It must be said that the federal opposition did, to some degree, support the stance of the federal government, yet we are the ones who cop the extremist tag. It is outright hypocrisy.

Mr Rowe moved to another point, and unfortunately I missed the transition to that topic. He said that there is a problem with the way we deal with domestic violence, an issue with which I have a sincere interest. Our data collection, our investigative process, our support services and indeed our mental processes are geared around assisting women, and so to a degree it should be. It must be acknowledged that any man who indulges in domestic violence stands openly condemned and efforts should continue with extra zeal and funding to back it up. Mr Rowe's point was that it is his belief that a significant number of men are subjected not only to actual violence but the more insidious forms of this behaviour with serious intimidation and harassment. Anything more than a casual survey would reveal unacceptable numbers of men who suffer in silence because the perception is that if they declare these issues they are lying. Indeed, the male psyche makes it difficult for men to report this violence. The only reason the figures show this is because the problem is not addressed or even acknowledged by those charged with handling this issue. I would ask that the government bite the bullet on this issue and accept a holistic approach to domestic violence. Make men feel involved and stop delivering the message that only men commit violence.

I will approach one further subject before I close. I agree with the sentiments expressed by the Minister for Tourism this morning that politics, whether as a minister or a backbencher, engenders high stress levels and that people meet those challenges with various degrees of success, and such is human nature. I have witnessed many incidents of heavy management that could be termed as bullying. As a union representative within the Police Service I engaged the people involved using the proper processes which, by and large, were and are successful. Bullying is not acceptable in the workplace. I know myself that I can become somewhat tense and even terse from time to time, but I also know that my staff and I have a process for resolution. I think that within limits we must accept intense expressions and terse comments, but we all must recognise the need for restraint.

Can we now move on from what should be housekeeping within an organisation to the affairs of governing this state. We certainly do not need yet another inquiry at the expense of the taxpayer. We all recognise the valuable worth of our staff and we should treat them with respect, but in some instances I do believe that people need to toughen up a bit.

Public Service

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (12.11 p.m.): Today I take the opportunity to bring to the attention of the taxpayers of Queensland the woeful mismanagement and maladministration that has occurred in relation to the state's economy and the Public Service. When the Labor Party took office on 26 June 1998 it took over a strong economy that comprised a work force of some 1.6 million Queenslanders. This included a Public Service that employed 153,502 people, which equated to about 9.6 per cent of the work force within Queensland. However, for about two of the last four years, Queensland has consistently recorded one of the highest unemployment rates within the states of Australia. This situation has played on my mind for some time. It has prompted me to do some basic analysis of the government's own figures.

As I just mentioned, when the Premier took over at the end of June 1998, Queensland's work force was 1.6 million people, with some 153,502 employees within the Public Service. When this is compared with the monthly Queensland labour force figures published within the Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Series and the Public Service statistics published annually within the annual report of the Office of Public Service, Merit and Equity, a very disturbing trend emerges. The financial year 2000-01 annual report from that office shows that as at 30 June 2001 the Public Service in Queensland had grown by a whopping 24,000 people to reach a total of 177,482. This represents a 16 per cent growth in the Public Service in just three financial years.

If that statistic alone is not alarming enough, one should compare the growth in the number of people employed within the Public Service with that of the overall labour force within Queensland. In doing so, one soon discovers that under the Beattie government over 25 per cent of all the jobs created in Queensland since Peter Beattie became Premier were within the Queensland Public Service. That is right—from July 1998 to the end of June 2001 some 90,900 jobs were created within Queensland. Of those jobs, nearly 24,000 were created by a blow-out in the size of the Public Service. Before members opposite claim that these Public Service jobs are solely because of some fanciful increase in the number of police, teachers and nurses, as the Premier tried to convince us this morning, I point out that only 11,800, or less than 50 per cent, of those 24,000 jobs created within the Public Service were actually within the departments of health, education and police. It also should be noted that this figure of 11,800 positions includes the additional education and health bureaucrats, because this secretive government will not come clean and break down the figures in health and education to show actual but necessary growth in the on-the-ground nurses and teachers.

I now highlight the devastating effect that this uncontrolled growth in the Public Service is having on the overall finances of Queensland. The consolidated financial statement produced annually by the government shows that the growth in recurrent revenue since the end of the 1997-98 financial year to the end of the 2000-01 financial year was just under \$1.89 billion. If this is compared with the increase in the employee expenses over the same time frame, one will find that they have increased recurrently by \$2.05 billion. This means that, under the Beattie government, growth in employee expenses has outstripped growth in revenue. In simple terms, for every year that the Beattie government has its fingers in the till, Queensland will continue to go backwards.

With the government constantly complaining about its apparent lack of money, it is amazing that it allows the finances of this state to haemorrhage because of its inability to manage the

Queensland economy and the Public Service properly. If these issues are left unaddressed, they will continue the growing trend of our hospital waiting lists getting longer and will prevent the raising of education standards for our children. These were the exact issues highlighted by Vince FitzGerald in his financial audit of the state in 1996. No doubt, this is a contributing factor in today's admission by the Treasurer that Queensland's growth rate has slipped back to be lineball with the national average for the very first time. So much for the Smart State! If the government continues to ignore this issue, it will erode the strong and stable financial position of the Queensland economy that has been built up by previous governments which, unlike the Beattie government, were sound and prudent financial managers.

Caloundra City Council

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): Residents of Kawana have requested that I raise some issues which will need to be addressed by the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Natural Resources and the Minister for Environment. I am told that the House will soon be presented with a petition, an unsigned copy of which I will table along with other relevant documents, including photos. I seek leave to table these documents.

Leave granted.

Mr CUMMINS: Many residents are concerned about allegations that not only has a local councillor encroached on public land, that being the sand dune behind his own property, but has also influenced a consultation process that could see a dune walkway built through the dunes behind the majority of homes, excluding his. I have listened to claims of a typically conservative, born-to-rule mentality that may see the values of neighbouring properties decrease, but due to an elected representative's influence his own property may substantially increase in value; thus a request for an independent valuer's opinion within the petition. Photos may also indicate a picnic table, chicken wire fence and stairs that connect his property encroaching outside his property boundary onto public land, clearly against directions issued by Caloundra City Council and the Department of Natural Resources. I will forward relevant accusations and photos to the relevant ministers.

Residents are also concerned about numerous encroachments, including water sprinklers, compost bin and fences. I trust that these issues will be investigated. I have been asked to request the Minister for Local Government to consider notified motions carried by a majority of the Caloundra City Council on 25 May 2000, namely, resolution 6.01 in relation to a meeting of Sunshine Sports Complex Pty Ltd, and a motion on 25 January 2001, namely, resolution 6.01 regarding alternative power supplies in relation to Caloundra City Council's ability to install and utilise alternative power. If these notified motions and resolutions of Caloundra City Council have not been addressed, has the Local Government Act been breached and, if so, what consequences will follow?

I will also table relevant emails that have been sent to me via my old council email address that have links to pornographic web sites. I have raised this issue with the Caloundra City Council CEO and have asked to be removed from this porn mailing list.

Recently, I was also accused by Caloundra City Council of showing no interest in relation to unexploded ordnances in the Kawana, Currimundi and surrounding areas. This is simply not the case. Caloundra City Council did a report alleging that I did not respond to literature sent to me. The CEO said that Australia Post may not have redirected my mail, that it may not have worked on this occasion and that this is called Murphy's Law. I was supplied with a letter that was allegedly sent to me without any address. It is quite disappointing that a Caloundra City Council report would imply that I had no interest in the unexploded ordnances and their removal. I have strongly advocated that the federal government is the body solely responsible for this. On previous occasions I have assured councillors in writing, including councillor Elaine Darling, a former federal member for Lilley and now very active participant in lobbying for the removal of these unexploded ordnances. I have written proof that I will do everything I can to assist. A meeting was called last Friday that the council decided to postpone.

In closing, I also seek the House's permission to table the relevant documents—emails where I have tried to remove myself from the pornographic web sites, and also the letter from Caloundra City Council regarding an invitation to the meeting about unexploded ordnances which was never received by my office. I seek leave to table these relevant documents.

Leave granted.

Sugar Industry; Burdekin Growers Race Day

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (12.19 p.m.): Today I would like to bring to the attention of the parliament a couple of events that occurred recently and which are of concern to my electorate. On 3 June in Brisbane a delegation of canefarmers from the Burdekin area plus farmers from other areas met with Bob McCarthy, the Deputy Director of the Department of State Development. That meeting was very effective. Everyone put their cards on the table and the issues that were of concern to people within the sugar industry were explained. The delegation was happy that they got a fair hearing at that meeting. Later that afternoon, I arranged a meeting with the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries, Henry Palaszczuk, in relation to the plight of the sugar industry. That meeting was also well attended by the delegation. They put forward their case and got a hearing from the Premier and the Primary Industries Minister. The Premier gave an undertaking to take forward to the department the three items that were raised at that meeting and to take them into consideration.

Also later in the week—on the Saturday—there was a rally in the Burdekin, which was attended by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Vaughan Johnson; the member for Hinchinbrook, Marc Rowell; the federal member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly; and the federal member for Kennedy, Bob Katter. The farmers who were at that meeting expected to hear that those representatives, who represented the political allegiances of most of them, were doing something about the sugar industry. That was not the case. At that meeting, all that those people did was put across to the farmers rhetoric and a lot of hype. They never gave them positive information—'Yes, we will take this to the minister' or 'We have arranged a meeting'—or anything. I have already done that with my constituents in the Burdekin and I will continue to do that. I think that it is time that the Deputy Opposition Leader, Vaughan Johnson, does what he said at that rally. I will state what he said at that rally—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I was at that meeting that the honourable member makes reference to. I have called on the federal government, in conjunction with the state government, to put in dollar-for-dollar funding as well as a consumption tax to help the sugar industry. The member was there. He knows exactly what I said.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! There is no debate here. There is no point of order.

Mr RODGERS: I refer to the *Ayr Advocate*, which states—

Acting Opposition leader Vaughan Johnson has suggested federal Agriculture Minister Warren Truss should step aside if he can't do anything more to ensure the survival of the sugar industry.

I have to agree with the member on that point. I think that the federal Agriculture Minister is not doing the job. The state government has been doing the job—taking representations from the farmers and talking to the farmers. The federal government has not done that. It is about time that it did that.

In light of some of the things that are happening, the other issue that is of benefit to the people of the Burdekin is the Burdekin Growers Race Day, which generated a lot of feeling back into the community.

Mr Pitt: It was a good meeting.

Mr RODGERS: It was attended by Warren Pitt, the member for Mulgrave; the State Development Minister, Tom Barton; the Primary Industries Minister, Henry Palaszczuk; the Emergency Services Minister, Mike Reynolds; and a couple of other members of parliament apart from me. I think that this race day shows that the people of the Burdekin are resilient and will do whatever they can to keep the economy of the community going. I support them in all of their efforts.

The Burdekin Growers Race Day is a good sign that the community can stand up and fight to get investment into the community and make the Burdekin a good area in which to live and prosper. That goes also for the farming community in the area. I intend to keep supporting the farmers in the area and the community in general, as I always will do, as the member for Burdekin and as I did even before I was the member for Burdekin.

The sugar industry is in need of assistance. I am endeavouring to find out and do whatever I can to assist the industry. Once again, I encourage the opposition to stand up and do that—arrange meetings with federal ministers, with state ministers and with the Prime Minister. I encourage them to do that.

Time expired.

Toowoomba Suncorp Metway Call Centre; Millmerran Power Station

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.25 p.m.): I take this opportunity in the House to alert members to two smart projects happening in this Smart State and in my own backyard, the Darling Downs. Firstly, I praise the government for its involvement in establishing the Suncorp Metway call centre in Toowoomba. This \$10.8 million centre, which was opened last week, will provide more than 300 jobs.

Early last year the Beattie government threw hefty support behind Suncorp Metway to ensure that the base would be set up in Queensland and not in South Australia. I was heavily involved in lobbying on a local level to push Toowoomba's claim to have this call centre set up in our city. I can tell members that it is satisfying to see the positive results of this lobbying standing proudly in Margaret Street overlooking the picturesque Queens Park. This project really was a great example of what hard work, persistence and cooperation between state and local governments and the private sector can achieve.

As a consequence of this centre, Toowoomba residents are set to reap numerous benefits. Of course, the big benefit with this centre is the jobs—over 300 positions with 95 per cent of the staff coming from Toowoomba. I know Suncorp Metway is looking for many different people of different ages and different life experiences to join their team. That is wonderful news for job seekers. I encourage the Toowoomba residents to take up this opportunity as soon as possible. The number of jobs that have been created on the Darling Downs through initiatives such as this really is staggering and it is something for which businesses such as Suncorp Metway should be commended. Since 1998, there have been 1,819 jobs created in our region. These new opportunities help the state government pass the 40,000 job mark in its Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

The opening of Suncorp Metway's call centre at Toowoomba would add 300 more jobs to this tally—something of which I know the state government and Suncorp Metway are both very proud, and with justifiable reason. The centre will also inject \$48 million into the Toowoomba community, thus giving that local economy an enormous and healthy boost.

Suncorp Metway is to be commended for sharing the Beattie government's vision of supporting regional Queensland. Suncorp Metway also fulfils part of my personal dream of seeing a more decentralised Queensland. I have always been committed to the decentralisation of industry and government departments. With respect to the latter, the 1980s transfer of Agriculture NSW from Sydney to Orange is a great example of its successful benefits. In the long term, I would love to see Queensland departments such as the DPI and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines make a similar move to regional centres. As the opening of the call centre demonstrates, decentralisation's benefits are immensely valuable to regional Queensland and to employees of organisations and industries as it lessens the choking of capital cities.

Another great project creating job opportunities and boosting local economies is the Millmerran power station. Last week, this station downloaded electricity onto the national grid for the first time. The \$1.4 billion project was not expected to start feeding into the grid until late this year. After only 33 months of construction, this early synchronisation is a wonderful milestone for the station, for Intergen—the chief operating office—and for the Beattie government, which has been heavily involved throughout the development of this project from dream to reality, especially in the form of the Department of State Development and its minister, Tom Barton.

The power project spreads across 6,000 hectares, comprising a coalmine, power station, transmission system and waste water pipeline from Toowoomba. The second generating unit will be finished towards the end of the year when the power station will be at full production. This will be just in time to meet the peak summer electricity demand. The station will employ 150 people and has an estimated life of more than 40 years. It is great for the Darling Downs and particularly great for Millmerran. It is one of the 17 stations operated by Intergen and will be the first in Australia to use the supercritical boiler technology combined with air cooling.

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! The time for Matters of Public Interest has expired.

PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS BILL**All Stages; Abridgment of Time**

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.30 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate presentation to the House of a bill for an act to regulate particular claims for and awards of damages based on a liability for personal injuries, and for other purposes, and the passing of such bill through all its remaining stages at this week's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.31 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The insurance crisis that has dominated the Queensland and Australian landscape for the past 12 months deserves an urgent response. In this time, we have seen an explosion in the cost of insurance premiums and every section of our society has felt the pain. The reasons for these increases are complex but they have been fuelled by some extraordinary events, nationally and internationally, including:

- the collapse of HIH last year and, more recently, the medical insurer United Medical Protection; and
- the 11 September terrorist attack which shook financial market confidence around the world and reduced investment returns.

At the same time, there has been an increasing number of insurance claims and some incredible awards for compensation by courts in other states outside Queensland. Whatever the specific cause, increases in premiums—particularly for public liability insurance—have threatened the very fabric of our society. Many community based not-for-profit organisations, event organisers, sporting associations, P&Cs and small businesses have been hard hit. For example, a survey undertaken by Queensland Events late last year found many organisations might simply have to cease operating because of high insurance costs.

Our government has led the nation in addressing this crisis. We have moved to ensure not-for-profit community based groups obtain more affordable liability insurance. A group insurance scheme will be open to all not-for-profit groups. We are taking an active role in a national review of the law of negligence, and we are expanding indemnity cover for private doctors working in public hospitals. Now, this bill is another important step. While our government has no power to dictate to private insurance companies the amount they charge for premiums, this legislation will remove one of the excuses used for high charges.

State governments have the power to change laws concerning negligence and the framework that influences compensation payments. Our government has responded with this Personal Injuries Proceedings Bill as our primary initiative of legislative reform. The purpose of this bill is to give certainty to those involved in personal injuries litigation and streamline the claims process. The bill is framed around three key strategies:

- reducing the costs of legal proceedings;
- reducing the number of frivolous claims for minor injuries; and
- capping the size of large claims.

Insurance companies have argued that one of the major pressures on premiums is the costs they face defending legal claims. Indeed, in some cases, up to half of the insurance payouts have been swallowed up by legal fees. It is true that these processes can be protracted and an insurer is often left to pay both its own and the injured person's legal costs. The provisions in this bill for pre-court procedures and limits on the recovery of legal costs will reduce the costs of managing claims. In particular, the number of smaller claims will be reduced because of:

- limits on costs recoverable;
- streamlined processing of claims; and
- minimum thresholds for claims for gratuitous care and for loss of comfort and service.

In addition, limits on advertising of legal services and provisions allowing expressions of regret by defendants will, over time, stop the litigation culture and the 'sue for anything' mentality emerging in our community.

Queensland courts do not have a record of awarding large compensation payments. Queensland has never gone anywhere near the extravagant payouts of courts in New South Wales, where juries have consistently handed down what some in the judiciary are now referring to as Santa Claus payouts. Nevertheless, our government is acting pre-emptively to prevent a blow-out in costs in the future. We are capping claims for economic loss at three times average weekly earnings, excluding juries from hearing personal injury trials and facilitating periodic payment of entitlements through structured settlements, rather than a lump sum.

The procedural reforms introduced in this bill are modelled on those successfully implemented under the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994. Under the new claim system established by this bill, any claim for damages for personal injury is initiated by a notice of claim delivered to the allegedly negligent party. This notice must be delivered within nine months of the incident or first appearance of symptoms. If a lawyer has been consulted, the notice must be delivered within one month of consulting the lawyer. The respondent to a claim must give an interim response within one month. They must fully respond to the claim within six months, including an offer of settlement.

The bill provides for the full disclosure of all relevant material, including medical and experts reports. It facilitates cooperation at an early stage between the parties by also allowing a respondent to a claim to obtain independent expert and medical reports. The bill prescribes processes for mandatory settlement conferences in order to avoid expensive legal proceedings. The bill also generally applies a consistent regime for disclosure and cooperation across all claims for personal injury. There are some minor exceptions to this. For example, a respondent in a health care claim may request a claimant to provide a single medical report. This medical report must outline the nature and extent of the injury and the cause of the alleged medical negligence. This is not intended to circumvent the normal process of a defendant obtaining medical reports at their own expense. It merely requires the claimant to provide the minimum amount of information necessary for a preliminary assessment of the claim by the respondent.

Notwithstanding these statutory arrangements, a court may order that a claimant be allowed to begin a proceeding despite non-compliance with some of the procedural requirements of the act. In other words, a court can remedy any time limit problems where the interests of justice and urgency demand.

The bill imposes some significant restrictions on amounts recoverable in personal injuries claims. It provides that the maximum rate at which a court may assess loss of future income or earning capacity is three times average weekly earnings. Awards for exemplary, punitive and aggravated damages are abolished completely. Awards for gratuitous services are only to be awarded for services arising solely as a result of the injury. In other words, a person is not compensated for services that were necessary before the injury occurred. An award for gratuitous services can only be paid if the service is required for a minimum six hours per week and for a minimum of six months. Legal costs are not to be awarded where a claim is less than \$30,000 and a maximum of \$2,500 may be awarded for legal costs where the claim is between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Where a party refuses to accept a previous reasonable offer of settlement, the bill allows for costs to be ordered against the party that did not accept the offer if the court later makes an award less favourable to that party.

The bill also better regulates provocative advertising by lawyers in relation to personal injury services. There is a complete ban on television and radio advertising of these services, and print and Internet publications will be subject to tight standards. I am confident that the legal profession will approach this new regulation with a degree of commonsense and good faith.

The government does not want to unduly inhibit public awareness or restrict the public access to information about their legal rights and the availability of legal assistance. However, the sort of advertising currently broadcast on radio and television does not enhance clients' rights or portray the profession in a particularly positive light.

This bill delivers on a commitment by the Premier to protect our state's beach lifesavers and similar volunteers acting in emergency situations. It achieves this through protection of people performing duties to enhance public safety. It is important to note that this section is not intended to provide an unrestricted immunity from liability. It is only to apply in emergency situations where the safety of a person is at risk or apparently at risk. It protects a person providing first aid or

emergency assistance for acts done or omitted in good faith and without reckless disregard for the safety of the person in distress.

There are a number of broader issues that are yet to be dealt with concerning the operation of the law of negligence. These are being considered at a national level and the Queensland government is actively involved in developing these issues through the appointment of an expert panel. However, this bill is the first and most significant step in the process of reform. It will provide a framework that streamlines and gives certainty to injured persons, insurers and the broader public about claims for compensation. It draws upon the proven success of the Queensland motor accident and WorkCover schemes in addressing the fundamental operation and costs of the compensation system.

This bill is balanced and fair and will provide a basis for the continued viability of the various insurance schemes in our state. This bill restores commonsense to compensation awards for personal injuries and it sends a clear signal to insurance companies to reduce their premiums. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (12.42 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2000.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (12.42 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002 seeks to amend the Corrective Services Act 2000 to ensure the ongoing viability of the Work Outreach Camps (WORC) program whilst still maintaining a strong commitment to protecting community safety. The WORC program was established in 1990 by the Goss Labor government to assist with the clean-up following the Charleville floods.

The program has been a significant rehabilitative initiative and has provided substantial benefits to western Queensland communities. Since 1991-92, when community work hours began to be formally recorded, the program has contributed in excess of one million hours of community service. This equates to almost \$13.5 million of assistance to the people of northern and western Queensland. In November 2000 the program received the Premier's Award for Excellence in the category of Services to Rural and Regional Queensland in recognition of its achievements in working in partnership with regional and rural communities.

Prior to 1 July 2001, the WORC program did not have specific legislative recognition. Due to its obvious importance, it was decided to give the program this recognition under sections 56 and 57 of the act. It was also decided that the stipulations in place prior to the commencement of the act to ensure community safety should be retained. The specific ineligibility offences were decided administratively by the then Queensland Corrective Services Commission and had no legislative basis. Section 57 of the Corrective Services Act 2000 now provides that a prisoner is not eligible to participate in the program if he has been convicted of an offence prescribed in schedule 1 of the act. It was decided to base schedule 1 on the schedule of serious violent offences contained in the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992.

In recent times the number of WORC program prisoners has declined markedly. The decreased number of prisoners eligible to participate in the program has mainly occurred through the inclusion of three particular offences in schedule 1: dangerous operation of a vehicle, section 328A of the Criminal Code; burglary, section 419(3)(b), particularly subparagraphs (iii) and (iv), of

the Criminal Code; and entering or being in premises and committing indictable offences, section 421(2) of the Criminal Code.

Research indicates that the number of prisoners eligible to participate in the program has been reduced by approximately 20 per cent. This decline is impacting upon the rehabilitative function of the program, as well as its ongoing viability in western communities. Over the last few months, members of a number of western communities have approached me with their concerns about the falling number of eligible prisoners for the program and asking for action to resolve the situation.

The bill will address the issues by adopting a three-pronged approach. Firstly, the offences relating to sections 328A and 421(2) will be omitted from schedule 1. However, the omission of these provisions will not place the community at any greater risk. Prior to the commencement of the act, a prisoner who was sentenced on these offences but was not declared to have been convicted of a serious violent offence was eligible to participate in the WORC program. I also remind the House that it should not be assumed that, because a prisoner has not committed an offence listed in schedule 1, approval for the prisoner to participate in the program would automatically be given.

When deciding whether to allow a prisoner to participate in the program, the chief executive of the Department of Corrective Services is required, under section 57(2) of the act, to consider certain strict criteria including the risk the prisoner may pose to the community.

Secondly, the bill amends the reference to section 419(3)(b), burglary, of the Criminal Code in schedule 1 so that it will be specifically limited to section 419(1) if the circumstances mentioned in sections 419(3)(b)(i) or (ii) applied. These circumstances relate to the offence of burglary where an offender: uses or threatens to use actual violence; or, is or pretends to be armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon, instrument or noxious substance. This means that offenders who commit the offence of burglary in these circumstances will not be eligible for participation in the WORC program.

Thirdly, as an additional community safety mechanism, the bill amends section 57(1) of the Corrective Services Act 2000 to include a further stipulation that a prisoner is not eligible to participate in the WORC program if the prisoner has been convicted of an offence under sections 328A, 419(1)—and the circumstances mentioned in section 419(3)(b)(iii) or 419(3)(b)(iv) applied—or 421(2) of the Criminal Code and has been declared under the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to have been convicted of a serious violent offence. This will mean that a prisoner convicted under these provisions will be eligible to participate in the program, provided they have not been declared under the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to have been convicted of a serious violent offence. With these changes, the WORC program ineligibility provisions will more closely reflect the WORC ineligibility criteria operating prior to the commencement of the act on 1 July 2001.

Consultation has occurred with the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc. Consideration was also given to the views of several western Queensland communities who made representations for legislative action to be taken to ensure the continued viability of the WORC program. I understand that these measures have the full support of these communities.

I point out that these amendments are consistent with the government's priority of 'Safer and More Supportive Communities' and will help to provide greater rehabilitative opportunities for eligible prisoners. Ensuring the continued viability of the WORC program will also assist the development of western Queensland communities.

The Beattie Labor Government is committed to providing a safer community. To do this, the correctional system must provide rehabilitative opportunities for offenders to enable them to be safely reintegrated into the community. In this regard, the WORC program has been a huge success. The proportion of offenders who have participated in the WORC program who have returned to prison within two years for additional offences is approximately 50 per cent less than those offenders who committed comparable crimes but have not participated in the program.

That is a remarkable indication of the significant impact that this program is making in breaking the crime cycle. An important factor in providing a safer community is ensuring the continued success of programs which reduce future crime from occurring, such as the WORC program.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Miss Simpson, adjourned.

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.51 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Parliamentary Service Act 1988.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.52 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2002. The bill is a necessary part of arrangements being progressed by the government to enable Queensland's parliament to meet outside of Brisbane in Townsville from 3-5 September 2002, for the first time in its 142-year history—and it is about time! Before I outline the objectives of the bill, I would like to touch on the unprecedented significance of this legislation.

This government has given a commitment to hold parliament once every term in a regional centre to improve access by the community to the parliament. As outlined in my plan for good government in Queensland, democracy works better if people have access to the workings of the parliament, but not all Queenslanders can travel to Parliament House in Brisbane. Honouring this election promise is a very significant event in the state's history. Parliament first sat in Brisbane in May 1860, and for the first eight years parliament sat in a convict barracks in the centre of Brisbane, near where the Myer Centre is today. Perhaps it was appropriate for them to sit there. In 1868, it shifted to its present position in George Street and has met here since.

Queensland is Australia's most decentralised state. While Brisbane is our capital city, our regions are vital to the social, cultural and economic development of the state. Through forums like community cabinets and regional community forums, the ministers of this government regularly travel to regional centres across the state. Taking parliament to a regional centre is a natural extension of that unprecedented accessibility. This initiative will be an opportunity for all members to gain a greater understanding of regional issues and an opportunity for the community to assess the performance of its elected officials. It is about ensuring all Queenslanders feel part of the state's decision-making and democratic processes.

On 9 October last year, the Honourable Speaker and I announced that the first ever sitting outside of Brisbane would be held in Townsville. Townsville is an ideal central northern location, four hours drive from Cairns in the north, the same to Mackay in the south and Hughenden to the west. How is that for a diplomatic decision? Even our members in Cairns love it. This also has the infrastructure to support the logistics of holding sittings of the parliament.

The public gallery will provide an opportunity for schools in nearby areas to send children in to see parliament in action. And so they should. This is part of our educative strategy. Local residents and businesspeople will be able to come and see this parliament first-hand. Apart from offering a significant injection into the local economy—which it will be—it will place the spotlight squarely on Townsville and north Queensland. The event also offers the community a chance to come together to share in this great event. The five Townsville based members—the Honourable Mike Reynolds, the Minister for Emergency Services and member for Townsville; Lindy Nelson-Carr, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and member for Mundingburra; Anita Phillips, the member for Thuringowa; Christine Scott, the member for Charters Towers; and Steve Rodgers, the member for Burdekin—have all welcomed the decision for the first non-Brisbane sitting of state parliament to be held in Townsville. I agree. This unique sitting presents a wonderful opportunity for the residents of north Queensland and all members of this parliament.

I now turn to the bill. The bill has been prepared to amend sections 4, 29(3), 30(2)(b) and 30(3) of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988. These amendments will alter the definition of 'parliamentary precinct' to enable a parliamentary precinct to be established in a location other than Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane for a stated period, by way of a gazettal notice, as well as remove some obsolete section references.

At present, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 provides that a parliamentary precinct means all land and improvements within the land reserved for Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane. The amendment is necessary to allow precincts to be established in regional centres other than Parliament House, Brisbane, so that the existing powers of the Speaker under the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 can be used in ensuring the lawful maintenance of security and order in locations other than Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane.

The state parliament is not just a magnificent sandstone building in Brisbane. That is the physical structure. The parliament is all about people. Sitting outside of Brisbane is about providing the opportunity to improve understanding of our system of government. Taking the parliament to the people is what democracy is all about. I want the people of regional and rural Queensland to share in this democratic process. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Miss Simpson, adjourned.

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (ROAD USE MANAGEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.57 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.58 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The object of the bill is to provide for an amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. This amendment provides for blood to be taken and tested for alcohol content from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash. Despite continuing road safety improvements, motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol are a major social, economic and health issue. Drink-driving accounts for approximately 30 per cent of fatal crashes and approximately 20 per cent of hospitalisation crashes in Queensland each year. The estimated social cost of these crashes is approximately \$120 million per year.

From 1997 to 2001, there was an annual average of 72 fatalities and 468 hospitalisations from crashes where the driver had a blood alcohol content—BAC—of greater than zero. In the year 2000, alcohol or drug use was the second largest contributor to crashes, being involved in 34 per cent of fatal crashes. Trend analysis shows an increase in the year 2000 in alcohol and/or drugs contributing to fatal circumstances. Drivers, motorbike riders and cyclists affected by alcohol play a major role in road crashes. In the year 2000, the percentage of driver and rider alcohol-involved fatalities exceeded the previous five-year average.

A range of measures is currently used in Queensland to combat drink-driving, the most effective of which is random breath testing—RBT. RBT is most effective when enforcement efforts are supported by public education that emphasises the risk of detection by police. Queensland Transport undertakes extensive public education as part of the Fatal 4 driving behaviours directed at consequences of being caught drink-driving, crashing and walking intoxicated.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in view of the time, I move—

That the remainder of my second reading speech be tabled and incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These countermeasures have been found to be highly effective in deterring people from drink driving. However, despite knowing the risks of crashing or being caught, the number of people sustaining injuries and being hospitalised due to drink driving is increasing. In 2001, another 79 more people were hospitalised than in 2000 as a result of a road crash involving alcohol with a further 71 requiring medical treatment.

It is time for a tougher stance to be taken against the menace of drink driving. That is why the Government is introducing new legislation, and that is why the Government will continue to look for ways to beat drink driving, and make our roads safer.

This bill will close a serious loophole in the legislation, a loophole that currently allows a number of potentially culpable drivers to escape penalty for drink driving. This situation has occurred because until now, conscious persons who attended hospital following a road crash could be tested for alcohol and/or drugs if requested by police—and subsequently prosecuted. However, people who were unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate could not be tested.

The bill seeks to empower police to request a blood sample for analysis of unconscious drivers. This will end the current iniquitous situation I have just outlined. Under the proposed legislation, a police officer can obtain a sample (through a health care professional) from all drivers (conscious or unconscious) who attend hospital following a road crash, and who they reasonably suspect was under the influence of alcohol or a drug at the time of the road crash.

Too many people have been tragically killed or had their quality of life reduced on Queensland roads as a result of people who drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The ability to take blood from all potentially culpable drivers who attend hospital following a road crash will lead to improved anti-drink driving outcomes, as it will allow better detection of drink drivers. All drivers, whether conscious or not, will be subject to the same treatment.

The taking of blood from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash will give us more information about the level of drink and drug driving in the Queensland community. This means we can better target our public education campaigns and our drink and drug driving countermeasures. The bill also allows us to exchange information with other Australian jurisdictions, which means that we will improve our knowledge of drink driving in the Australian community, and be able to evaluate the success of our anti-drink driving effort against that of other states.

It is also anticipated that introduction of these amendments will lead to a reduction in drink driving. People will know that if they drink and drive and they have a crash, they will more than likely be blood tested, regardless of whether they are conscious or not. People will be more aware that police can and will follow them to hospital and request a blood sample. People will be more aware that the net is closing in on those who drink alcohol or take drugs and drive.

Given the geographical diversity of Queensland and limited access to medical practitioners in some areas, the provisions relating to doctors taking blood samples will be expanded to allow registered nurses to take blood when requested by a police officer. The legislation will also allow qualified assistants, who are persons whose duties include the taking of blood, to take a sample if directed by a doctor or nurse following a request by a police officer. However, this amendment will not require persons other than doctors to be 'called out' to a police station, vehicle, vessel or other place for the purpose of taking a blood specimen.

To protect health care professionals against any other person who attempts to obstruct the taking of a sample from a person, the person who obstructs the taking of a sample may be guilty of an offence. This means that a health care professional cannot be hindered, and no obstruction may be made to their taking of blood from someone else.

Health care professionals will be protected from civil liability for an act done, or omission made, honestly and without negligence. Health care professionals are also protected against the operation of Section 246(1) of the Criminal Code (Assaults Unlawful).

There are some circumstances where a doctor or nurse need not take a sample. This includes where the doctor or nurse reasonably believes that taking the specimen would be prejudicial to the person's treatment, for example, a doctor or nurse may reasonably believe that taking a specimen would be prejudicial to a person's treatment if the person sustained serious injuries and required emergency surgery as a result. It also includes a situation where the doctor or nurse has another reasonable excuse for not taking the sample. For example, a doctor or a nurse may be unable to take a sample because they are called to attend to a medical emergency.

The bill also seeks to limit the occurrences when analysts, health care professionals and others involved in the blood testing process may be required to appear in court to give evidence regarding the taking or analysis of a blood sample. This acknowledges that hospitals and laboratories are busy places with finite human resources available for court appearances, while providing a legislative avenue for defendants who have a genuine complaint in relation to the taking or testing of blood. Defendants will be required to substantiate their application before the court will grant leave to require a person involved in the blood taking, receipt, storage or testing to attend a hearing and give such evidence.

The Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002 provides an opportunity to close a loophole that currently allows a number of potentially culpable drivers to escape penalty for drink driving. It provides the opportunity to reduce drink driving and road crash trauma in Queensland, as well as raise our awareness about the level of drink driving in our community. It gives comfort to families and friends of those tragically lost to road trauma involving alcohol that those responsible will be caught for drink driving, and that justice will be done.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Miss Simpson, adjourned.

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

BUDGET DOCUMENTS

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.30 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I lay upon the table of the House the following documents—

Budget Speech;
Budget Statement;
Economic and Revenue Outlook;
Capital Statement;
Budget Highlights;
Queensland Growing the Smart State;
Ministerial Portfolio Statements, including Speaker's Portfolio Statements for the Legislative Assembly.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2002 and 1 July 2003.

Motion agreed to.

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

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.31 p.m.): I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I rise to introduce the appropriation bill for the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary service for 2002-03.

The government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and this extends to the means by which public moneys are appropriated to ensure its continued functioning.

We are therefore adhering to the recent convention that the Legislative Assembly's appropriation be contained in a bill separate from the Appropriation Bill for the other activities of government.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill will provide the necessary funds to ensure the continued operations of the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary service.

These include advisory and information services to assist the parliament, its committees and members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities, the services provided by the Parliamentary Library, Committee Office, Parliamentary Reporting Service and Chamber and Security Services as well as the provision of accommodation, hospitality and members' entitlements.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.34 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2002 and 1 July 2003.

Motion agreed to.

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

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.35 p.m.): I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of Government comes with an obligation for the aspirations of current and future Queensland generations.

The Beattie Government's vision of a Smart State is delivering on this obligation.

This year's Budget, my second as Treasurer, is about growing Queensland the Smart State and at the same time ensuring a better quality of life for all Queenslanders.

It focuses on new investment in the vital areas of families, education and training, health and housing to provide opportunities for all Queenslanders.

The Budget builds on the foundations set in our first term in office which delivered strong employment growth and improved services and infrastructure.

Delivering our Smart State vision for Queensland was not going to happen overnight. But the vision is becoming a reality. It is a reality in the way we are shaping the future of our State's education system and the growing investment in knowledge and innovation industries.

Since our re-election the Beattie Government has been delivering in full on our election commitments and on our social, fiscal, economic and Smart State priorities.

In this Budget, we are maintaining our commitment to invest in our people and communities.

A major funding boost will deliver better outcomes for children and families in contact with Queensland's child protection system recognising our responsibility to protect our most vulnerable members of the community.

Education and training reforms for the future will provide the platform for the Smart State.

Increased resources are being provided to deliver health services that improve quality of life for Queenslanders.

New housing initiatives will provide further support to those in need of secure and affordable housing recognising the contribution housing makes to a better quality of life.

In contrast to the priorities of the Commonwealth Government which are about reducing support to those most in need, the Beattie Government is about providing services and opportunities for all Queenslanders but most importantly those in greatest need.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Our primary economic strategy objective is to raise living standards and employment opportunities for all Queenslanders.

Our strategy recognises the need to invest in people and innovation—the new drivers of growth in the Smart State. It builds upon the strong fundamentals of the Queensland economy and our fiscal strategy.

In 2001-02 the Queensland economy has maintained momentum despite facing a challenging external environment including subdued economic conditions in Queensland's major trading partners.

The difficult external environment was further exacerbated by the tragic events of September 11 which triggered a downturn in the United States with flow on effects to many Asian economies. Domestically, a number of corporate collapses affected confidence, with the demise of Ansett presenting an additional challenge for the State's tourism sector.

In the face of these challenges, the Queensland economy is estimated to grow by 3 3/4% in 2001-02, in line with the national economy and well above expected growth for the entire OECD.

Domestic demand continued to underpin the State economy, with sustained growth in household consumption and a recovery in private investment.

Looking ahead to 2002-03, Queensland growth is expected to lift with a forecast strengthening in economic growth to 4 1/4%, exceeding the national growth rate of 3 3/4%.

2002-03 will see forecast business investment reach an historical peak of almost \$13 billion in real terms, supported by our Government's facilitation of major projects such as Comalco and AMC.

Exports are also expected to pick-up as a strengthening global economy demands more of our commodities and improves the prospect for international tourists to visit Queensland.

Mr Speaker, proof of Queensland's fundamental economic strength and the Beattie Government's management of the economy is seen in employment growth.

Queensland is currently creating jobs at a much faster rate than the national average. Over the 12 months to May 2002, Queensland created over 30% of all the jobs created in Australia.

In terms of full time jobs, Queensland was responsible for almost 80% of national full time jobs. This compares with our population share of around 19%.

This strong performance is expected to continue into 2002-03 with a forecast year-average rise in employment of 2 1/2% translating to an additional 43,000 jobs. As a result, Queensland's unemployment rate will fall to a year-average 7 1/2%, the lowest in over a decade.

SAFER AND MORE SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Families are central to the Government's vision for the future of Queensland.

The Budget highlights the Government's continuing commitment to providing positive outcomes for children, young people and families across Queensland. Social services such as those provided by the Families Department remain one of the key priority policy objectives of the Beattie Labor Government.

In support of this commitment, the Department of Families will receive additional funding of \$188 million over four years for the implementation of a comprehensive program of new initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity to assist Queensland families, youth and children in need—in particular child protection services.

Annual funding for the Families Department (excluding funding provided for concessions) is now \$194 million higher—that's 97% higher—than when the Beattie Government was elected and \$147 million higher than at the time of the 1999-2000 Budget when the Premier gave the commitment that the Government would revisit the Forde Inquiry funding recommendation year after year. The Government has now met its fiscal commitments flowing from the Forde Inquiry.

The first \$42 million instalment in 2002-03 of the Government's increased investment in family services will be broadly focused. It will include a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention strategies, increased investment in supporting and enhancing the alternative care sector, and encouraging innovation in the provision of services.

Areas where the additional funding will be targeted include more support and assistance for foster and relative carers, increased funding of \$3 million to support children and young people in care who have high or complex needs, and additional funding of \$2.8 million for the development and implementation of responsive placement options for out-of-home care.

The prevention and early intervention strategies included in the package are seen by our Government as essential. Early identification and action to address issues before families reach crisis produces more effective outcomes and avoids costly more intensive, longer-term intervention which often is not as effective.

Further detail on the entire package of initiatives will be provided when the Premier and the Minister for Families launch the Queensland Families: Future Directions policy statement on Thursday. This statement will outline the Government's vision for the Department, and present in detail the package of initiatives being funded through this Budget.

Mr Speaker, strong policing and crime prevention are critical to achieving safer communities and this Budget provides for a range of initiatives including:

- 307 additional police;
- an additional \$40 million over two years to enhance the police services information management systems and capital infrastructure;
- \$21 million over three years to expand the Drug Court trial to Townsville and Cairns and to continue the trial in Ipswich, Southport and Beenleigh;
- \$13.7 million over four years to improve the effectiveness of the Coronial system;

- the staged commissioning of the Maryborough Correctional Centre; and
- \$6.2 million over four years for emergency helicopter services.

To enhance the safety of our children travelling to school, \$16.7 million over four years is provided for a program of annual school bus replacement in non-urban areas, seat belt trials in a number of school buses on steep and mountainous routes and a public education campaign to improve school transport and safety.

MORE JOBS FOR QUEENSLAND—SKILLS AND INNOVATION—THE SMART STATE

The Beattie Government is committed to growing the Smart State.

This means achieving high and sustainable levels of economic growth to drive job creation.

We have the fundamentals in place—a supportive business environment underpinned by a competitive tax regime, sound fiscal management and cost effective infrastructure.

Growing Queensland as the Smart State also demands a skilled and adaptable workforce. Educational opportunities provide this foundation.

Our Education and Training Reforms for the Future package will provide our young people with more opportunities to access high quality education and training.

The package includes:

- a long-term investment in information and communication technologies and teacher training in schools including a \$22.7 million investment in 2002-03;
- the trialing of a full-time preparatory year in 39 schools in 2002-03 and a further 20 schools in 2003-04; and
- community consultation on proposals to make senior schooling a clearer pathway to further education, training and work.

This Budget continues to implement election commitments such as our new centres of excellence in mathematics, science and technology, as well as the expanded New Basics program and the Triple R School Maintenance program. But it also provides for an additional \$60 million over four years to provide and support quality services to students with a disability.

In total, the Budget provides for 382 additional teachers for growth and other needs, including 158 teachers as part of the Government's election commitment to deliver an additional 800 teachers over four years.

The Beattie Government supports parents' rights to choose the most appropriate education for their children and this Budget provides \$284.4 million, a 6.9% increase, in State financial assistance to non-government schools to support them in delivering a quality education to students.

To ensure that grant and program funding provided to non-government schools maintains its real value, a further \$10.6 million will be provided over the next four years commencing with \$1.7 million in 2002-03 for the Capital Assistance Program, External Infrastructure Subsidy, Bus Fare Assistance and Transport for Students with Disabilities.

In addition \$1.6 million in ongoing funding will be provided towards the additional costs arising from the increase in the superannuation guarantee charge payable to the non-State school workforce.

Mr Speaker, our Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative provides a range of programs to create jobs and training opportunities particularly for those at risk of long-term unemployment.

To further this initiative, an additional \$10 million over two years has been provided for community employment programs and additional apprenticeship and traineeship places.

The Beattie Government's vision for the development of Smart State industries and jobs is clearly reflected in our commitment to research and development.

We have been a strong investor in molecular bioscience research, cancer research and biotechnology innovation.

Through our \$100 million Smart State Research Facility Fund we are committing up to \$20 million to support the establishment of an Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. We are also allocating up to \$22.5 million for an Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation and up to \$7.4 million to support the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Engineered Fibre Composites.

The Australian Institute of Commercialisation will be headquartered in Queensland and will focus on increasing value from commercialisation of Australian research and development.

The recently announced Queensland BioCapital Fund to be managed by the Queensland Investment Corporation will invest \$100 million in venture capital in biotechnology projects which have potential for high commercial returns.

In addition to positioning Queensland as a major biotechnology hub, we are building on our potential in industry sectors such as light metals, minerals processing and aviation.

The AMC Magnesium Smelter and Comalco Alumina Refinery, two of the most significant smart industry expansions being undertaken in Australia, are supported by State provided common user infrastructure. This is a significant milestone in our strategy to establish Central Queensland as an international centre for light metals.

The transformation of Queensland into a key aviation and transport hub is gaining further momentum with more aviation companies coming to Queensland including the Qantas subsidiary Australian Airlines in Cairns.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr Speaker, we are committed to working in partnership with the community to deliver improved and integrated services that will further improve the high quality of life we enjoy in Queensland.

Good health care remains a fundamental priority.

Our Health Budget will grow by 6.7% including:

- an additional \$13.3 million in 2002-03 to address demand for a range of acute inpatient services across the State;
- up to \$7.3 million to improve access to Home and Community Care services; and
- \$4.8 million for blood transfusion services.

An additional \$50 million over four years is provided to meet health capital and technology needs.

Access to secure and affordable housing makes a significant contribution to individual, family and community wellbeing.

Over \$150 million is allocated for public rental housing providing for the completion of 260 dwellings under construction and the commencement of 300 dwellings. Upgrades to existing accommodation will further improve the amenity of public housing.

The State will support the further development of the Brisbane Housing Company, a joint initiative with the Brisbane City Council. This initiative aims to have 600 units of housing in inner and near city suburbs by the end of its fourth year of operation.

Our Home Assist Secure program aims to address some of the practical housing related difficulties experienced by older people and people with a disability who wish to remain living in their own home. This Budget provides \$10.8 million for this valuable program.

Funding of \$2 million has also been provided to construct and acquire crisis accommodation to assist those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. It will also support preventative responses to homelessness.

Mr Speaker, the Beattie Government has a genuine commitment to advancing reconciliation to enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders to move forward together.

We want to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find practical ways to progress reconciliation and to improve living conditions and opportunities for Indigenous people across the State.

In the spirit of reconciliation and in recognition of past injustices the Government has made an offer of \$55.4 million to make reparations for decades of control by former Queensland administrations of the wages and savings of Indigenous people.

This demonstrates our genuine desire to heal the past.

The Cape York Justice study clearly identified issues which need to be addressed to improve the quality of life for Indigenous people.

This Budget provides \$15.1 million over four years to implement the Government's response to the Study. This includes funding for:

- the establishment of Community Canteen Alcohol Boards;
- expansion of the Local Justice Initiatives program;

- Indigenous economic development activities;
- Indigenous child and public health improvements; and
- additional financial aid to community councils.

To further the improvement of water supply, sewerage and health related infrastructure in Indigenous Communities, \$12 million in additional funding has been provided in the Budget for the next four years.

The Beattie Government believes that people with disabilities should have the opportunity to fully and actively participate in society.

This Budget builds on the 11.6% funding increase in our last Budget with a further increase of 8.8% in the Disability Services Budget to enhance support for people with disabilities, their carers and family and community groups.

Sport, recreation and cultural activities are essential ingredients for strong, vibrant and cohesive communities.

This Budget provides \$38.8 million towards the \$260 million five year Millennium Arts project including \$7 million for regional capital projects. Major elements of the Millennium Arts project for 2002-03 are the Gallery of Modern Art and the Millennium Library.

Our \$18 million redevelopment of the Tallebudgera Outdoor Recreation Centre will produce an aquatic centre of excellence.

As Minister for Sport, I am pleased to advise that the redevelopment of Suncorp-Metway Stadium into a world-class sporting stadium is proceeding to schedule. As the Treasurer, I am particularly pleased to advise that this \$280 million project is also on budget.

VALUING THE ENVIRONMENT

Protecting the environment and biodiversity is essential to our future.

The Beattie Government has put in place a range of strategies, policies and reforms to protect our environment for future generations while allowing the ecologically sustainable development of our natural resources.

We have already made substantial investments in the areas of vegetation management, water resource allocation and use and native forest management.

We are strongly supporting the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality which will involve a State investment of \$81 million over seven years.

We are improving the presentation and management of our national parks with a further 60 rangers to be employed in 2002-03 to deliver our election commitment of up to 140 new rangers.

In addition to continuing to resource these major environmental initiatives, this Budget also provides for:

- \$9 million over two years as the State's contribution to the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative which will fund programs such as bore rehabilitation;
- \$3.3 million per annum to continue the regulation of timber harvesting and other production activities on public lands; and
- \$2 million to develop long-distance walking tracks as part of our \$10 million Great Walks of Queensland initiative.

BUILDING QUEENSLAND'S REGIONS

Queensland is Australia's most decentralised mainland State and our vision for a growing Smart State requires a strong commitment to supporting regional growth and improving the livability of our cities, towns, regions and remote communities.

The Budget includes \$437 million for grant and subsidy programs to support the provision of local government infrastructure and services.

This Budget also provides for:

- \$6 million to maintain an appropriate level of air and long distance bus services to remote and rural Queensland communities;
- co-operative marketing activities with Australian Airlines which will establish its hub in Cairns;
- \$20.3 million over four years to protect Queensland from foot and mouth disease; and

- \$12 million in joint Commonwealth/State funding to develop the skills of our primary producers.

Regional growth and development requires quality infrastructure provision.

The Queensland Government has been a strong investor in infrastructure and this year 56% of our \$4.8 billion capital program will be undertaken outside the Brisbane region.

Regional infrastructure projects funded in the Budget include:

- \$38.7 million for the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre;
- \$4.2 million to upgrade facilities for Rockhampton's triennial beef expos;
- \$9 million for the Cairns Tilt Train; and
- \$10 million towards a commitment of up to \$38 million for a Multipurpose Centre in Mackay.

As I have recently announced, the development of gas-fired power generation and gas delivery in Townsville will involve \$500 million of new public and private investment. This project will enhance industrial development in north and central Queensland and encourage further investment in Queensland's domestic gas industry.

The Beattie Government acknowledges the valuable contribution that our primary producers make to our State economy. A number of primary industries are facing difficult conditions. In particular, our sugar industry is being adversely affected by low commodity prices and significantly reduced yields due to drought and other factors.

The priority our Government places on primary production is reflected in the \$15 million underlying increase provided in the Budget for Primary Industries, including funding for drought assistance and enhanced Foot and Mouth disease preparedness.

The Government has a high level response team examining ways in which we can assist the sugar industry meet its current challenges. \$20 million will be available to provide low interest loans to cane growers to assist in covering the cost of planting and fertilising their 2003 cane crop.

GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Mr Speaker, the Beattie Government's Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility makes it clear that this Government is committed to delivering improved services and outcomes for the community in the context of sound fiscal management. The Charter reinforces the link between our strong financial position and achieving the Government's objectives for the community.

Accordingly this Budget provides for a net operating surplus of \$23 million (in GFS terms) together with surpluses over the forward estimates period.

Our balance sheet will continue to grow and total State net worth will increase to \$58.5 billion by end June 2003.

Our AAA credit rating continues to confirm the strength of our fiscal position.

Like the rest of the world, the State's financial position has been subject to international shocks such as international economic downturns and the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

We foreshadowed in the Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review that as a result of volatility in both domestic and international equity markets our investment earnings on funds set aside to meet future liabilities such as superannuation will be well down on normally expected levels. Unfortunately equity markets have not recovered leading to a forecast net operating deficit for 2001-02.

Periodically equity markets will under-perform and prudential reserves that have been built up in years of high returns mean that we are still able to cover our future liabilities. For a State with such significant financial assets, the nature of market forces will periodically adversely impact on our net operating position. Aside from the establishment of prudential reserves such situations do not warrant policy action by the Government to take countervailing revenue or expenditure measures.

In fact, adjusting for the impact of the lowest investment returns in 12 years, the underlying net operating position would be in strong surplus in 2001-02.

In aggregate terms, general government expenses will grow moderately in 2002-03 by 4.8% on last year's Budget. However within that aggregate growth we are giving a clear priority to key service delivery areas.

The Education Budget is growing by 5.8%, Health by 6.7% and Family Services by 15.5%.

The 2002-03 Budget also addresses service infrastructure needs with a total capital program of \$4.8 billion.

The 2002-03 capital program includes the first year of a \$400 million four year Priority Infrastructure Package which will be funded from higher stamp duty cash inflows achieved in 2001-02.

This four year package includes \$50 million for health technology priorities, \$40 million for police information systems and capital works and \$150 million for schools infrastructure. It will also support Burnett water infrastructure, and the Tugun Bypass.

REVENUES

Mr Speaker, Queensland has a very competitive tax regime and the Beattie Government's fiscal principles include a clear commitment to maintain our tax competitiveness.

For 2002-03, the Budget forecasts that Queenslanders will pay \$1,321 per capita in State taxes compared with \$1,757 for the average of the other States. Queenslanders pay 25% less than the average of the other States.

As I announced in last year's Budget, Queensland's payroll tax rate will be reduced to 4.75% from 1 July 2002.

This means that the Beattie Government will have reduced the payroll tax rate from 5.0% to 4.75%.

In contrast the payroll tax rate in Victoria will be 5.35% and 6.0% in New South Wales.

Mr Speaker, national tax reform has narrowed the tax base available to the States. While the States will share GST revenue in the future, it needs to be appreciated that no State will gain any benefit from GST revenue in 2002-03. As a result the Commonwealth is having to provide top up grants to all the States to ensure the States are no worse off than had the reforms to Commonwealth-State financial relations not been implemented.

These arrangements have seen Commonwealth payments to Queensland drop below our per capita share, as other States are compensated for the abolition of taxes that Queensland never imposed. In fact, the Commonwealth's basis for distributing these top up grants disadvantages Queensland by more than \$250 million in 2002-03.

Despite the fact that the States are yet to benefit from access to GST revenues and a reduction in Queensland's share of funding, the Commonwealth is already starting to signal its intentions to cost shift to the States.

Various Commonwealth Ministers are suggesting that the States should fund an increasing proportion of services ranging from roads to disability services.

What they are really saying is that the Commonwealth plans to reduce its relative contribution to these areas at the expense of the States.

This poses a major fiscal risk to the States and the Beattie Government will vigorously oppose such Commonwealth moves.

In an environment where the States have become increasingly dependent on Commonwealth funding—including grant revenue sources from the Commonwealth's Goods and Services Tax—it is critical that we maintain an appropriate and effective State tax base to ensure we are in a position to continue to meet the Queensland community's need for core services.

Accordingly, this Budget includes changes to land tax for companies, trustees and absentees.

With effect from 1 July 2002, the present 15% rebate for companies, trustees and absentees will be abolished.

To assist small business land tax payers, the land tax exemption threshold will be increased for companies, trustees and absentees from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

The phasing-in rebate will be restructured and expanded to include absentee landholders.

The effect of these changes will see some 7,800 current land tax payers no longer pay land tax and over 4,000 pay less tax. This represents around 40% of companies, trustees and absentees that currently pay land tax.

Individual landholders will not be affected by these changes and will continue to receive the 15% general land tax rebate.

Following these changes Queensland's per capita land tax collections will still be well below those of Victoria and New South Wales.

STRONG, STABLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Mr Speaker, the Beattie Government is a responsible and accountable Government committed to delivering cost effective services to our community.

Through Access Queensland we are building an integrated service delivery platform to provide seamless access to Queensland Government information and services. Funding of \$15 million is provided in this Budget to continue this initiative.

The Government wants to pursue value for money opportunities to deliver infrastructure through the private sector and we have recently released a draft framework for Public Private Partnerships or PPPs. This framework sets out clear processes for the thorough consideration of PPP opportunities, and paves the way to incorporate private sector innovation in the delivery of public infrastructure.

We are also pursuing strategies to ensure that Government service delivery remains cost effective and efficient and relevant to meeting community needs.

Corporate service activities are being reviewed to adopt a shared services model of delivery and options for how the Government manages and delivers its strategic information obligations are being developed. These are clear examples of the Government looking to do things smarter.

As part of our commitment to accessible and responsive Government, we will hold a history-making sitting of Parliament in Townsville during 2002-03.

We are also responsive to the needs of the community sector arising from the crisis in public liability insurance through our actions to implement a package of legislative reforms and to facilitate a group insurance scheme to ensure community groups can continue their valuable contribution to community life.

In addition, the Government will move to provide stamp duty relief on public liability policies for non-profit community organisations following consultation with the insurance industry and relevant organisations on the most effective way to provide this relief.

GROWING THE SMART STATE AND DELIVERING OPPORTUNITIES

Mr Speaker, through this Budget we will continue to deliver sustainable economic growth and responsible fiscal management.

Our election commitments and priorities and our vision for the future are being delivered.

The platform laid by the economic strength of our State is helping achieve a generational change for Queensland.

This Budget will grow the Smart State and will deliver opportunities for all Queenslanders.

Opportunities for jobs.

Opportunities for a better quality of life.

Opportunities for all Queenslanders to reach their full potential.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.16 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.16 p.m.