

**THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2002**

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

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Childers Palace Memorial Building**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.31 a.m.), by leave: I refer to the opening of the Childers Palace Memorial Building on Saturday, 26 October 2002. It will be a permanent and fitting memorial to the 15 young people who lost their lives on 23 June 2000, when the Palace Backpacker Hostel in Childers was destroyed by fire. My government has worked alongside the Isis Shire Council in rebuilding the community of Childers and offering support and assistance to those whose lives have been forever altered by these events.

Immediately after the fire, we offered support to families of the backpackers by providing domestic airfares and accommodation to allow them to visit Childers and attend memorial services. We were able to help more than a dozen relatives from a variety of countries with transport and/or accommodation at a cost of nearly \$17,000. I am pleased to advise that for the opening of the Childers Memorial Building, the Isis Shire Council and the state government will again provide assistance for those family members who wish to attend. Between us, we will provide accommodation in Brisbane and Childers, bus travel from Brisbane to Childers and liaison officers in Brisbane and Childers to smooth their visit. I congratulate and thank the council for its generous actions. It is expected that the opening will be attended by representatives of 12 of the 15 families.

Staff from my department are also responsible for coordinating the involvement of numerous other departments, such as Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Fire and Rescue to ensure that the privacy of family members and the dignity of the occasion are maintained.

I personally visited Childers last month to inspect the progress of works at the site. It is going well. Following extensive community consultation, it was decided to restore the Palace Hotel to its former state and that the entire top floor would be given over to a memorial for those who perished in the tragedy, and an art gallery. The next stage of work at the site will see the construction of a new hostel for backpackers on land at the rear of the Palace Memorial Building. I will officially open the Childers Memorial Building on 26 October.

The Queensland government contributed \$340,000 to the redevelopment of the site, \$25,000 towards the Memorial Wall to honour those who died in the fire, and \$40,000 for memorial artwork—a total of \$405,000. The memorial, which will be unveiled by Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, is an enormous glass sculpture that covers an entire wall and bears the images of the 15 people who lost their lives. A mural commemorating them will be unveiled by a representative of the families. Unfortunately, only about 100 people are able to be present for the unveiling of this memorial due to the size of the room in which it is housed.

As one can imagine, there are a lot of people from the community who played a very active role in the days and months following the fire who would like to witness the unveiling. I am happy to advise that the Queensland government will provide an eight by six metre daytime outdoor screen so that the proceedings can be televised live to the public. The state government will contribute up to \$17,100 to pay for the screen and the cost of two nights' accommodation in Childers for the families.

The way in which the Childers community united following the fire, their initiative in erecting the Palace Memorial Building and the commissioning of a memorial to those lost in the tragedy are actions to be commended. I am proud that my government has been able to be of assistance in supporting the Childers community and the families of the deceased throughout these difficult times. As I have previously reported, when I was in London in 2000, I took the opportunity to meet some family members of those lost in the fire.

I thank Local Government Minister, Nita Cunningham, for her contribution to enabling the work on the building to go ahead and for her personal involvement in it. I also thank the local member of parliament, Trevor Strong, for his involvement and representation and for keeping me

informed of progress. In addition, I thank the Isis Mayor, Bill Trevor, who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and compassion ever since the tragedy. I again congratulate him for everything that he has done. I have sent him a letter on behalf of all Queenslanders stating that the way in which the community of Childers united following the fire and the initiative of constructing and commissioning the Palace Memorial Building are actions to be commended.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Education and Training

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: Developing Queensland as a Smart State is one of my government's key priorities and I want to ensure that that continues to be the case. In order to be the Smart State, we must have a well-educated, skilled and adaptable population. I have always insisted that education and training are the keys to enabling all Queensland youngsters to have an opportunity to reach their full potential. That is why we will spend a quarter of our budget on education.

Later today, I will be hosting—along with the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, and other key ministers including the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth, Matt Foley—a reception for some of Queensland's leading educators to thank them for the contribution they are making to our Smart State vision.

I take the opportunity to update the House on our plans to reform education and give Queensland children, regardless of where they live, the very best education. We know that the world is changing and that we are developing into a more knowledge-based society where learning is a life-long endeavour, not something that finishes when we take off the school uniform for the last time. In order to prepare our children for these changes, we need to create pathways for students, pathways to the education which suits them best and pathways which will equip them with the general and technical skills and knowledge to be competitive in the 21st century.

Last week, Anna Bligh and Matt Foley released on behalf of the state government two external reports by Professors John Pitman and Margaret Gardner, focusing on more flexible senior schooling options and better links between school, further study and work. Professor Pitman suggests in his report entitled 'The School Certificate—A New Deal' that the senior certificate should be more achievement based than time driven, and that learning from work, TAFE and the community should be counted towards obtaining that qualification. He also suggests that there should be more flexibility to enable students to complete the senior certificate in different environments such as TAFE and the workplace.

Professor Margaret Gardner reviewed pathways for students to further education, training and work once compulsory schooling has been completed and in their post-school years. She has recommended that post-school studies become more flexible and that schools, vocational trainers and universities give greater recognition to the courses and qualifications which are offered by each institution. The Pitman and Gardner reports will be considered along with community feedback on the discussion paper 'Queensland the Smart State: Education and Training Reforms for the Future'. That paper, which we released in March, proposes that young people should be learning full-time until they turn 16 or 17 and that if they are not they should be in full-time work. It also advocates a trial of a full-time preparatory year for children before they enter year one.

Next year a total of 39 schools in the state, Catholic and independent sectors will take part in such a trial. The package also recommends greater long-term investment in information and communication technologies. We have also set new goals for education, training and employment through Queensland State Education 2010 and through our vocational education and training strategy, Skilling Queensland 2001-2004.

This year's state budget provides for a \$158 million investment over four years in new and replacement computers, IT training for teachers, and measures to improve secondary school retention rates. We have also set aside \$151 million to improve student literacy standards. All of these measures show that we are serious about our commitment to education and equipping Queenslanders with the knowledge and technical skills which a Smart State needs.

I seek to incorporate some additional remarks into *Hansard* for the information of all members.

Leave granted.

**EDUCATION RECEPTION TALKING POINTS**

Educating children for their futures is one of my government's greatest priorities.

To transform Queensland into the Smart State and ensure we have a prosperous and growing future, we have to make an ongoing commitment to the excellence of that education.

Every child, no matter where he or she lives in Queensland, must have the very best possible education to reach his or her full potential.

We're developing into a more knowledge-based society and we need to prepare our children for those changes.

Every educator in Queensland has a role to play in this regardless of where they work in the education and training system.

Teachers are pivotal to meeting the challenges in education and they play a valuable role in facilitating learning, managing projects and leading research.

We've set new goals through Queensland State Education 2010, and our vocational education and training strategy, Skilling Queensland 2001-2004.

In March we released Queensland the Smart State—Education and Training Reforms for the Future.

It outlines proposals for keeping young people in full-time learning until they turn 16 or 17 or, if they've left school, to encourage them to work.

It also advocates trialling a full-time preparatory year for children prior to Year One and greater long-term investment in IT.

We're also considering more flexible senior schooling options and ways of improving links between school, further study and work.

We're reviewing reports from Professors John Pittman and Margaret Gardner outlining ways in which we can do this.

Their suggestions include making the Senior Certificate more achievement-based, giving students more flexibility to complete the certificate in other environments such as TAFE and the workplace, and greater support for young people making the transition from education to work.

We may not adopt all of the proposals or we may adapt them in slightly different ways, but we'll consider all of them very carefully and will continue to listen to your ideas.

I am determined that the future of education and training will remain one of my government's greatest priorities.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
Japanese Economic Forum**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: As Minister for Trade I have organised a major business forum to remind companies that Japan remains a massive and lucrative export market for Queensland businesses, even after the Asian economic downturn. Later today I will open the forum titled 'A Changing Japanese Economy: Successes and Opportunities' at 80 George Street, Brisbane. I will be accompanied by the Japanese ambassador and the local Japanese consul.

Today's forum continues Queensland's longstanding association with Japan, our formal links dating back to the establishment of a Japanese consulate in Townsville in 1896. This forum will not only strengthen our political, economic, social and cultural ties but will also enable Queensland businesses to explore new opportunities in biotechnology, information technology, the entertainment industry, education and health care sectors. There is no more important bilateral relationship for Queensland than the one we enjoy with Japan. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Overall, we supply more than one quarter of Australia's exports to Japan. Our key products are coal, raw sugar, and beef. Contrary to the media talk of doom and gloom in the Japanese economy, Queensland's exports to Japan actually rose 45 per cent between 1999 and the 2001 calendar year.

Last year, Queensland's trade offices in Tokyo and Osaka helped Queensland companies attract about \$80 million worth of new business.

Companies such as Softlink, Filtronic Comtek and IMT Holdings are leading the way in showing Queensland firms how to do business with Japan. We are also making inroads with biotechnology. Last year Japanese companies signed three confidentiality agreements with Queensland biotechnology companies. A memorandum of understanding was signed between Itochu Bio Industry and the Institute of Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland.

The education services sector is also making gains with about 21 clients generating an estimated \$41 million in income for Queensland. The commencement of Australian Airlines flights between Australia and Japan in October will enhance opportunities in the education and travel sectors. Our food exporters are enjoying continued success with fresh and frozen vegetables, sauces, pastes, canned juices and gourmet antipasto products to Japan.

Many of our export partnerships have been developed with the Japanese trading companies but even their role is changing as they diversify into new areas such as biotechnology, IT and environmental services. I recently had the pleasure of signing an agreement with Mitsui and the Tokyo Electric Power Company for a \$325 million investment in the Tarong North Power Station.

Since becoming Premier of Queensland I have made it my business to visit Japan at least once a year and will continue to do so.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Toyota National Country Music Muster

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: This weekend is an historic one for Gympie. For several reasons, it will be memorable. The peaceful setting of Amamoor Creek State Forest Park—40 minutes drive west of Gympie—came alive on Tuesday for the annual Toyota National Country Music Muster. The muster concludes on Sunday. All going well, I might even drop in and see how it is going.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** All right. I will not go into that because last time I got into trouble, but I am a Lee Kernaghan fan, so let me get into trouble again! As well, my cabinet will be in Gympie for our 54th community cabinet meeting, starting Sunday. I made the announcement about holding the cabinet while in Gympie on my recent 'keeping in touch tour' from Rockhampton to Brisbane.

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** It was an excellent idea, and I take the enthusiastic interjection of the Minister for Education.

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I can't wait to get there. The Gympie meeting will be the 19th community cabinet since our re-election. This will be the first time that we have met in Gympie, and it will be the first time since February 1959 that state cabinet has met in Gympie. The ministry and the departmental directors-general will be on hand. More than 107 formal deputations have been received—another clear indication that the community cabinet process continues to work well. The local member for Gympie is most welcome and we look forward to seeing her on Monday at the official reception.

Since election in 1998 we have received just under 4,440 formal deputations as well as taking an estimated 3,850 informal deputations. That is more than 2,400 hours of deputations. We estimate that more than 22,900 people have attended the community cabinets, so there has been a significant commitment to meeting and listening to Queenslanders. This year we have held community cabinet meetings at Stanthorpe, the Brisbane Convention Centre, Moranbah, the State Library, Stretton (Sunnybank Hills), Cairns, Barcaldine/Longreach and earlier this month at the Ekka. Now it will be Gympie's turn. It is the fourth time we have met at the Ekka and it is now part of our annual program. While in Gympie I will also officially open the Cooloola Shire City Centre Project on Monday afternoon at the invitation of the mayor. This and the community cabinet meeting are about engagement. It is all about listening.

While highlighting community engagement I want to remind members that our next sitting day will be the first day of the historic north Queensland sitting in Townsville. The north Queensland sitting is now just under a fortnight away. The north Queensland sitting will be a most memorable event and again another example of engagement, listening and keeping in touch. Mr Speaker, I understand that you have produced some mementos—a cap and a T-shirt—of this great occasion. I urge members to help promote those not just for the information of the community but for all members of this House.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Regional Sitting of Parliament, Townsville

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: When Parliament sits again next month, members will swap this grand old chamber for the tropical climes of Townsville. It will be a historic occasion not only for parliament but also for the people of north Queensland. Each year, this parliament attracts tens of thousands of curious and inquisitive visitors, the majority of whom are students. Last year, of the 40,000 visitors to parliament more than 25,000 were primary and secondary school students, mostly from the

south-east corner. Clearly this is an important part of government studies in our schools. That is why our government launched a subsidy scheme earlier this year to give year 7 students in the far-flung reaches of north and north-west Queensland the chance to visit parliament when it sits in Townsville.

Under the scheme, schools could apply for a subsidy of between \$50 and \$200 per student, depending on their location, to help them cover travel costs to the regional sitting of parliament. I am pleased to inform members today, particularly those with electorates in the north and north-west of Queensland, that more than 700 students from over 20 state and non-state schools have been approved for funding under the scheme. I am particularly delighted to advise that eight year 7 students from Saibai Island State School in the Torres Strait and 10 year 7 students from Lockhart River State School will attend the historic sitting. Both school groups advise that it will take them a day to reach Townsville. This is a considerable journey for young students.

The member for Mount Isa will be pleased to know that groups from Mount Isa as well as Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton will be travelling to the sitting as a result of the subsidy. No doubt they are looking forward to a chance to see their local members in action. This is a rare opportunity for rural and regional students to see how parliament operates first-hand, an experience that students in Queensland's south-east corner enjoy as a regular part of their schooling and can take for granted. To date, a total of more than 4,600 students from over 80 schools have registered to attend the Townsville sitting. In the lead-up to the sitting, Education Queensland and the Parliamentary Education Services have organised a range of activities to inform students and teachers about the Townsville parliament and to encourage them to get involved.

Last month I visited more than 30 north Queensland teachers who were brushing up on their knowledge and understanding of government and parliamentary processes at a conference in Townsville. The conference gave teachers ideas for classroom activities and identified education resources that they could use to develop students' understanding of the key principles of civics and democracy. Other activities also planned to coincide with the Townsville sitting include a local schools debating competition and poster competition for primary schools. This is an historic occasion which the community of north Queensland has embraced. Like other members, I look forward to this next milestone in the history of the Queensland parliament. I am pleased that so many young Queenslanders will have the chance to share it with us.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.47 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland Art Gallery's flagship contemporary art event, the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, will open at the gallery three weeks from today on 12 September. APT 2002 will focus attention on the important contribution of artists from Asia and the Pacific within the contemporary art arena and continue to build on the innovation, diversity and success of the previous triennials. Work exhibited will range from the meditative and quietly engaging to the challenging and spectacular. The APT is an event of which all of Queensland can be proud. It was originally introduced by the Hon. Wayne Goss, the greatest arts minister in Queensland's history, and has flourished under the strong leadership of art gallery director Doug Hall. It is now recognised as one of Australia's foremost cultural events and has earned its place as an essential and important event on the national arts calendar.

For the first time in Australia, APT 2002 will offer audiences works by a smaller, more select group of highly influential and innovative artists who have made an outstanding contribution to contemporary art over the last three decades. Sixteen artists and one artists' collective have been selected by a five-member team of senior gallery curators, led by director Doug Hall. The work of internationally renowned and influential artists such as Nam June Paik, Yayoi Kusama and Montien Boonma will be seen alongside new work by a younger generation of contemporary artists including Suh Do-Ho, Song Dong and the Pasifika Divas. APT 2002 will be of a similar scale to previous triennials and will physically occupy more than half the entire scope of the Queensland Art Gallery exhibition space.

The audiences for the APT have expanded and consolidated over the last decade. The first APT was held in 1993 and attracted 60,000 visitors, the second in 1996 doubled its attendance to 120,000, while the third in 1999 attracted 155,000 visitors. The Asia-Pacific Triennial has developed a strong appeal for young audiences and students nationally. APT artists and

artworks, through the exhibition and associated education programs, are now studied across curricula in primary, secondary and tertiary education frameworks throughout Australia. The considerable success of previous Kids' APT programs will be extended and explored during APT 2002, which will again present interactive art works commissioned by the gallery from participating artists and devised especially for young audiences.

Kids' APT also incorporates a children's cultural festival over the summer holidays from January 11 to 25. The Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, now in the design phase and planned to open in 2005 as part of the South Bank Millennium Arts Precinct, will provide a home for future triennials.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### General Practitioner Shortage, Rural/Regional Areas

**Hon. W. M. EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (9.50 a.m.), by leave: The shortage of general practitioners in rural, regional and outlying city areas is a well recognised national dilemma. I have made previous statements in this House about a related issue—the need for the federal government to make sure our private GPs have adequate incentives through Medicare to provide services after hours and on weekends. That in turn could relieve the pressure on our public hospitals because there is no doubt that attendances by GP-type patients at our emergency departments are increasing. This was outlined in an article in yesterday's *Courier-Mail*.

However, what I would like to raise today is the need to address a fundamental issue with our medical work force; that is, the need to train more Australians in medicine. I acknowledge that the health system in Queensland and Australia could not survive without overseas trained doctors. I am told that in 2000-01 AMWAC figures show that nearly 2,500 temporary resident doctors arrived in Australia, so it is reasonable to estimate that well over 500 of them began work in Queensland either for the public or private systems.

While many overseas trained doctors have terrific skills, and they must meet the required standards to practise here, surely this is not a long-term solution to the skilled medical work force shortage problem. Surely it is time for Australia to seriously look at training more of its own medical work force. It is wrong in every way to permanently rely on such a significant number of overseas trained doctors while Queensland and Australian young people generally have the door to medical school slammed in their faces by the Commonwealth's restriction of medical school places, GP training places and, of course, Medicare provider numbers. It certainly is not smart work force planning.

In 1996, the federal Labor government recognised the need for extra places in Queensland and announced the new medical school in Townsville. In June of this year the Premier threw the state government's support behind a push to establish a medical school on the Gold Coast. At the time we were aware of two Queensland based universities that were keen to establish a medical school, and I believe they remain keen. The government's argument at the time was that the Gold Coast had an extremely strong case. Adelaide, with 1.4 million people, has two medical schools and south-east Queensland, with more than 2 million people, has one.

The state government once again calls on the federal government to fast-track the Gold Coast's claim for a medical school. Urgently increasing the number of Australian medical graduates is a sustainable solution to the ongoing problem of doctor shortages, and it gives young Queenslanders a fairer go. I urge members opposite to support it.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Fingerprinting

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: Fingerprinting remains an essential tool in fighting and solving crime. I often rise in this House to discuss the benefits of new technologies such as DNA testing, and indeed this is certainly an exciting field which has met with great success. But it must be remembered that the art of fingerprinting is also a science. In fact, Mr Speaker, I can tell you that between the start of July 2001 and late June this year, 6,408 positive fingerprint matches have been made by police. Of these, 5,808 have been linked to suspects or offenders in crimes. In some cases the identification of fingerprints helped link suspects to more than one crime.

In 2000-01, police made 4,785 positive fingerprint matches. This included making identifications of suspects allegedly involved in more than 500 major crimes and drug offences and 2,200 burglary offences. The Police Service's ability to identify fingerprints at crime scenes has been enhanced by a new state-of-the-art fingerprinting system which was implemented in April last year. The national fingerprint computer system has led to the successful identification of suspects in rapes, robberies and break-ins which previously may not have been possible. It also helps to provide new information to allow old unsolved crimes to be further investigated.

Fingerprint identification played a key role in identifying sexual offenders as part of Operation Javelin, a long-running investigation which examined and solved sex crimes. The role that technology plays in crime fighting is an increasingly important one, and one that we, as a government, encourage the Queensland Police Service to embrace.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **National Housing Summit**

**Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (9.55 a.m.), by leave: I want to take this opportunity to bring to members' attention the increasing need for a national response to a growing housing crisis. The media is full of interesting stories about windfall gains in the housing market. These stories are, of course, good news, and I applaud the ongoing role that home ownership has in the fabric of society. But there is another story that, sadly, more and more people in Australia will be able to relate to and for whom the great Australian dream will never be a reality.

The need for an overall look at housing has been brought home yet again with the tragic fire at Sandgate on Sunday night which left more people without a place they can call home. Currently, there are more than 25,000 people homeless each night in Queensland. What we have seen over recent years is the supply of low-cost housing for the most vulnerable people in our society shrinking, and there is no sign that this trend will change. In the 12 months to March 2002, there has been a loss of an average of 44 boarding house rooms per month in Brisbane, which is equivalent to 33 boarding house closures in the past 12 months, representing a loss of 531 rooms. The Howard government has all but walked away from its responsibility to fund housing construction. The Commonwealth is continuing to dictate further cuts to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement—further cuts to an agreement that has already been savaged by the Commonwealth government with its so-called efficiency dividends while it turns a blind eye to the impact of the GST and inflation, which is further eroding federal funding.

Without capital funding for housing, the state cannot replace boarding houses and provide other low-cost accommodation. The cuts mean there are not even enough dollars to sustain the existing housing portfolio. The Commonwealth thinks the answer is in subsidising rents for people to pay in the private sector and withdrawing capital funding to the states. The fact is that many people cannot find a place in the private sector that they can afford—somewhere safe and secure where they can stay long term, and somewhere where they are not discriminated against. The contribution of housing to the community is severely underestimated. Secure housing is linked to other objectives, such as improving health, education and employment.

**Mr Johnson:** I took it up with the federal Treasurer last week personally.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the member. It gives me no pleasure to note that waiting times in many areas are going up and waiting lists are increasing as a result of Howard's policies. It is easy to see how the Commonwealth's favoured rent assistance program, while helping many tens of thousands of households every year, can still leave some people paying more than half of their pay packet on rent, while others who do not have any trouble paying their rent also receive it. What is needed is a vision for Australia's housing future, a national housing framework that will involve a commitment by all levels of government, and a willingness to make a difference. I am calling on the federal government to hold a summit with all the state Housing Ministers and other key stakeholders to develop a national housing framework. We need a federal minister for housing so that it is not considered to be simply yet another social service. Just as Health warrants a specific ministerial responsibility so, too, does housing. It is equally important.

The current federal Minister for Community Services is overloaded and is unable to clearly see the importance of housing in the community—fundamental to her other portfolio responsibilities. A national housing summit will provide the focus the federal minister lacks.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Recognition of Excellence Awards, Department of Families

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (9.59 a.m.), by leave: Today I am announcing that nominations for the Recognition of Excellence Awards for the Department of Families will be opened. Staff from the Department of Families work every day to make a difference to the lives of people scattered throughout the state. They often work in a highly volatile and sometimes hostile environment. These awards are our opportunity to formally and publicly acknowledge their contribution to the safety and protection of Queensland's children. We rarely hear about the work of these officers in a positive light, but each day they work at keeping families, who are under tremendous stress, functioning and united. They work at finding a safe place for some of our most disadvantaged children, and they work at helping and supporting our foster carers.

Staff of the Families Department see aspects of human nature which many of us could not imagine. They are witness to the human suffering and trauma that follows the collapse of a family. They see the horrific results of child abuse, and they do this as part of their everyday job. They are the subject of media scrutiny, and I would have to say that all too often this is a one-sided view of the situation. Family Services officers are bound by legislation that prevents them from defending their actions in the public arena. But each day in each part of this state they are making a difference to people's lives. I want to give members a snapshot of the type of work and some of the results that are being achieved.

We recently received a telephone call from a former client. She wanted to make contact because she was pretty sure that not too many past clients ever thanked the department for its involvement. She went on to say how grateful she was that the department had taken her children into care, had 'forced her to take a long hard look at how awful her life was' and made her 'clean up her act'. She said that if the department had not 'interfered' she would most probably 'still be into the drink and working the highway' and 'not a very good mother, but most probably I'd be dead in the gutter somewhere'. The caller said, 'I just want to thank everyone at the department who has helped me and the kids over the past four years and just to tell you guys to keep up the good work because there are a lot of success stories out there, and our family is one of them thanks to you.'

Then there is the case of a small baby recently diagnosed with a terminal illness who was taken into care due to his mother's inability to provide care for him and her neglect of his medical needs. He was given a very high standard of care by foster carers and was then placed with his grandparents. The foster carers and medical personnel all worked with the grandparents to take over his complex care needs and he has now been successfully integrated into the extended family. All of these factors have contributed to give the child's natural family the opportunity to know, love and care for a child whose prognosis is not optimistic.

Then there is the young woman who has been in care since she was a baby and who at 18 was not confident of being able to finish high school. The staff worked with that young person to resolve a number of family and accommodation issues, with the end result being that the young person is now stable and confident of being able to finish high school despite her leaving foster care. These workers have given her a greater chance at a better life than she may otherwise have had.

Finally, another good outcome is the recent case of a 12-year-old boy who was subject to a short-term custody order. When the department first had contact with him his behaviour was quite violent and aggressive. Due to his behaviour at school he was on the verge of being expelled. He was absconding from his family home and was at times verbally abusive and aggressive to his family and teachers. He was placed outside the family home for a short period of time and had weekly contact with his FSO and child and family support worker. He now has a 100 per cent attendance record at school and is involved in grade 8 subjects including laptop English—whatever that is—and social science. He consistently completes homework and spends extra time on assignments and projects for school. He is now also involved in a Boys on Books program and reads to primary school students. He has recently started playing junior Rugby League and plays beach volleyball with other young people every week. He has also now returned to his family and this is going well.

I know that there are many families out there who owe a debt of gratitude to our Family Services officers. I suggest that the Recognition of Excellence Awards are an opportunity for each and every one of us to support the good work that they perform, and I encourage members of parliament to take part in this.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Drought Declarations; Vaccinating Stock to Prevent Blackleg

**Hon. H. PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Today I can announce that as minister I have approved recommendations to add Barcoo shire in the state's west as well as Cooloola shire and the southern sections of Tiaro shire to the state's drought declared list. With these declarations, together with Inglewood shire earlier this week, there are now 41 shires officially drought declared in Queensland. The area of Queensland covered by shire drought declarations has increased to just over 20 per cent. The declarations are based on the recommendations of the local drought committee. In Barcoo shire the lack of pasture growth has been compounded by the unusually high temperatures from November last year to February this year. These high temperatures burnt off any benefit from storms that went through the shire late last year. There have been 34 individual drought declared properties in the Barcoo shire.

In terms of the Cooloola and Tiaro shires, pasture conditions in the area are very poor as a result of the lack of moisture and dry conditions combined with severe frosts in winter. There have been 22 individual drought declared properties in Cooloola shire and a further seven individual properties in the area of Tiaro shire are now completely drought declared. The declarations in Tiaro shire cover the local government divisions 2 and 3.

Under shire and individual property declarations, primary producers have access to freight subsidies on fodder and water, stock returning from agistment and on stock purchased for restocking. There has been some good rain in Queensland this week, but I still expect more drought declarations to be made. The rain has been of great value to many producers, but it has not fallen in all areas or in the amounts that are needed. In some areas, the light falls may ultimately be of more nuisance than benefit without follow-up rains. I welcome the rain that has fallen, but we need more and we need it more often.

I also urge all cattle producers to undertake vaccination of young stock to avoid the consequences of blackleg, a disease which is endemic in Queensland. Blackleg is a disease most commonly seen in young cattle between the ages of 12 and 30 months, particularly weaners. A simple five-in-one vaccination can provide protection to young cattle from blackleg, tetanus, pulpy kidney and other clostridial diseases. Whilst it would normally occur in situations where the cattle are in good feed, it can also result from supplementary feeding of good grain. Once again, I urge all producers to vaccinate their stock. Times are tough enough without losing stock to a disease that is so easily prevented.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Office of Fair Trading, Prosecution Trail

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: Some 79 individuals and businesses were successfully prosecuted by the Office of Fair Trading for over 250 breaches of consumer and business legislation in the 2001-02 financial year. While the vast majority of businesses are responsible traders, OFT has continued its vigilance against rogue operators in the marketplace. Shonky real estate agents and motor dealers were among the main offenders, highlighting the need for the consumer protections and sanctions contained in the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and for people to deal with licensed traders. Of all the individuals and businesses brought before the courts by the Office of Fair Trading in the last financial year, only three escaped conviction. Fair Trading had an impressive strike rate and this should send a very strong message to individuals and businesses who think they are above the law.

Unlicensed dealing and odometer tampering continued to cause problems throughout the state, but an increase in proactive compliance activities such as spot checks has stopped many rogue traders in their tracks. In the past 12 months, Fair Trading investigators have visited 1,948 property agents, auctioneers and motor dealers in Brisbane and regional areas. While the level of

compliance has been good overall, we have been successful in identifying illegal behaviour and bringing those responsible before the courts. Fair Trading's compliance blitz also targeted second-hand dealers and market traders.

Regular inspections of weekend market stalls were also stepped up. Trade measurement inspectors visited 47 markets between November 2001 and June 2002, increasing overall compliance in the sector by around 30 per cent. Increased use of new infringement notices has allowed OFT to pursue more compliance activity. Penalties and orders obtained by OFT in the 2001-02 financial year totalled \$568,650, up \$316,970 from the previous year.

Most significant was the \$270,000 fine recently handed down to infamous Gold Coast loan shark Timothy Ward and his company Shark Financial Services Pty Ltd. Others included a \$100,000 fine for a company and its director, associated with a Brisbane rental car business, found guilty of winding back vehicle odometers and six-year jail sentences for the directors of a Brisbane motor vehicle auction company for the misappropriation of more than \$600,000 in trust moneys. I seek leave to table a list of some of OFT's most significant prosecutions.

Leave granted.

**Mrs ROSE:** The Office of Fair Trading is serious about stamping out illegal activities by individuals and businesses and boosting confidence in the Queensland marketplace. We welcome tough penalties for traders who rip off unsuspecting consumers and try to cheat the system. A further 76 prosecutions are pending for further breaches of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, Criminal Code, Fair Trading Act, Classification of Films Act, Classification of Publications Act, Consumer Credit Code and the Auctioneers and Agents Act. The OFT continues to extend compliance activities. We will pursue shonky traders, particularly in relation to trust account misappropriation, odometer tampering and overseas scams. This means increased monitoring of business compliance, greater use of infringement notices, injunctions and namings, and further prosecutions—actions that are critical to ensuring consumer confidence in the marketplace.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Landcare Week

**Hon. S. ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.11 a.m.), by leave: This week marks National Landcare Week—a week where Australia celebrates the work of ordinary, everyday Australians who are our frontline volunteers in the fight to protect the environment. Australia's Landcare movement has been tackling land and water degradation for 15 years now, and some great gains have been made in the effort to tackle natural resource problems. The week's theme, 'Everybody, Everywhere, Landcare', aims to encourage all Australians to embrace the Landcare ethic and take ownership of NRM issues in their community.

Every year in Queensland more than 350 Landcare and Catchment groups and thousands of individuals work towards a sustainable future for our natural resources. The success of our state's Landcare groups is reflected in Queensland's presence at the National Landcare Awards presented in Canberra last night. Queensland groups and individuals were nominated as finalists in each of the 10 award categories. Queensland's finalists were: Gympie & District Landcare Group; Max Middleton; Accelerated On Farm Nature Conservation Project in Roma and Dalby; Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee; Bernie Shelton; Noosa Shire Council; Duncan Patterson; Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee; the Sturgess Family Partnership; and the Capricorn Coast Landcare Group.

While Queensland was not awarded any of the national awards, this does not detract from the marvellous work that these groups do to protect our state's natural resources. The participation of these groups and their many volunteers illustrates the diversity of people in our state who are willing to give up their time and expertise to work in partnership with government to protect our environment. Queensland is fortunate to have Landcare volunteers across the state who work tirelessly to tackle important environmental issues such as salinity, land degradation, water quality, erosion and nature conservation. To all the Queensland finalists I say: congratulations on the deserved recognition for your ongoing contribution to natural resource management in Queensland. In fact, one of the awards that I presented in Gatton last Friday night was to the sister-in-law—

**Mrs Rose:** No, my sister.

**Mr ROBERTSON:**—the sister of the Hon. Minister for Tourism.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Training Academy**

**Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: Few would disagree that the tragic events of 11 September last year in the USA changed our world forever. I know that our Queensland Emergency Services workers and volunteers, particularly our firefighters and paramedics, felt a very deep sense of loss from that tragedy as part of the wider international emergency services community. As the anniversary of the terrorist attacks draws near, we can pay our deepest respects to people who laid down their lives so that their community could live more safely and more securely. Like many people throughout the world, our Queensland Emergency Services workers also recognise the need to move forward after the 11 September tragedy.

Earlier this month many people from my department undertook a gruelling exercise at the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service's training academy at the port of Brisbane which simulated a high-rise building collapse. The exercise saw tonnes of rubble dumped within the grounds of the academy, with 85 personnel with 12 different search and rescue scenarios designed to train personnel in all areas of urban search and rescue operations. It was a great success and will help the planning and execution of emergency services delivery in rescue operations in the future. The exercise was also the first big test for the QFRS academy's new urban search and rescue, or USAR, training cell, which was specifically developed by the QFRS to train and test rescuers under extreme conditions. The cell is a series of interconnected tunnels and pipes that can be filled with rubble, realistically simulating the conditions of an earthquake or building collapse, enabling rescuers to train using realistic scenarios and environments.

This three-day exercise trained urban search and rescue teams from across Australasia in the preparation, approach and execution of rescue operations for a major structural collapse. The exercise was the first USAR exercise conducted in Australia since last year's 11 September attacks in the United States. The logistical concerns surrounding any rescue operation are of course enormous, and the lessons learnt during this exercise mean that the QFRS search and rescue task force will be fully skilled up in the event of a major incident. The QFRS has the capacity to assemble a USAR task force within two hours of notification and send a team equipped with rescue gear and supplies anywhere in the state, country or the world within six hours.

The clear objectives achieved out of the exercise included creating awareness amongst USAR teams about the specialist equipment, systems and capabilities available nationally and internationally in the aftermath of a disaster and how on-site operations should be coordinated and managed. It also provided a valuable platform for skill sharing and knowledge, swapping between rescuers and Australasian task force representatives.

**OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY****Report of Expenses**

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (10.17 a.m.): I table the report of the expenses of the office of the Leader of the Liberal Party for the period 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002.

**NOTICE OF MOTION****Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2002**

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.17 a.m.): I give notice that I will move—

That the Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2002 (Subordinate Legislation 2002 No. 199) tabled in the Parliament on 20 August 2002 be disallowed.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****Battle for Milne Bay**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.18 a.m.): In his short history of Australia's part in the war against Japan titled Pacific Victory, Hugh Buggy commented—

Pacific war history was made by Australian troops in the battle for Milne Bay in late August and early September 1942. They did what no Allied Troops in the Pacific had succeeded in doing up to that date. They met an amphibious

Japanese invading force, fought it to a standstill, and hurled it back into the sea. And they achieved this swift and smashing victory alone.

That was the first land defeat of Japanese forces in World War II. At the fighting front in the thick of the battle was the 25th Battalion comprising militia soldiers from Toowoomba and the Darling Downs who were called up for full-time service just two weeks after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941. They embarked from Townsville for Milne Bay on 12 July 1942.

Milne Bay was important for both sides. The allies needed it to bolster Port Moresby's defence and to launch attacks northward. To the Japanese, swift seizure of the three allied forces airfields at Milne Bay was necessary to secure air control of the Coral Sea and from where they could launch an attack on Samurai Island and then onward to Port Moresby and Australia. Fierce fighting ensued until early September, when the Japanese were crushed and victory rested with the allied forces.

A ceremony in Toowoomba this Sunday, 25 August, will be the last chance to officially thank the veterans of the battle of Milne Bay on the 60th anniversary of that battle. There will be a street parade at 10 followed by a service at the Mothers Memorial at 11 and a reception for members of the 25th Battalion Association. After this weekend's commemorations the 25th Battalion Association, representing those fine veterans—most now in their eighties—will go into retirement. Some of the battle of Milne Bay veterans we will always remember. We remember in particular the president of the association, Errol Jorgensen, MM; his secretary, Ernie Bain; Alan Beahan, the treasurer; the current committee members, Charlie Cox, Eddie McKee, Kev Olsen, Stan Alford, Stan Postle, Bert Miles and Gerry Turner; and all the others who have been involved.

The Chief of Defence, General Peter Cosgrove, is expected to attend. The whole of the battalion which inherited the proud history of the 25th Battalion—now the 25th/49th Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment—will be on parade. I ask all Queenslanders who can possibly attend these commemorations for the last time to do so. It is a time for us to remember those who did not come back. Lest we forget.

### **HIH Royal Commission, Payment of Legal Fees**

**Mr MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): The House will be aware of the appalling greed, fraud, corruption and abuse uncovered at the HIH royal commission. What has been revealed has been rightly described as an obscenity. I want to bring to the attention of the House no less an obscenity, funded by the federal government, in relation to the directors and officers who stand accused of the most gross mismanagement and abuse of trust in the HIH collapse.

We now know that the legal costs of Mr Adler, the disgraced former head of FAI Insurance, who has already been banned from holding a directorship or company management role, is having his legal representation at the HIH inquiry paid for by the federal government at the rate of \$5,000 a day. One expects that the disgraced former CEO of HIH, Ray Williams, will also benefit from this appalling largesse on behalf of the federal government.

The evil behaviour of these two led to the collapse of HIH and directly to the hardship being experienced by many policyholders and by thousands of charitable, community, sporting and professional groups. They can no longer afford public indemnity insurance premiums or have had to find the cash to pay another premium to maintain their insurance protection. Because of their grotesque behaviour, many community functions have been closed down and others hang in the balance.

I find it appalling, even bizarre, that at a time when the Howard government has cut legal aid funding it is meeting the legal costs of people who have dragged the name of corporate Australia through the mud and caused so much hardship for so many decent, innocent Australians. I call on the Attorney-General to raise this matter at the next meeting of federal and state Attorneys-General and demand that the federal government end this obscenity and direct more legal aid funds to ordinary Queenslanders so that they can have equal access to the justice system.

### **Science in Parliament**

**Mr FLYNN** (Lockyer—ONP) (10.22 a.m.): I refer to the recent BIO2002 Conference in Canada, which I was fortunate enough to attend. I did not sign up any trade deals, but the conference certainly gave me an appreciation, on behalf of the people of Queensland, of what it is that science is prepared to and can do for us. The secret is to demonstrate to the people that it can be done safely. I was pleased to be able to follow up my visit to that conference with an

invitation by the government to attend Science in Parliament this week. As a result of that, I would like to read out a letter from a Dr David Leavesley, sent by email. It states—

Dear Bill,

It was a privilege and a pleasure to meet you yesterday when Queensland parliament opened its doors to me and my colleagues, the scientists of Queensland.

I learned much more than I anticipated and enjoyed the short interaction we had in your office. I now have a much better appreciation of the myriad challenges you face daily in servicing your electorates. I empathize with your perceived inadequacy when trying to allay/answer fears over GMO and Stem Cell Research. There are too simply few of us with the understanding to educate those who haven't. However perhaps by targeting basic education ... to leaders in the community to whom the voters turn for the answers, we can demystify such issues. Once demystified we are in a better position to debate the issue objectively ...

...

Please convey my appreciation to Joe Baker and Ray Hollis for their 'Science Meets Parliament, Queensland' initiative. I hope that this will be the first of many.

I acknowledge Minister Paul Lucas for his involvement as well. I think Tuesday's activities were a demonstration of bipartisan support for Science in Parliament. I think this should be the first of many initiatives. There are a lot of worries out in the public. I think the function went a long way to addressing some of those concerns.

### **Diving Industry**

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): Honourable members would be aware of the importance of the diving industry to Cairns, particularly as an attractor in the tourism field. What honourable members may not be so aware of is that the diving industry is also important in association with the fishing industry. I am sorry to report that last year a young crayfish diver, who was diving in the Torres Strait with a fishing operator, died. He was Mr Craig De Vis and he was aged only 23 years—a fine young man. His family understandably are still in grief.

At the coronial inquest in Cairns, Dive Queensland spokesperson Col McKenzie, a man who has worked hard for good standards in the diving industry, highlighted the importance of training appropriate to the task and appropriate to the equipment to be used. Apparently where a surface supply of oxygen is used in open water no special qualifications are currently required. Those in the seafood collecting industry where such equipment is commonly used may not be aware of the dangers associated with its use. There are some allegations therefore that increased regulation may be necessary.

I call therefore on the Minister for Industrial Relations, who has responsibility for workplace health and safety, with the cooperation of the Minister for Primary Industries where these matters bear on the fishing industry, to investigate this situation and to discuss with dive experts their recommendations and any recommendations arising from the coronial inquiry to ensure that divers are properly qualified to undertake such dangerous tasks and to reduce the risk therefore of young divers such as Mr De Vis falling into such accidental circumstances as to lose their lives.

### **Amputee Clinic, Gold Coast**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.25 a.m.): I support the Gold Coast Amputees Advisory Association in its call for the Health Minister to establish a locally based once-a-week amputee clinic at the Gold Coast Hospital. The current once-a-month visiting clinic with a doctor from Brisbane—the doctor sees patients between 9.30 and 11.30 and the therapist sees patients between 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m.—fails to meet the huge backlog.

Losing a limb to disease or trauma such as a road accident is horrific enough. However, the first year after this loss involves a stressful process of repeated trips to specialists and ancillary health professionals for treatment and adjustment of artificial limbs. Currently on the Gold Coast there are an estimated 442 amputees, 384 of whom are listed on the Queensland Artificial Limb Scheme's register. To receive locally based public services through the visiting monthly public clinic, people have to wait three to four months. Alternatively they can drive or be driven by ambulance or family to Brisbane.

The Amputees Advisory Association on the Gold Coast estimates that there are 133 new leg prescriptions each year and myriad other appointments which go with each person, making a conservative estimate of 371 appointments per year. The skills base exists on the Gold Coast to have a locally based clinic. The association advises me that its meetings with hospital staff show that there are appropriately certified doctors and physios qualified to undertake this work, as well as local prosthetists.

The association says that it is hard enough adjusting to being an amputee, but the process of adjusting to artificial limbs can take 12 months. The stump has to shrink to its final size and there is much ongoing adjustment, pain and perseverance. This means that many people, with the additional trauma of having to wait months for a local appointment or being driven back and forth to Brisbane, just give up and accept life in a wheelchair or on crutches. They deserve a better go—

Time expired.

### **Hindustani Language School**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): Happy Daffodil Day. I recently had the great pleasure of attending the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Hindustani Language School. Founded from a vision of cultural integration and diversity, the primary objective of the school is to teach communicative Hindi language and to maintain Indian culture in Australia.

The school commenced in 1992 and has progressed in leaps and bounds since then. At that time the school had 27 students and operated from one centre at Boondall. Ten years down the track the school has expanded and operates from three centres: at Boondall, Rochedale and Camira. The average number of students per year is now 100.

The success of the school is testament to the dedication of parents and trained teachers who work in a voluntary capacity to ensure that those who wish to learn the Hindi language and culture do so free of charge. The service is available to anyone with an interest in learning the Hindi language and culture. The curriculum is accepted by Education Queensland and by the community language element of the federal government. Since acceptance of the curriculum, Hindi can now be taught in mainstream schools as a language subject, provided there are sufficient numbers of students wanting to participate.

The program is not aligned to any particular religion. In fact, the background to every major religion is taught to ensure students learn to understand and respect the traditions and cultures of people from all around the world. In addition to language and culture tuition, the school provides programs in leadership and personal development, public speaking and stage presentations. The marvellous work being carried out by the Hindustani Language School is an example of the many ways the community and the government engage to promote positive community harmony and cultural diversity. I take this opportunity to thank the school, the parents and the volunteers on reaching the milestone of 10 years of operation.

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

### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

#### **Group Insurance Scheme**

**Mr HORAN:** (10.30 a.m.) I refer the Treasurer to the group insurance scheme for not-for-profit organisations, which is scheduled to commence in just over a week's time on 1 September. I ask: how many applications has the Treasurer now received? Will all of those applicants be provided with insurance cover? What is the average cost saving that this group insurance cover will provide these not-for-profit organisations?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The scheme went to cabinet on Monday. In relation to some of the final points that we need to negotiate, we have an insurer who is prepared to take the risks. My department is finalising the negotiations now. We hope to be in a position to sign the contract with the insurer either late this afternoon or first thing in the morning.

Once that is done, an announcement will be made in relation to the scheme and all the people who have registered—and there are over 5,000 who have registered—will be made offers. At this stage, some 80 per cent of people who have registered will be made an offer and will be able to insure from 1 September. The other 20 per cent, which are in the high-risk category, will have their offers made to them from 1 October.

#### **Gaming Officers**

**Mr HORAN:** I refer the Treasurer to Queensland Treasury's decision to amend the certified agreement for gaming officers in Queensland, effectively reducing the number of inspectors on duty at any one time at casinos around the state, something which is completely at odds with his government's policy to have gaming inspectors permanently present on the floors of Queensland

casinos. I ask: why then did the Treasurer's own director of compliance, Office of Gaming Regulation, at the Australasian Casino and Gaming Regulators Conference in June last year, table a Queensland update which stated—

The fact that police and gaming inspectors have a full-time presence in the casino has to a substantial degree assisted in minimising problems of money laundering, prostitution, loan sharking and undesirables being present in the casinos.

Why was the Beattie government's star witness at the recent QIC hearing supporting a reduced regulatory presence, in this case a Mr Barry Sergeant, the West Australian Director-General of the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor—and I table a copy of his affidavit—and a member of the Territory of Christmas Island Casino Surveillance Authority. Bearing in mind that the Treasurer's witness, Mr Sergeant, held these positions while \$13 billion worth of ill-gotten gains were being laundered through the Christmas Island Casino, why has the Beattie government decided that cutting another corner on wage negotiations is preferable to the disastrous consequences that will result from undermining the full-time presence of gaming regulators on the floors of Queensland casinos? I table that affidavit, the update and that other report.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The question had something added in the middle, and at the end of the question it came back again. I could not quite pick up the relevance of that section in the middle about Christmas Island and someone from Western Australia giving evidence somewhere. In relation to what I took to be the question and the statement by our director of compliance of the Office of Gaming that we have been able to stop money laundering by having a presence at casinos, if the Leader of the Opposition looked at the certified agreement he would note that there still will always be a presence of our inspectors during the operations of casinos. All we have done—

**Mr Horan:** Full time?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Full time. All we have done is that at some times, when it is not necessary to have the numbers of people there, we have changed some of that. There still will be inspectors at the casinos at all times.

### Employment

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I refer the Premier to the state government's Smart State policies and its emphasis on job creation, including the very effective strategy of Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. I ask: as a result of the whole-of-government approach to job creation, how does the jobs growth in Queensland compare with the rest of Australia?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for Kurwongbah for her question because I know that she is passionately committed to the Smart State and our whole-of-government strategies. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in July 2002 in Queensland, an additional 1,000 jobs were created. What does that do? That brings jobs growth in Queensland over the past 12 months to 41,100. That represents almost 30 per cent of the jobs created nationally—much more than our 19 per cent share of the national population. We have 19 per cent of Australia's population, yet in Queensland we have created 30 per cent of the jobs that have been created nationally. Of the 41,100 jobs created in Queensland over the past 12 months—and this is a very important statistic—31,500 were full time. That is very significant. This is an incredible 88 per cent of the number of full-time jobs created nationally—88 per cent.

The ANZ job advertisement figures provide a reasonable forward indication of employment. On that basis, the ANZ job advertisement figures for July were encouraging. In the 12 months to July 2002, job advertisements in Queensland were up 25.4 per cent compared to a national increase of 9.5 per cent. So the long-term indications are strong. On the back of the strongest job growth in the nation, our unemployment rate has dropped to 7.3 per cent.

**Mr Foley:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is a fall of 1.1 per cent in 12 months. I take the interjection of the Minister for Employment. I know that he shares my passion for this jobs issue. This is one of the lowest unemployment rates in the past decade and can be contrasted with the average unemployment rate of nine per cent delivered by the coalition during its last term. So our government's unemployment rate is 7.3 per cent. The average unemployment rate during the last term of the conservative Borbidge government was nine per cent. In fact, under the government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a cabinet minister, in February 1997 the unemployment rate rose as high as 9.5 per cent. I remind members of the difference between my government's approach

to job creation and that of the former coalition government. We work hard to make a difference and to create jobs. But when unemployment reached 9.5 per cent in February 1997, Mr Horan, the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, announced that there was nothing that they could do.

Although our job-creation strategies are clearly hitting the mark, we need to maintain our momentum to keep delivering real jobs for Queensland. Queensland's growth status as the best place to work and live in Australia presents challenges in terms of the high participation rate. We are responding to that. As a consequence of the economic climate created by my government, a record level of private investment is expected for 2002-03. This will generate a strong demand for labour and an education and training system to provide Queenslanders with the skills to take up this wealth of opportunity.

So we are working to turn Queensland into the Smart State. This is about future jobs and future opportunities. I accept that the unemployment rate is still too high, but we are doing everything that we can to get it down. This is the lowest level of unemployment in almost 10 years.

### Department of Main Roads

**Mr JOHNSON:** I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to his repeated assurances yesterday that there was no industrial dispute in relation to the Department of Main Roads. I also refer the minister to repeated assurances by the Premier that any of the 2,000 jobs under the VER program would not impact upon regional areas or service delivery. I ask: can the minister confirm that the Queensland Public Sector Union notified the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission of a dispute in relation to the VERs last week and that the Department of Main Roads is now proposing to slash 10 per cent of jobs as part of Queensland's strategy to pay for the botched enterprise bargaining process? Why are 200 jobs in Main Roads to be cut from regional areas and an additional 200 jobs to be slashed from RoadTek—the government's road building and maintenance unit? Will the minister tell the people of Queensland why building roads and fixing potholes is not a service area?

**Mr NUTTALL:** I thank the honourable member for the question which has raised a couple of issues. The second half of that question should be directed to the Minister for Main Roads. In relation to the issue he raised regarding—

**Mr Horan:** Did you tell a lie yesterday?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr NUTTALL:** In answer to the question by the honourable member for Gregory, yes, the QPSU did go to the Industrial Commission; yes, the Industrial Commission spoke with both the government and the union; yes, we are talking with the QPSU in relation to the issue of voluntary redundancies; no, there will be no slashing of jobs in the area of Main Roads. Any other questions the member has in relation to Main Roads should be directed to that minister.

Let me just talk about what has happened during question time in the last couple of days. We have heard slurs, innuendoes and mistruths in relation to my portfolio. Let us just look at this. It started on Tuesday.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr NUTTALL:** On Tuesday, the honourable member for Keppel jumped up in this House and told a fib, stating that we are looking at closing the Roma and Warwick areas of the industrial inspectors.

**Mr LESTER:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr NUTTALL:** Look, sit down, you—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Keppel, is this a point of order?

**Mr LESTER:** I ask that the comment that I told a fib be withdrawn. I find that offensive.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I withdraw it if he thinks it is not a fib. There was an inference drawn by the honourable member that we will be withdrawing industrial inspectors in Roma and Warwick. That was the inference in his question. That is false.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LESTER:** Point of order. I ask that the word—

**Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order.

**Mr LESTER:** I ask that the word 'inference' be withdrawn.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! All right. The member has made his point.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Anything the member finds offensive, I withdraw.

**Mr Lester** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Keppel, you have made your point. Resume your seat.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Anything the member finds offensive, I withdraw. At the moment, there is no industrial disputation in relation to Main Roads. I make that very clear to the honourable member for Gregory.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** As I said yesterday, there has been a slur on my department and on my performance. I make it very, very clear to honourable members opposite that we will not put up with their nonsense.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gregory will cease interjecting.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. Before calling the member for Stafford, I welcome to the public gallery a special group of students from the Distance School of Education. Welcome.

### **Nurses, Enterprise Bargaining**

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN:** I refer the Premier to advertisements by the state government to set the record straight about the enterprise bargaining offer to nurses and to present the facts to taxpayers on how their money is being spent. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition criticised the government, stating that this was a blatant misuse of taxpayers' money. I ask the Premier if taxpayers have any reason to take the Leader of the Opposition's views seriously?

**Mr BEATTIE:** The answer to that question is no. As I indicated in this House last night, it was interesting that the Leader of the Opposition came in here and waved around all those ads. Remember the ads he waved around?

**Government members:** Yes.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Well, what did the Leader of the Opposition do when he was the Minister for Health? What did he do? Let me just wave a few of these advertisements around. This is what we call hypocrisy. This is why people do not believe the Leader of the Opposition. What were they about? What were they about?

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide will cease interjecting.

**Mr BEATTIE:** They were about enterprise bargaining. Isn't that funny? They were about enterprise bargaining. For example, 'Good and Fair: A new enterprise bargaining offer for Queensland Health employees'. The Leader of the Opposition has attacked this government for placing advertisements in newspapers—the very thing he did himself when he was the Minister for Health. Not only that, he has stated that we are being divisive. Well, let us have a look at 'divisive' in terms of some of these issues. Let us go back and have a look at what happened in 1996, 1997 and 1998 when the National and Liberal parties were in office. These are some of the headlines. 'Probe of Education Ads Urged'. Do honourable members know how much the coalition government spent on advertising? \$80,000! They spent \$80,000 on campaigning in relation to the teachers' strike. \$80,000! Do honourable members remember that?

**A Government member:** Yes, I do.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That's right. I remember that, too. The Minister for Transport, who was the shadow minister for education at the time, will remember the saga relating to school cleaners. The opposition spent \$80,000 on advertising. Let us look at the headlines. 'Ads Stir Row.' It goes on. 'Teachers Warn of More Strikes Over Restructure.' 'Nurses Crisis Looming'—under a coalition government.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Talk about this for subtlety: 'Horan Blasts Queensland Nurses' Secretary'. What an inflammatory thing to say! We have these headlines: 'Walk-out Cancels Hospital Surgery in Cairns', 'Nurses in Fight for Justice', 'Hospital Staff to Stop Work' and 'Hospital Workers Plan Action to get Government Talking.' These are all related to health.

**Mr Bredhauer** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed! I take that interjection. So, what do we have? The Leader of the Opposition came in here and stated that we did a terrible thing in placing those ads. Did he do it when he was the Health Minister? Yes, he did! And another \$80,000 related to education. He has also said that we are being divisive. Well, look at these inflammatory remarks from the then Health Minister. Talk about divisive! There is one word to describe this—hypocrisy. That is why people do not believe the Leader of the Opposition. He has no credibility. Look at this headline: 'Hospital Protests'. The list goes on and on. I have never seen such a litany of shame. We have this headline: 'Health Workers Set to Protest Wages.' All the Leader of the Opposition has to do one day is to tell the truth.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Nicklin, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Redlands College in the Cleveland electorate. Welcome.

#### **Drugs, Disposal of Equipment**

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I refer the Minister for Police to the issue of the disposal of equipment used by people undertaking illegal drug activities. Recently the Sunshine Coast police were successful in confiscating lighting and expensive hydroponic equipment used for illegal drug activities. Will the minister ensure that, where appropriate, this expensive lighting and hydroponic equipment is available for sale to legitimate business operators before it is destroyed?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for the question. It is a good and sensible question. He has already raised this with me on another occasion. I have been advised that the Queensland Police Service does auction such equipment from time to time and that, indeed, community groups and some individuals have the opportunity to purchase.

The member has rightly raised the issue that we must be careful as to whom the equipment is sold. If the police believe that there is no value in this equipment, it will be destroyed. On occasions, a court may order that the equipment be destroyed. In answer to the honourable member's question, the Queensland Police Service auctions this sort of equipment to responsible and respected groups or, indeed, individuals. I suggest that if the member's constituents have any concerns or problems they should contact me or contact the member and I will be more than happy to investigate those concerns.

#### **National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools**

**Mr CHOI:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education. Minister, in May this year the federal government confirmed that it would cease funding the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools program—NALSAS. The funding runs out at the end of this year. What impact will this have on Queensland's Asian language programs in our schools?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for his question and for his ongoing interest in the teaching of Asian languages and culture in our schools. Australia's attempts to build strong relationships and partnerships with its Asian neighbours were dealt a very serious blow in May this year when the federal Minister for Education confirmed on SBS television that the funds from the federal government that underpin Asian language teaching across all Australian states were to be withdrawn at the end of this year. I think everybody in this House would agree that that is a very short-sighted decision and one that was detrimental to our reputation in the Asian region. Australia relies on trade with its Asian neighbours. Four of the NALSAS targeted Asian

languages—Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean—are the languages spoken by our top 12 trading partners.

Statistics from the Department of State Development show that Japan ranks as our number one trading partner, with more than \$6 billion annually in exports, and Korea is second with \$2.2 billion. I have recently written to the federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson urging him to reconsider his decision. I have done that because I have taken some time now to look at how Queensland might absorb these cuts and the effect that they might have. In Queensland we receive under this program \$5.22 million. The breakdown of funding is: state system, \$3.7 million; Catholic system, \$856,000; independent sector, more than \$607,000. The Commonwealth ceases its funding in December this year.

In working through how we might absorb these cuts, I am disappointed to advise the House that I see no way forward, unless the minister reconsiders his decision, but to consider putting cuts on the languages program in more than the Asian area so that we do not just target those languages in those classes below the compulsory years. In Queensland state schools, LOTE is compulsory in years 6, 7 and 8. But many schools, with the encouragement and support of Education Queensland, over the last 10 years have developed programs in their preschool to year 5. If we have to impose cuts in this area, it will affect 55,374 Queensland primary students in preschool to year 5 in state primary schools who will no longer be able to participate in non-compulsory LOTE classes. Other impacts will include a reduction in the professional development programs for LOTE teachers. I am advised that in the Catholic sector cuts to NALSAS will cause a significant shortfall in the capacity of some Catholic schools to continue to provide Asian languages at all or at their current level, and similarly in the independent sector.

At the national meeting of ministers of education we tried to implore the federal minister to reconsider his decision. I have now written to him outlining what these cuts will mean in more than 800 primary schools in Queensland. I urged him to consider this before December because that is when we will have to start putting new arrangements in place. I urge all members to make their views on this issue known to the federal Minister for Education. I will be providing information to every member of this House about the primary school sector and urging them to take up this issue on their behalf.

### **Paradise Dam**

**Mr SEENEY:** My question was intended for the Minister for State Development, but in his absence I will direct the question to the Premier.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** It is a question that I have no doubt the Premier is well aware of. I refer to the recent disturbing reports that the much needed and long-awaited Paradise Dam project and the associated weirs on the Burnett River face the prospect of being scrapped. Will the Premier put an end to this speculation and provide a guarantee to the parliament that the government will meet its pre-election commitment to the people of the Burnett region in relation to the Paradise Dam and the associated weirs at Eidsvold, Mundubbera and Murgon? Can the Premier say when site works will begin on these projects?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am happy to do all of that. Let me make it clear that the election commitment that I gave in relation to a dam at Paradise will be delivered. The member is referring to an article that appeared in the financial pages of the *Courier-Mail*, which we all read. We issued a statement in relation to it. The development of proposals for new infrastructure is being overseen by my ministerial colleague Tom Barton. While specific issues and matters of detail regarding these proposals should be referred to him, I make some overall comments.

To achieve the water for Bundaberg component of the 10 point plan for the Bundaberg election commitment made prior to the last election, the Water Infrastructure Development (Burnett Basin) Act 2001 has been enacted to facilitate investigations into new water infrastructure, including the undertaking of detailed impact assessments. The government established Burnett Water Pty Ltd to act as a proponent to manage the investigations. Proposals include a new major dam on the Lower Burnett River, a new weir, et cetera. The bottom line with all this is that the recent media reports about the Burnett River dam have contained serious inaccuracies, particularly in relation to the government's commitment to the project and the project's economic viability. The government has set aside \$35 million for the Burnett River infrastructure development project in the 2002-03 financial year. This funding is to enable planning, design, land purchase, cultural heritage management and other necessary

preconstruction activities to be completed so that construction is able to be commenced in late 2003 or 2004. The preconstruction work program is on track.

The government has made the necessary funding allocations to complete this work. After completing a thorough assessment of all relevant material to the environmental impact statement process, including over 200 public submissions, the coordinator-general recommended on 31 October 2001 that the Burnett River dam and Eidsvold weir projects could proceed. Economic assessments completed during the environmental impact statement process clearly demonstrated that the project is economically viable. The reports that were referred to in the press, if I recall correctly, are very old and are no longer relevant in terms of time. The government is continuing to draw on advice from a range of independent economic and financial experts. The state government is cooperating with the national competition council and is confident that a comprehensive joint Commonwealth-state impact assessment process has sufficiently demonstrated the economic viability and ecological sustainability of the proposed Burnett River dam.

Suggestions that Orafti's chicory proposal is being delayed due to the Burnett River dam's construction timetable are incorrect. The government is delivering on its substantial commitments to Orafti. Any delays in Orafti implementing its project in Queensland are unrelated to the actions of the Queensland government. The Minister for State Development is seeking urgent clarification from Orafti about its plans. But it is a private operation and what it does obviously we cannot control. We can help facilitate these things. I set out what the position is. I saw the newspaper report and so did the minister. We were both concerned about it. I think that clarifies the issue. Tom Barton did issue a statement the day after to make sure everyone understood the issue. I confirm the position to the House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Ipswich, I welcome a second group of students and teachers from the Redlands college in the Cleveland electorate.

### Queensland Heritage Trails Network

**Ms NOLAN:** I refer the Minister for the Arts to work being carried out by the Queensland Heritage Trails Network in regional Queensland. Which projects are due to be completed in the near future and what significance will they hold for tourism potential for regional communities?

**Mr FOLEY:** Queensland has a rich and diverse history, full of epic events, intriguing tales and colourful characters. The Queensland Heritage Trails Network, a \$110 million joint initiative of the Queensland and federal governments, aims to bring to life this history on a scale never seen before in this state. QHTN links 43 sites of cultural significance across rural and regional Queensland, with money invested to develop tourism infrastructure at each site. I can inform the member that 16 of these sites have already opened, with five more to open in the next three weeks. Last Sunday I had the privilege of opening Lark Quarry, near Winton in western Queensland, along with that bard of the bush, Senator Ron Boswell.

**Government members:** A dynamic duo.

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank the Premier and the Minister for Education for their recognition. Apparently a double act of that kind in Winton has not been seen for some time.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. The opposition leader will be particularly interested in this. About 95 million years ago a large theropod dinosaur drove fear into the hearts of hundreds of small ornithopods and coleurosaurs, chasing them through a muddy lake shore and into the forest. This terrifying moment is preserved for all to see in some 3,300 dinosaur footprints encased in the rock at Lark Quarry. They are the world's only known tracks of a dinosaur stampede. With \$2.5 million in funding from the QHTN, the protective structure at the site has been revamped, providing a controlled, ecologically sustained environment. Site interpretation displays and upgraded visitor facilities ensure that this magnificent event in history will be remembered for a long time to come.

At the Barcaldine community cabinet, representatives of the Winton shire council approached me and asked me to read at the opening a poem composed by local Winton poet Milton Taylor entitled 'Lark Quarry Dinosaurs'. I did so and I now table that poem and seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Lark Quarry Dinosaurs By Milton Taylor

Cast your mind back; way, way back; say, ninety million years,  
(Give or take two million years or three)  
Imagine as you contemplate these markings on the floor  
The bygone scenes of how things used to be.

See those smallest footprints? The size and shape they make?  
Mark it in your mind and closely look.  
Those were made by Coleurosaurs, who hunted dragonflies.  
The Dinosaurs no bigger than a chook.

The next size up? Ornithopods. They're near a metre tall,  
Close enough to emus in their height,  
They could run at thirty k's if startled or disturbed  
By something that might put the mob to flight.

The biggest prints? The big ones? Well, they're from a Carnosaur  
Or Therapod, but heck, what's in a name?  
He stalked the chooks and emus as they came to take a drink,  
Carnosaur the hunter, seeking game.

Look! The tracks! See how he walks to close in on his prey?  
See the way he's turning to the right?  
Make your observations, think, now call the view to mind,  
It must have been a terrifying sight.

The chooks and emus bolted as the big bloke made his move,  
Stampeding as the monster took a lunge,  
Then, racing back beneath him in a frenzied headlong rush  
They scattered as he made his killing plunge.

The sights, the sounds of mayhem as he pounced upon his prey,  
The panic of the small ones running by,  
All leaving prints embedded on the footmarks of their foe  
To mark this place as eons travelled by.

Now, move ahead, past countless years to what you witness here,  
Lark Quarry and its treasures, take a stock  
Of the action and excitement of a Dinosaur stampede  
Preserved, for all to see, here—in the rock.

I can report to the House also that at the opening Senator Ron 'Banjo' Boswell also read his own poem about the dinosaur stampede based on the theme of Banjo Patterson's *Waltzing Matilda*. Flowing verse is all the rage out there at Winton.

The QHTN embraces everything from dinosaur tracks to train tracks. Next week I will accompany the Premier to Ipswich for the opening of the Workshops Rail Museum. I acknowledge the Premier's strong support for the project and that of the members for Ipswich and Ipswich West. On 7 September, a facility at Dogwood Crossing at Miles will officially open. On 14 September three more projects are scheduled to open—the Ravenshoe (Nganyaji) Cultural Unity Centre, the Hou Wang Temple and Chinese Museum in Atherton and Halloran's Hill Lookout, also in Atherton.

### Archbishop Dr G. Pell

**Mr FLYNN:** I refer the Premier to the fact that, despite the alarming number of allegations of abuse against our leading citizens and attacks upon our institutions, we all would appreciate the need for proper and transparent investigations of all cases of alleged abuse, and I ask: given the enormous publicity surrounding the issue and the stated support for Archbishop Dr George Pell by the Prime Minister, will he please indicate his level of confidence in the Archbishop's integrity?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will answer this question in a very serious way, because this issue is obviously dominating the national media, political and church landscape, however we want to describe it. My view about these matters is very simple. I have supported for some time a national inquiry, as has my government, into issues relating to child abuse. We had our own inquiry in Queensland, as the member may well be aware, headed by former Governor Leneen Forde. We believe these matters cross borders and therefore we have supported a national inquiry. The reason for the national inquiry is that whenever an institution has its own inquiry, such as the Anglican Church in Queensland or the Catholic Church nationally in relation to the Archbishop Pell allegations, there are arguments from groups supporting child abuse victims that the inquiry is limited by virtue of legal impediments. That is why I have supported a national inquiry and I do so today.

However, let me say this: I think Archbishop Pell has acted appropriately and properly in standing down. I think he did that in a very dignified, appropriate and proper way and he has my

respect for doing so. He handled a very difficult situation, allegations that are 40 years old, with dignity and he stood down. That would have been hard. It would have been very painful for him to do that. But he acted properly and, appropriately, the church is carrying out its inquiry. Has Archbishop Pell acted appropriately? Yes, he has. I think he has won enormous admiration and respect in the community for having done so.

Secondly, however, allegations in relation to child abuse, in this case allegedly from a person who was then 12, obviously have to be investigated. There is nothing more important in our community than children. Allegations in relation to children need to be properly and fully investigated. We cannot have it any other way. They are our future. The only thing that concerns me deeply—and I do not want to be misunderstood in relation to the member's question, nor do I want to be misunderstood by those people who support victims of child abuse—is that allegations that are 40 years old have been made. The archbishop has stood down for an appropriate and proper inquiry. I have a fear that unfounded and uncorroborated allegations can be made and yet the person against whom the allegations are made, even if later cleared, can be permanently damaged. That deeply concerns me.

Let me make this point: every honourable member should be concerned about this, because we are all in public life. That means that anybody can make whatever allegation they like about us. Therefore, if it is found that these allegations are without foundation, in my view some legal action should be taken against the person who has made the allegations. I want to make this clear: I am neither pre-empting nor prejudging this inquiry, but there has got to be justice. Justice is for both sides, not for one side. Therefore, I think it is important that I say on the public record that while I believe that the archbishop has acted appropriately, while I believe that these matters should be fully investigated, those who make false allegations should themselves one day fear the full impact of justice.

### **National Highways Funding**

**Ms PHILLIPS:** I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the federal coalition government's AusLink proposal and recent moves by the Commonwealth to back away from its full responsibility to fund the national highway system, and I ask: can the minister please advise the House of the position adopted by the states at the recent meeting of federal and state Transport Ministers held in New Zealand?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I thank the honourable member for the question. She is fully aware of the Commonwealth government's backing away from funding national highways, because of her experience with the Douglas Arterial Road and the fact that to this day it still refuses to fully fund its national highway obligations to the tune of about \$8 million. The Australian Transport Council met in New Zealand about two weeks ago. One of the things on the agenda was John Anderson's AusLink proposal. The state's have argued consistently for the four years that I have been the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads—that is, Liberal ministers, National Party ministers and Labor Ministers on the ATC—for a national transport plan. We support a national transport plan. The one obstacle to a national transport plan over those years has been John Anderson and the Commonwealth government. He has now put out a proposal called AusLink, which is basically a guise for the National Party and the coalition government federally walking away from their responsibilities for funding the national highways. Queensland has been underfunded on national highways for years. It fixed up Sydney, Victoria and South Australia. Now it is Queensland's turn. He acknowledges that we have the worst national highways in the country. What did the federal government do? It cut \$78 million from our funding for roads in Queensland in this year's federal budget. Now it has put out a proposal that it will no longer accept funding responsibility for national highways. But it gets worse.

Peter Slipper, the federal member for Fisher, wrote to me complaining about the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. He stated—

It would be highly desirable for the Bruce Highway to be upgraded to six lanes for its entire length from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast.

I could not agree more. Our members on the Sunshine Coast have been telling me and the feds for years that it needs to be done. But what is the problem? It is not my road, it is his. It is national highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Honourable members should mark my words. If the National Party and Liberal Party federally get their way, they will not be putting any more money into that road. When Ron Boswell, the member for Kallangur and I opened the new section of six-laning, he said that we should be talking about an alternative corridor to the Bruce

Highway on the Sunshine Coast and that the state government should pay for it. That is arrant nonsense. When Mr Slipper writes letters to me stating that the 'rapid growth of the Sunshine Coast region demands greater infrastructure commitments', I could not agree more. Mr Slipper's slogan is 'serving the community from the mountains to the sea'. I think it is time he came down off the mountain, pulled his head out of the sea and went to Canberra and told them that we need money for the national highway.

#### **Mr I. Isaacs; False Allegations of Child Abuse**

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I refer the Attorney-General to the posting of material on the Internet maliciously defaming Aspley State High School principal Ian Isaacs and his deputy and to the fact that the material was posted from Victoria. I refer also to his allegation that Victorian law was deficient and its authorities could not act as a consequence. Given that the head sentence for criminal defamation in Victoria is 10 years and is an indictable offence and that criminal defamation in Queensland, or its equivalent, carries a head sentence of two years and was downgraded to a simple offence in 1995, subject to a 12-month time limitation for action to be started after the date of the alleged offence, I ask: can he explain why warrants could not be issued by Victorian police? Can he prove that it was the Victorian and not the Queensland law that was deficient in this case? Will he table his advice to verify that the alleged perpetrators cannot be extradited to Queensland under the Commonwealth Service and Execution of Process Act 1992 to face the courts in this state?

**Mr WELFORD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I wish I had all that legal advice at my fingertips to be able to give the honourable member an answer, but let me say this about the issue he raised. In 1995 the then government consolidated the law of defamation in a Defamation Act. The law was then fragmented between the Criminal Code, various other laws and common law. It was a sensible policy decision for the government at the time to consolidate the law of defamation. It is true I suspect that at that time no-one contemplated the type of defamation that was perpetrated against the Aspley high school principal, and none of us in the government for one moment countenance that disgraceful slur cast upon a very honourable and highly respected principal in one of the best schools on the north side. All of us in the government wish that principal well in recovering his strength and returning to the school—

**A government member:** And the deputy.

**Mr WELFORD:** Yes, and the deputy. We wish them well in recovering their strength to return to the school as soon as possible to re-establish their leadership role in that school, which everyone at that school wants and everyone in this government wants.

In relation to the actual investigation of the defamatory material put on the Internet, the Queensland police have liaised with the Victorian police in relation to this issue. It is complex in determining the basis upon which the Victorian police could not execute a warrant. I know the member opposite has asserted publicly that the reason the Victorian police could not execute a warrant is that the offence of criminal defamation under the Queensland Defamation Act is a simple offence rather than an indictable offence. Whether it is a simple offence or an indictable offence is not material to the fact that a serious term of imprisonment can be imposed on anyone who perpetrates that offence in Queensland or against Queensland law.

If the evidence had been identified in Queensland, then the police under our Police Powers and Responsibilities Act could have executed a warrant to gather that evidence; that is true. If the Victorian law had the power under its police powers legislation similar to the Queensland legislation, then it too could have allowed the police to execute a warrant to gather evidence in Victoria. However, Victorian law does not allow the police to do that. On the other hand, I am still determining whether we should in fact, in accordance with the member's suggestion—and, as I have indicated previously, I am prepared to consider it—upgrade the criminal offence of defamation under the Defamation Act to an indictable offence in Queensland and look at the sentencing options.

But the fact of the matter remains that the Victorian police did visit the address of the alleged offenders in Victoria and did make inquiries at that address and were unable to obtain evidence that would allow the investigation to proceed. In the circumstances, I think it is fair to say that both the Queensland and Victorian police have done their best to pursue all inquiries that can be undertaken to settle this matter. I do not think anything more can be done, regardless of what the law is, but I am prepared to look at it and review it. In the meantime, I wish the principal and the deputy well. All of us on both sides of the House hope that they can get back to work.

### School Based Apprenticeships, Q-Build

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the fact that since 1999 the Department of Public Works has offered high school students the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship with Q-Build while they finish their senior certificate. I ask: can the minister inform the House of the success of this school based apprenticeship program and how it fits with the government's commitment to ensuring young people are learning and earning?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As far as I can ascertain, this government is the only government in the world that can lay claim to training some 380 construction apprentices—the only government in the world. Most assuredly, we are the only government in Australia that has gone down the path of school based apprenticeships. While they do exist in other states, naturally enough where those states do not have the day labour forces that we do, they cannot be in a position to influence the school agenda in that regard. I am delighted to say that through cooperation between Education Queensland, Minister Foley's department through TAFE and Q-Build we have been able to offer some 40 apprenticeships to school leavers since 1999. I put this issue on the agenda in 1999 because I was convinced that we should play our part as a government with a high training agenda to ensure that we could offer school based apprenticeships.

I am delighted to say that this month Troy Holcombe was the first apprentice to have completed a school based apprenticeship. He has now moved on to another employer, but Troy's commitment highlights just how efficiently this program works. In March 1999 he commenced his apprenticeship on the basis of one day's work with Q-Build, three days at school and one day's training. This system has worked very well. As a result, we have been able to expand that program to some 40 apprentices—22 of whom, I might add, are outside the Brisbane metropolitan area. My view is that school based apprenticeships are the way of the future. I have long been convinced that employers want people with certain skills before they arrive at their door. School based apprenticeships give us the opportunity of doing that—that is, students leave school after having completed two years of their apprenticeship and then do two years full time.

The school based apprenticeship scheme that Q-Build offers enables students to use their school holidays as part of their training. People like Troy will find their way into the construction industry in Queensland, and as everybody knows there will be high demand in that regard. This policy also fits very clearly with the latest policies announced by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Training with regard to the closer links that need to occur between training and education. This government intends to ensure that Q-Build stays and does the work that it does. As I said, I am delighted to be part of a government that takes training this seriously.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the next question, I ask all honourable members to acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the Japanese Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Mr Atsushi Hatakenaka. His Excellency is accompanied by the Consul-General, Mr Takenori Yamazaki. Welcome.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

### Queensland Law Society; Complaints Against Lawyers

**Mr QUINN:** I refer the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to the front page of the *Courier-Mail* from 30 June 1999 where the government was quoted as saying—

In one of the biggest shake-ups in decades, the Government plans to divert the job of regulating and punishing unethical lawyers to a series of independent bodies. Mr Foley said the shake-up was to ensure people received a fair go from lawyers.

Now that three years, one month and 22 days have passed since that front-page story, I notice that another front-page story has materialised this morning which commenced—

The Queensland Law Society could lose its powers to regulate and discipline lawyers under reforms announced yesterday in State Parliament.

I ask: will the Attorney-General now give a firm time frame with a firm completion date on which he intends to deliver on this promise, or will we be waiting for another three years?

**Mr WELFORD:** I read that article from 1999 just yesterday. I carry it around in my pocket all the time expecting a question from the member for Robina.

**Mr Bredhauer:** You might get the same question from the member for Moggill yet. You'll be well prepared!

**Mr WELFORD:** I cannot wait for the member for Caloundra to come back.

**Dr Watson** interjected.

**Mr WELFORD:** Excuse me! I should say to the honourable member that the two articles actually refer to two different things. What the article in 1999 referred to was the structure of tribunals that would deal with the discipline of lawyers. Currently, there is a Solicitors Complaints Tribunal. In the discussion paper that the previous Attorney circulated, various alternative options for tribunals to deal with the discipline of both solicitors and barristers were canvassed. The issue that has been canvassed in this morning's paper is not just the issue of tribunals and how those tribunals are established and structured but also the process of investigation of initial complaints laid currently with the Law Society, as they are required to be, under legislation establishing the Law Society as a statutory agency for that purpose.

As I indicated yesterday in my ministerial statement to the House, I am not only greatly concerned about the recent publicity surrounding allegations of unethical behaviour of one individual firm but the public perception that there is a pattern of management of complaints handling by the Law Society which indicates that its incapacity to deal with this particular firm is not confined to the complaints that have been lodged recently against that firm or indeed in the past. That is why I have appointed the Legal Ombudsman to do a comprehensive inquiry and audit of all complaints in relation to that firm especially, going back over time, and how the Law Society has managed those past complaints which appear not to have been resolved.

As I have already indicated in a number of media comments in recent weeks, this is a test of the Law Society's capacity to handle these initial complaints issues. Whether it passes that test now that it has appointed former judge Pat Shanahan to head up its professional standards committee will determine whether it retains that role of handling the initial complaints that are lodged against solicitors. I believe that there is a role for professional organisations, on behalf of their profession, to take some collective responsibility for resolving disputes between professionals and their clients. The client relations unit at the Law Society plays some role in that. Whether it retains the complaints management role for serious allegations of misconduct is something that I have yet to determine.

### Disability Services

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT:** I direct a question to the Minister for Disability Services. I understand that Disability Services Queensland is undertaking a major funding reform project. Could the minister advise the House of the ways in which people with disabilities and their families are able to contribute to this process?

**Ms SPENCE:** I acknowledge the interest of the member for Woodridge in, and advocacy of, disability issues. As the member said, the funding reform project is a major one. In fact, it is probably the most significant project that we have undertaken in the last decade in disability services. While we have progressed a lot in the last decade in terms of delivering more flexible and client focused disability services, there are still a number of unresolved issues. That is what the funding reform project will be looking at.

One of the most important issues facing government and, indeed, the disability sector is the viability of disability services. The funding reform project is looking closely at that particular issue. Obviously we all have to plan for the long-term unmet need for disability services in our community. One of the outcomes that we hope to achieve from this project is an honest assessment of the money that is likely to be available to disability services in the years ahead and whether in fact that money is being spent equitably in our community and, indeed, improving the quality of life for all people with disabilities who need support and services from government.

So this is an important project. That is why it is important that it be inclusive and that we involve the community. Obviously we acknowledge that government does not have all the answers and that many good ideas are going to be gained from talking to all those who are affected by disability in our community. That is why we have nine public community meetings happening throughout Queensland. In fact, one is happening on the Gold Coast today. I believe that the member for Mudgeeraba is there as we speak. In common with the members for Thuringowa, Kurwongbah and Mundingburra, the member for Mudgeeraba has been very involved in this funding reform project and is part of one of the committees leading the project in the next six months. I thank each of those four members for their hard work and involvement in this important project.

As well as these nine public meetings which are going to happen three times throughout the state during the next six months, we have funded a number of important disability organisations,

including ACROD, the Queensland Disability Network and Queensland Parents of People with a Disability, to undertake their own consultations and share their knowledge and experience. I recently had the good fortune to attend public meetings in Mackay and Gympie to talk to families and friends of people with disabilities. I thank the members for Mackay and Gympie for organising those meetings for me. They were very instructive.

### Fire Hydrants

**Mr MALONE:** I refer the Minister for Emergency Services to the ongoing dispute between himself, through the QFRS, and the Brisbane Lord Mayor, Jim Soorley, in respect to the marking and maintenance of fire hydrants and the supply of sufficient water through water mains, and I ask: can the minister inform the House who exactly is responsible for this issue, and how many more homes and lives have to be at risk before he and Councillor Soorley stop the bickering and finally fix it?

**Mr REYNOLDS:** As the member for Mirani would be aware, there has been a difference of policy in regard to—

**Mr Malone** interjected.

**Mr REYNOLDS:** I ask the member to allow me to answer his question. He referred to an ongoing dispute between me and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. I do not think that I have been in any public dispute with the Lord Mayor of Brisbane on this particular issue. In fact, I had discussions with him this week about the very important agreement between the Queensland government and the Brisbane City Council in regard to how we work in partnership on the different aspects of fire response and the importance of water pressure and hydrants and so on.

Just the other day in the media I made quite clear the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service's policy in regard to those particular road markings. When speaking with the Lord Mayor just three days ago I took the opportunity to once again reiterate that that was the QFRS's policy and the government's policy, and we would like to see the Brisbane City Council work towards the policy that the QFRS has been espousing on a number of occasions. I think the dispute to which the member is referring might be the one between the United Firefighters Union and the Lord Mayor, which has certainly been a very public dispute for a number of months.

Let me say quite clearly that as Minister for Emergency Services I have responsibility in regard to responses to fires and making sure that we have a Fire and Rescue Service. As minister, I take that responsibility and obligation very, very seriously. Our policy is quite clear. In terms of local government across Queensland, we would certainly like to see those road markers used with hydrants. We have made that our policy on a number of occasions. The Brisbane City Council is aware of that. However, as an autonomous local authority it has not made that a spending priority. Nevertheless, we would like it to go down that track.

In regard to the work that we do with the Brisbane City Council, we have a very important fire safety partnership which was set up after the fire at Childers. No-one in this House should believe that we do not work very closely with the Brisbane City Council. That is a philosophy that we put together in December 2000. We share a number of areas of common interest in relation to responsibility for fire safety. We have agreed upon a close working relationship in terms of joint planning and service delivery initiatives. Today I have quite clearly outlined our policy.

### Centre of Excellence in Fibre Composites

**Mr SHINE:** I direct a question to the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy. Earlier this year the government announced \$10 million for a Centre of Excellence in Fibre Composites at the University of Southern Queensland. What is happening with this centre, and when will we start to see the results?

**Mr LUCAS:** In very many ways the honourable member is 'Mr University of Southern Queensland' in terms of his strong advocacy for that university. I am a great advocate for the university, being a graduate of it, but there is not a moment when the member for Toowoomba North does not talk to me about the great work that is being done at that university. He and I were delighted—as I am sure were other members of this House—when Professor Gerard van Erp, who is leading the research team at the fibre composites design and development centre at the USQ, was last week named Queensland 2002 Professional Engineer of the Year. That is what is happening at Toowoomba and the University of Southern Queensland. We are very lucky to have that fibre composites centre. There was interest from other states. South Australia wanted to

pinch it. Gerard van Erp is a world-renowned scientist who now has important recognition in Queensland. As I said, the member for Toowoomba North and I were absolutely delighted.

Fibre composite is a very new and exciting construction material. It has the potential to revolutionise the engineering industry. The material is non-corrosive, non-magnetic and non-toxic and can be used to build many new structures that are currently in need of replacement. For example, there are about 20,000 timber bridges in Queensland. They have certain clearances, and timber needs to be used as concrete does not allow the required clearances. Fibre composite does. This traditional need can be satisfied by USQ.

To date the Queensland government has committed up to \$10 million to the Fibre Composites Centre of Excellence. We signed a heads of agreement with USQ and Wagners in May. I was under the first fibre composite bridge at the Wagners quarry, as was the Leader of the Opposition. I know that he is also a supporter. It was wonderful to see the work being done there on a real bridge. I was standing under it, as were many others. It was holding up extremely well.

I spoke with Boeing when I was in the United States about some of the interest it has in fibre composites. This material is six times lighter than concrete. We hope that construction will start before the end of the year and that it will be occupied by the end of 2003.

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

## PRIVILEGE

### Statement by Deputy Premier; Casino Gaming Inspectors

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): This morning in this parliament the Treasurer and Deputy Premier said that gaming inspectors would be in casinos at all times. Mr Mike Sarquis, director of compliance from the Office of Gaming, on 29 July admitted in evidence to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission that it was a possibility that there would be no inspectors in casinos at some times as a result of the Beattie government's proposed amendments to the certified agreement for gaming inspectors. The Deputy Premier needs to return to this House and correct the record.

## CHILD CARE BILL

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (11.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to regulate the provision of child care, and for related purposes.

Motion agreed to.

## First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Ms Spence, read a first time.

## Second Reading

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (11.31 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today to introduce the Child Care Bill 2002.

General outline

This legislation represents more than two years of extensive consultation with the child care industry, community interests and parents. It is a bill that provides the flexibility for the delivery of a quality child care system. The Beattie government recognises that child care services play a critical role in the lives of many Queenslanders. Child care is one of the most important issues for young Queensland families who want to see the best for their children, and we know that the support of families and the care of children is of critical significance for the future of our communities.

To give our children the best start, we need to ensure our child care workers have the best skills. These people are providing care and education to the youngest Queenslanders every day. They are contributing to the development and education of tomorrow's leaders and tomorrow's parents. They are helping to improve the quality of children's lives and to build and support our communities.

Child care also plays a significant role in supporting the work force participation of parents. Many parents, without outside assistance, would not be able to go to work each day, study and take up training opportunities. To grow, Queensland needs a smart and flexible work force. To reduce unemployment, families with young children need support to take up opportunities for work, further education and training. Child care allows many people to be able to take part in community life and decision making and provides opportunities for children to come together to play and learn in safe surroundings.

I am pleased to say that this new legislation has been developed in recognition that the availability of good quality child care services is important to this state for both social and economic reasons, and it has been drafted so as to ensure that our state has a responsive, high quality and sustainable child care system.

#### Basis of the bill and reasons for changes

The Child Care Act 1991 and subordinate legislation have been in operation since 1992. The act has now been in force for almost a decade and, whilst it was benchmark legislation at the time, it has become increasingly dated and lacks the flexibility to respond to the changing needs of families and address the anomalies that have become evident in the present system. Since that time, there has been significant growth in the child care sector, changes in the work force patterns of parents, and new and emerging models of child care.

The need for legislative change has been highlighted by feedback provided in the consultation sessions, particularly in relation to the legislation being overly prescriptive and lacking the necessary flexibility to assist services to meet the specific needs of parents within their communities. The current legislation also contained several areas of duplication with other legislation and some requirements which had proven to be problematic over the life of the act because of a lack of clarity.

The proposed new legislation builds on the minimum standards of the current legislation by increasing qualification requirements for child care workers, including the licensing of school age care services for the first time and increasing the number of offences for breaches under the legislation. Importantly, the bill strikes a balance between increasing the level of regulation of the child care industry whilst introducing measures to ensure that services are positioned to respond to the needs of parents, particularly working parents. I have listened to parents and the child care sector and have heard their call for standards that allow for flexibility in service delivery whilst maintaining high standards of care and safety for children in care.

Although there will always be competing views in the child care sector on how stringent the legislation should be, I believe that this bill incorporates a range of views and sets out a strong regulatory framework which aims to ensure safety for children, as well as having the capacity to assist services in meeting the needs of parents.

#### Background

The regulation of child care is important in ensuring that child care services are provided in the best interests of the child and in accordance with standards around safe and suitable care. The expansion of the regulatory framework to include the licensing of school age care services recognises that the sector has expanded and that services which regularly provide for the care of children for reward and in a place other than a child's home should meet certain requirements. The school age care sector has been working towards licensing standards for some time and is ready to be accommodated within the framework.

A broadening of the licensing framework provides benefits for children and families in terms of helping to ensure quality and safety. The strengthening of the qualification requirements means that the system of issuing certificates of endorsement to unqualified staff will be abolished and more staff will be required to hold qualifications or be studying towards an appropriate qualification. An increase in qualified staff will lead to higher quality child care services across the state.

Additional offences under the bill represent a toughening of enforcement powers, recognising the importance of ensuring children's safety. The proposed legislation also serves to clarify 'loopholes' which have proved problematic under the current legislation and provides key mechanisms to ensure that children's safety is paramount when making licensing decisions.

#### Key reforms

The bill is founded upon guiding principles which value the interests of the child as being paramount, encourage the involvement of parents and the community and ensure that child care services develop children's potential in a range of areas. Importantly, the guiding principles form a key part of the decision making framework used by the department when making licensing decisions.

The bill moves away from using prescribed service types such as kindergarten, limited hours care, long day care and family day care to determine the extent to which a child care service should be regulated. Instead, the bill uses objective criteria to set appropriate requirements, including the setting of the service (home or centre based), the numbers and ages of children attending the service and the length of time in care. Whilst this means that those services do not appear in the legislation, the department will continue to recognise these services in publications, resource materials and when providing information to parents. Using objective criteria to regulate ensures that new and emerging forms of child care are included in the framework when they operate with the same characteristics as other forms of licensed care.

The bill introduces new requirements for services around the transportation of children, the operation of playgroups in family day care and improved strategies to ensure parents are aware of group and staffing requirements in centre based care. In addition, there are new provisions designed to assist services in responding directly to the needs of parents and families. These include a provision to care for a child or sibling group in the case of a family emergency and the ability for services to accommodate the needs of shift workers by varying their operating conditions at particular times of the day. Through these new provisions, the bill assists services in being more responsive to the needs of communities by allowing services to operate with specific conditions on their licence and appropriate safeguards.

Whilst the bill introduces a strengthened qualification framework, there are specific transitional provisions for staff already working within the child care industry to assist them in meeting the new requirements within a reasonable time frame. In addition, this government's \$4.2 million Child Care Statewide Training Strategy will greatly assist workers in obtaining these qualifications.

The Child Care Bill is the result of extensive consultation. The process commenced with the review of the act during this government's previous term. Consultations with parents and the child-care sector were initially held in April 2000 on the proposed new regulatory framework. Following the development of an exposure draft of the bill and regulation last year, further consultations were conducted across the state to ensure that the bill and draft regulation would work in practice. In addition, consultations were held with government agencies and child-care peak organisations before the bill was finalised in order to make changes as a consequence of feedback received.

The Child Care Bill provides a solid framework for child care in Queensland, which strengthens current requirements and ensures that services are better placed to accommodate the needs of parents. As I said earlier, there will always be competing views within the child-care sector about how stringent the legislation should be made. The legislation regulating child-care services represents minimum standards for the sector and the relevant considerations are what is the best interests of families and children in terms of quality, safety and affordability, as well as what is achievable for the sector. This bill addresses these considerations.

I would also like to table a copy of the draft regulation used in the statewide consultation process as required under section 195 of the Child Care Bill 2002.

Leave granted.

**Ms SPENCE:** I draw to the attention of the House that following extensive consultation and substantial feedback, there have been a number of significant changes to the draft. The revised regulation will be tabled in the normal course following its making by the Governor in Council. I am satisfied that consultation about the making of the regulation, which has been carried out, is comparable to consultation under part 5 of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Copeland, adjourned.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 21 August (see p. 3062).

**Mr FLYNN** (Lockyer—ONP) (11.42 a.m.): I rise to support the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill. I believe that we all acknowledge the need to protect and nurture our youth, shielding them from the elements of life that they cannot possibly understand and from adults who are too keen to take advantage of their inexperience. However, I must place on the record that I agree with the member for Tablelands, who yesterday referred to the public perception that the justice system is somewhat soft on juveniles. Having said that, on looking at the state of our juveniles today, I would say that 95 per cent of them are no worse and no better than we were when we were young.

**Mr Cummins:** That's very positive.

**Mr FLYNN:** I take that interjection. I think that, with the remaining five per cent, we have perhaps lost our way a little bit in offering them fair and wise guidance. I think that this legislation and other aspects of our social mechanisms are now beginning to adjust for that shortfall in supporting the remaining five per cent.

Today we see in the provisions of this amendment bill a fair attempt at recognising the need to inform and protect our society at large. We are at last seeing a move to require children to recognise their responsibilities as well as their rights. There will always be zealous civil libertarians who will deliberately fail to recognise the greater good in order to expand the rights of others, although those rights are also important. If this amendment bill had been in force prior to the Heiner issue occurring, it probably would not have occurred.

It is definitely a move forward to impose a requirement for detention centres to report allegations of abuse. The move to recognise the tendency for self-incrimination should to some degree placate civil libertarians, although we might perhaps consider changing that in the future. If a person has committed a crime, why should we worry about self-incrimination? Of course, in terms of this bill, we are debating only issues involving serious violent offenders. To be frank, there are other less serious offenders who can in some circumstances have a dramatic effect upon the community. I would have preferred to see those persistent recidivists who snub their noses at the justice system and the community dealt with in a similar manner.

For too long now, we have dithered with overprotection, which was counterproductive and actually placed members of society at risk. I congratulate the minister and her department on introducing this bill, which goes a long way towards addressing some of the imbalances in our justice system. One Nation supports this type of legislation and believes that there are other areas in our justice system that might similarly be treated to give balance to other concerns.

At the time I wrote this speech, the Minister for Police was present in the House. I hope—and I was going to recommend to him—that he is able to ensure that the police cooperate with the spirit of the legislation and not just the printed word.

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (11.44 a.m.): The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 is the result of widespread stakeholder consultation and a whole-of-government approach to juvenile justice. During this government's earlier term, as part of the review of the Juvenile Justice Act 1992, in late 1999 and early 2000 a series of 11 community forums and meetings with community groups, including the Victims of Crime Association, were held to determine the extent and breadth of the amendments required. An issues paper was released which highlighted areas of the act that had been the subject of concern expressed by members of the community and in the judicial interpretation of the act. Approximately 30 written submissions were received from peak community organisations and government departments in response to the distribution of the issues paper.

Following the review process, an exposure draft of the bill was prepared. In June 2001 cabinet approved a period of targeted consultation on the exposure draft of the bill to ensure that the bill will operative effectively in practice. Accordingly, this second round of consultation was targeted at organisations that had a working knowledge of the legislation. In particular, the exposure draft was forwarded to organisations that had a particular knowledge of the issues and the legislation that was relevant to our juvenile justice system, including Legal Aid Queensland, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, the Victims of Crime Association, the Homicide Victims Support Group, the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland, and also community legal services and peak youth services throughout Queensland. A four-page information paper outlining the major changes proposed by the bill was

distributed to a large number of juvenile justice stakeholders, especially those organisations that were unlikely to have sufficient staff to be able to read or make recommendations on technical aspects of the exposure draft. The information paper provided contact details for those who wished to obtain copies of the exposure draft itself.

A series of forums to explain the changes proposed by the bill was conducted throughout August 2001 in Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Hervey Bay, the Sunshine Coast and also on the Gold Coast. The forums provided an opportunity for people to receive an explanation of the major changes proposed by the bill and to provide feedback and ask questions about the bill. Presentations on the bill were also made to youth legal services and to the Queensland Police Service Juvenile Aid Bureau annual conference.

The Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group and the Victims of Crime Association were provided with copies of the exposure draft and attended the forums conducted on the bill. The Attorney-General forwarded the exposure draft to senior members of the judiciary and to all judges holding commissions as judges of the Childrens Court of Queensland. The Attorney-General also met with senior members of the judiciary to discuss the enhanced jurisdiction of the Childrens Court of Queensland.

The development and finalisation of the bill has involved a whole-of-government approach and extensive cooperation between the Department of Families, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Corrective Services, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. For example, there has been close cooperation between the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Families to ensure that the bill provides clear policing provisions in both the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

In conclusion, many submissions were received as a result of the targeted consultation process conducted on the bill. As a result, changes and refinements have been made to several aspects of the bill to better realise the policy intent and to ensure that the bill will provide Queenslanders with informed, realistic and constructive juvenile justice legislation.

**Hon. J. FOURAS** (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.49 a.m.): I am pleased to take part in the debate on the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill and I commend the changes. The bill meets the Beattie government's election commitments, which, in regard to intensive supervision orders, are to meet the gap in community based sentencing options for children between the ages of 10 and 12; and, further, to end forum shopping. The intent is to strengthen the specialist jurisdiction of the Childrens Court and to transfer the power currently exercised by public servants to breach a child's supervised release from detention to the courts. Also, there are, of course, the new juvenile justice principles and the Forde inquiry recommendations, which I will refer to later.

To put all of these changes into context, it is one thing to have the best legislation in the world—and that is a good starting point—but without resources, it becomes a pointless exercise. Yesterday the minister spoke about the fact that the Department of Families has received a 17.9 per cent budget increase this year by a sum of \$51 million. She referred particularly to the fact that the government will provide \$10 million for early intervention and prevention programs for the non-government sector. That is very important. Often the court system is the ending point and we have to do something at the starting point. I know how excited people in the non-government sector were as they prepared their applications for this program. The minister advised us yesterday that it will be up and away by November. Considering the short time which has passed since the budget, that is a wonderful outcome. I could imagine someone in a community saying, for example, 'We have a family in crisis and it is likely to break up, but we do not want the department to intervene and remove the children. Let us have a program where we can put a worker in with that family to help them cope with stress and learn the life skills to carry on down the road. We need to provide that sort of program.'

The charter of principles is the basis for the development and cooperation of programs and services provided under the act. We need to have principles under which we act, but we also need to have adequate resources. When I was the chair of the Enoggera SkillShare project—before it was annihilated by the Howard government—we ran a six month program for 20 young people from the John Oxley Detention Centre. So that they could actually understand what we were trying to do, we took them away for a week and gave them the opportunity to take charge of their own lives and to understand that they could actually retain their dignity and be full participants in our society. Actually, on the first day of that program, three of the participants committed a break and enter, so some habits are hard to forget. Nevertheless, the program carried on. In fact, that group expelled one of its members because he lacked cooperation. It was

a decision made like Big Brother: it was their decision to do so because that person was inhibiting their progress. Of those 19 children, at the end of six months 15 of them actually obtained jobs that would allow them to be full members of our society. That is the sort of program we need out in the community.

I contrast that to events which have occurred during my time in this House. In the eighties, Graham Zerk, the then Director of Children's Services, said that we could not meet our statutory obligations to protect children, and he was sacked for his truthfulness. Add that to the evidence given to the homeless children inquiry by the then National Party coalition government that the majority of homeless children on the streets had at one time been under the care of the Department of Family Services. Concerned people within the community went to the extent of forming a Friends of Children in Care to try and take responsibility for them. Today, one of the principles with regard to children in detention actually states that these children should receive the appropriate help in making the transition from detention to independence. Of course, we need resources to do that. Nevertheless, that was an appalling situation. Having the state intervene in a situation like that was actually worse than having a child stay in the most horrid situation at home. In fact, in those situations the state should have been brought before the courts under the state government's own legislation for breaching its duty of care.

I reiterate that we cannot do what we need to do without the proper resources. We have here the first instalment of a four-year program to provide more resources to the department. I underline how important that is. I also want to make reference to the Forde inquiry. I congratulate the previous minister and the current minister for following on with the recommendations because that really was a catalyst for changes in child protection. I need to say in this House that one highlight for me has been the closure of the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre. I have spent years in this place talking about that dreadful blight on the juvenile justice landscape. I remember children being taken into detention there for status offences; for being likely to be in moral danger; for being likely to fall into a life of vice and crime. They were young kids seeking love in the back seat of a car, yet they had to be put into jail.

**Ms Spence** interjected.

**Mr FOURAS:** And their parents; that is right—and being seen to be uncontrollable. Again, the parents were making that decision. They were put in there and mixed with children who had committed arson and other dreadful crimes. It was called a youth hostel, but it was just a jail masquerading as a hostel. It was an horrific place. Of course, the excesses of that place were highlighted in the inquiry by Leneen Forde and we have now seen the closure of that place.

I underline what the minister said in her second reading speech, that we have to put things into perspective. There is no significant increase in juvenile crime. There is no crime wave out there from our young people. As the minister has said, it appears that there is a decrease in the rate of more serious crime. It is important that we note that. We know that the majority of juveniles before the courts are 15- to 16-year-olds, so this legislation is bridging a gap which existed there. Not many 10-, 11- and 12-year-old children actually commit crimes, but a small proportion of them do get into the situation of being serious offenders. For the protection of society and for the protection of these young people, we need to make sure that there are sentencing options for children. It is important that these intensive supervision orders both protect the public and help to turn these children into responsible adults. That is something that I am very delighted to see in this legislation.

I want to speak specifically on the Labor Party's election commitment to introduce a new Charter of Juvenile Justice Principles into the Juvenile Justice Act. The charter of principles actually does three things: it underlines the operation of the act; it provides guidance to the courts on sentencing options; and it forms the basis for the development and operation of programs and services provided under the act. These principles point to the important balance between having children take responsibility for their offending and providing a juvenile justice system that will not lead to the tragic consequences uncovered by the Forde inquiry. For example, proposed principle 2 of the new schedule 1, Charter of Juvenile Justice Principles, states—

The youth justice system should uphold the rights of children, keep them safe and promote their physical and mental wellbeing.

Proposed principle 16 states—

A child should be dealt with under this act in a way that allows the child to be reintegrated into the community.

We do not want a process where a child, because of circumstances such as poverty or family breakdown or drunkenness in the home, goes from one process in the juvenile justice system to

becoming a victim in the correctional services down the road. We do not want children ending up on the street, because in even a week on the street they will break and enter, take drugs and may prostitute themselves. If we allow that to happen, it is too late. The resources required to bring that child back into the community and the costs to society are tremendous. We need to give young people whose circumstances are difficult their day in the sun, their chance at a fulfilling life. These principles underline that.

I am pleased to see that the legislation encompasses principles espoused by the Forde inquiry. Schedule 1 provides—

3. A child being dealt with under this act should be
  - (a) treated with respect and dignity, including while the child is in custody; and
  - (b) encouraged to treat others with respect and dignity, including courts, persons administering this Act and other children being dealt with under the Act.
- ...
15. A child being dealt with under this Act should have access to legal and other support services, including services concerned with advocacy and interpretation.
19. While a child is in detention, contacts should be fostered between the child and the community.

I commend this enhancement of the principles.

In conclusion, I refer to proposed principle 20 concerning children detained in detention centres and to what is happening to children who have entered this country without bits of paper called visas who end up in our detention centres. These children require the protection of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a fundamental principle on which this legislation is based. Therefore, they should not be detained for an indeterminate period of time.

Detaining children and not giving them recourse to the courts is horrendous. It would not happen in any country that has proper human rights legislation. It cannot happen in Europe. Phillip Ruddock says that these children are a state responsibility. If we get a detention centre in Queensland in which such children are detained, I will talk to the Families Minister to see whether those children are protected by the rights enshrined in these principles.

Ultimately, human rights belong to our children and to their children. These rights are universal. Mr Ruddock says that the situation in which these children find themselves is the parents' fault, that the parents should protect the children because they brought them into the world. Mr Ruddock says that when the children mutilate themselves they are simply seeking attention. Imagine a youth suicide prevention policy that actually blames the victims and says, 'You are just seeking attention; we will ignore you because if we ignore you you will stop seeking attention.' Technically, under immigration laws the minister is the guardian of these people, but he passes the buck to the states. If they build a detention centre here—heaven forbid—I will demand that the principles of schedule 1 are noted.

In conclusion, I am proud to be part of a Beattie Labor government that has decided that we cannot keep on going down the road of the Business Council of Queensland in terms of putting more money into capital works every year, with not enough to provide adequate and necessary human services. I am proud to be part of a government that said no to such a proposition because, ultimately, people matter. We must provide an opportunity for every child to attain adequate educational levels and to become a full member of our society. I commend the minister because this bill represents improved legislation, backed up with adequate resources to make what it proposes a reality. I am proud to commend this bill to the House.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (12.05 p.m.): Children today are no different from what we were, but as responsible adults it is our responsibility and duty to guard them against their own not yet fully developed judgment. There are just as many reasons for juveniles to commit crimes as there are for adults, although the reasons may vary depending on the individual. There is often peer pressure in which a juvenile wishes to be accepted into a group or gang and the crime is their rite of passage. They may also need to feed and finance a drug habit or wish to ensure that their possessions are equal to or are better than those of their peers. Even the desire to dress in a certain label encourages theft. Clothing theft in small businesses is a major problem.

Often social upheaval, poverty and boredom are also contributing factors. The high participation rate of juveniles in break and enters, motor vehicle thefts and so on is reflected in the statistics. Sometimes these antisocial actions are a cry for help, but I do not believe that is necessarily so. There are many who choose to use that as an excuse in the hope that the courts will be lenient.

One purpose of this bill is to allow for the revelation of the name of a juvenile who has committed a heinous crime. Many in the community feel that this measure is reasonable. Equally, many people in the community feel that these juveniles should be allowed anonymity, that they should be allowed to enter adulthood without the stigma of a childhood crime. In this day and age, many juveniles are very knowledgeable about crime; they even surf the Net for ways and means of achieving their end. Often they are very well aware of their actions and the outcomes of those actions.

I see the despair of victims at the leniency afforded these children. The sentences they receive are almost non-existent. I concur with the member for Tablelands that often we are not hard enough on many of these children. Under this bill, the community can be made aware of the identification of a child who commits murder, attempted murder, rape or manslaughter. Serious sexual assault is another offence that I suggest the minister should seriously consider in these terms as well.

As a whole, society needs to address all the social issues which contribute to juveniles' decisions to act in an antisocial way. Boredom, as I said before, is a major contributing factor. A generation ago it was possible to undertake activities which today require licences and permits, something that has an impact on people's pockets and puts many activities out of the reach of many of these juveniles. I have often mentioned in this House that governments not only restrict childhood activities but also appear to legislate against what we all experienced—a normal childhood.

Programs need to be in place to make juveniles respect not just the property of others and authority figures but, most importantly, themselves. Many parents today feel disempowered to address the misdemeanours of their children. Frustration in parenting is rife. In saying that, there are also many parents who should not have children. Parents need education on how to care, educate and encourage their children on positive pathways. Unfortunately, many parents find it acceptable to rip off their employers or the welfare system and in many instances, for whatever reason, believe it is also justifiable. Even if they do not actively encourage such behaviour in their children, children are very smart; they pick up on such ideas and it becomes part of their social interaction with society and authority.

There are also adults who actively recruit children to become thieves because they are small and agile. Adults know that these children or juveniles will not be penalised too severely. It has been reported to me by one particular juvenile, whose mother brought him to me in my office, that the reason he committed the crime was simply for the thrill of it and the admiration of the gang. He belonged to a mixed race group, a group composed of Caucasian and Aboriginal children, who found that the penalties were even less severe because those who apprehended them had to recognise the Aboriginality of some of the gang. Therefore, this lessened the penalties that were applied to the Caucasian children.

Whether it is acknowledged by the authorities that that did in fact occur, the children themselves believe it to be true and act accordingly. Juveniles and children today are street smart and know their legal rights. Our system allows juveniles to obtain assistance to leave home early in life if they can convince authorities that they have a valid reason that makes it difficult for them to stay at home with their mum and dad. This right can be abused by some. For example, a child might be adventurous and choose to continually test the boundaries of life.

Recently, I became aware of the case of a young girl who lived approximately 28 miles out of town but who wanted to live in town with her friends. She was only 16 years old. She came up with a story and told it to the school counsellor. She was then placed in a youth centre and her parents entered into mediation with the counsellor. That went on and on. I know this family very well. The child wanted to stay in town with her friends and have a good time. She was very convincing in what she conveyed to the counsellor. I will read from part of the letter from her mother, who stated—

The fact is I can no longer compete with what the youth centre has to offer, I cannot provide her with accommodation in town ... so she can have ready access to her friends, I can't allow her to stay where and with whoever she pleases without first knowing who they are.

She can drink as much alcohol and smoke pot as often as she likes, she no longer has anyone around able to prevent it. Basically she is running amok and they are providing her with the accessibility to do so. The second week in the hostel my daughter woke to find one of the girls in the room having sex with one of the boys staying at the hostel. Why males and females are permitted to stay in the one place is beyond me. I believe the hostel is a godsend to those who truly need it but I do feel it needs to be run more like a place for those in need, than a school camp or slumber party. My daughter and many others are abusing the privilege to stay there. I feel if it wasn't so free and easy there, and the rules and regulations were enforced in a more rigid and professional manner then it

wouldn't be such a fun place to stay and then perhaps they would think twice about leaving their homes and families.

I am hoping something can be done to prevent this sort of thing happening again and again. No-one can make my daughter want to come home but surely more can be done to ensure that these kids are truly safe.

This mother has resigned herself to the fact that her daughter will not come home. She fears that if she ever does come home she will probably be pregnant. Parents in these situations feel great despair. That is unjustifiable. One of our greatest needs as a society is to teach children that rights bring responsibilities. However, we must also allow parents to parent without assuming that they are automatically in the wrong. Most young people want to make something of their lives, but many find themselves being confronted in one form or another to commit a crime, and these young people need to be protected from having a one-off indiscretion marking them for all of their adult life. The Charter of Juvenile Justice Principles reflects this desire to not have such a discretion mar their future. I believe most juveniles would find this acceptable and would be very grateful. Hopefully, such measures would discourage their ongoing pursuit of crime. Unfortunately, there is a small minority who under no circumstances would be grateful, who would find that no authoritative action was acceptable and who would be intent on breaching any probation or other supervision order. These few need to be treated in a very serious manner so that they are under no illusions that the law will be lenient on recidivists or those who commit heinous crimes.

I acknowledge that the intent of this bill is to follow through on the Forde inquiry recommendations and the government's election promise to amend the juvenile justice legislation to allow judges the discretion to name juveniles who commit crimes such as murder, sexual assault and other crimes mentioned previously. I have no hesitation in supporting the proposed bill.

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (12.13 p.m.): This morning it gives me great pleasure to speak on the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. Each day this government faces tough problems and often there are no easy solutions. In all the decisions that we make there needs to be a balance between conflicting interests. This bill clearly attempts to balance the right of the public to know the identity of a serious offender against the long-held notion of protecting the identity of minors.

Many previous speakers have commented on this bill, and I will focus on just two aspects. Prior to the last election, the Beattie Labor government made a commitment that the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 would be strengthened to stop forum shopping by abolishing a juvenile offender's right to elect that a case be dealt with by a District Court instead of a Childrens Court judge. This stance may seem tough on juvenile offenders, but it is designed with their best interests at heart. On one hand, we must remember that the people we are dealing with are young, impressionable and still considered children in our eyes, even though life might have laid upon them the troubles faced by adults. We should protect them, care for them and nurture any good they have. On the other hand, the sad fact is that some of these children are perhaps, sadly, beyond the normal assistance extended to minors. They know their rights but abuse the justice system put in place to protect innocent people from deliberate harmful actions.

This right of election has prevented the specialist Childrens Court of Queensland from exercising a proper and sufficient overview of the Childrens Court system. Many lawyers are also unfamiliar with the practices and procedures of the Childrens Court of Queensland. Therefore, they advise their clients to elect the District Court. Other circumstances that have contributed to the District Court being preferred over the Childrens Court of Queensland include the fact that trial by jury is not presently available in the Childrens Court of Queensland, and the option of electing the Childrens Court of Queensland is generally restricted to more serious indictable offences.

Sending juveniles for trial to an adult District Court exposes impressionable children to more serious adult offenders. Many of these children come from a disadvantaged background and need to be protected from environments that might have further negative impacts on them. This bill will facilitate the creation of a more effective specialist Childrens Court by removing a child's right to elect to be dealt with in the District Court. However, the most serious offences—for example, murder and manslaughter—will continue to be heard in the Supreme Court. I believe this will significantly expedite the resolution of cases and provide easier access to the court. It will also offer consistent and expert application of juvenile justice law and practice, particularly with regard to sentencing. An exclusive jurisdiction will also allow in-depth familiarity with specialised community based sentences and programs and services tailored to stop young people from reoffending.

Other important changes that enhance the jurisdiction of the Childrens Court of Queensland include enabling a child to elect either trial by jury or trial by a Childrens Court judge sitting alone.

Trial by judge alone may be appropriate, for example, in circumstances where the facts are not in dispute but a ruling on a matter of law is required. This will lead to much speedier resolution of matters involving children. A child will have the option of changing his or her decision whether or not to have a jury up until the time the child is called upon to enter a plea. Other important safeguards provided require the child to be tried by a judge if the child does not have a lawyer or if the presiding judge determines that in the circumstances a child should be tried by a judge and jury. All of these options are clearly in the best interests of the child.

This bill also introduces a new framework for young people who are being dealt with in both the adult and juvenile justice systems. In the past, there has been some confusion about whether a person with matters before both adult and childrens courts should be incarcerated where bail is refused or as a result of a sentence of detention or imprisonment. As far as is reasonably possible, the bill seeks to provide certainty in this area.

The bill introduces provisions that generally provide that the status quo of custody will be maintained, although there are some important exceptions. For example, it is my understanding that if a person is in a youth detention centre and becomes subject to adult custody on either remand or sentence the adult custody is to be served in the youth detention centre until the period of childhood custody expires. If a person in an adult correctional facility becomes subject to childhood custody on either remand or sentence, that person shall remain in the adult facility, even if the adult order expires and only a childhood order remains. In these circumstances, the person may apply to a Childrens Court judge to allow them to serve their juvenile justice sentence in a youth detention centre, provided that such an application is made before the person has been an adult for one year. When a person is remanded in custody on juvenile justice charges, after having been an adult for over a year, that person is to be remanded in an adult corrective services facility. If a person is remanded on both adult and child matters and is not presently in either adult or child custody, that person must be remanded in an adult corrective services facility.

In making changes to the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 this government has made some hard decisions, but demonstrates a clear balance between justice and compassion. I am sure this will provide positive results for our youth and our community. That is why I commend this bill to the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Jarratt): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Ipswich, I welcome to the public gallery members of a Chinese trade delegation from the Province of Bengbu. In particular, I welcome the head of the delegation, Mr Fang.

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.19 p.m.): Juvenile justice is a significant issue in Ipswich and in the broader Australian community. The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill is a comprehensive rewrite of the Juvenile Justice Act. It tackles a series of contentious issues head on, and the minister should be commended for bringing it to the House. Our juvenile justice system is, I believe rightly, based on a couple of key points. The first is that justice for young people is primarily based on the opportunity to rehabilitate. It aims to give kids the chance to straighten themselves out and to get on and create a life that does not involve crime.

We recognise that the best way to do that is to push young people to take responsibility for their criminal actions—that is, understand and make up for the damage they have done. We try to divert most young people from the courts and we encourage that responsibility by increasing the use of community conferencing where offenders have to front their victims and give police the discretion to issue cautions. We also understand that, for some young people who are repeat offenders or who commit serious crimes, processes of courts and detention are necessary both to satisfy community expectations and to provide young people with a last resort before adulthood to make hard decisions between a life of contribution and a life of crime.

While I strongly support these principles, I am not at all sure about the extent of community acceptance of them. For most people, including me, the first response to even a small crime like vandalism or a minor break and enter is one of anger. The community is, as it should be, seriously intolerant of juvenile crime and often the reaction is that we need to get tough on the people who commit it. I agree with this sentiment, but I believe that the most important thing is always to straighten the kid out and get him away from a life of crime. There are a lot of ways to do that, and locking him up and throwing away the key is not necessarily the smartest.

There is a widespread perception in the community that kids who commit crime get away with a slap on the wrist. It is a perception that I sometimes think has a basis in fact, although I have also heard it more than once in cases where kids have gotten off not because the punishment was not tough enough but because, as could happen in any other criminal case, there simply was

not sufficient evidence. The confidentiality surrounding juvenile justice means that community perception is hard to change, but this bill takes some steps towards changing it. It does so, firstly, by clearly articulating the principles underlying juvenile justice and, secondly, through some of the more specific elements of the bill, which I will touch on.

For the first time the bill gives courts the option of naming violent juvenile offenders who have been convicted of particularly heinous crimes. It removes the perception that accountability can be dodged by young offenders and their lawyers shopping between the District Court and Childrens Court to choose the one which will give them the best deal. It removes the legal barrier that previously prevented victims from finding out the name of the child who committed an offence against them. Importantly, this bill provides courts with the option of giving children in the age group of 10 to 12 years intensive supervision orders. With the age threshold for a community service order set at 13 years, the only sentence option for high-risk children under this age has previously been probation, detention or release from detention on an immediate release order. There has not been the middle ground of intensively supervising children.

Under this legislation, depending on the case and the child's circumstances, it is envisaged that an intensive supervision order program will have components including reintegrating activities with a strong focus on education as well as recreation and cultural activities; interventions to address individual risk factors that have contributed to offending behaviour; and family support, which will be voluntary. The overarching goal of an intensive supervision order is the integration of a child with their family and community so that the child ceases their offending behaviour.

The next point I want to talk about in detail relates to the implications of this bill for young indigenous people. Queensland has an appalling rate of overrepresentation of indigenous people in prison, and this extends to juvenile justice where young Aboriginal people are seriously overrepresented on orders and, more significantly, in juvenile detention centres. While the member for Nanango perpetuated a widespread community perception that Aboriginal kids get off more lightly than white kids, I want to talk about the issues she raised. This is a perception that one hears in the community all the time. Every time I hear it I look into the details and try to pin it down. Every time I find that it is hearsay and somehow I cannot quite get to the bottom of it. It seems to me that this perception allows the racists in our community to perpetuate what they want to believe.

The government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement is a serious effort to address these issues. While I have heard it simplistically said that indigenous overrepresentation in the justice system can only justly be reduced if indigenous people commit less crime, the agreement recognises that there are structural factors both within our society and within our justice system that constantly discriminate against indigenous people and that create a clear path from a background of economic and social disadvantage to our prisons. The most significant shift in the bill is that in future if police decide to caution an indigenous child they will be required by law to bring in a respected person from that child's indigenous community to issue the caution—if doing so is at all possible. Similarly, if a matter concerning an indigenous child is being dealt with in a community conference, the conference coordinator must make an effort to involve a respected indigenous person from the local community or community justice group. These changes are a significant step in ending the practice whereby juvenile offences involving indigenous children are dealt with by a process that is completely external to the indigenous community. They will force police not just to pay lip-service to the indigenous community but to genuinely involve Aboriginal people in the justice process.

Aboriginal people, by and large, do not like or trust police. Given that police have been the agents of cruel and discriminatory government policy for more than 100 years, one can see why. Big steps have been taken in recent years to improve those relationships. The introduction of cultural training for police recruits, the widespread involvement of police liaison officers and symbolic moves such as the instigation of NAIDOC flag raising ceremonies have made a real difference. This policy will institutionalise Aboriginal involvement in the administration of justice to Aboriginal children. I believe it is the highlight of the bill, and I commend the minister for it.

There are other changes that I want to touch on which will reduce the structural discrimination against Aboriginal people. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody highlighted one significant but pointless cause of indigenous overrepresentation in custody, and that is the detention of people on remand. The royal commission showed that Aboriginal people are more likely to be held in detention before trial, a practice that places enormous strain on people and leads to deaths in custody but which really, from a policy perspective, has little purpose. Accordingly, and consistent with the well-established principle that for a child detention is the

option of last resort, changes have been made to the bail and arrest system that, while applying to all children, will help reduce the number of indigenous children on remand in detention centres.

For example, the bill will impose a requirement on police officers to consider applying to a court for a variation or revocation of a child's bail instead of immediately arresting a child thought to be breaching bail conditions, with the exception of the condition to attend court. Currently, most children are brought to court by attendance notice. This process will be streamlined so that children are brought to court through the use of notices to appear under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. Realistically, because of varied factors such as the child's immaturity, some children or their parents will miss their date for appearing in court. The bill makes it clear that a Childrens Court magistrate can delay issuing a warrant for the arrest of a child for non-appearance. This will allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal service field officers to locate and bring the child to court without the child having to be arrested and placed in custody for non-appearance.

The crux of those changes is that this will stop kids being arrested just because they have missed, or are likely to miss, their court appearances. It will make it harder for them to be kept in detention even before they have fronted up to a court. That addresses one of the fundamental points of the royal commission into deaths in custody. The bill will also help indigenous children from sparsely populated regional and remote areas of Queensland to overcome some of the difficulties encountered because of fewer courts in those remote areas. The bill introduces a new provision that will allow bail applications to be conducted using audio or AV links.

There are a couple of changes which the bill does not make but which I believe are important and should be considered. The first is the fact that in Queensland we continue to deal with 17-year-olds in the adult justice system. I understand that there would be substantial costs involved in moving 17-year-olds into the juvenile justice system, but frankly I hate to think what happens to 17-year-olds when they are locked up with hardened bad guys. While we are never going to be swept away with public sympathy for young offenders, I think that changing this practice should be a priority for government.

Another matter of concern relates to schools and the principles of confidentiality in juvenile justice. I well understand the importance of allowing young offenders confidentiality, saving them being labelled as criminals and hence giving them the best chance of rehabilitation. I believe that there should, however, be a provision that allows a school to be informed—as a relevant interested party—of the outcome of police investigations or court proceedings that relate to an incident that occurs at that school.

What happens, for instance, if police caution a child for possession of drugs at the school but, in speaking to the school, the student refuses to admit to the crime? The school might even have heard whispers that the student has been disciplined, but unless it can get its own evidence through its own investigation the school would not be able to discipline the student on the basis of the police investigation because the confidentiality provisions of the bill prevent the school from knowing. While these cases would be rare, they give school students who want to subvert the school's disciplinary system the chance to do so by just denying everything, and they therefore prevent the school from exercising its duty of care. I ask the minister to give some consideration to this issue.

Finally, I want to talk a little bit about Ipswich and the huge steps that have been taken there in dealing with juvenile crime. Going back a few years, Ipswich had a bad run with juvenile crime. There were the kids who would hang around town at night and who famously spat on Pauline Hanson. A few years later there was a really terrible incident when a man, Cliff Te Kooti, who was walking home from the pub to his boarding house, was bailed up by a group of kids in the main street, Brisbane Street, knocked down and killed. While security cameras recorded Mr Te Kooti being bailed up they did not record the fatal blow, and no-one was convicted over his death.

Since these incidents, big changes have happened in juvenile justice in Ipswich, and the town has very much cleaned up its act. Police, welfare agencies such as Drug Arm, the Ipswich Community Youth Service, Teen Care, the Department of Families, council and others have worked extremely well together largely through the state funded Ipswich Management of Public Intoxication Program. The working group received strong support from David Hamill and a person in his office, Wayne McDonnell. I now provide them with all the support and encouragement that I can.

While the reaction to Cliff Te Kooti's death was one of anger and shock, the approach to sorting out the problem has been community based and it is multi-pronged. Police have seriously policed paint sniffing by taking the paint off inner-city shelves and using the Safe City cameras to spot the sniffers and confiscate their paint. Drug Arm and the indigenous youth organisation Teen Care have run a street patrol, walking the streets at night, getting to know the kids and pointing them in the right direction to get help. The indigenous elder in Ipswich, Margaret Illingworth, deserves a lot of credit. Despite the fact that she is getting old and is now unwell, Margaret has spent many hours walking the streets at night, talking to Aboriginal kids and pointing them in the right direction.

The new Youth Justice Service provides meaningful support to kids on orders and, along with Teen Care, gives many of them a direction out of the cycle of hanging around in town and getting into trouble. Jim Ralph's Employment Service has placed a number of these previously pretty hardcore kids in jobs. The rate of youth crime in Ipswich has gone down. While there are still kids who hang around in town, the level of community concern about safety on the streets has genuinely improved. I tell this story because I am proud of what Ipswich has achieved and because it sends a strong message to other communities.

This is a very good bill. It strengthens and clarifies the principles of juvenile justice and will restore a degree of community confidence in the system, but the bill should be understood as a framework within which communities can work. Ipswich has had some intelligent and coordinated responses to youth justice issues. The extent of concern about youth crime will ebb and flow, but with state government support and community cooperation we have made a real and meaningful change. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McNamara): Before calling the honourable member for Cunningham, the Chair recognises the presence in the gallery of Mr Helmut Franz Gecks, Mrs Marie-Luise Gecks and their daughter Monica Gecks, who works in the office of the member for Bulimba and Deputy Government Whip, Mr Purcell.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (12.35 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. The objective of this bill is to amend the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 and a range of other relevant legislation to provide an improved, relevant and cohesive legislative basis to the administration of juvenile justice. The shadow minister for justice and Attorney-General, the member for Southern Downs, has indicated that the National Party will be supporting this legislation and is happy to do so. He also explained that he is leading the debate on behalf of the National Party given that it is our policy that the responsibility for all justice issues should reside with the one member, as was the case when we were last in government.

I am sure that juvenile justice is one of the most difficult issues with which any government can deal. As other members have said, there is a lot of community concern about juvenile justice. Some of it is based on fact, and some of it is probably based on hearsay and urban myth as much as anything else. But there is certainly a degree of fact in some of the concerns that are held within the community. This bill attempts to address some of the issues regarding juvenile justice, and I intend to address a few of those during my contribution.

The bill provides for the naming of juveniles. Judges will now be able to permit publication of the name of a child found guilty of a violent crime that is serious enough to carry a maximum penalty—for example, murderers, rapists and armed robbers. It also allows the chief executive of the Department of Families to release details about a child for public information if satisfied that this is required to protect a person or the public safety. I believe that this is something for which the public certainly has been calling, and I believe that it will be well received. There is no doubt that some of the crimes that are committed by juveniles are comparable with crimes committed by adults, and some of them need to be dealt with in the same way. But as other members have said, rights and responsibilities must be given to young people.

The National Party policy for the 2001 state election clearly outlined the need for the naming of young offenders by a judge as an extension of the life sentences that were introduced by the previous National Party government and to ensure that the public can see that justice is being served. That in itself is an important end: that the community sees that justice is being done. In addition, the National Party policy outlined allowing the identification of convicted juveniles who escape from lawful custody and are considered to be a danger to the public. It advised that names and photographs could be published to allow the public to assist police in the speedy apprehension of any offenders. These initiatives certainly would ensure that the public can see that justice is being served. They would safeguard the public against dangerous juveniles and enlist the assistance of the public to quickly capture escapees.

Naming can be used as a deterrent to juvenile offenders who are starting a life in crime. It demonstrates that there are indeed serious consequences to committing a crime. There is a reasonably limited amount of research in regard to linking the naming of juvenile offenders with deterring would-be young criminals, but I believe that it should be further investigated. It is absolutely vital to nip the problem in the bud and deter potential young criminals before they graduate to more serious crimes.

There is also a provision for intensive supervision orders. This initiative is targeted at 10- to 12-year-olds who repeatedly offend and remain at high risk of offending. Those above 13 years receive a community service order. Children in this age group who commit offences will receive the intensive supervision needed to protect public safety and support the child's development into a responsible adult.

The bill also attempts to put an end to forum shopping. It will strengthen the jurisdiction of the Childrens Court of Queensland through abolishing a child's right to elect to be dealt with by the District Court. It will lead to greater consistency in sentencing, quicker resolution of cases involving children and the development of a more specialised system.

The strengthening of the Queensland Childrens Court is also a commitment of the National Party. The president of the Childrens Court of Queensland and his predecessor both commented in their annual reports on the tendency for the expertise of that court to be underutilised in recent years. These specialised skills must be effectively utilised to ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people coming before the court and for the community.

The bill also contains changes in relation to the handling of breaches of a supervised release from detention. Currently a public servant decides if a child has breached their supervised release from detention. This power will now be transferred to a court. If a court finds that a child has breached supervised release from detention, the court must then decide whether and for how long a child can be returned to detention.

One of the important parts of this bill is the introduction of a new charter of juvenile justice principles. These principles will underlie the operation of the act, provide guidance to courts in the sentencing process and be the basis for the development and operation of programs and services under the act. The new charter is consistent with the Forde recommendations and includes principles specifically relevant to children in detention centres, including a list of basic rights.

The Forde inquiry report, brought down in 1999, made a number of recommendations regarding children in the care of the state government. In particular it had a number of recommendations referring to juvenile justice. A number of items in this bill attempt to recognise those recommendations. It imposes a mandatory obligation on youth detention staff to report harm suffered by a child in detention and provides confidentiality to staff who make these reports.

The bill requires mandatory monitoring and regular inspection of detention centres, requires that children be provided with information about their rights and responsibilities on entry to a detention centre, ensures that children can access legal advice and support services while in detention, provides a power to the Commissioner of Police to provide the manager of a detention centre with the criminal history of a person visiting that centre and requires that the chief executive collect and publish statistics about children dealt with under the Juvenile Justice Act. These changes aim to provide a youth detention system that is more accountable and maximise the prospect of rehabilitation by safeguarding the safety, wellbeing and rights of the children. We certainly support that. The bill does attempt to address the Forde inquiry recommendations regarding juvenile justice. Hopefully we will see real outcomes as a result of it.

There are also changes to bail amendments. A child will no longer be forced to show cause why he or she should be given bail, and each application by a child will now be considered on its own merits. The bill will also allow children from regional and rural areas to apply for bail through using audio or audiovisual links to take away aspects that may disadvantage those particular young people. That is certainly welcome.

This bill also extends the conferencing provision. It provides for stronger encouragement for the use of conferencing options. The responsibility of deciding whether or not a child should participate in a conference will no longer be imposed on the victim of the crime; however, the central role of victims in the conferencing processes and their right to participate in conferences are still strongly affirmed. The National Party introduced community youth diversion conferencing when we were last in government. I think it has been a very positive step. It is good to see that it will actually be enhanced.

The process should be emphasised because it has been proven to have a positive effect on the attitude of young offenders. It provides a direct link between the crime committed and the consequences of that crime. A media analysis conducted by the Canadian justice department of 32 conference programs around the world found a statistically significant reduction—a reduction of 38 per cent—in repeat offences. The analysis also found that reparation agreed to in conference is more likely to be made than is reparation ordered by a court and that victims and offenders are generally more satisfied with the results of conferences than trials.

Although the criminal actions of juveniles are often held up as shameful in a conference, the offenders have the support of their friends and families and the opportunity to make amends. Such a program has had a significant effect, for example, in New South Wales with young arsonists seeing first hand lost property, helping to rebuild fences and so on.

There are also changes to the administration of community based orders. Before this bill, the various community based sentence orders each had different conditions and breach procedures. It will introduce a cohesive and streamlined scheme for the administration, breach and variation of these orders that will make them easier to understand, use and enforce.

A significant weakness in the juvenile justice system in Queensland has been the failure to enforce conditions of non-custodial orders. Young people can lose respect for the system if these orders cannot be enforced. It is vital that these orders are streamlined so that they are easily and comprehensively enforceable. The emphasis on any administration improvements must centre on ensuring that compliance with these orders is achieved so that the credibility of the system is not eroded. Police will be given the power to issue a notice to appear to young people to bring them to the court, avoiding the custody that is associated with arrest.

There are a number of other changes, including that a person who is held in an adult correctional facility will not be returned to a youth detention centre, except by way of court order. The confidentiality provisions will be amended to be consistent with other legislation dealing with children, such as the Child Protection Act 1999. The point raised by the member for Ipswich regarding confidentiality restrictions in terms of schools and school principals is worth looking at. The barrier that previously existed preventing victims from finding out the name of the child who committed an offence against them has been lifted.

As I said at the beginning of my contribution, juvenile justice is no doubt one of the most difficult issues we can deal with. We want to ensure that young offenders are appropriately punished and that they are seen to be appropriately punished, but we also must ensure that young people are given a chance to reform and rehabilitate and not embark on a life of criminal activity.

I think there is a perception in the community that we have a revolving door system in relation to juvenile justice. Whether or not that is an accurate assessment, that perception does exist. That sort of perception results in a loss of confidence on the part of not only the community but also the young people themselves and, probably more importantly, the police who have to deal with these issues and continually chase repeat offenders.

Last year I put a question on notice to the Minister for Families—question No. 382—regarding the number of appearances in the Childrens Court in Toowoomba. I will refer to one small part of the answer to that question because it gives us an idea of some of the statistics for juveniles appearing in front of the court in Toowoomba—a snapshot of what happens right across the state. During the first 11 months of 2000-01, the 183 juveniles who appeared were responsible for 277 finalised appearances. Of these 183 young people, 127 had one appearance, 31 had two appearances and 25 appeared three or more times. Thirty of the 183 young people also appeared in other courts throughout the state during the first 11 months of 2000-01. The answer goes on to list the other courts these people appeared in.

Those figures clearly show that the vast majority of young people who do appear in front of a court appear only once. In this case 25 appeared three or more times. I suspect that a number of those would have appeared significantly more than three times. It is those recidivists who create the most pressure in the community, who are the high-profile examples of what is termed a revolving door system and who will hopefully benefit from changes within this legislation to try to address some of those problems.

During his speech the member for Southern Downs referred to a school principal he had spoken to who identified a young person the principal thought may have been at risk of offending. I have a similar example with a school principal I know at a very good school. A young

person came to that school after going to a series of other state schools and with a history of offending behaviour. The school had some real successes in addressing the behaviour of the young person and were very pleased with his progress. The principal and the teachers suddenly noticed a change in the behaviour of the young person at the school and were very concerned that he was going to lapse into offending behaviour. They got in contact with the Department of Families to try to address that in the early stages, to try to circumvent what they thought may have been happening.

For one reason or another, the Department of Families was not able to assist the school principal. The following week, the young person did offend and appeared again before the courts. I think that raises a very good question of how we, on a whole-of-government basis, identify young people before they offend, while they are in the process of rehabilitation, or before they reoffend.

A number of people have referred to the initiative of early intervention and prevention that was included in this year's budget. I have placed on record a number of times our support for that. I hope that sort of program will help address the circumstances that both the member for Southern Downs and I have encountered, as well as, I am sure, many other members of parliament, in our own electorates or even outside our own electorates. I hope that there is a real focus on early intervention and prevention not only so that we catch people before they fall between the cracks but also to make sure that those young people who are on the path to rehabilitation and reform are also helped if they happen to trip over on that pathway.

Most young people in our community are excellent young people who make a fantastic contribution. It is a real shame that there is such a sensationalist attitude from some sections of the media. I think that it is overly focused on the negative stories that tend to abound within our community about young people who may have fallen foul of the law and who have offended. I hope that all of us do whatever we can to promote the good stories that are out there. It is overwhelmingly the case that there are far more good young people out there than bad people and we need to promote—

**Ms Struthers:** You're one of the good guys.

**Mr COPELAND:** It is not just the member's side who thinks that; all of us recognise that. I think that is one of the benefits of being a member—

**Ms Struthers:** Your colleagues five or 10 years ago wouldn't have said what you're saying.

**Mr COPELAND:** I cannot speak for those people, but I certainly can speak for all of my colleagues now and all of my colleagues certainly agree. I think that it is one of the benefits of being a member of parliament that we can see a lot of cases of where good things are happening to young people and we have the opportunity to promote and reward that good behaviour. I know that all of my colleagues on this side of the House agree with me. I know that belief is widespread regardless of which side of parliament one sits.

The National Party supports this legislation. It is a step in the right direction. Of course, we must always rely on the courts to implement the legislation as it is introduced. Hopefully, we will see real benefits in the future.

**Mrs CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (12.52 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. In doing so, I commend the Minister for Families for her commitment to what is indeed a complex portfolio. As one of the newer members to this parliament, I have been impressed with the many changes that the minister has introduced, some of which are very difficult changes. In my time here so far, I have witnessed the strength of the minister and her fine ability to tackle issues that are challenging. I am certainly proud that I am part of a government that has shown and continues to show courage in facing some of Queensland's toughest issues.

One of the tough issues is the problem of juvenile crime. The introduction of this legislation delivers for the people of Queensland yet another election commitment from the Beattie Labor government. The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 provides for a Juvenile Justice Act that is relevant, effective and, most importantly, balanced. This bill recognises the reality of youth crime. It demonstrates the government's determination to be tough on crime and tough on criminals. But it also goes further than that: it is tough on the causes of crime as well. That is an essential aspect that can all too easily be overlooked.

Recommendations arising from the Forde inquiry are also addressed in this bill to try to improve the treatment of young people who are already being held in youth detention centres across the state. I think those last two points are really indicative of how balanced this government is: it is tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime and yet also it is working to improve the lot of those youth who are already in the system.

On emotional issues such as this, it is easy for the legislative response to become unbalanced. But this bill avoids that and it is one of the reasons I am proud to be a part of this government. Juvenile justice and youth crime can often be the subject of sensationalised reporting, which often does little more than spread fear among our elderly residents. My electorate of Broadwater has a relatively high proportion of elderly residents. So I sincerely hope that this bill does go some way towards allaying their fears, because it contains some important changes that will make a real difference on the ground.

It provides for the naming of young offenders who commit the most serious violent offences. A number of members who have spoken in this debate have said that this issue relates to only a minority of juveniles who are caught up in this kind of activity. I would like to say that in my electorate a number of groups work with our youth. I would like to commend the local police and also the Progress Association at Paradise Point for working and dealing with some of the juvenile crime in the area. But the part of the bill that I am focusing on relates to those juveniles who commit serious violent offences. This is an election commitment that this government is delivering. No longer will juveniles who are caught up in violent crimes be able to hide behind the shelter that their age used to afford them. This issue has been raised with me repeatedly as I talk to people in my electorate. So I am sure that it is a measure that will be well received. We live in a society that is sick and tired of these violent crimes being perpetrated. This bill will ensure a greater degree of public accountability from the most serious violent offenders. It is a measure that I applaud.

The amendments contained in this bill also deliver another election commitment, which relates to the intensive supervision order. Although the majority of young people who appear in court are aged between 15 and 16, there are younger offenders and some of them are in real danger of reoffending. Currently, offenders aged between 10 years and 12 years of age can fall through the cracks due to the lack of community based sentencing options. The intensive supervision order will address that. It will allow for these 10- to 12-year-olds to receive intensive supervision that will stop them reoffending and help them to ensure that they develop into law-abiding adults. This is good news not only for the young people affected but also for the general public.

The bill also contains a number of other important measures, such as ending forum shopping—abolishing the right of the child to elect to be dealt with by the District Court instead of the Childrens Court. There will also be a new charter of juvenile justice principles incorporated into the legislation.

All in all, the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 is an excellent piece of legislation. It makes a number of important changes to legislation that deals with an issue that is of great relevance to our society. These changes have a three-tiered focus: they ensure the ongoing protection of our community; they require young offenders to take responsibility for their offences; and they will stop young people from reoffending. It is well balanced, workable legislation and I commend it to the House.

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (12.57 p.m.): The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 will amend the Juvenile Justice Act and other legislation relevant to the juvenile justice system and will provide an improved, relevant cohesive legislative basis for the administration of juvenile justice in the state.

The bill implements the commitment made by this government to amend the Juvenile Justice Act so that the act provides a relevant, effective and balanced juvenile justice system. The bill responds to the challenges made by the commission of inquiry into the abuse of children in Queensland's institutions, commonly referred to as the Forde report, and to improve the treatment of young people held in youth detention. The bill implements those recommendations in the Forde report that require change to the Juvenile Justice Act. These amendments build on this government's commitment to respond to the Forde report, demonstrated by the pulling down of the blight that was the Sir Leslie Wilson Centre and its replacement with the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

The Beattie Labor government honours its promises and more proof of our commitment was patently clear in our recent state budget where funding for the Families Department went up 15.5 per cent to \$518 million. Families are crucial to the government's vision for Queensland's future. The importance of Queensland families to the government's vision for the future of our state is clearly visible in the 2002-03 budget as it shows that we will increase funding by over \$188 million over the next four years.

This commitment continues the determined efforts that we have made to make up for decades of neglect. The commitment has confirmed that families are a key Beattie government priority. The additional funding ensures that the government has now met its fiscal commitments which resulted from the Forde inquiry. We have also 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 state's community conferencing program will be expanded to the Sunshine Coast. I have been actively lobbying for the introduction of community conferencing.

**Ms Spence:** You did a very good job of lobbying. Well done.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I thank the minister very much. It is great to see that the Minister for Families has heard the calls and recognised the need for the option on the Sunshine Coast. I sincerely thank her and the Treasurer on behalf of Sunshine Coast residents.

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

Debate, on motion of Mr Cummins, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Casino Gaming Inspectors

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.30 p.m.), by leave: After I left the chamber this morning following question time, the Leader of the Opposition made a statement about the answer I gave in relation to casino inspectors being available at all times. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from evidence given at a Queensland Industrial Relations Commission hearing. What he did not tell the House was that the person who gave that evidence also stated, 'It is current government policy that we maintain a presence in casinos'—and that means at all times—'and we are allocated the resources to do so.' In other words, the government provides the funds to ensure that happens.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to evidence during cross-examination where the person was asked if it was possible for an inspector not to be available in the casino, and he said, 'Yes.' For instance, if an inspector took ill and went home before another inspector could actually get to the casino, the casino could be left unattended by an inspector. In fact, that has happened in a casino which has two inspectors. There has been an instance where both of those people are absent. Anyone who listens to 4KQ in the morning will know that yesterday morning and this morning both Kim and Laurel were off sick—at the same time. It can actually happen to two people. So if a person is working and they take ill, that is possible. However, it is our policy that casino inspectors will maintain a presence at all times.

Following that question this morning, I asked for a briefing from the department in relation to the situation. That states—

Inspectors will be rostered to be on duty in the casinos during all operating hours. There is the possibility that a casino inspectorate could be unstaffed for a short period on an ad hoc basis where an inspector takes sick leave at short notice. Controls will be put in place to ensure that there will be no impact on the integrity of gaming during these infrequent periods.

I table the full briefing note for the benefit of members. I do not believe that my answer this morning misled the parliament in any way in relation to inspectors. Obviously, commonsense would tell people that if somebody takes sick they will leave their place of employment. If people believe that that is misleading the parliament, I apologise, but I certainly do not believe that it is. It takes only a little bit of commonsense to understand that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Mickel): Are you seeking leave to table that document?

**Mr Mackenroth:** Yes.

Leave granted.

**JUVENILE JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL**  
**Second Reading**

Resumed (see p. 3148).

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (2.34 p.m.), continuing: Prior to lunch I was thanking the Minister for Families and Minister for Seniors for the funding of the community conferencing program, which will begin soon on the Sunshine Coast. This community conferencing program has proven to be highly effective in making young offenders face up to the consequences of their actions. It has also served to keep them out of the juvenile justice system. As it has worked in other areas, I have no doubt that it will also work on the Sunshine Coast.

All members would be well aware that the vast majority of our young adults and youth are excellent citizens. Indeed, they are often fine role models. I take this opportunity to mention a recent incident on the Sunshine Coast. A 16-year-old student, Justin Madden, from Buderim Siena Catholic College has shown what a quick-thinking young man he is. After a bus driver collapsed at the wheel, he forced his way through a bus load of terrified children to apply an emergency air brake and avert a crash. Justin said that he had been sitting near the back when he heard screams and thuds as a tree clipped the side of the bus. He could see that the driver had fallen out of his seat and that the bus was still moving. Despite having to leap over the driver's seat to apply the handbrake, Justin said he was very calm—because everyone else was doing his share of the screaming. The bus came to a halt just before a concrete streetlight pole. None of the students, aged 13 to 17, was injured, although many were in shock and later received counselling at the school. Siena College is in my electorate and we on the Sunshine Coast are very proud of Justin. He got a very good write-up in the *Courier-Mail*, which should be commended for that.

I will finish by singing the praises of yet another Sunshine Coast student. Shelly Thomson was Kawana's representative at the recent 2002 youth parliament. I seek leave to table a letter from Shelly, thanking both me and the parliament, along with a copy of her speeches.

Leave granted.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I had the pleasure and honour of occupying the Speaker's chair for a period of the youth parliament. It was, indeed, a satisfying experience. The vast majority of our youth are honourable and positive, and this ensures a good future for both Queensland and Australia. The students enjoyed the experience and acquitted themselves extremely well. They did a marvellous job in this chamber, trying to learn. Shelly stated—

I cannot thank you enough for choosing me to participate in this year's Youth Parliament. Before the Constitution Convention I had no knowledge of the political spectra, yet with these two events my interest in politics has grown immensely.

The Queensland Youth Parliament was an amazing experience and has opened up so many opportunities for me. The procedures learnt and issues discussed are valuable to me now and in the future. However, the people I met made the greatest impact. I have made firm contacts with people from all around Queensland, who can open so many more doors to me. I enjoyed the week and have my fingers crossed to return next year.

Again, I thank all those involved in that event.

I commend the minister for this very positive bill and for the immense amount of work that she has done to ensure that the Beattie Labor government will be remembered as a government that lifted families to another level. I commend bill to the House.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.38 p.m.): In rising to speak to this Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002, I place on the record my experience with young people, which I know most members in this chamber will agree with. Ninety-five per cent of our young people, if not more, are great; they are terrific. They do the right thing and they strive to achieve. Unfortunately, we do not hear enough stories about those achievements. We do not hear enough about the good things that young people do in our community; for example, volunteer work. A lot of high schoolers, particularly those in years 11 and 12, undertake voluntary work at aged persons homes and at various organisations and meetings to enhance the quality of life of our senior residents and those with special disabilities.

I want it clearly on record that the overwhelming majority of children do a great job. They might make a mistake every now and again—I do not mean in the judicial sense but in the sense of young people's habits versus older people's expectations—but the majority of children are wonderful. In high schools, children will run entire programs without assistance. In fact, primary schools now have graduation services. Year 7 students, just in their teenage years, are running entire programs. I commend the vast majority of young people.

The difficulty is that we hear only about the small percentage of young people who do the wrong thing. For many folk, particularly those who do not have young people or whose children have already grown into adults, it is easy to get the perception that young people in the majority are ill behaved, undisciplined and many times flout the law. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A number of initiatives in the bill are welcome, and I shall address a few. The bill provides that a support person must be present when a child is interviewed by police about an indictable offence. Unless the support person is there, the evidence cannot be admitted into court. There are some exceptions to this, but only where the prosecution can show that there was a sound reason why a support person was not present. I welcome that. Young people often do not understand the implications of what they are saying. This is not a criticism of the minister; I am merely putting on the record something that, over time, I have talked about with a number of people. I hope the same thing can be done, reinforced and required when it comes to child victims—particularly victims of sexual crimes. We still find that a number of children, particularly in terms of court proceedings, are re-traumatised because of the process.

A few years ago I did some work with a child psychologist in terms of young children using a video link to give evidence in court. We can set arbitrary ages for that, whether that is age in years or age in mental maturity. The idea was so that young children could not be put into court and minced up into small pieces as some barristers want to do in defending their clients. It was also suggested that, at other ages, it should be compulsory for a blind to be erected between the victim and the alleged perpetrator. As a person's age and maturity increases, that person is more able to cope with direct confrontation with a perpetrator in court. I am not criticising the bill proposals with regard to protecting children, but I look forward to the time when the same mandatory protections are in place for child victims, because so many children are re-traumatised when required to go to court and face physically, as well as emotionally, the alleged perpetrator.

It is a right and very sound premise to say that all Queenslanders are entitled to live in a safe and secure environment. We all acknowledge, though, that that is not the case. Frustrated constituents see me in my office about juvenile crime. Juvenile crime often happens in blocks. There will not be a lot of juvenile crime and then there will be a small period of time where often the same group of people—I do not know whether they are bored or what provokes them—will create mischief in a suburb or an area. This happened recently at Boyne-Tannum where currently there is a lack of police officers for the 24-hour police station. A new station is due to be formally opened and therefore the number of police officers can and will be increased.

I read with some interest an article in the *Courier-Mail* in which a sentence states—

Mr Beattie claimed that there was considerable public concern about the inability of judges to publicly identify juveniles even when their offences were shocking. We have seen little credible evidence of that considerable public concern.

To whomever wrote this I say that Mr Beattie's claim that there was considerable public concern is borne out 100 per cent in my electorate and I am sure in many electorates. For the victims it appears that young offenders are protected because of the pre-existing rule of no identification of juveniles. Whether it is robbery, a threat of grievous bodily harm or whatever, they feel twice the victim because they have received little in the way of reparation for the damage they have incurred, whether that is physical damage or property damage. They also see that these young people, particularly the repeat offenders, are protected by this requirement for anonymity. The article claims that Peter Beattie was wrong. My information is that the Premier is 100 per cent right. For many people in our community, the ability for judges to disclose the identity of repeat offenders in serious violent offences will be welcomed.

The options for intensive supervision orders are also welcomed. I know that a previous speaker criticised the community perception that young people get let off lightly when they commit quite serious crimes. I reinforce the notion that that is the community perception because I hear about this in my office. In some instances, the victim of the crime finds out from the police what might happen to the offender. This is not a criticism of the police who do all the work and sometimes get little satisfaction out of it, but often members of the community see young people who have gone through the court process receive very weak, if any, sentences. From the community perspective, the feedback to me is that most adults do not want to see young people put in jail where they will learn bad habits and how to commit worse offences. This creates the revolving door process as far as a child's emotional and psychological development is concerned.

There are probably many other issues that I could address in relation to the bill, but because of time constraints I will not so do today. I commend the minister for viewing this matter from the

community's perspective and for acknowledging that, because young people are young, they sometimes lack the skills to understand the depth and severity of their actions. I look forward to seeing this bill improve not only justice for young people who commit crimes but also justice for the victims of crime.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.47 p.m.): This bill will not only amend but also substantially overhaul the Juvenile Justice Act 1993 and other pertinent legislation to the juvenile justice system to provide a better, more modern and more consistent legislative basis for its administration in Queensland. It was a promise of this government to implement the Forde recommendations to improve the treatment of young people held in youth detention. Most people who were aware of the Sir Leslie Wilson centre were indeed delighted when it was demolished and replaced by the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. This was the beginning of the Forde report's recommended changes. Some years ago I had the unforgettable, devastating experience of visiting a young teenage boy known to me in the Sir Leslie Wilson centre and I can still remember the oppressive and stark nature of the place. On his release the young boy some time later committed suicide. That is something I will never forget.

The Forde report also highlighted the need to build safer and more supportive communities that are able to tackle the problems that youth experience. Breakdowns of family relations and the wider community are contributing factors to antisocial behaviour in juveniles. Youth will commit crime, but it is up to society and governments to do everything possible to ensure that every effort is made to prevent them from becoming adult criminals and to respond to the offences committed.

**Ms Keech:** And parents have a responsibility, too.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** Yes, parents have an extremely important responsibility. This government is going forward, unlike when the opposition was in government in 1996, under Rob Borbidge, when amendments made to the act did not provide appropriate and reasonable clarification and resulted in some further operational concerns. The member for Cunningham is wrong to suggest that this bill enhances what the Nationals put in place whilst in government.

As the Minister for Families stated in her second reading speech, the most effective approach to juvenile offending is one that enhances community safety by recognising that we must encourage the development of our young people's sense of responsibility and their development into law-abiding adults as far as we reasonably can. The old 'lock 'em up and throw away the key' mentality has long gone. It was always about as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike.

The Beattie government promised that, although it would do everything possible to ensure that young offenders were given every opportunity to be rehabilitated, the identity of the most serious, violent and heinous offenders would be published. They would no longer be able to hide under the umbrella of confidentiality provided by the Juvenile Justice Act when the court decides that it is in the interests of justice to do so. People in the electorate of Pumicestone whom I represent have raised this issue. They believe this is totally appropriate and that we are right to propose it.

**Ms Keech:** So have the people of Albert.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** The people of Albert agree as well. It is also imperative that there are suitable sentence options in place so that the courts can attempt to prevent young offenders from repeat offending. Currently, there is a hiatus in community based sentence options for children between the ages of 10 and 12 years. Because the age threshold for a community sentence order is currently set at 13, the only sentence option for high-risk children under this age has been probation, detention or release from detention on an immediate release order. However, this has now been addressed in the bill by introducing the intensive supervision order, which is reserved only for those whose behaviour has placed them at risk of detention. Permitting 10- to 12-year-olds who commit crimes to get the intensive supervision they need and supporting their development into law-abiding accountable and responsible adults so as to protect the public epitomises this government's fair approach to young offenders.

Under this bill, and for the first time, a child will be able to elect to have a trial by jury in the Childrens Court of this state. This government is committed to strengthening the specialist jurisdiction of the court by eliminating a child's right to elect to be dealt with by the District Court instead of the Childrens Court. Cases will be heard more quickly and expertly because of this change, and that has to be better for all concerned. Many in the system will look forward to the

setting up of a specialist Childrens Court to permit more uniformity and fairness in sentencing and more effective responses to juvenile offending.

It must be noted that this bill includes changes to the policing of children, a list of basic rights of children in youth detention centres in the charter of the juvenile justice principles, an obligation on youth detention staff to report harm suffered by a detained child, and mandatory regular inspection of youth detention centres. The use of conferencing and cautioning in juvenile crime related matters has been revised and updated. Courts will be required to consider dealing with children by referring them to a conference. Conference conveners will have a duty to ensure that the victim is notified of and invited to the conference.

This bill seeks to improve the management of young people involved in both the adult and child criminal justice systems. Court processes relevant to young people who have both adult and child offences or who are subject to an application to stand trial with an adult offender have been refined also. Precise direction is also provided about whether a young adult is to be imprisoned in a youth detention centre or in a Corrective Services facility. Consultation has been widespread amongst those groups with a working knowledge of the legislation. During late 1999 and early 2000, 11 community forums and meetings were held throughout Queensland with various interest groups, including the Victims of Crime Association, where the opportunity was given for people to get information and explanations of the major changes proposed and to provide comments and ask relevant related questions. Thirty written submissions were received on the release of an issues paper that highlighted areas of the act that had been the subject of concern. Extensive consultation also occurred between the Department of Families, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Queensland Police Service. I pass on my congratulations to all who worked on this bill and I commend it to the House.

**Miss ELISA ROBERTS** (Gympie—Ind) (2.54 p.m.): Today I rise to speak in support of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. Although children are among the most vulnerable members of our society, it is a sad reality that we are seeing more and more crimes being committed by young children, some of which we could never imagine a child being capable of. The Jamie Bolger kidnap and murder case in Britain is a vivid and ghastly confirmation that children are capable of the worst possible crimes.

It is well known that the way in which perpetrators of crime are dealt with, regardless of their age, is of vital importance to the public. It is my belief that the public would support any initiative aimed at decreasing the incidence of crime. As stated previously, children have the ability to commit violent and premeditated crimes just like an adult in some instances. Therefore, it is only right for the opportunity for that child to be protected by the confidentiality as set out in the Juvenile Justice Act to be denied to them. An offender is an offender no matter what age he or she may be. If the disclosure of the criminal's name will protect the community, it is imperative that a judge be given that choice.

The extension of sentence options is valuable as it will allow appropriate age based punishment to be provided, particularly for the youngest of offenders. I hope the introduction of the intensive supervision order will work towards deterring our youngest offenders from repeating their crimes and assist more appropriately in their rehabilitation whilst they are still young enough and remain susceptible to positive and responsible development. Research has shown that a child's surroundings are a major contributing factor to how they behave and that, if detention can be avoided, it would be more conducive to a child changing their behaviour for the better.

I particularly support the implementation of a Childrens Court that will specialise in the administration of suitable sentences specific to minors. The adoption of the Forde report recommendations, including the monitoring of detention centres and the provision of criminal history information to the detention centre manager of those visiting the centres, is to be commended, as are the provisions pertaining to the rights of the child undergoing detention.

One other notable aspect of the bill is the attempt to reduce crimes committed by members of indigenous communities by introducing circumstances where their own communities can contribute to the rehabilitation process, which will be more culturally acceptable and therefore more inclined to be effective. It is imperative to all that governments continue to be tough on crime so that we can all live in a safe environment. It is my belief that this bill goes towards achieving that aim.

**Ms MOLLOY** (Noosa—ALP) (2.57 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill. The basis of the bill is grounded in the response to the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, the Forde report, which was aimed at improving

the treatment of young people held in youth detention. The responses included removing the then Sir Leslie Wilson centre and replacing it with the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. Further amendments in the bill show this government's commitment to being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, to building safer and more supportive communities and reducing indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system in accordance with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement.

The amendments to the act by the coalition did not provide clarity and only created further problems. The judiciary and the key stakeholders have given input regarding the act, especially in relation to bail provisions for children and the admissibility of a child's participation in the diversionary process where evidence is not tested by a court. So why take this initiative? Firstly, the citizens of this state have a right to live safely and securely. Secondly, Queenslanders also have a responsibility not only to address issues of youth crime but also to respond to the needs of those citizens—the youth of this state—to ensure that they do not become victims of the crime cycle. We all know—or at least we should know—that if we can prevent these youngsters from reoffending we will have at least fulfilled our responsibility in providing the tools for them to learn and move on—to move on to wholesome responsible citizenship that will be all the better for their participation. It is not good enough to rap them over the knuckles for wrongdoing without giving them the skills to improve their lives.

The Coolum Youth and Neighbourhood Centre is a community based centre run by Rod Holt and Ken Jones. The centre has been running for 10 years with enormous support from the community and volunteers. This centre is the hub of a youth caring community. It has links with Lifeline, St Vincent's and the Salvation Army, to name just a few. Rod Holt has committed years to the youth of Coolum when no-one else would. Rod has been running innovative, interventionist type programs in Coolum and has been employed at the Coolum State High School. While Ken Jones and Rod Holt head up this wonderful centre, the community can be assured that the youth in our community are at least being supported. But Rod and Ken need further support because they cannot keep on keeping on.

I now come back to the bill before the House. This bill fulfils election promises. Issues such as naming, intensive supervision orders, an end to forum shopping and the commitment to transfer the power currently exercised by public servants to breach a child's supervised release from detention to the courts are included in the bill. The bill also contains new juvenile justice principles and Forde report recommendations, including community conferencing, an issue which I and the member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, look forward to. We are absolutely thrilled at the minister's decision to put this program in place on the Sunshine Coast.

**Mr Cummins:** Hear, hear!

**Ms MOLLOY:** I thank the member for Kawana for his interjection. The bill in its entirety is the result of extensive consultation with the legal and indigenous community and victims of crime stakeholder groups. May I suggest to those people in the community who really care about youth and youth issues to avail themselves of the opportunity to read this bill and its background in order to adequately acquaint themselves with the way in which this bill will help build Queensland communities. Once again, I congratulate the minister, Judy Spence, and her staff on taking on this bill and reinforcing the Labor government's commitment to social justice and youth issues.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (3.01 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill. At the outset, I want to make a few comments about the speech made yesterday on this bill by the member for Tablelands. The member made a very negative contribution to this debate, particularly in relation to the status of youth in our community. In particular she highlighted what she believed was a significant increase in crime and used terms such as 'lawlessness' and 'villains' when referring to young people. This is totally contrary to the factual situation. There has in fact been a small increase in the number of matters dealt with by the Childrens Court—about 1.9 per cent. Judge Robertson said this on this issue—

The statistics do not support any significant increase in juvenile crime. Indeed, the substantial decrease in the number of defendants appearing before the Childrens Court of Queensland and the District Court suggests a reduction in more serious crime by juveniles.

**Mrs Reilly:** As the population is rising it is actually not a rise, really, in real terms.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** That is right. In fact, if one looks at the proportion of young people who would be eligible in terms of the numbers in Queensland, it is about 25 per cent of the population. In terms of the total number of cases that appear before our court system—and that is including

all adults—they make up less than four per cent of the total. So any suggestion that there is a rampant increase in the amount of juvenile crime, or its seriousness, is absolute rubbish. The member for Tablelands went on to paint a very negative picture of young people in the community.

**Ms Keech:** Obviously she doesn't know many young people.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** That is correct. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth, I take strong exception to those comments and that stereotyping of our young people. The reality is that the overwhelming majority of young people in our community are good and honest and make valuable contributions to our community life.

**Mrs Reilly:** Only one per cent appear before the courts.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** Yes, that is correct. Even a casual observer of the activities that young people in our school system and our community engage in would see the truth of this.

**Ms Keech:** Our communities can be proud of our young people.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** They certainly can. The state government values young people and the contributions that they make to our community and government decision making. At the local level, I am particularly proud of the achievements and contributions that young people make to the community and community life in my electorate. To give the House a small recent example—one of many—three teams from Banyo State High School participated in the Australian Business Week enterprise program. The year 10 students took out sectional awards and were the overall winners in their particular category. The year 12s also took out sectional awards. There are many other examples of high achievement and great contributions to community life that young people have made in my electorate and, I am sure, the electorates of all members.

At the state level, the government has taken proactive steps to actively engage young people because we value their contributions. Our Youth Participation Strategy comprises a number of key elements. The State Youth Advisory Council comprises a number of representatives from various government departments and agencies and youth representative organisations. Importantly, it also includes an advisory council made up of 15 young people between the ages of 15 and 25 and gives advice to the minister and the government on issues of importance to young people.

**Mrs Reilly:** This government has included young people more than any other government.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** It has. Another initiative to further improve and increase the active involvement of young people in decision making is our Get on Board initiative in which we take proactive steps to identify young people in the community to sit on government boards. The GENERATE web site is a very useful resource and communication device for young people. There are also regular monthly online chats where ministers of the government are available for an hour to talk, in an online sense, with young people about issues of concern to them. There is also a range of grants which encourage the active participation of young people in community life. There are individual grants of up to \$500 through the Yes, You grants. In addition, community organisations can access up to \$15,000 in our youth participation grants. Again in response to what was a very negative contribution by the member for Tablelands—and many other members have commented on it—I again reiterate this government's record and recognition of the valuable contribution that the overwhelming majority of young people make to community life.

The amendments contained in this bill cover a range of areas: the public disclosure of the most serious violent offenders where a court decides it is in the public interest to do so; the insertion of provisions relating to intensive supervision orders for 10- to 12-year-olds whose behaviour has put them at risk of a period of detention; the inclusion of a new Charter of Juvenile Justice Principles in the act; and a range of recommendations arising out of the Forde report, including matters such as a mandatory requirement on youth detention staff to report any harm suffered by children, regular monitoring and inspection of detention centres, access and advice to children in detention, et cetera.

There is one particular issue on which I want to make some specific comments, and that is the abolition of a child's right to elect to be dealt with by the District Court instead of the Childrens Court. I firstly put on record again some of the basic principles of our juvenile justice system, which I and, I believe, most people in the community support. The principal purpose of our juvenile justice system is to prevent the development of criminality in children and young persons. That is achieved through a balanced system that takes account of the need for offenders to be held

accountable for their actions, the need to protect the public and, importantly, to rehabilitate young offenders back into becoming contributing members of our community.

One of the key elements of that system in the 1992 act was the creation of the Childrens Court. One of the intended roles of the Childrens Court is to apply consistency in the way in which juvenile offenders are treated and sentenced by a justice system.

The Childrens Court Act 1992 established the Childrens Magistrates Court and the Childrens Court of Queensland, which are presided over by judges appointed from the District Court. I understand that the first court judge was Judge Fred McGuire; the current judge is Judge John Robertson. The Childrens Court can hear matters that are classified only as serious offences, and that is those that, if committed by an adult, would attract a sentence of 14 years or more in prison. A child charged with a serious offence is put before a committal hearing before a children's magistrate. If it is determined that the child has a case to answer, it is at this point that the child, if legally represented, can elect to have the matter heard in either the Childrens Court with the judge sitting alone or the District Court or Supreme Court with a judge and jury.

Given the generally agreed-to principles of juvenile justice in the community and the creation of the Childrens Court to consistently apply these principles, it is interesting and significant to note that to date the majority of defendants committed from the Magistrates Court to a higher court have chosen to have their cases heard in the District Court or the Supreme Court and not the Childrens Court. In fact, in the year 2000-01 only 669, or fewer than 21 per cent, of the eligible cases elected to have their matters heard in the Childrens Court. In 1998-99—just to go back a couple of years—only about 12 per cent of cases that could have been heard by the Childrens Court were in fact heard by it.

My understanding is that it is generally accepted that one of the main reasons why people elect to use the District Court or Supreme Court as opposed to the Childrens Court is the lack of jury trials in the Childrens Court. In a speech I gave to this parliament in March 2000 I supported the introduction of the option of trial by jury in the Childrens Court and specifically stated that I agreed with the current president of the court, Judge John Robertson, that young people committed to a higher court should have the right to elect to have a trial by a Childrens Court judge with or without a jury and no other right.

The Childrens Court system provides the community with an opportunity to apply consistently the principles of juvenile justice that I believe have widespread support in the community. I am pleased that this legislation introduces amendments which will abolish the right of a child to elect to have their matter heard in the District Court and introduces the right of a child to elect to have their matter heard before a jury in the Childrens Court. These amendments are long overdue. I commend the minister and the department for this reform and commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (3.11 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to speak to the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. This bill continues the Beattie Labor government's approach of being tough on crime and the causes of crime. The Beattie Labor government's approach is obviously working. It is important to acknowledge that juvenile crime is a serious issue in the community. However, we must keep it in perspective. The overwhelming majority of our young people never have more than one contact with the law. Only one per cent of young people in Queensland will appear before a court for offending, and 75 per cent of that one per cent will appear only once or twice. So while juvenile crime is a problem, we are talking about less than one per cent of young people in Queensland actually being involved in the juvenile justice system. It is good that the Beattie Labor government is making progressive steps forward in the juvenile justice system. However, the majority of children in Queensland are good, law-abiding children, and we should not lose that perspective.

Some of the changes proposed by the bill are designed to protect the community and require young offenders to take responsibility for their offences and, of course, to stop them from reoffending. It is important to acknowledge that with the recent debate about medical indemnity insurance the community sentiment suggests that many adults are not taking responsibility for their actions. They have a desire to blame someone else, to sue someone else or to see someone else at fault when unfortunate or unlucky things happen. However, the Juvenile Justice Act and this amendment increase the requirement on young offenders to take responsibility for their actions, to own up to their offences and therefore stop them reoffending.

Some of the amendments contained within this bill will allow courts to permit the naming of juvenile offenders. Of course, the offenders who can be named are only those who commit the most serious and violent offences. This provides an appropriate emphasis on community safety in

relation to that small target group. So within that small percentage of one per cent of children who appear before the juvenile justice system, only a small percentage of them actually commit serious violent offences. So the naming provision will not have widespread support to allow children who are picked up for shoplifting to be named in the media. Only those children who are deemed to pose a serious threat to society and have committed those serious violent offences will be named.

Some of the other major changes include the implementation of the recommendations made in the Forde inquiry report, continual refinement of the diversionary processes contained within the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 and, of course, the clarification of the process for granting bail for children. This is an issue about which the member for Glass House spoke. A commonsense approach has been adopted in relation to granting bail for children. So when considering whether or not to grant bail to a child, consideration must be given to a broad range of matters and the child must be granted bail unless the child presents an unacceptable risk as measured against these criteria. The bill provides options that will help the principle that detention of a child is an option of last resort while providing appropriate community protection.

For example, an amendment to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 provides that instead of immediately arresting a child for a breach of their conditions of bail—except the condition to attend court—police will be required to consider whether it would be more appropriate to apply to a court for a variation or revocation of the child's bail. The requirement to refuse a child bail for their own protection has been modified to make it clear that child protection concerns such as homelessness cannot be addressed by refusing bail. This has been done by stating that bail can be refused for a child's own protection only if release threatens the child's safety and the child's safety cannot be ensured without remanding the child in custody. The bill will ensure that when a child is granted bail the least restrictive bail option is considered first and conditions imposed on bail must be no more onerous than necessary. Because so few children or their parents can afford cash bail or provide a surety, the bill states that these options should be considered only if release on the child's own undertaking is inappropriate in the circumstances. Some children have been remanded in watch-houses after failing to appear on particular minor offences, such as failing to pay a rail fare.

Having some of the most vulnerable members of our society detained in watch-houses for relatively minor offences is a matter of concern to the community. Accordingly, the bill makes it clear that following arrest on a warrant for failure to appear, if a child cannot be brought promptly to a court the police have the discretion to release the child on bail. To ensure that children from regional and remote areas of Queensland have the same opportunities to apply for bail as children in larger centres, the bill will allow a bail application to be considered using audio or audiovisual links. Finally, the bill clarifies that if a sentence of detention is imposed for a breach of bail, this sentence is no longer automatically cumulative with other sentences of detention being served by the child.

Some of the other changes in this bill include the introduction of a new intensive supervision order to address and change offending behaviour in high-risk children under 13 years of age who are too young to do community service work. This allows the court greater flexibility in imposing supervision orders on these children. During my work on the graffiti task force members of the public have told me that they would like the children who are committing graffiti offences to be made to get out there and clean off the graffiti. Whereas there are some occupational health and safety concerns in relation to chemicals and so on, I understand the sentiment behind that. Is there a way to get those children out there to repair some of the damage that their offending behaviour causes?

Finally, I turn to the amendments relating to where children can elect to have their cases heard. Certainly, forum shopping is a well-known fact of life in the criminal justice system. Many defence solicitors and barristers use forum shopping to either frustrate the legal system or increase the revenue in their own pockets. I certainly support the move to end forum shopping by defence lawyers. I commend the minister and her staff for their hard work and I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (3.19 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise today to speak to the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002. Juvenile crime is a frequent topic of conversation at Neighbourhood Watch meetings in my electorate and other community forums. There is often a perception that juvenile crime is increasing, so I would like to use this opportunity to put on the record the statistics from the 2000-01 annual report of the Childrens Court of Queensland.

A comparison of the number and type of juvenile offences heard in all Queensland courts in 1999-2000 and in 2000-01 reveals a decrease of 13 per cent in juvenile crime. Motor vehicle theft, which is one of the more frequent crimes, decreased by 16.5 per cent, while assault and related offences decreased by 37.6 per cent and robbery decreased by 31.1 per cent. Clearly, these statistics confirm that juvenile crime is falling rather than increasing. Notwithstanding these positive trends, there were 19,385 juvenile offences heard in 2000-01. It is a serious concern to the community and to me.

Prior to the last election the government made a number of commitments in response to this concern. The community of Holloways Beach in my electorate was experiencing significant problems with young people vandalising the local respite centre and abusing outdoor dining patrons, amongst other things, which led to an angry meeting of some 100 residents calling for action. In that instance I responded with a commitment to establish a local police beat, which was opened earlier this year. As I have indicated to this House previously, Constable Paul Stanley, the police beat officer, is doing an excellent job and juvenile crime has decreased in Holloways Beach.

At the state level, the Beattie government has made a commitment to allow the public naming of convicted violent juvenile offenders and to strengthen the Juvenile Justice Act. The amendments being debated today deliver on those election commitments. Prior to detailing these changes I would like to make mention of the charter of juvenile justice principles, which is included as a schedule to this bill. This charter provides a very good indication of our government's policy in relation to juvenile justice, and the 20 principles cover the rights of children and their victims, the obligation of parents and decision makers, indigenous cultural recognition and correctional treatment. I seek leave to have them incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### RIGHTS OF CHILDREN:

##### Right:

- To be treated with respect and dignity.
- To special protection during investigations and proceedings that relate to offences.
- To be the subject of criminal proceedings only when necessary.
- To have procedures and matters that affect them explained fully to them.
- To be dealt with in a manner that is conducive to socially acceptable personal development.
- Of access to legal, advocacy and interpretation services.
- To be consulted about and to participate in decision making that affects them on such issues as education, health, family and rehabilitation programs.
- To appropriate privacy.
- To assistance in making the transition back to the community after release from detention.

##### Rights of victims:

- Opportunity to participate in process relating to offences.

##### Obligations of parents:

- Encouragement to fulfil responsibility for care and supervision of their children.

##### Obligations of decision-makers:

- Should consider the child's age, level of maturity, cultural and religious beliefs and practices when making decisions that affect the child.

##### Indigenous culture recognition:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be appropriately involved in dealings with children from those communities.
- Programs and services should be culturally appropriate for the benefit of indigenous children.

##### Correctional treatment:

- Recognition of the importance of the re-integration of children into the community.
- Children should only be detained as a last resort and even then only in institutions suitable for them.
- Recognition that the relationship of children in detention with their families and community should be maintained.

**Dr LESLEY CLARK:** While I believe that these principles reflect a balanced approach to this difficult and complex issue, it is important to note that since the 1990s Queensland, along with other jurisdictions, has moved away from a welfare model that attributes youth crime to social, economic and psychological factors and towards a justice model that places more focus on punishment and the need to hold young people accountable for their actions.

Commensurate with this step has been an acceptance of the restorative justice model associated with increased rights for the victim. In a practical sense, restorative justice principles are applied through such avenues as community conferencing and victim mediation, which both involve the victim in the decision-making process and emphasise the need for a young person to take responsibility for his or her own action and provide restoration or restitution to their victim.

Conferencing is no soft option, because the young person has to personally face the anger and pain of their victim. As a result, they are much more likely to feel genuine remorse for their action and make amends. I have been and continue to be a strong advocate for this form of correction for young people, ever since it was introduced in New Zealand in the early 1990s and subsequently piloted in this state.

Returning to the details of the bill, which delivers on our election commitments, this government promised that young people who commit the most serious violent offences will no longer be able to hide behind the shelter of confidentiality provided by the Juvenile Justice Act. As promised, the bill allows the identity of the most serious violent offenders to be publicly disclosed when a court decides that it is in the interests of justice to do so. Judges will be given the power to permit publication of the name of a child guilty of a heinous offence of violence that is serious enough to carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment if committed by an adult.

The bill also addresses the safety of the community through conferring a power on the chief executive to release details about a child for public information if satisfied that this is required to protect a person's safety. Another change that I know will be welcomed by the community is the removal of the confidentiality provisions that prevent victims finding out the name of the young person who has committed an offence against them.

The statistics show that the majority of young people who appear in court are aged 15 and 16 years. However, those of younger years do commit crimes and, in a small number of cases, some of these younger children go on to offend repeatedly. It is important that there are appropriate sentence options in place so that the courts can try to stop the development of repeat offenders.

At the moment there is a gap in community based sentence options for children between the ages of 10 and 12 years. The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill delivers on the commitment to address this gap in sentence options by introducing intensive supervision orders. These orders epitomise the government's balanced approach to youth offending, allowing 10- to 12-year-old children who commit offences to receive the type of intensive supervision needed to both protect public safety and support their development into law-abiding and responsible adults.

The bill provides for a range of other changes that will improve juvenile justice. I would like to touch on just two of those that are particularly relevant for far-north Queensland. To ensure that children from regional and remote areas of Queensland are not disadvantaged, the bill will allow a bail application to be conducted using audio or audiovisual links.

The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill's increased emphasis on successful diversionary processes, such as conferencing and cautioning, also responds to the challenge of reducing the overrepresentation of indigenous youth in the juvenile justice system. The bill enhances opportunities for indigenous communities to participate where these processes involve their children and will help a child take responsibility for their offending in ways that are more culturally relevant and, therefore, will have a greater rehabilitative impact on a child.

Amendments made by this bill will contribute to a more effective juvenile justice system and will help achieve the important goals of reducing juvenile offending as well as providing Queenslanders with safer communities. I congratulate the minister on this bill and I commend it to the House.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (3.24 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill. This bill, which incorporates amendments to a number of acts relating to juvenile justice, is all about this government keeping pace with a changing community. The amendments reflect commentary on the existing act by the courts and juvenile justice stakeholders in relation to provisions of the Bail Act and the right of election to the Childrens Court of Queensland and consider the findings of the Forde inquiry and implement the government's key election commitments, including the naming of a serious violent child offender in selected circumstances. Importantly, the bill seeks to strengthen the Juvenile Justice Act to better reflect the government's objective of attaining a balanced juvenile justice system for Queensland. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

### Leave granted.

Members will be aware of the perceptions that exist within their own constituencies of an increase in crime, particularly concerning young people. In reality, when we look at the data, the claims just don't stack up.

Only about 1% of young people appear in court in any one year.

About 75% of young offenders appear in court only once or twice.

The majority of offences committed by young people are property related offences—very few are offences against the person.

However, there is, Mr Speaker, a very small group of juvenile offenders who do fall into the category of serious violent offenders and who can pose a significant risk to the community.

This piece of legislation seeks to allow the identity of these offenders—the most serious offenders—to be publicly disclosed when a court decides it is in the interests of justice to do so.

While statistics show that the rate of serious juvenile crime has decreased in recent times, this Bill is about ensuring that those juveniles who do commit crimes of a serious and violent nature can no longer hide behind the provision of confidentiality which exists in the current Juvenile Justice Act.

The provision stems from a belief by this Government, that when a serious violent crime is committed, community safety should remain the most important consideration.

I particularly welcome clauses 93 and 105 of the Bill which permit the court to name a child convicted of such an offence in certain circumstances, and provide the Chief Executive of the Department of Families to release the name and details of a child when it is in the interest of public safety.

Mr Speaker, this Government is also about providing a sensible approach to juvenile justice—creating a safe environment for all Queenslanders and, at the same time, ensuring that steps are taken to curb the crime cycle for young people by offering avenues to rehabilitation.

Restorative justice is one such approach for dealing with juvenile law-breakers that differs from traditional criminal justice processing.

Traditionally, our criminal justice system has a retributive basis which differs from a restorative justice approach. In recent years however, a number of legislative advances have meant all that is changing. This is particularly the case in the area of juvenile justice which uniquely fits the restorative justice paradigm and objectives of rehabilitation and public safety.

Mr Speaker, like many members in this House, I am particularly supportive of the concept of community conferencing—an avenue of restorative justice first legislated for under the Juvenile Justice Act 1992.

The process allows, in some circumstances, for an offence to be referred to a community conference—a meeting between a young person who committed a crime, the young person's family or other support people, and the victim if he or she wishes to attend.

Trained conveners are also present to help the parties talk about what happened and how the young offender might work towards repairing the damage or harm.

Either a police officer or a court may decide if it is appropriate to refer a matter to a community conference. It is usual for a police officer to attend as the presence of a uniform signals to participants the seriousness and formality of the occasion. Attending police officers can also provide factual and contextual information that can assist the process.

A range of offences have been effectively dealt with through conferencing, including assault, armed robbery, unlawful use of a motor vehicle, stealing, housebreaking, wilful damage and drug offences.

Restorative justice is more than just another change to the justice system; it is a fundamentally different way of understanding what justice is and how it is achieved.

Victims, offenders and the affected communities are the key stakeholders in justice and the community conferencing process maximises the input and participation of these parties—especially victims and offenders—in the search for restoration, healing, responsibility and prevention.

The roles of victim and offender vary according to the nature of the offence as well as the capacities and preferences of the parties.

In restorative justice, the offender becomes accountable to those he or she has harmed. Justice is done for the victims, victimised communities and offenders.

An important change for community conferencing being considered as part of this Bill is a shift of the responsibility of the decision making process when it comes to a child offender's participation in a conference.

Currently, this decision is imposed upon the victim. Instead, conference conveners will invite victims to participate and may still decide to proceed with a conference, even if a victim does not participate.

In the traditional justice system that has operated in Australia since the early days of European settlement, victims have tended to feel left out of their own cases. Often they need to speak about how they feel, but in the past the system offered little provision for that.

By allowing the court to permit the naming of a child convicted of a serious, violent offence in certain circumstances AND continuing with the many successes that have come from community conferencing, we can reflect the communities' abhorrence of serious violent offenders and at the same time provide some peace of mind to victims and offer a path to rehabilitation for young offenders.

Mr Speaker, another important aspect of the Bill is the introduction of a new sentencing which specifically targets high risk children who are too young to engage in community service work.

I mentioned earlier that the perception of juvenile crime is out of sorts with the statistics. Those same statistics show that those juveniles most likely to engage in crime are aged 15-16 years.

There are, however, a small number of offenders who are significantly younger than that—we're talking between 10 and 12 years of age.

Presently, sentencing options for this age category are significantly limited. In an attempt to curb their propensity for involvement in crime and prevent repeat offences, an alternative to the current detention, probation and release from detention options needed to be considered.

Under the proposed changes to this Bill, a new sentencing option targeting repeat and high risk offenders is available. The intensive supervision option will be utilised for those children at risk of a sentence of detention, but only after a pre-sentence report is provided to the Court.

The introduction of this new sentencing option will give those child offenders the opportunity to break free from a cycle of crime.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.26 p.m.): The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 aims not only to provide legislation that is relevant and effective but also to deliver a balanced juvenile justice system for Queensland. The bill demonstrates this government's determination to build safer and supportive communities and to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. Safer and supportive communities are essential to the government's commitments contained in this legislation—

**Mr Cummins:** Happy birthday, Jo-Ann.

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you. Yes, it is my birthday today. What a great day to be discussing juvenile justice legislation.

**Mr Mickel:** You are a juvenile yourself.

**Mrs MILLER:** I am not quite a juvenile. I want to report to the House on some initiatives in my electorate relating to young people. The Base community organisation runs several programs for juveniles in our community. First, the Abused Women Action Group is designed to assist all women and young girls who have suffered abuse and violence. Second, Rec Zone is for children and youth at risk. Its aims are to prevent crime and prevent self-harm. This program also teaches recreational and social skills.

Third, the new Bubbles program is for new and expectant mothers. It teaches them how to cope with babies—feeding them, washing clothes. It is basically dealing with innocent ignorants and turning them into confident young mothers. Fourth, there are counselling, support and advocacy programs on behalf of young people. Fifth, there are prevention programs specifically aimed at youth suicide, drug and alcohol addictions and self-harm. Many clients are referred by local doctors, schools, juvenile justice centres and the Juvenile Aid Bureau. Many young people also walk in off the street because it is such a non-threatening and helpful environment.

The Goodna Youth Service accommodates some 14 young people in units and houses in my electorate. A number of these young people come out of the juvenile justice system. These young people are taught basic living skills such as budgeting, house cleaning, cooking and even washing dishes. They are taught about values and ethics from their own perspectives, such as evaluating what are families, what are friends and their roles in society. Different standards of behaviour are discussed relevant to their recreational outings. For example, standards of behaviour at a Broncos match are very different from those expected at a formal dinner.

The Goodna Youth Service also works closely with our local schools, as does the Base. Every Friday evening at Camira All-Sports a free sausage sizzle is held, along with organised activities. Redbank Plaza Shopping Centre sponsors a live band, basketball competition or breakdance competitions on a monthly basis. Redbank Plaza should be congratulated for its support of our young people. A crowd of 300 to 400 young people attend these nights, with some even bringing their parents.

The work of the Goodna Neighbourhood House workers and volunteers with our young people helps them in their lives. The house runs after-school programs including assistance with homework. It provides holiday care programs, including trips to Sea World, South Bank or the movies—all with generous support from our community. Much of the success of these programs is due to the dedication of John and Elnor Stor, who work tirelessly with children in our community. The Riverview Neighbourhood House provides similar programs. Both houses share ideas on programs that help youth in my community. The work of the churches in my electorate should never be understated. Many run specific programs for young people, teaching them basic life skills so often neglected in our society.

Governments can only go so far with legislation. Our local communities also need to take responsibility for their youth. We have done this in my electorate of Bundamba. Our young people know that the Base exists. They know that the Goodna Youth Service exists. They know that they can seek assistance through schools and they know that they can get help from churches.

I am a member of parliament who helps the community help themselves. I roll up my sleeves and I have over several years been elected to the committees of management of the Base and the Goodna Neighbourhood House. I am a member of numerous other community organisations that help youth in my electorate. I do not just give support from a distance; I am an active participant on these committees and I care about our youth. Everyone in my community knows this, including the young people themselves. Indeed, many young people also contact me in my role as a member of this parliament and I bend over backwards to help them for, as a mother, I know that our young people are our future. It gives me great pleasure to support this bill.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (3.30 p.m.): I applaud the minister, Judy Spence, departmental staff and members of the Forde inquiry team for their efforts in making sure that young people in detention are given every possible opportunity to get back on track. As many members have said in this House today, young offenders must be punished and held accountable for their actions. There is no doubt about that at all. But people in my area and in the wider community as well as many members who have spoken in this debate know that people will not feel safer and crime will not be reduced if young offenders are simply locked away without getting access to education and employment skills, if they are locked away without learning ways to have a greater sense of respect for others and responsibility for others and, for that matter, respect for themselves. Many young offenders need counselling and support to overcome their own experiences of child abuse or neglect. As a result, many young offenders have a severe attitude problem and carry a lot of built-up hatred. It is well proven that if young people in detention are subject to neglect or abuse they are likely to get an even bigger chip on their shoulders, an even bigger attitude problem and disrespect for others.

I am very supportive of this amendment bill. It is an important step forward, particularly in the way in which it introduces new principles governing the treatment of youth in detention. It will impose a mandatory obligation on youth detention staff to report harm suffered by a child in detention. They are very important steps, as are the strategies to reduce the overrepresentation of young indigenous people in detention, including the new bail arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

Finally, I take this opportunity, like the member for Ashgrove, to make a plea to the federal government. The Howard government must take urgent action to get the children, who are innocent victims of oppression, out of immigration detention centres. The suffering endured by families and children at the Woomera Detention Centre is a disturbing and sickening blight on our national character. These children are not criminals, yet they are being served up a big smorgasbord of gross inhumanity. What chance will they have in life after spending a year or more behind razor wire in Woomera?

The Howard government needs to comply with international standards of human rights. The Howard government needs to talk to the minister, Judy Spence, and take a leaf out of her book in terms of the principles that she is introducing in this amendment bill. The Howard-Ruddock treatment of these children and families is a national disgrace. Their deceitful children overboard political campaign was an absolute disgrace as well. They should never be forgiven for that. They are not fit to govern.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.33 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to address the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill before the House. In common with many other members of this place, this bill is among the most difficult of balancing acts that we as the legislature have to perform. The competing interests of helping young people in trouble, of looking after the needs of the community and balancing rehabilitation with punishment are all very seriously addressed in this bill and it is a great step forward.

As a former practising criminal lawyer, particularly practising in the Childrens Court, and as a duty lawyer I saw plenty of young kids in trouble in my time. I had a number of children who were before the courts on very serious offences—young kids under 15 on arson and major school vandalism charges; home invasions with serious assaults and grievous bodily harm; unlicensed driving and unlawful use of motor vehicles; not just using drugs but supplying drugs and in serious quantities—the whole gamut. There are young people in trouble and they need our help, but I think the balance that is struck in this bill is the right balance. The need on certain occasions to name serious young offenders was obviously picked up by Judge McGuire, and I endorse his comments. It is ALP policy and I strongly support it.

I congratulate the minister on not only dealing with this difficult issue but also moving the debate forward in this sensible way. Also, the bill picks up a lot more than merely naming young

offenders. I worry that that issue has been a little too dominant in this debate. It is an important issue, but the major issue, as the member for Ashgrove said earlier, is resourcing and funding. A terrific program has just started working in my electorate—a juvenile justice program that is doing great work and has been really welcomed by the community. That is the sort of support which ensures that juvenile justice is an improving area under this government, and I congratulate it.

I want to pick up one point that was made by the member for Callide. It may never happen again for as long as I am in this House, but I want to strongly endorse what he said in relation to young children who, in many cases, have been forced to raise themselves. I saw a lot of kids go before the courts, and I think it is fair to say that in the overwhelming majority of those cases they had experienced severe family disruption, a severe break in the normal parenting arrangements. They came from dysfunctional family backgrounds. I would appear in court for kids who were there to face serious charges and no parents would turn up. I do not think we can ever underestimate the importance of the background of a child as young as 14 or 15 who steals a car or bashes someone. There is a lot more at work. I certainly congratulate the minister and I congratulate the government on the resourcing that will be given over the next four years to support this program. I strongly support the bill.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.36 p.m.): I also congratulate the minister and her staff on bringing the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 2002 before the House. I have to say that I think the children of today are much better behaved than the children of yesteryear were. I think that if the kids of today did what we did when we were kids we would be most upset. Our children today are very good children. Certainly the statistics tell us that the juvenile crime rate is down. I think that we need have no fear about the future of this country and where it is going with our juveniles. I commend the minister for the thrust of this bill, because it is a move in the right direction. We need to give the police, the courts and those people who deal with juveniles the power to deal with them in the way in which they should be dealt with. If juveniles commit adult crimes, they should be dealt with as adults.

I work very closely with the JAB unit at the Morningside Police Station. Barry Bullion, who is the officer in charge of the Morningside Police Station, has been very good in keeping his hand on what is happening with regard to juveniles. I believe that the juvenile crime rate in my area has dropped because the JAB unit under Barry Bullion is talking to kids to find out what they are doing and is looking for other things for them to do. There are any number of sports that kids in my area can play—football, hockey, Aussie Rules, Rugby League, Rugby Union, swimming, athletics—anything at all. I think it is important that we give kids those alternatives. Some people say that there is nothing for kids to do today. I even have a pony club in my area where kids can go and learn to ride. It is very cheap. People will lend kids their horses. I am the patron of the club so I can pump that along. I know the hard work that is done by the people involved in that club.

**Mr English:** With Barry Bullion they're in great hands.

**Mr PURCELL:** I take that endorsement from the member for Redlands, because being an ex-police officer he would know that Barry works very hard. He is attracting great police officers to the district because of the example that he sets in terms of his work ethic.

In my area, with the help of Bunnings, we have started Graffiti Busters. That has helped enormously. If crime does not look like it is there, crime does not happen. I will not say that there is no crime in my area—of course there is—but one of the main areas in my electorate that experienced crime, and mainly juvenile crime, was Cannon Hill. We have a police beat at the shopping centre and that has helped enormously. We are continuing to get on top of it.

The need for this legislation and these changes has been justified by comments from the judiciary and from important juvenile justice stakeholders. The police are telling us that we need to give them a little bit more help to deal with these people.

I agree with members who have said that throwing people into jail does not help one little bit. Most juvenile offenders, given another opportunity, will not want to go back to jail and will not want to offend again. However, we must give them the opportunity not to. When I was a member of the Builders Labourers Federation, I had the opportunity of finding jobs for people as they were released from jail. They had a certain amount of time and if they did not get a job they would be put back into jail. When I was secretary of the Builders Labourers Federation, we got jobs for some 300 people. Not one of them ever went back to that place—well, one did but I will not go into that story because it will take too long to tell. Some of those people got jobs with very good employers. We had about 20 major employers who would pick those people up—and they are still

working for those companies. All they needed was a chance—a job and some jingle in their pockets—and they did not go back into that rotten place.

We need to make sure that the great job done by the minister and her department continues and we need to make sure that this bill is relevant; that it assists the community and moves with the community so that it continues to look after our youth. I commend the bill to the House.

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (3.41 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. It has been a very positive debate. We should be proud of the fact that over 30 members of the Queensland parliament have participated in this debate in a very informed and responsible manner. I think all members would agree that too often politicians use the fear of crime to score cheap political points. However, during this debate we have witnessed—

**Ms Molloy:** The Tories, too.

**Ms SPENCE:** I include members of the opposition in my comments because they have also played a very positive role in this debate. However, there was one exception. I agree with the member for Nudgee that the member for Tablelands has obviously not informed herself about the issues of juvenile crime and the crime rate in this state. I wish she would do a little bit more work in that area. Apart from the member for Tablelands, all other members have displayed sympathetic, concerned and fairly realistic thoughts on the subject of juvenile crime. We have come a long way in a short time in terms of our attitudes and, indeed, our success in reducing the level of juvenile crime in this state.

I will address some of the issues raised by the member for Southern Downs. He suggests that the National Party believes that this legislation would be more appropriately dealt with in the Justice portfolio, and he sees that as a difference between his party and ours. Interestingly, last time the National Party was in government it did indeed deal with juvenile justice legislation within the Justice portfolio. That part of the legislation went to Justice. It had the act, it did the research and it did the policy work in this area. The Department of Families was responsible for the community section of the Juvenile Justice Act, so it was responsible for community service orders, representing the state in court and kids who were leaving detention. The corrective services department—and in those days it went to QCORR—was responsible for our two juvenile detention centres.

We do not believe that having legislation supervised by three separate government departments actually works. On any given day, we are talking about 90 to 100 kids in our detention centres and 1,200 kids on community supervised orders. A small number of children will be directly affected by this act and that is why one department can supervise the act, the detention centres and the community based orders. Members would agree that the Department of Families has done very well in supervising this for the last four years and that it has a good story to tell in terms of reducing the level of juvenile crime in this state.

I will raise a number of points about juvenile justice because all too often we hear stories about juvenile crime waves or about how our courts are being forced to deal with more and more young offenders. That can be the community perception, at least. In fact, many members have acknowledged that juvenile crime is usually minor and transitory and affects only a small percentage of our population. Many members have quoted the percentage. Only one per cent of Queensland's 10- to 16-year-olds will ever come into contact with a court, and of that one per cent 60 per cent will have no further contact; they will not re-offend. We are talking about a small number of highly recidivist young offenders who are responsible for carrying out the majority of juvenile crime in this state.

This government is committed to being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. We believe that the way to tackle the issue of juvenile justice is by tackling the root of the problem. Recently, the Leader of the Opposition stated that a National Party led state government would trial the use of electronic anklets on juvenile offenders with the aim of reversing the continuing increase in youth crime and property crime. At least that was contained in his press release on 1 July this year. He got that idea from visiting the UK where electronic bracelets and anklets are used.

I did a bit of research on what is happening in the UK with those trials. According to members of the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales who visited Australia earlier this year, there are real concerns that all the anklets have achieved is boosting a young person's status. They say that it has become something of a badge of honour to wear the anklet rather than a deterrent.

Secondly, and most importantly, these trials in the UK should be seen in the context of increasing juvenile crime rates in that country, whereas in Queensland we are seeing quite the opposite. I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition gets his information from. It is hard to analyse a press release when it masquerades as policy, but I hope he pays attention to the facts that we have heard about juvenile crime in this parliament over the last 24 hours because the figures certainly do not support the suggestion that there is an increasing crime wave. In the Childrens Court annual report dated 8 April 2002, Judge John Robertson stated—

The figures do not support any suggestion of a significant increase in juvenile crime. Indeed, the substantial decrease in the number of defendants appearing before the Childrens Court of Queensland and the District Court suggest a reduction in more serious crime by juveniles.

For instance, statistics for the last three years show a decrease in the number of young people involved in the youth justice system in Queensland. During this three-year period there was a 2.9 per cent increase in the number of young offenders who were diverted from courts by way of police cautioning. There was little variation in the number of charges heard by the court over the three-year period. From July 2001 to March 2002, there was a 5.3 per cent reduction compared to the same time in the previous financial year. All in all, the news is good in terms of our efforts to reduce juvenile crime in this state, and that is why the Labor government cannot agree with the opposition's policy of introducing bracelets or anklets for juvenile offenders.

We believe that we have been successful in reducing the incidence of juvenile crime because of our partnerships with local communities. They have proved to be the most effective way of stopping young children offending. Key strategies contributing to the reduction in the number of young people within the youth justice system include the youth justice services, of which we have heard something in the last 24 hours. I am pleased to say that we have recently increased or expanded those very successful youth justice services to Caboolture and Hervey Bay. Crime prevention initiatives in partnership with local government authorities and community agencies have proved very successful in addressing these local issues.

In 1998 this government made an election promise to replace seriously outmoded youth detention centre facilities with centres based on current national and international standards of care and security. This year's budget completes that commitment to rebuild, upgrade and modernise our youth detention centres. Stage 1 of the upgrade was completed at a total cost of \$65.9 million. This included the closure of the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre in April last year, the construction of the new Brisbane Youth Detention Centre—which the Premier and I opened in July last year—and the rebuilding of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. Fortunately, in this year's budget we received over \$4 million to start rebuilding, and that money is for stage 2 of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. By the end of the next year we should have completely new youth detention centres in this state.

A number of speakers mentioned Judge John Robertson. I inform the chamber that he recently announced his intention to resign as President of the Childrens Court of Queensland. I acknowledge the excellent work of Judge Robertson in his term as president since January 1999. His leadership has contributed significantly to raising the profile of this very important jurisdiction. The quality of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill has benefited greatly from the wisdom and experience of Judge Robertson, who provided significant advice throughout its development. Judge Robertson may be leaving the position of president, but I have no doubt that he will continue to make a significant contribution as a Childrens Court judge.

As many members acknowledged, a large number of people and organisations were involved in the development of this legislation. I place on record my appreciation to all who contributed to this significant legislation. In particular, I thank the Department of Families' Senior Legal Officer, who is sitting here today, Damien Sammon, and his staff, who have done a tremendous job in working through the issues and concerns raised by the stakeholders. I also thank my Deputy Director-General, Mr Steve Armitage, who was heavily involved with the legislation at the beginning before taking over his current role as deputy director-general. I thank Mr Terry MacDermott, Director of Operations, who has spent his whole career in the Department of Families in the Juvenile Justice Unit. Finally, I thank my ministerial staff, who have also worked hard with me in developing this legislation. It is an important piece of legislation. Members have acknowledged that the legislation strikes a balance between the need to hold young offenders accountable while at the same time delivering the greatest chance of rehabilitation. At the end of the day, it is more cost effective and better for the community for young offenders to be rehabilitated and brought back into the community than left languishing in a detention centre and, later, in an adult prison.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) in charge of the bill.

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (3.55 p.m.): This is the only clause on which I wish to speak. I want to respond to a matter raised by the minister in her summing-up when she mentioned some issues regarding the National Party's policy about the placement of anklets on certain juvenile offenders and how some concern about this was held by authorities associated with the administration of juvenile justice in Britain.

I can assure the minister that the information we received was from the British Home Office's street crime action team. The information was obtained when the Leader of the Opposition was over there on a study tour. I am not saying that there is not a variation in views across government or administration of government in Britain—I am not aware of that—but if there are differences of opinion that is not the fault of the opposition. However, it is important to say that the British Home Office is fairly high up in government, as is its street crime action team, which is a part of the Home Office. That is where we were able to get that information. It was fairly comprehensive information which was provided to the Leader of the Opposition.

I speak on clause 7 because I would like to apologise to the minister. When I spoke during the second reading debate, I indicated that there may have been a potential weakening of the existing section of the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 in the replacement of parts A and B. I felt that police may have had their hands tied and may have been somewhat restrained by some word changing with regard to the repeal of the old sections 1B and 1C and the insertion of these new sections. That is to do with the issue of what steps a police officer would need to take when dealing with a juvenile offender. I use the words in clause 7, which provides—

'(1) Unless otherwise provided under this division, a police officer, before starting a proceeding against a child for an offence other than a serious offence, must first consider whether in all the circumstances it would be more appropriate to do 1 of the following—

- (a) to take no action;
- (b) to administer a caution to the child...

I expressed some concern that perhaps there was a change from the word 'may'—which I had seen in the old act—to 'must'. On further reading of what will become the old section of the current act, which will be repealed, I see that there certainly are provisions that seem to be absolutely identical to those in the amendment bill that we are now debating. It is quite clear to me that it is just the layout which is different and that it seems to preserve the rights and obligations that police officers had previously. I clarify that for the minister.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 183, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Ms Spence, by leave, read a third time.

## CORRECTIVE SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 18 June (see p. 1851).

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (3.58 p.m.) I have pleasure in speaking to this bill on behalf of the member for Callide, the shadow minister for corrective services. The National Party opposition will be supporting the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. This legislation will extend the eligibility of offenders to participate in the Work Outreach Camps program, initially established to assist the clean-up following the Charleville floods in 1990.

As the minister noted during his second reading speech, to date this program has been able to provide rehabilitative opportunities for offenders to enable them to be safely reintegrated back into the community. To reinforce the impact of the program, the minister has said that the

proportion of offenders who have participated in the WORC programs who have returned to prison within two years for additional offences is approximately 50 per cent less than the number of offenders who committed a comparable crime who have not participated in the program. Quite clearly, it has been a great success. Although those results would indicate that the program has been meeting with levels of success, we should always continue to strive for even better results for those offenders participating.

In the most recent financial year there has been one abscond from the program. During 2000-01 there were quite a few more. There is always room for improvement in the way the program is conducted. However, the work of offenders involved in this program has provided prisoners with the opportunity to develop work skills and experiences that will be beneficial for them in getting a job following their release. The WORC program has also produced many benefits for communities throughout western Queensland. For instance, between 1 July 1995 and 30 June 2000 the program delivered 441,408 community service hours to the value of \$5 million, if not more. I was involved in the early program at Charleville following the floods. There has been work in all of the western towns—Mitchell, Boulia, Winton, Julia Creek, Augathella and numerous other towns in the west. They have played a very important role in the community. They have assisted a lot of non-profit groups such as show societies through improving showground facilities. That has also given those people an opportunity to gain some skills and integrate with the community. In November 2000 the program also 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 communities in Queensland.

The primary purpose of this bill is to amend section 57 and schedule 1 of the Corrective Services Act 2000. With the commencement of the act on 1 July 2001, the program was accorded a specific legislative basis pursuant to sections 56 and 57. On the basis of ensuring community safety, section 57 of the act states that a prisoner is not eligible to participate in a WORC program if they have been convicted of an offence under the provisions of the Criminal Code, as mentioned in schedule 1 of the act. The same schedule was based on the schedule of serious violent offences contained in the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992. I understand that this has had an impact on the number of prisoners eligible to participate in the program since it was officially recognised under the legislation on 1 July 2001. Three particular offences have been identified in schedule 1 as contributing to this decline, namely, dangerous operation of vehicles, burglary, and entering or being on a premises and committing indictable offences.

Prior to this program being provided for under state legislation, prisoners convicted of the types of offences listed above, as long as they had not been declared under the Penalties and Sentences Act to have been convicted of a serious violent crime, would be considered eligible to participate in the WORC program. The minister's solution to this problem, without compromising community safety, is being proposed through a three-tiered approach. Firstly, schedule 1 of the act would omit its reference to the dangerous operation of a vehicle and the entering or being on a premises and committing an indictable offence, as provided under the Criminal Code. Secondly, where an offender has committed an act of burglary, so long as the offender has not attempted to damage any property or the act has not involved direct physical harm or violence, the inclusion of this offence in schedule 1 would be inconsistent with the WORC ineligibility criteria that operated prior to the commencement of the act.

As I understand it, this would mean that section 419 of the Criminal Code, which relates to the offence of burglary where an offender is in company with one or more persons, or where an offender damages or threatens or attempts to damage any property, would not exempt a person from participating in a WORC program. Conversely, should a person be convicted of any of the three types of offences that have been mentioned and the conviction is under the Penalties and Sentences Act for a conviction of a serious violent offence, the prisoner would not be eligible under the amended section of the Corrective Services Act.

The National Party supports the proposed amendments put forward by the minister. The highest priority in running these types of programs should always be the safety of the community. I strongly agree that offenders with a criminal history involving direct physical harm and violence—for example, assault or attempted murder—should never be considered appropriate for a program that involves working closely in and amongst a local town.

However, I do not believe that the offences we have mentioned under the Criminal Code should prohibit a person from participating so long as they have not been convicted under the Penalties and Sentences Act of a serious violent offence relating to one of these offences. The intention of rehabilitation is to allow the offenders the opportunity to prove themselves. I believe

the WORC program has been providing that opportunity through the community driven projects undertaken.

To ensure that this is not the only form of criteria against which an offender is assessed, section 57 of the act still provides for further assessment. Despite a prisoner's not having committed an offence listed in schedule 1 of the act, the chief executive will still be required under the act to consider strict criteria, including a judgment on whether the prisoner might pose a threat to the community.

The ongoing use of this process in deciding upon an offender's participation should remain paramount, as it allows for the consideration of the person's behaviour, attitude and approach to rehabilitating themselves. Local communities in Queensland have benefited from the WORC program and the types of projects it is delivering. The amendments proposed in this bill still ensure that community safety is of the highest priority and this should never be compromised in the operation of the WORC program. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (4.05 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak in support of the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. There are times when good things are borne out of tough times and disasters. Such is the case with the Work Outreach Camps program. It had its inception in 1990 when the western town of Charleville was deluged and experienced devastating floods. The Goss government was one year old. Eighteen correctional officers and 101 prisoners from the then Wacol Correctional Centre volunteered to travel to Charleville to assist with the clean-up, restoring the town and outlying properties. The rest is history. Out of that very sad event, which we all witnessed on our television screens, was borne the WORC program.

On 1 July 2001 the WORC program was accorded specific legislative recognition with the commencement of the Corrective Services Act 2000. The act prescribes the eligibility criteria for prisoners participating in the program and requires prisoners participating in the program to perform community service. Furthermore, it provides for the establishment of work sites where prisoners are accommodated by notification in the *Queensland Government Gazette*. There are now 12 WORC sites or camps operating throughout Queensland, most of them in western centres. I had the great privilege of visiting a number of these in April with the minister, Tony McGrady, the Police Commissioner, the Deputy Director-General of Corrections, Mr Peter Severin, and the member for Mount Ommaney, Julie Attwood. Camps are located at Charleville, Yuleba, Mitchell, Blackall, St George, Winton, Clermont, Boulia, Springsure, Dirranbandi, Julia Creek and at Warwick, where women prisoners have been undertaking some challenging and rewarding projects.

It takes 10 or 15 minutes to drive from one end of my electorate of Woodridge to the other. For me it was an incredible experience to fly over our vast outback and visit the towns of Boulia, Blackall, Winton and Julia Creek. In each town we were met by the mayor and a number of councillors, local police and WORC camp supervisors. We visited the WORC camp, usually 10 kilometres or so out of town, and then inspected a lot of the projects that had been either completed or were under way in the town. These were diverse and gave us a wonderful idea of the wide scope of the skills that the men acquired and the wonderful benefit that it was to each town. In Boulia the camp is located close to the camel racetrack. These facilities had been recently painted and upgraded. A tour of the tiny town revealed that many buildings had been painted, the cemetery was surrounded by a new fence and an attractive garden, and the town looked very neat and tidy. Similarly, in Blackall, where the camp is located near the wool scour tourist attraction, the public pool was surrounded by gardens, a well-kept lawn, the cemetery was neat and tidy, and an innovative feature was a post outside each home with a house number displayed prominently in iridescent paint facing both ways for the benefit of emergency vehicles.

In Winton, playgrounds, a skate park, churches and the RSL war cemetery all showed signs of being well cared for. Julia Creek had some unique features, with paved footpaths and flowers blooming in raised beds made from rocks, which looked most attractive. The grounds of the hospital, schools and council were all looking great thanks to this wonderful program. Believe me, the men who work on these projects are so proud of what they have done. I recently had the good fortune to return to a number of these towns and heard a delightful story that a number of these men, on release from our Corrective Services facilities, have returned to these towns and settled with their families. They have become respected citizens and are happily enjoying life in the outback.

In Julia Creek we had the pleasure of meeting the Local Community Advisory Committee made up of volunteers. We were able to enjoy a very fruitful discussion on a number of issues

relevant to the future of the WORC camps and their operation, and it gave the minister an opportunity to thank each member for their valuable contribution. The WORC camps could be likened to community renewal in the bush. The prisoner learns valuable skills and is able to experience the feeling of accomplishment and enjoy the gratitude of the townspeople. The towns which benefit from this program are neatly maintained and have their facilities upgraded, while at the same time businesses and services gain a benefit financially with the additional workers in their town.

The local councils have shown great enthusiasm and they want to see the scheme expanded. It has tremendous benefits to the prisoners and helps to improve their skills. Many are encouraged to leave their offending behaviour in the past. Since the inception of the WORC program, almost \$13.5 million in assistance has been given to communities in the west. Additional flood relief has been provided to Longreach, Muttaburra and Winton by assisting farmers to reconstruct their fences.

Given all these wonderful outcomes, the program is suffering because of a scarcity of prisoners. Indeed, many of the WORC camps are operating at two-thirds capacity and, should numbers fall further, projects may have to be cancelled. Before prisoners are permitted to participate in the WORC program they must satisfy strict selection criteria. Even though a prisoner may meet that criteria, the chief executive of the department is required under section 57(2) of the act to be satisfied that the prisoner is a suitable candidate for inclusion in the WORC program. For example, a prisoner who has a history of escapes from custody would not be accepted. It should be emphasised that simply because a prisoner is not imprisoned for an offence mentioned in schedule 1 it does not mean that the prisoner would automatically be approved to participate in the program. Community safety issues are addressed through a number of avenues.

These measures, combined with the contribution that the WORC program makes to rural and regional Queensland, have helped to make it the successful program that it is. The program is a prime example of the government and western communities working together to provide meaningful work opportunities for prisoners. The Beattie government is committed to ensuring a safer community. It is vital that the corrective services system not only keeps dangerous offenders secured and away from the community but provides programs designed to break the crime cycle. The WORC program and the release to work program are just two examples of initiatives that provide offenders with gradual supervised release into the community and, importantly, into work situations.

The proportion of offenders returning to prison within two years is approximately 50 per cent less for those who have participated in the WORC program than it is for those who have not participated in the program and who have committed comparable offences. This bill proposes to expand the categories for prisoners to be eligible for the WORC program. It is designed to ensure the ongoing viability of this much-valued initiative without, as the minister has stated, compromising community safety.

I thank the minister, his Director-General Helen Ringrose, the Deputy Director-General Peter Severin and staff for their commitment to this program which has such wide benefits for all parties concerned. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.14 p.m.): I rise in support of the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. The Beattie Labor government is committed to ensuring a safer community. Corrective services is not simply a matter of locking offenders up and throwing away the key; it is about ensuring that steps are taken to break the crime cycle. This involves establishing rehabilitative programs aimed at addressing offender behaviour and providing offenders with the necessary skills to participate in society without resorting to committing further crimes.

An example of the Beattie Labor government's commitment to ensuring a safer community is the recent announcement that the number of community sex offender programs will be doubled. This will provide more rehabilitative opportunities and, hopefully, reduce the number of repeat sexual offenders in our community.

This bill relates to the Work Outreach Camps program, an initiative of the Goss Labor government that has been continued by successive governments and which has been a remarkable success. The rate of offenders being returned to prison for further offences who have participated in the WORC program is approximately half that of comparable offenders who have not been in the program. The Corrective Services Act 2000 provides a statutory basis for the Work

Outreach Camps program. Before a prisoner is permitted to participate in the program, the prisoner must be assessed as being suitable for participation. This assessment includes the prisoner not having committed an offence mentioned in schedule 1 of the Corrective Services Act 2000, which prescribes ineligibility offences. It also means that a prisoner must be classified as open security before he will be considered for participation in the program.

Prisoners who are assessed as being suitable and who are approved to participate in the program are placed on a community work order under section 56 of the act. The act requires that a prisoner participating in the program must perform community service as directed by a Corrective Services officer. Participating in the WORC program and working at the WORC sites located throughout western Queensland assists prisoners to prepare to re-enter society as productive law-abiding citizens.

Through the program prisoners are provided with opportunities to develop and maintain a sound work ethic. The prisoners are required to commence work at specific times that suit the WORC camp at which they are accommodated as opposed to a structured prison routine. The requirement for prisoners to maintain work routines closely replicates the expectations that they will be required to meet in the community upon their discharge.

Prisoners in the WORC camps work under supervision and undertake tasks such as concreting, landscaping, fencing and painting. This provides real workplace experiences through which prisoners are provided opportunities to develop marketable work skills. Again, this is considered essential if they are to be able to successfully seek employment in the community following discharge. A former prisoner who is gainfully employed will be less likely to reoffend. Through their work in the communities, prisoners are provided with opportunities for positive interaction with community members. They are able to observe law-abiding citizens and their lifestyles in a community setting. Staff members who supervise and work alongside the prisoners provide positive role models in terms of both behaviour and the development of a work ethic.

In accordance with the act, prisoners participating in the WORC program are able to access reintegration leave which is graduated and supervised in accordance with the risks and needs of individual offenders and is designed to assist in their eventual community reintegration. Reintegration leave is a particularly important mechanism in assisting a prisoner to gradually re-establish and strengthen relationships with family members. Leave is approved where prisoners have displayed appropriate standards of behaviour and have undertaken satisfactory sponsor assessment and assessment of the proposed leave residence. Each prisoner is assessed for suitability for leave and all leave granted is subject to surveillance by Corrective Services officers. This surveillance may be conducted by means of either physical or telephone checks on the prisoner. Any prisoner who breaches a condition of this leave or, for that matter, any condition of their community work order will incur consequences which are relative to the severity of the breach.

For example, if a prisoner is found to have consumed a prohibitive substance such as alcohol, the prisoner's community work order would be repealed and the prisoner returned to prison. Accordingly, the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002 is designed to provide and facilitate the ongoing viability of the WORC program by providing opportunities for more eligible prisoners to participate. However, this does not come at the expense of community safety. The WORC program can clearly be demonstrated to assist the positive reintegration of prisoners back into society and breaking the crime cycle. As I said, the amendments contained in the Corrective Services Amendment Bill are designed to ensure the ongoing viability of the program by providing opportunities for more eligible prisoners to participate. The amendments will also ensure that the WORC ineligibility offences will relate primarily to sex offences and serious violent offences.

I take this opportunity to talk about some of the WORC camps that I visited on 26 April this year with the minister and the member for Woodridge, Desley Scott. The Work Outreach Camps are helping to revitalise Queensland's rural and remote communities. They assist to rehabilitate offenders and assist communities, providing offenders with valuable skills and outback communities with a source of labour otherwise not available to them. In 2000-01 the program provided more than 65,000 hours of community service to regional and remote communities. Outback economies also benefit from the department buying camp requirements and supplies locally.

On the Mount Isa trip we visited Boulia, Blackall, Winton and Julia Creek. In Boulia, where a WORC camp was established in 1993, the total of hours worked was 4,186 at a cost of \$62,790. There were six prisoners there at the time. The completed projects were camel races,

maintenance of radio facilities and construction assistance to abattoir yards and the shed. We also visited the very popular tourist attraction: Boullia's Min Min Encounter, which is a tribute to the long-honoured art of the bush yarn all based around the famed Min Min Light phenomenon. We were taken on a journey through Min Min country with spine-tingling effects from lifelike figures of locals and country scenes.

The next stop was Blackall, where the total of hours worked was 5,660 at a cost of \$84,907.50. The Winton WORC camp was established in 1992. The total of hours worked was 4,614. The WORC camp at the last stop, Julia Creek, was established in 1998. The total of hours worked there was 4,804 at a cost of \$72,067. Completed projects involved painting the hospital and providing support for the annual Dirt and Dust Festival. An ongoing project is the paving of footpaths in the township and building brick surrounds for the garden bed in the park. The camp maintains the doctor's lawn and the aged people's home and has painted the Anglican Church windows. The mayor of that town assures me that there is full employment in Julia Creek and more community housing is needed. In those small communities the same people are usually the leaders of all the groups, such as the P&C and CWA. They have a great deal of knowledge of and concern about their local areas, and proposed projects are always forthcoming. The minister is to be congratulated on this amendment bill, and I commend it to the House.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.22 p.m.): In rising to support this bill I want to put on the record my belief that quite a number of people are in prison because they have made a single non-violent mistake. However, that mistake deserved and received a custodial sentence. The Work Outreach Camp program began during the Charleville floods. I remember seeing footage of the floods and prisoners who were assisting landowners. That was very positive, and for the community of Charleville it was very encouraging. For many of the people who live in that area it was probably their best opportunity to get their homes back to some acceptable order.

The fact that the outreach camps have been made available to non-violent offenders is a great comfort to the community. It would be a concern if inappropriate people who are currently serving custodial sentences were allowed to be released for this type of work. It has been said that they will do jobs such as mowing, slashing, cleaning public parks, cemeteries, hospitals, nursing homes and sporting facilities. I seek clarification on one point, and I am sure that the minister will respond appropriately. The bill states that work will be undertaken in nursing homes. Certainly there is a lot to be done. However, I seek clarification as to whether non-violent prisoners who are serving custodial sentences for offences such as burglary without violence would be allowed to work in places such as nursing homes. The risk is that they could be casing the joint and might come back later or pass on information to people who might be able to enter those premises and perhaps create mischief with the residents.

As with all spheres of government, local authorities are always strapped for cash, and they have more jobs available than they have people and money to do them. Some offenders who are serving custodial sentences would be suitable to assist a community and contribute positively to that community by doing some of this work. I am not talking about replacing the work force—because I am sure that would be one of the criteria—but they could add to the work force, particularly a local authority, and I know that their assistance would be welcome. From my experience in local government I know that many of these jobs outstripped the available money and the available work force.

Additionally, for families whose loved ones are interred in cemeteries that they cannot regularly maintain, the knowledge that a work force is available to do that would be most welcome and comforting. Again, I direct my concern about prisoners working in nursing homes and also places such as hospitals, where people could be at risk if inappropriate persons were allowed to do that work. I am expecting the minister to say that all prisoners will be vetted so that the work to which they are allocated is appropriate, but I raise these issues because I know that members in my community would be concerned if it was not clarified as to whether people will be put in appropriate jobs.

The greatest gift that we can give to people is dignity and hope. This bill gives people who, often for want of a single mistake, would be earning a living and residing in the freedom of their homes with their families the opportunity to contribute positively to the community. That is most welcome. It will enhance their self-esteem and, as one member said, it will certainly help them to develop skills. More importantly, those persons who are serving custodial sentences for non-violent offences will return to their Corrective Services facilities knowing that although they have

wronged in the past they are now contributing positively to the community. This legislation is welcome.

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (4.26 p.m.): I rise briefly to place on record my support for the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. This bill seeks to amend section 57 and schedule 1 of the Corrective Services Act 2000 so as to ensure the ongoing viability of the Work Outreach Camps program without compromising the safety of the community. Obviously the purpose of corrective services is the safety of the community and crime prevention through the humane containment, supervision and, importantly, the rehabilitation of offenders. The aim of corrective services is to assist in the integration of prisoners into the community after their release from custody. This rehabilitation has many components, but there is an important focus here upon acquiring skills.

The Work Outreach Camps program was established as a result of the Charleville floods in 1990. From 1 July 2001 it has been accorded a specific legislative basis. The WORC program has contributed in a meaningful and quantifiable way to the Queensland community. For example, between 1 July 1995 and 30 June 2000 the program delivered over 400,000 community service hours with an estimated value to the community of over \$5 million.

This bill is required because the number of prisoners who participate in this program has been in decline, and this is affecting the program's ongoing viability. Three offences which currently make a prisoner ineligible to participate in the WORC program will be removed from schedule 1 of the Corrective Services Act. However, it is important to note that a prisoner will still be ineligible to participate in the program if convicted of a serious violent offence. These changes to the act will not place the community at any greater risk and will provide for the ongoing viability of the WORC program.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (4.28 p.m.): Who in this House and who in Queensland cannot remember the dramatic and devastating 1990 Charleville floods? The Goss government at that time responded quickly to that tragedy by allowing prisoners of low risk to actually be flown out and transferred to Charleville to help society, to help in their rehabilitation and to contribute towards repairing that most damaged part of society.

Since 1990 the Work Outreach Camps program has been providing valuable community support and service throughout remote and regional Queensland. The Corrective Services Amendment Bill seeks to expand the eligibility criteria relating to prisoners who can attend those work outreach camps. This has become necessary because there has been a decrease in the number of prisoners eligible to contribute via the Work Outreach Camps program. As such, a number of remote and regional shire councils have voiced their concern about losing this great resource in their society. It should also be acknowledged that this program represents a win-win situation. The local community benefits by having these people performing work and the prisoners themselves learn new skills and learn what it means to contribute to society.

Society will not be placed at increased risk as a result of this legislation. All we are doing is increasing the eligibility criteria. Whilst certain previously ineligible prisoners may now become eligible to apply for a work outreach camp, section 57(2) of the Corrective Services Act states that this is only one factor to be considered when taking on a prisoner. Another factor to consider is the risk that prisoner might pose to the community. Despite the fact that a prisoner may have committed an offence for which he is eligible to be accepted on the program, if management deems them personally to be an unfair risk to society they will not be accepted on the program. In no way, shape or form does this legislation increase the risk to society. It does increase the benefits to those rural and remote communities by the work done on the Work Outreach Camps program. I commend the minister and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.31 p.m.): I rise in support of the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. The bill seeks to amend the Corrective Services Act 2000 in two ways—firstly, to ensure the ongoing viability of the Work Outreach Camps program and, secondly, to ensure community safety.

The program has been a great success since 1990 when it was first established. It has provided significant benefits to a number of western Queensland communities. Indeed, the western communities want this program. They want the falling number of prisoners eligible to work on the program to be reversed. Over the last few months the number of prisoners eligible for the program has declined markedly—in fact, by some 20 per cent. This bill seeks to redress this decline. The decline in prisoner numbers is impacting in two ways. Firstly, it is affecting the

rehabilitative aims of the program. Secondly, it is affecting the ongoing viability of the program in western towns. The bill brings about changes to the WORC program that are similar to the WORC eligibility criteria operating prior to the commencement of the Corrective Services Act 2000.

In my electorate of Bundamba we have our fair share of former prisoners and prisoner families. The families are clear in their view that the WORC program benefits their family members in helping them to genuinely rehabilitate themselves and in giving them confidence and work skills in western towns. In fact, I understand that the number of former prisoners from this program who return to prison within two years for further offences is about 50 per cent less than for those prisoners who are not part of the WORC program. The program is a proven success. Any program that can break the crime cycle should be supported in our community.

In my electorate, the Goodna Neighbourhood House has recently published a prisoners handbook, funded by the Department of Housing's Community Renewal Program, to help prisoners return to their homes and to assist in rehabilitation. It also assists prisoner families. Furthermore, in Goodna a community corrections office has been established. I have been lobbying our Corrections Minister for this office for some time. It has made an enormous impact on the lives of our prisoner families. A local office means that no longer do families have to worry about paying bus and rail fares to an Ipswich city office. Most can simply walk to the local Goodna office and discuss any issues of concern to them. The Work Outreach Camps program is a success. The families of prisoners vouch for its rehabilitative benefits. It is very important that it continues for the benefit of western communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (4.34 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to speak in support of the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. The Work Outreach Camps program, originally established by the Goss Labor government, provides participating prisoners with meaningful work and skill development opportunities that will assist them to obtain employment upon their discharge from custody. I understand that the Hon. Glen Milliner, who at one time was the Minister for Corrective Services in the first Goss Labor government, and the Hon. Deputy Premier, Mr Terry Mackenroth, who was the Police Minister at that time, worked closely together in establishing the first trials and pilots of what is now known as the Work Outreach Camps program. I acknowledge that on the record and recognise the tremendous work my predecessor, Glen Milliner, did as the former member for Ferry Grove.

Furthermore, the program provides the opportunity for prisoners to undertake core rehabilitation programs at its Wacol headquarters. The program also provides benefits to rural and regional communities. Participation in the program requires a prisoner to undertake community service as directed by a corrective services officer. The community service rendered by WORC prisoners has significantly contributed to the development of western Queensland communities. Some remote communities have particularly benefited through having a source of labour otherwise not available to them.

With this in mind it is useful to review some recent activities undertaken by staff and prisoners in the various WORC sites across Queensland. For example, in Mitchell prisoners spent 160 hours working to replace swings and fences at Anduna kindergarten, at a value of \$2,400; 108 hours painting a local church, at a value of \$1,500; 273 hours painting a room and carrying out grounds work at St Patrick's primary school, at a value of \$4,095; and 178 hours refitting swings at Mungallala playgroup, at a value of \$2,670.

Prisoners at the Yuleba camp have restored Apex Park at Wallumbilla. The airport was painted and the Yuleba Tennis Club was restored. At the Julia Creek camp prisoners have helped pave the main street, have painted the hospital, have helped with preparations for the Dirt and Dust Festival and have landscaped yards at the local pensioner retirement homes.

Prisoners at the Blackall camp have helped with preparations for the local camel racing event and have constructed a watercourse at Ram Park. At Boulia prisoners have also helped with preparations for the local rodeo and camel races. Similar projects have also been conducted at camps at Charleville, Clermont, Dirranbandi, St George, Springsure and Winton. In total during 2000-01 in excess of 75,000 hours of community service work was performed by prisoners participating in the WORC program.

The provision of this work has greatly benefited the communities involved. The communities in which WORC camps are located also reap the economic benefits that result from many camp requirements being purchased locally. Due to the importance of the WORC program in the rehabilitation of prisoners and the development of western Queensland communities, the

amendments in the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002 are essential to ensure the program's long-term viability.

As the minister indicated in his second reading speech, the number of prisoners participating in the program has been declining since the Corrective Services Act 2000 commenced on 1 July 2001. Not only is this decline impacting on the program's rehabilitation opportunities; it is also affecting its ability to continue to provide important services to rural and regional communities. The listing of three particular offences in the list of ineligibility offences in the act, schedule 1, has contributed to this decline. These offences are dangerous operation of a vehicle, section 328A of the Criminal Code; burglary, section 419(3)(b) of the Criminal Code; and entering or being in premises and committing indictable offences, section 421(2) of the Criminal Code. Prior to the commencement of the act on 1 July 2001, prisoners who were imprisoned for such offences would have been eligible to participate in the program, provided they were not declared to have been convicted of a serious violent offence.

The amendments in the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002 will not mean that community safety will be compromised. The strict criteria established under section 57(2) of the act, whereby the chief executive of the department is required to consider whether a prisoner poses a community risk, is to be maintained. Furthermore, the amendment to section 57(1) of the act will ensure that a prisoner will also be ineligible to participate in the program if the prisoner has committed an offence under section 419(1) in circumstances where the prisoner used or threatened to use actual violence, or was or pretended to be armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon, instrument or noxious substance.

Prisoners will be ineligible if they have been convicted of an offence under sections 328A, 419(1) or 421(2) of the Criminal Code and if the conviction was, under the Penalties and Sentences Act, a conviction for a serious violent offence. The amendments are also clearly designed to ensure that prisoners who are convicted of sexual or violent offences are ineligible to participate in the program. This is in accordance with the ineligibility criteria that operated prior to the commencement of the act and is consistent with the government's commitments made to western communities since 1991 in that regard.

I support the amendments contained in the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002, because they will allow for the rehabilitative and community service opportunities afforded by the WORC program to continue. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (4.40 p.m.): I am pleased to make a brief contribution to this bill and will probably cover some of the ground that other speakers have covered. However, I wanted to be on the record as supporting an excellent program that originated in the town in which I was born, Charleville.

As some members have indicated, the Work Outreach Camps program was established about a decade ago as a result of the tragic 1990 Charleville floods. It has also been indicated by a number of speakers that this program has provided substantial benefit to a range of communities. I listened to the range of community work that is carried out under that program as outlined by the member for Ferny Grove. It has been suggested that the program has contributed in excess of one million hours of community service. What a wonderful list of achievements in terms of community outcomes that this program has delivered.

Prior to July 2001, in a sense, the program operated in an informal manner in that it did not have formal recognition under the act. That formal recognition occurred under the Corrective Services Act 2001. A significant part of that act is that it clearly provides that prisoners who participate in this program must not have been convicted of an offence prescribed in schedule 1. That is the schedule that lists a range of serious violent offences and it is one of the protective mechanisms in this program. It is an issue that, obviously, would be of concern to members of the communities if these provisions were not there.

In recent years, one of the difficulties that has been identified has been a decrease in the number of prisoners eligible to participate in the program. The difficulty has been identified as the inclusion of three particular offences in schedule 1: dangerous operation of a vehicle, burglary, and entering or being in a premises and committing an indictable offence. Clearly, that decline in the availability of eligible prisoners has had a negative impact on the rehabilitative function of the program as well as its ongoing viability in a number of communities—western communities in particular.

I note from my own observations and discussions with people in a number of towns that this program has been very well supported in western communities and some not-so-western communities. I can recall very clearly that in Warwick just a couple of years ago there was a very supportive article in the local newspaper outlining the great benefits that the program was delivering to that community. My recollection is that a number of women prisoners were doing a lot of work in restoring some historic buildings in that area. As has been indicated by a number of speakers, under this program western communities have benefited from a whole range of community projects, including work in parks.

The bill addresses the difficulty of the declining numbers of eligible prisoners in three ways. Firstly, the offences that I have outlined—that is, dangerous operation of a vehicle, entering and being on premises and committing an indictable offence—have been omitted from schedule 1. However, the safeguard that is currently in the act is that in deciding whether a prisoner is allowed to participate in the program, the chief executive of the Department of Corrective Services is required to consider certain strict criteria, including the risk that the prisoner may pose to a particular community.

The second component of the bill relates to the offence of burglary. Where an offender uses or threatens to use actual violence or pretends to be armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon, instrument or noxious substance, that offender will not be eligible for participation in the WORC program. Thirdly, as an additional safety mechanism, the bill stipulates that a prisoner will not be eligible to participate in the program if he has been convicted of one of those other two offences, which is the dangerous operation of a vehicle or burglary, and additionally has been declared under the Penalties and Sentences Act to have been convicted of a serious violent offence.

So there are a number of safeguards in the bill to protect communities. This is an excellent program that is delivering excellent outcomes for regional and western communities. It has positive benefits for those communities and also for the inmates involved. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (4.45 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak, albeit briefly, to the Corrective Service Amendment Bill 2002. It is one of those really worthwhile pieces of legislation that deals with real problems in a very effective and worthwhile way. As has been mentioned, the WORC program was established following the Charleville floods to assist with the clean-up. It has proved to be of immense benefit not just to Charleville but to western communities generally. I will refer to that a little more later on.

To date, the value of the work has been immense. For instance, between 1 July 1995 and 30 June 2000, the program delivered service hours amounting to over \$5 million in value. As has been outlined by the minister in his second reading speech, the program has struck difficulties with respect to the ineligibility offences. Hence the reason we are here today—to try to make the scheme more viable.

In the brief time available to me, I will refer to some of the benefits of the scheme and how well it has been received, particularly in western areas. The member for Warrego is present in the House. He would be better able to verify these remarks than I. Nevertheless, some of the clippings that I have been able to get from the Parliamentary Library date back to June 1991 with an article headed 'Bush jail gangs to stay', indicating the great success of the scheme even in those early days. Other Brisbane based media outlets have been prominent in their praise for the scheme. One article headed 'Starting over under open skies' detailed the very worthwhile work done in Charleville and the people who were at that stage stationed at the Yuleba camp.

In November 1991, the Corrective Services Commission had approached the Barcardine, Longreach and Blackall shires with a proposal to set up WORC camps. I know from information that I have received elsewhere that at many and varied centres of western Queensland these WORC camps have been successful. I would like to refer in particular to an article in the *Courier-Mail* dated 24 October 1992 headed 'Prisoners approved by locals' which states—

Allegedly retired Bunny Powne, MB, with 22 years in local government behind him as a former councillor and deputy chairman of the Balonne Shire Council, has championed the prisoners' work-camp scheme throughout the bush.

He said that in "selling" the project, initial contact is made with shire chairmen, and then the full council.

If the council favours bringing the scheme to its area, a public meeting is given the opportunity to vote. And if it approves, an organising committee is chosen to oversee the scheme and draw up a list of projects.

That was a brief indication of what was involved and how the community was taken along with the project.

In the *Courier-Mail* on that date a special report was undertaken and quite a lengthy article included which basically ran along the lines that embattled Queensland rural communities were breaking new and fertile ground in the way that society viewed and treated much of its prison population. So it has been found to be beneficial for the prisoners involved, for those communities generally with respect to the improvements achieved, and for the attitude of members of the wider community to prisoners themselves.

I commend this scheme and I commend the minister's determination to see it continue and expand, being one of the most beneficial aspects of prisoner treatment in Queensland.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (4.50 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Corrective Services Amendment Bill. The proposed amendments within this bill are designed to ensure the long-term future of what has been a very successful program within the rehabilitative sector of Queensland's corrective services system. The establishment of WORC camps across 11 locations in Queensland since 1990 has provided a blanket of benefits to both the offenders who have been placed within the camps and to the community at large. One big spin-off has been the enormous economic injection to western and northern rural communities. I will touch on this aspect in a moment.

The corrective services system has progressed in leaps and bounds over the last decade or so. We now have a system which balances the needs of the government's rehabilitation agenda and the important priority of creating safer and more supportive communities. In fact, no human service has changed so rapidly and effectively as the Australian prison system between the 1970s and early 1990s. Here in Queensland, reform has come quite a long way in the 13 years since a broad brush approach to long overdue change received bipartisan support. With those changes came the acceptance that a secure and effective prison system did not have to be a draconian one.

It is an undeniable fact that all but the very worst offenders will one day be integrated back into the mainstream community. It is the responsibility of any government to develop and maintain mechanisms which allow this to happen in a productive way. Members on both sides of this chamber do not need convincing that it is better to have former prisoners making their way in the community as contributing citizens rather than continuing to be a burden upon it.

The challenge for any correctional system is to provide an important balance between public safety, security and rehabilitation. Communities have a right to feel safe and secure, and governments have an obligation and duty to provide safety and security. Community custody aims to reintegrate offenders into the community and to assist offenders to find and maintain paid employment upon their release. The role of WORC camps in this context is vital. As the minister mentioned in his second reading speech, the support for the WORC program within the communities it assists is enormous. Why wouldn't it be? The economic benefits to a region, in terms of projects completed, is significant. In the last financial year alone, 72,268 hours of community service was performed by low security prisoners who lived and worked in the state's 11 WORC locations. When we translate this into a monetary value, we are looking at the equivalent of an \$852,900 investment in those communities. In addition, local business within those regions benefits from a decision to purchase the supplies needed to run the WORC camp locally.

Some of the projects carried out in the past financial year have included the provision of flood relief; assisting the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to protect the endangered bilby through the construction of fencing around Currawonga National Park; and the construction of a grandstand facility for local camel races at Boulia and Blackall. On the other side of the coin, the benefits to the prisoners involved are enormous. Aside from the core rehabilitative programs undertaken, the placement in a WORC camp offers the prisoners an opportunity to develop new skills that they can use upon their release back to the community. So the role of the WORC outreach camps within our corrective services system provides a win-win system to the community and assists in meeting the government's objective of creating safer communities.

I strongly support the government's amendments, which seek to ensure that the program continues on its path of success well into the future. I believe that the changes to the eligibility requirements for offenders placed on the programs are of a relatively minor nature and pose no additional threat to community safety. As members will be aware, changes made to the Corrective Services Act last year provided for the inclusion of a number of offence categories to be included

in schedule 1 of the act that were previously not there. The offence categories included the dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, burglary that does not involve violence, and entering a premises or being in a premises and committing an indictable offence. The inclusion of these offence categories has meant that the number of prisoners eligible to participate in WORC programs has declined by about 20 per cent, a figure which could substantially limit the future success of the program.

What is important about the changes proposed in this amendment bill is that serious violent offenders will still be ineligible for the program, and those considered for the program will still undergo the necessary checks against the criteria to ensure their suitability. There are no automatic approvals just because their offences have not fallen into schedule 1 under the act. The changes in this bill will ensure that our rural communities can continue to benefit from the economic gains associated with WORC and the government's rehabilitation and community safety objectives can continue to be met. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (4.54 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. It seeks to amend the Corrective Services Act 2000 to ensure the ongoing viability of the WORC outreach camps or WORC program, whilst maintaining a strong commitment to protecting community safety. The WORC program was established in 1990 by the Goss Labor government and was applauded right across the state. It was established 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 and 1992, when community work hours began to be formally recorded, the program has contributed in excess of one million hours of community service. This should be applauded by all Queenslanders. This equates to almost \$13.5 million of assistance to the people of northern and western Queensland, and I know that they are very appreciative of it. I commend the minister and the department for making further improvements to this program. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (4.56 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Corrective Services Amendment Bill 2002. The minister has said that these changes are necessary to ensure that this program continues. I was around in the early years when this program was set up in 1992 and before then. Most members have already mentioned the Charleville floods. The previous member for Bulimba, Ronnie McLean, was the then Minister for Public Works.

**Mr McGrady:** Admin. Services.

**Mr PURCELL:** I take that correction from the minister. It was the Department of Admin. Services in those days. I know what joy it gave him to be able to make people available from his department to go out and work. I know that they worked with those prisoners who were taken out to help the people of Charleville. I knew that was happening because, as I said during an earlier debate today, the early release program was also operating at that time. I was secretary of the Builders Labourers Federation and some 300-odd prisoners had come to us seeking work. How did that come about? From time to time, some builders labourers had a spell at Her Majesty's pleasure—not too many of them—and when they did, after they came out we would give them a hand to get a job. Word spread through the prison system and we used to get calls from blokes who were on early release, perhaps down at the Valley in a hostel or something. Usually they had about six weeks to get themselves a job or they were put back into jail. That made them fairly keen and focused.

I used to get those blokes in and interview them. I probably got away with a lot of things that other people would not have. I made the situation quite plain to them. They had to tell me what they had been put away for. I told them that I would put them on the job and that I would tell the boss what they had done. If they 'failed themselves', as I used to put it, and committed an offence or did anything to cause concern on the job, they would not have to worry about corrective services sorting them out because I, or we, would sort them out. We had very good results.

As I said earlier, we only had one failure and it was not that bloke's fault. I will not say what he did time for, because that might identify him. He came to me to be interviewed. Now, not too many people frighten me. I used to put the frighteners on them, to make sure that they did what we required. They were all good workers and they took the opportunities that they were given. As I said, in my time, none of them ever went back to jail—except this one bloke. This fellow was a fairly tough looking bloke but a very nice bloke when you got to know him. I got him placed on a

Girvan's job at Ann Street. Unfortunately, after he had been there for about a fortnight, there was a strike early one morning over a safety issue and the boys went home. He decided he would pay his missus a visit. Well, the worst thing that could happen happened. He went home unexpectedly to visit his missus but she had a visitor. That upset him a little bit. He did not touch either of them. He did the right thing. He took the door off as he went out; he just walked straight through it. I said he was a fairly tough looking bloke. He frightened me. He had no hair on his head and he was a big, tough, burly bloke.

**Mr Johnson:** What happened to the boyfriend?

**Mr PURCELL:** I will come to that. He then had a couple of beers to settle himself down and went back to the Valley. Well, the missus gave him up to the coppers. She telephoned the coppers and said that he had been threatening her and that he had torn the front door off the unit. The coppers went to see him. He was quite honest. He said that he went to visit her because there was strike action and therefore no work. He said that he never touched them. He said, 'I did take the door off; I forgot to open it; and I walked through it' They said, 'Have you had a beer?' He said, 'Yes, I've had a couple of beers.' They said, 'Look, sorry mate, but we have to pinch you. You know that you cannot drink when you are on one of these programs. Back in the peter you go.' I did not find out about this until about three days later. I went and spoke to the coppers about it. They were pretty candid and said, 'Listen, Patty, if we had known what had happened we would have given him an hour with that bloke!' They would have taken him back to see his missus and to sort out the bloke! We did not know that and he did not tell us that. In response to the member for Gregory, the boyfriend got off scot-free. But my bloke was back in jail through no fault of his own.

When the Charleville work was on, I contacted Ronnie who, through the then minister, made sure this bloke went to Charleville. He worked during the floods. He was a top bloke. He could fix anything. He was that sort of bloke. If a hot water system needed rewiring, he could do it. If the plumbing needed fixing, he would shovel muck and dirt all day—

**Mr McGrady** interjected.

**Mr PURCELL:** I won't go into that. He was a builder's labourer. A builder's labourer is licensed to do anything. As we in this place know, if we have a builder's labourer's ticket we can do anything. He was one of the last blokes to leave Charleville. The locals did not want him to leave. That is the worth of this program. The bloke has never been back in the peter. He contacted me when he got back to Brisbane. We had a few beers—he was able to have a few beers—and a bit of chuckle about what happened. This is a great program. It really does rehabilitate people and give them an opportunity to get their lives back on track. The return rate to jail of people who go through this program is very low. I went to Miles when the facility was being set up there, and I knew half the blokes there. They were concreters and builder's labourers. The town loved them. They were doing a great job. They were looking after the oldies, taking them out on trips—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr PURCELL:** That could be right. There but for the grace of God go I; there is no doubt about that at all. The police at Emerald used to take the weekends off to take the prisoners fishing. Each prisoner would go fishing with one of the local lads and the police would supervise. It became a real social event. Not only were they doing work in the district but good things for the town also. There was a plant operator out there I knew who had done time. He was an FEDFA member; that is how I knew him.

**Mr Wilson:** At Charleville; he was a delegate.

**Mr PURCELL:** Okay. I thought he was in Emerald. He rang me and said, 'Listen, I am getting out of this place but I want to stay in Emerald. I do not want to go back to Brisbane because I will only get in trouble again.' He said that out in the bush he was Okay. I got him a job on the mine. I rang up the industrial relations people because I was always out there doing industrial relations agreements and so forth for those camps. He got himself a girlfriend and I know that they had a couple of children.

I congratulate the minister on this program. I commend any legislation that will continue this program and its good work. Not only should we pass legislation to ensure this program continues but we should ramp it up. Every community should have the opportunity to have one of these WORC camps. Every prisoner in the categories specified should be given an opportunity to do their bit for society. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (5.05 p.m.) This bill is a good piece of legislation. It is a very responsible piece of legislation because it gives prisoners an opportunity to get away from the routine prison system. A lot of these people are incarcerated for petty and less serious crimes. I applaud the minister for the approach he took in approaching the opposition spokesman, the member for Callide, some months ago seeking a bipartisan approach so that these types of prisoners could be involved in these work release schemes. Like the minister and my colleague the member for Warrego, I have seen these programs work very efficiently and very well in places like Boulia, Winton, Blackall and Charleville. My point is that these work release programs should apply to offenders whose criminal sentences are of a less significant nature. In this modern day and age, fines are a suitable punishment for many crimes.

I agree with the member for Bulimba and others that it is far better for prisoners to be rehabilitated outside of the prison system in a community type environment. Their integration with the community in these situations certainly does a lot for their rehabilitation and helps them get back into the ebb and flow of communities. It is a very good program. As the member for Bulimba just said—and no doubt the member for Warrego would endorse this—these people did some magnificent work during the 1990 floods in Charleville. They were not taking away jobs from the local people; they were adding to the benefits of those economies. All the groceries from the local store, the fuel at the local depot, the tools at the local hardware store or any other equipment they needed was purchased locally and the money stayed in the local economy.

That is one of the big benefits of this program. It is about unclogging jails, saving taxpayers' money and ensuring that these people have a productive and meaningful role in society. As the member for Bulimba rightly said, many of these people have relocated permanently to those towns and have fitted in very well. This is a magnificent program. All honourable members applaud it. The people I represent embrace, support and endorse these programs, because they have been advantageous to their communities.

Last night and earlier today, the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill was debated. That bill dovetails with this legislation and, as I said last evening, with the Community Services Legislation Amendment Bill and also the Indigenous Communities Liquor Licences Bill. In addressing the number of indigenous people in our prison system, this legislation will ensure that our justice system is fair and equitable and does not pick on one group in society. The system should be helping people regardless of their socioeconomic background. We should not allow people to become the victims of their unfortunate circumstances. The system should offer rehabilitation such that these people are able to improve their quality of life.

This afternoon the member for Bulimba rightly identified that some of those people have found work in these places. The member has first-hand experience with some of these people and he would understand what I am saying. They are ordinary people just like us—damned good people. We all make mistakes. Everybody deserves a second chance, but programs like this give some of these people the first chance they have ever had. This program is about unclogging the jails and giving people an opportunity to reintegrate into the community along with their loved ones and friends.

This program is a successful model for the rehabilitation of people who have broken the law. Also, those who have not broken the law should recognise that these people need the support of the wider community. We should not be criticising or ostracising these people but instead helping them to become an integral part of the community. I applaud the government for reducing the restrictions on the prisoners who are able to work in WORC programs. They have done great work outside the prison system, which is where they would otherwise have been housed until completing their sentence. It gives me great pleasure to support this legislation.

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (5.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have participated in the debate this afternoon. The portfolio of Police and Corrective Services is not a glamorous one. There are not too many free lunches or dinners associated with the portfolio. However, one of the great personal satisfactions for ministers is being able to steer through the parliament, with the support of our colleagues, a piece of legislation such as this which touches ordinary people who have made a mistake. That is what we are talking about tonight.

As to the history of the legislation, some time ago the director-general explained to me that the number of prisoners available for the WORC program was reducing drastically and it looked as though some of these camps would have to be closed down. There are two WORC camps in my

electorate. I am aware of how beneficial they are to the community. I made it clear that while I was presiding over the portfolio there would be no reduction in the number of WORC camps—over my dead body. In fact, I want to see more WORC camps scattered right across our state.

I approached the opposition and put the proposition to it that, if we were going to succeed, I needed its support. I spoke also to Greg Hallam of the Local Government Association and explained what the position was. I explained that it was its members who stood to lose the most. I was able to get the support of the opposition, the Local Government Association and my cabinet and caucus colleagues. This is an occasion where everybody is working together for the betterment of the community. As I said before, in the unglamorous world of Corrective Services, we are able to sit here tonight and speak with one voice about helping those people who have made a mistake. I cannot recall whether the member for Ferny Grove mentioned Glen Milliner.

**Mr Wilson:** I did.

**Mr McGRADY:** I thought he might have. Glen Milliner was the architect of this scheme.

**Mr Wilson:** He was an excellent member for Ferny Grove.

**Mr McGRADY:** That is right. The point I want to make is that Terry Mackenroth was the Minister for Police who oversaw the clean-up in Charleville. However, it was Glen Milliner as prisons minister who brought this project into being. Glen has left this place, but I hope the member for Ferny Grove will tell him that his achievements were mentioned in the parliament today.

**Mr Wilson:** I certainly will.

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member. The member for Gladstone asked a good question. She wanted to know whether there was a possibility of a person on the WORC scheme working in a nursing home and casing the joint so as to allow either the prisoner or one of his cohorts to break in at a later time. I can reply in two ways: firstly, history is against that proposition, because we have not experienced that situation. Secondly, each person who goes on the WORC scheme is personally assessed. Thirdly, they are not inside nursing homes mixing with the residents. As I said, history suggests that the answer to Mrs Cunningham's question is no.

Although the legislation before us tonight allows more prisoners into the scheme, I am not satisfied that we have gone far enough. As some speakers have mentioned, some of us did a trip to these camps. Therefore, there is no need for me to repeat what the scheme is about. Those who have seen the scheme at first-hand were amazed by its success. I am giving careful consideration to two areas, and I have requested the director-general to come up with a response as soon as possible. The honourable members for Warrego and Gregory will be interested in this.

At present, under the award the prisoners, led by the officer, work so many days on and then go back to Brisbane. It is basically 12 days on and eight days off, but it varies from time to time. To me, that is unproductive. I am hoping to arrive at an agreement whereby we can employ a couple of Corrective Services supervisors inside a town. That would mean there is less need for prisoners to leave camp and go back to Brisbane accompanied by the officers. Instead they could stay behind and work. That would create a new lease on life for some of those communities, because a couple of jobs would be created.

There could be some industrial issues in relation to that which will need to be addressed, but where we are getting X amount of hours per week or month I would certainly hope to at least increase that by 30 per cent. That is the first thing I want to do.

The second issue is that all the prisoners involved in the WORC camp scheme come from the south-east corner. There are prisons in Capricornia, a new one about to be commissioned at Maryborough, Stuart Creek at Townsville and Lotus Glen in Mareeba, yet currently we do not have one single prisoner coming out of those establishments for this program. There may be reasons for that, but I would bet my last dollar that there are prisoners in those facilities who could participate in the WORC scheme.

I have asked the director-general for an assessment report of every single prisoner in those prisons to see if we can bring them into the scheme. So it is a triple whammy: firstly, new prisoners will come under the scheme as a result of this legislation tonight; secondly, there will be more productivity when we reach an agreement with the various industrial unions; and, thirdly, we will be able to access additional prisoners from those other institutions which I just mentioned.

In conclusion, I want to thank the local councils, because it is the local councils that provide the material. It is the local councils that provide the enthusiasm for these schemes. It is the local

councils that are the backbone of them. I also place on record my thanks to those people on the community committees—that is, the men and women who actually decide what projects will be taken on board. They are the ones who are dedicated to this scheme. On Sunday night in Julia Creek I attended their annual conference and the enthusiasm of those people was amazing.

The final point I want to make tonight is that Paul Woodhouse—and the member for Gregory would know him from Julia Creek—is a man who has a vision. He is a man of great compassion, a man with a social conscience and a man who has done so much for this scheme as the chairman of the state group for some time. After attending the annual meeting on Sunday I understand that he is no longer the chairman. I do not know the reasons for that and do not particularly care. All I want to say is that as the minister I want to place on the record my appreciation of the work that Paul has done and for his dedication to the job. I do not know his political persuasion and do not care. All I know is that this bloke is committed to the WORC scheme. I think the parliament needs to understand that. I do not know who the new chairman is, but I do know that whilst I have been the minister I have had tremendous cooperation from Paul. I wish him well in his future endeavours. He is still involved in it, but he is no longer the state chairman.

I conclude finally by saying a big thank you to my cabinet colleagues for allowing me to bring this legislation through; for the tremendous support I have had from my caucus colleagues; to the opposition and the Independents for their support; and also the officers of the Department of Corrective Services who have brought to fruition the wishes and the desires of myself as the minister and my cabinet colleagues. I commend this bill to the House and thank all members for their support.

Motion agreed to.

#### Committee

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

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

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

#### Second Reading

Resumed from 18 June (see p. 1854).

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.25 p.m.): I rise on behalf of the opposition to contribute to the debate on the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002. This bill proposes to address the longstanding problem associated with drivers who avoid the consequences of their actions by using a loophole in the current drink-driving legislation. Persons who are unconscious or who feign unconsciousness are not able to give permission for a breath test or, more likely, a blood test to be taken to determine their blood alcohol concentration.

From the outset, let me say that the opposition supports this legislation but is concerned that it does not go far enough to address a number of serious loopholes in the drink-driving legislation. Consequently, I shall be circulating a number of amendments to this bill in the hope that the minister will acknowledge the shortcomings of this bill.

**Mr Bredhauer:** I haven't seen your amendments. How can you expect me to have a look at them?

**Mr JOHNSON:** We should have them here.

**Mr Bredhauer:** You have to provide the amendments so I can have a look.

**Mr JOHNSON:** They should have been circulated. The problem that is being addressed by this bill is not a new one, but I think it is fair to say that the loophole to which it applies has become well known in the community in the last decade and there is every reason to believe that more and more drink-drivers have been using this anomaly to evade the consequences of their actions. This matter was so serious that it was referred to the Travelsafe Committee for investigation and was the subject of a report tabled in this parliament in December 1997. As a result of this inquiry, the all-party committee recommended unanimously the introduction of compulsory blood testing of all road accident victims admitted to hospital. Despite the

recommendations of this committee of the parliament and the continuing carnage that takes place on our roads because of drivers and others badly affected by alcohol, the Beattie Labor government has continued to ignore the problems identified by the Travelsafe Committee.

I believe that we would still not be addressing this problem if I had not forced the minister's hand by introducing a private member's bill earlier this year to give effect to the recommendations of the Travelsafe Committee. At the time I pointed out that Queensland was one of the only states that did not have a provision for the testing of unconscious patients. It is interesting, therefore, to examine the reasons for the Beattie government's refusal to comply with the recommendations of the Travelsafe Committee. The reasoning of the Minister for Transport and then Minister for Police was that it would cost too much. Whilst the opposition acknowledges that there was a need to spend money to upgrade testing facilities at the John Tonge Centre, recent issues with the operation of that centre have substantiated that there is a need for the centre to be better resourced.

It is ironic, is it not, that this government refuses to spend money on a system that would reduce the demand placed on the staff and operational demands of our hospital system? Drink-driving accounts for approximately 30 per cent of our road fatalities and 20 per cent of those admitted to hospitals following a crash. Road safety experts suggest that the annual cost of these accidents is more than \$120 million a year—a lot of money in anyone's language.

In his second reading speech the minister acknowledged that, unfortunately, the number of people sustaining injuries and requiring hospitalisation as a result of drink-driving accidents is increasing. If this government was really fair dinkum about addressing the issues that surround the crisis in our hospitals, surely addressing this most significant causation factor would be warranted. But we all know about the skewed priorities of this government. It cannot afford to address road deaths but it can waste millions on a pedestrian bridge; it can find the money for political publicity stunts, but it will not act to stop drink-drivers escaping the law. It is also interesting to note the emphasis that this government puts on speeding compared to drink-driving. I ask the public of Queensland and the fair dinkum members opposite to tell me when they last saw an anti drink-driving television campaign.

I believe that this government has gone soft on drink-driving, and this bill proves it. As usual, this government is trying to paint the opposite picture with its publicity machine. With Labor it is watch what it does, not what it says. The fact is that this government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this House with this bill because it was embarrassed that the opposition had been able to do what it had refused to do in four years. Rather than looking at the cost of implementing the Travelsafe Committee recommendations as a reason for not introducing compulsory testing, the opposition went about finding a way to simplify the system. We did our research and found that other jurisdictions have been able to successfully implement compulsory testing. In fact, the system I proposed in my private member's bill is based on the system operating in New South Wales; so it works.

**Mr Bredhauer:** Which they're about to change.

**Mr JOHNSON:** They might be about to change it, but it certainly has been working. I would bet that they do not take out what is currently in the system.

This bill makes a number of presumptions that are simply wrong. Firstly, the bill provides that a police officer is able to demand that doctors or specified others are able to make a demand for a blood test to be taken from an unconscious patient. The simple proposition that underlies this bill presumes that a police officer is available within the two hour limit to make the request. I would have thought that, of all people, this minister would understand the realities of the availability of police officers to attend a hospital within two hours of a road accident. It must come as news to the minister, but there are places within one hour's drive of this House where it is not possible to get police to make demands within that time limit.

Do not take my word for it; what did the Police Service itself tell the Travelsafe Committee? The submission from the Queensland Police Service—submission 50 at page 180—advised that the need to attend to other matters, and distance, were two factors that often serve to make it impossible for them to satisfy the requirements that a blood sample be taken. The second major failing of this legislation before the House is that it is applicable only to drivers of motor vehicles. I ask members opposite: do they think it is okay for the rider of a motorcycle to get drunk and cause an accident? Do they think it is okay for a pedestrian to get full and stagger out onto the road and cause an accident? The minister obviously does, because this bill does not include a provision for those people to be tested. Do they believe that a drink-driver should be able to

escape testing by claiming that someone else was driving? The minister does, because this bill does not require others who were admitted to hospital as a result of a road accident to be tested.

Thirdly, we have the issue of the obligations of the medical profession to abide by the request of a police officer to take the sample. Obviously the opposition agrees with the provisions that have been made for circumstances in which a doctor or a nurse need not take a sample because, for example, they are concerned about the implications of the patient's health. But do members opposite agree with the exemption that says that a doctor may refuse to take a sample because the patient is the president of his golf club? The minister does, because there is no penalty for refusing to take the sample.

This government, which has recently accused doctors and nurses of everything short of genocide, now proposes that they should be above the law. Like everything else to do with the medical profession, the Beattie government has found it all too hard. The purpose of this legislation is not about detecting persons who have contributed to a road accident by breaking our drink-driving legislation, it is about deterrent. That is the important factor: deterring the driver from breaking the law in the first instance. The fact is that deterrence is best achieved by increasing the perceived chance of apprehension. That philosophy is supported by research that was the basis of random breath-testing.

By deliberately refusing to close the loopholes to which I have referred this government is condoning drink-driving, otherwise why not act to close the loopholes that may lead to a continuing disrespect for our drink-driving legislation? It must also be said that the other reason for closing these loopholes relates to justice and closure. One of the reasons that prompted me to introduce my private member's bill was a letter I received from the mother of a young girl who was killed in a road accident. That mother was being further tormented in her grief because the driver of the vehicle that killed her daughter had been drinking. Because of the loophole that the government is belatedly moving to close, that mother had to sit by as that drink-driver went free because he had not been able to be tested. That mother was tormented by the injustice of the system.

If the legislation before this House is allowed by the arrogant majority of Labor to pass without the significant shortcomings that I have identified being addressed, there is nothing surer than that there will be more letters from more mothers, and I will have no option other than to refer to these proceedings and indicate that I tried to point out the failures of this legislation. I hope and pray that I do not have to write those replies, but I trust even more that I am successful in having my proposed amendments accepted in the interests of saving lives on our roads. I know that some members opposite agree with me. At least one of them was a member of the Travelsafe Committee that proposed the sort of system to which I refer. We shall soon see the real character of those opposite and their commitment to reducing the road toll.

I ask this minister to show consideration to closing any loopholes in this legislation if it is not going to work. The justice system certainly can make it work. We do not need to be pushing the responsibility back onto an already overtaxed Police Service. I hope that when this legislation is passed it will have some great results, even though it does not have the total coverage that I would like it to have in reducing our road toll and seeing some of those idiots who want to drink and drive pushed out of the system. It is all very well to talk about fatalities on our roads, but we always tend to forget about those people who are maimed or injured by a drink-driver. That is what the essence of this legislation is all about. It is certainly why I introduced similar legislation in the first place. Phyl den Ronden of CARS is a great advocate of trying to eliminate drink-drivers from our roads and getting a better deal for those people who have been the victims of drink-drivers. Whilst we have come a long way, we have not gone far enough. We certainly have to look further at the penalties for drink-drivers. I say to the minister that if we are going to clean up our road system we have to introduce harsher penalties for some of these people because their careless attitude can no longer be condoned.

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (5.39 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2). I will first talk about a report of the Travelsafe Committee of the 48th Parliament. I will then present some statistics and talk a little about the bill.

The Travelsafe Committee of the 48th Parliament inquired into Queensland's increasing road toll. Two reports from this inquiry, reports 19 and 22, were about drink-driving. Report No. 19, *Queensland Road Toll: Drink Driving*, tabled in December 1996, was about random breath testing, the flagship of anti drink-driving programs. The report noted the impairing effects of alcohol on driving, the high incidence of alcohol related crashes in Queensland and the low testing levels compared to comparable states that had achieved bigger reductions in drink-driving and alcohol

related crashes. In essence, the low-intensity Queensland program did not convince drink-drivers that they risked getting caught by police. The report noted that RBT is highly effective in reducing alcohol related crashes when done properly and gave criteria for best practice RBT operations. The report noted the potential to achieve significant reduction in both the numbers and severity of crashes in Queensland through improvements to the RBT program.

In the early 1990s RBT in Queensland was conducted by police on an ad hoc basis. There were no set targets for the number of tests to be conducted by police. This led to significant differences in approaches to RBT across the state's police regions. In effect, officers did what testing they could when not assigned to other police duties. The committee noted that, as a result, the numbers of random breath tests conducted in Queensland were low compared to other comparable Australian states with highly effective RBT programs, such as Victoria and New South Wales. The committee also noted that Queensland RBT enforcement statistics were very poor and often incomplete. This made it difficult to gauge the true extent of the state's drink-driving problem. The committee's recommendation 1 states—

While ensuring that RBT best practice, as outlined in the report, is adhered to, the intensity of the RBT program should be increased in all police regions so that a ratio of tests to licensed drivers of 0.7:1 is achieved—

that is, 70 per cent of one million licensed drivers—

by 1998; and a ratio of 1:1—

that is, one million tests for one million licensed drivers—

is achieved by the year 2000.

This does not mean that every licensed driver in Queensland would be tested, but the target was to conduct as many tests as there were licensed drivers in Queensland, so that increased the risk of drink-drivers being detected.

The Queensland Police Service has not reported its implementation progress to the current or past Travelsafe Committees. However, State Traffic Support Branch staff have publicised RBT statistics from time to time. These statistics show that police RBTs exceed the levels recommended by the Travelsafe Committee. State Traffic Support Branch staff state that no additional police were appointed to conduct RBTs. Increasing testing levels have been achieved with existing resources. RBT levels reported by Queensland police are now the highest in Australia. At least that has been achieved.

I will briefly give some of the statistics relating to the breath tests conducted by the Queensland Police Service. The number of tests conducted were as follows: in 1993, some 800,000; in 1994, 773,000; in 1995, 696,000; in 1996, 690,000; in 1997, 1,078,000, which exceeded the Travelsafe target; and in 1998, 1,685,626, which exceeded the target by 13.4 per cent. In 1999 the target was exceeded by 16 per cent. In 2000 there was a small decrease but the number of tests conducted still exceeded the target by some 13.7 per cent. In the year 2001 the number of tests conducted was back up to 16.8 per cent over the target. These statistics show that police were actually out there doing the job of random breath testing. What has to be considered now is just how effective the current RBT program is. Road crash statistics show that there are still high numbers of drink-drivers on our roads. Maybe we have to look at addressing the problem in some other way.

At present, people who attend Queensland hospitals after traffic accidents do not routinely have breath or blood samples taken to determine blood alcohol content. The taking of samples under the current legislation is dependent on police being notified of the accident, police being able to attend the hospital to request the test, a doctor being available and willing to conduct the test, and the patient being conscious or appearing to be conscious and able to consent to the test being taken. This all has to happen within a period of two hours after the accident.

Police told the Travelsafe Committee of the 48th Parliament that feigning injury was one of the biggest outs in relation to drink-driving. Police advised the committee that loopholes in the current legislation do exist and can be exploited by people who are aware of them. There are enough smart people out there on our roads who read the rules, understand the laws and know what they can do.

There are other problems with the current legislation, such as police not being notified of an accident or being unable to arrive at a hospital within the specified two hours or a doctor being unavailable or not having the time to take a sample. These factors all contribute to a high level of non-testing and, consequently, a low level of detection of drink-drivers involved in road accidents. It is highly unjust that hospitalised drink-drivers effectively avoid detection and punishment for grossly irresponsible behaviour. Given the statistics, I find it difficult to understand why

government departments of the past have failed to recommend similar legislation to that now before the House. Drink-driving remains one of the causes of road crashes leading to death and/or serious injuries, and often it is the innocent who are the victims.

For honourable members to understand the problem we have, we should look at the data available to us. Despite our levels of enforcement and random breath testing exceeding those for all other states in Australia, there are still large numbers of drink-drivers on Queensland roads causing or being involved in road crashes. It is only when we look at the statistics that we can appreciate the problem. First we have to look at the number of drivers and motorcyclists hospitalised in Queensland with a blood alcohol content, the number of those tested who returned a BAC above .05 and the number who refused to be tested.

In 1996, 1,267 people were tested, 427 people had a BAC above .05 and 27 people refused to be tested. In 1997, 1,203 people were tested, 340 were above the limit and 28 refused to be tested. In 1998, 1,518 people were tested, 326 were above the limit and 19 refused to be tested. In 1999, 1,666 people were tested, 338 were above the limit and 20 refused to be tested. In 2000, 2,060 people were tested, 357 were above the limit and 24 refused to be tested. In 2001, 2,494 people were tested, 438 were above .05 and 24 refused to be tested. Over the last six years, 10,208 drivers and riders hospitalised after a road crash were tested for BAC, 2,226 were found to have exceeded the legal limit and 132 refused to be tested. In Queensland during 2001, 5,296 drivers and motorcyclists were hospitalised following a road crash. Four hundred and thirty-eight, or 8.3 per cent, were found to have an illegal BAC level where police requested that a blood sample be taken for analysis.

For the same year in New South Wales, 11.9 per cent of blood tests taken routinely from road crash victims taken to hospital showed a BAC of .05 or higher. In South Australia, 22 per cent of blood tests from people killed in or hospitalised after a crash were found to have illegal BAC levels. So there is a real problem in South Australia. If we apply these percentage rates to the number of drivers and motorcyclists hospitalised after road crashes in Queensland in 2001—that is, 5,296—and subtract the number of people who were found to have an illegal BAC—that is, 438—it could be suggested that between 727 and 192 drink-drivers may have gone undetected. Of course, I understand that these figures are approximate only and assume a similar drink-driving pattern among drivers in three states. However, there is no doubt that the figures support the fact that there is a significant number of hospitalised drivers and riders getting away with being involved in road crashes while under the influence of alcohol.

The amendment bill before the House will ensure the increased detection and removal of drink-drivers from our roads. It will enhance the integrity of Queensland data on alcohol as a factor in crashes, it will assist with better casualty management in hospitals, improve the identification and the treatment of drink-drivers and it will stop hospitals from being used as safe havens from the law. If a person gets behind the wheel of a motor vehicle and is above the legal limit, that person is breaking the law. If, because of alcohol, that person is responsible for/or contributes to the cause of an accident, he or she must be held accountable for his or her actions. Using loopholes in legislation to escape punishment and public humiliation is just no longer acceptable. The community has been telling us that for a long time.

These amendments will ensure the closure of serious loopholes that previously have allowed drunken drivers to escape punishment. I know that the public will welcome these new laws. This bill will provide for the taking of blood for the purpose of blood alcohol content testing from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash. These amendments will not introduce compulsory blood testing, but will close a serious loophole in the legislation and ensure that potentially culpable drivers cannot escape penalty for drink-driving simply on the basis that they were unconscious when they attended hospital following a road crash.

Under the legislation, a police officer can obtain a sample, through a health care professional, from all drivers who attend a hospital following a road crash—whether they are conscious or unconscious—whom they reasonably suspect were under the influence of alcohol or a drug at the time of the road crash. To address the situation where drivers may escape prosecution because the police were unable to breath test the driver at a crash site or to make a request for a blood sample to be taken within the time limit for requests, Queensland Transport will conduct a full examination of the feasibility and efficiency of compulsory blood testing for alcohol. I support the minister in that action.

It is acknowledged that in Queensland compulsory blood testing—that is where a sample is automatically taken from a person who attends a hospital for treatment following a road

crash—may produce a number of benefits. The minister acknowledges that the recommendations of the Travelsafe Committee's report warrant further consideration to determine the likely benefits of the introduction of compulsory blood alcohol content testing in Queensland and the cost involved in achieving those benefits. I understand that civil liberties issues will be canvassed during this feasibility study. This parliament needs to give the minister the support that he requires to ensure that that study is carried out and that he is able to report back to the parliament the results of that study and, if necessary, make the legislative changes to support it.

As I said, under this legislation police may request a doctor or a nurse to take a specimen of blood for the purpose of blood alcohol content testing from a driver who is, or appears to be, unconscious or unable to communicate. It will be lawful for a doctor or nurse to take a specimen of blood from a person who is unconscious or unable to communicate their consent. A second sample of blood will automatically be taken from patients who are unconscious or unable to communicate. That is just some protection for the injured person. Currently, conscious patients can request a second sample for their own purposes at the time the blood is taken. Nothing will change in that regard. Provisions relating to the taking of blood specimens in hospitals will be expanded to allow registered nurses and qualified assistants—that is, persons whose duties include the taking of blood—if directed by a doctor or nurse to take blood samples when requested by a police officer.

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. Health care professionals taking a blood sample under section 80 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management Act) 1995 will be protected from civil liability for an act done or omission made honestly and without negligence. We need that protection for those people.

A new offence provision has been included in the bill for any person who obstructs a health care professional in the taking of a blood sample for another person. The amendments will allow for the Commissioner of Police to enter into an arrangement with an interstate commissioner to allow for the exchange of blood and other blood test results data.

Drink-driving continues to be a problem for the community and for the government. I congratulate the minister on his commitment to road safety. As chairman of the Travelsafe Committee, I work with his department in a very commendable way. I know how committed the minister is and how committed is his department. I also want to congratulate the Queensland Police Service on the good work that they do. They are underestimated and undervalued in the work that they do and the contribution that they make to road safety in Queensland. They are doing a great job in Queensland on behalf of the people.

The amendment bill is good legislation. I appreciate the fact that the minister realises that there is probably an opportunity in the future for him to go a little bit further, but at this time he is making the changes that are necessary. I believe that they are good changes and a good result for Queensland.

**Ms PHILLIPS** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.56 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002 and congratulate the minister on presenting it. Not only does this bill close a serious loophole in the drink-driving legislation by allowing for the more comprehensive detection of drink-drivers, but I believe that the bill will also lead to a reduction in drink-driving on Queensland roads.

Drivers affected by alcohol play a major role in road crashes and alcohol use is also considered to contribute to a substantial proportion of more severe crashes, especially those involving a fatality. As a parent, I often lie awake at night praying that my teenage children will arrive home safely from a night out. I know of many parents who have had that dreaded phone call or knock on the door telling them that their loved ones have been a victim of a road crash, often involving a drunk driver.

Currently, drivers who attend hospital as a result of a road crash can have a specimen of blood taken for the purposes of blood alcohol content testing only if they are conscious. Currently, the legislation does not allow for blood samples to be taken in circumstances where a driver is unconscious or unable to communicate. The bill will amend legislation to provide police with the power to request a blood sample for analysis from all drivers who attend hospital following a road crash. This will apply to all drivers, whether they are conscious or unconscious. The bill will eliminate the current unfair and unjust situation where a blood sample cannot be obtained from all drivers which, in turn, allows some drivers to avoid being held accountable for their illegal and irresponsible behaviour. The technical details of how this will be carried out should not be the

subject of argument or objection by the opposition. We should be adopting a bipartisan approach to this significant legislation.

In Queensland, a number of other measures are already in place to combat drink-driving. The most effective of these is random breath testing. Extensive public education campaigns are conducted in an effort to emphasise the risk of detection by police as well as to convey a message about the potential repercussions and serious consequences of being caught drink-driving. As we have already heard, the RBT levels in Queensland are among the highest in Australia.

While these counter measures have been found to be highly effective in deterring people from drink-driving, the number of people sustaining injuries and being hospitalised due to driving under the influence is increasing. Therefore, it is timely that consideration be given to this issue and action taken to extend these efforts to further reduce drink-driving. Through the analysis of blood specimens from both conscious and unconscious drivers who attend hospital following a road crash, Queensland Transport will have more information about the level of drink- and drug-driving in the Queensland community.

The bill also allows for the exchange of statistical information between other Australian jurisdictions relating to drink- and drug-driving. This will improve our knowledge of drink-driving in the greater Australian community and will allow Queensland's antidrink-driving efforts to be measured against those from other states. The examination and analysis of this information and these sources will allow for more targeted approaches to be taken with public education campaigns, as well as drink- and drug-driving counter measures with a view to further reducing drink-driving on Queensland roads. I am pleased to see the efforts being focused in this area of road safety in an attempt to reduce the road toll. This initiative will lead to a reduction in drink-driving and road trauma. I look forward to the users of Queensland roads reaping its benefits. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Alger—ALP) (6.00 p.m.): Using the line from a well-known TV advertisement, let me say that there have been far too many 'bloody idiots' on our roads; foolish and negligent people who risk their lives and the lives of others by driving while under the influence of alcohol. All members of this House have probably pushed the limits or taken a risk by driving over the .05 level, either knowingly or unknowingly. Many members have probably been on the risky line. Thankfully, people are now much more aware of their responsibilities, the risks and the penalties which apply for drink-driving.

I commend the minister, Steve Bredhauer, for introducing this amendment to enable blood to be taken and tested from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital. We have to be ever vigilant to ensure that foolish drivers who have committed criminal offences and put lives at risk are not let off the hook by an inability to gather the required evidence of drink-driving.

I can recall being a frightened kid sitting in the back of car, driving with family friends who were full of grog. They would still get in and try and control the car. I can remember as a kid travelling in a car that hit a keep left sign, or something, one day at Redcliffe. That is a vivid image in my mind. That sort of practice was very common in those days. Thankfully that sort of practice is not so common these days. The intensive, long-term road safety campaigns, combined with tough laws and enforcement practices, have led to a very positive social revolution.

Post-mortem blood alcohol level tests on drivers show an alarmingly high number of drivers whose blood alcohol level was above 0.15 per cent or 0.25 per cent. In 2000, 20 per cent of post-mortem tests on drivers recorded a level of 0.15. This is three or more times the legal limit. That is far too many people. Thankfully, overall the revolution has been quite a positive one and most people are generally aware of the risks and the need to be far more careful in the way they handle their vehicles under the influence. Alcohol or drug use was the second largest contributor to road crashes, being a contributor in 34 per cent of fatal crashes but only nine per cent of all reported crashes. We have to be tough and consistent. We have to make sure that no-one escapes their culpability for accidents and injuries resulting from that their behaviour as 'bloody idiots'.

I take a minute to mention another road safety risk; that is, poor road conditions. Every year around \$1 billion is spent on improving safety on Queensland's roads. Over the last six years, record road funding allocations have been provided by the Beattie government. This has assisted in reducing the number and severity of traffic accidents and associated road trauma costs. In 2002-03, the state government has increased its road funding commitment by \$37 million. Unfortunately, this has been offset by a federal roads budget reduction to Queensland of

\$50 million. In addition, the federal government also cut funding to local governments in Queensland under the Roads to Recovery initiative by \$21 million on the basis of a payback in 2004-05. These federal road funding cuts will result in serious safety consequences for the travelling public through the deferral of important road safety works in my local area and right across this state. This is particularly alarming, given the federal government's acceptance that the standard of Queensland's national highway system is the worst in Australia. Projects such as the Ipswich Motorway upgrade in my local area, which has a woeful safety record, will certainly be delayed as a consequence.

I call on the conservative members of parliament in this parliament and federal Liberal members, such as Gary Hardgrave on the southside of Brisbane, to lobby John Howard and John Anderson to get the increases in federal road funding that Queensland so desperately needs. Gary Hardgrave is a master at shifting responsibility for roads to the state government. He is missing in action when the call is being made to the federal government to meet its share of the bargain.

We have bipartisan report in general on this bill. The member for Gregory has been an advocate for road funding. I suggest that he speak to some federal counterparts and try and get some action from them. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.05 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill. The bill provides for blood to be taken and tested for alcohol content from unconscious drivers or from people who are unable to communicate when they are taken to hospital after an accident.

Since being elected to this place, I have had communications with the Attorney-General, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport seeking the changes which this bill will bring about. I have long considered to be an unacceptable loophole in our anti drink-driving laws, in what are often the most serious accidents where people are maimed and killed, that drivers can escape resolution of the critical issue of whether they were illegally affected by alcohol by virtue of being unconscious. I congratulate the Minister for Transport for confronting this issue and particularly for the thought which has been given to the problem of protecting medical practitioners and nurses in circumstances where proper medical considerations prevent them taking blood.

Every member of this place wants to see a reduction in the number of road deaths in this state. Families are torn apart when someone is killed on the road. Justice demands that questions be answered as to whether one or more of the drivers involved might have been affected by alcohol. Quite simply, the minor invasiveness of having a couple of millilitres of blood taken in circumstances where medical procedures are likely to be necessary anyway is justified in order to prevent more deaths and to see that justice is done. This legislation is balanced and measured and it will be welcomed by the public. I congratulate the minister and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (6.07 p.m.): Listening to the speakers who have gone before me has caused me to think back and reminisce a little about my own lifetime and my experiences in relation to drink-driving, the social aspects of it and the attitudes towards it. There has been a huge change from what I remember as a child in the fifties. Our family would travel at holiday times from Brisbane to our farm in the Brisbane valley, from Ipswich to Fernvale, which is probably about 25 to 30 kilometres. The trip usually took up to about three hours and my brothers and I had to be satisfied with a couple of double sarses at one or two of the various social stops which were highly necessary in those days.

Things have changed a lot, and thank God they have. This legislation is necessary not just because of drink-driving but because of the huge number of cars on the road as a result of the great increase in the population that has occurred over that 50 years, almost. The object of this legislation, as has been said, is to make provision 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. All of those elements must be present in order for the legislation to take effect.

As other members said, particularly the member for Fitzroy, the chairman of the Travelsafe Committee, the problem is a severe one. Thirty per cent of fatal crashes in Queensland can be attributed to drink-driving, and approximately 20 per cent of hospitalisations from crashes in Queensland can be attributed to this cause as well. In his second reading speech the minister indicated that the estimated social cost of these crashes is approximately \$120 million per year, a

rather conservative figure I would have thought. In 2000, alcohol or drug use was the second largest contributor to crashes, being involved in 34 per cent of fatal crashes.

Other measures have been introduced to try to lessen this cause of the road toll. Reference has been made tonight to random breath testing and to the Fatal 4 public education campaign of the Queensland Transport Department. These countermeasures, RBT and Fatal 4, have been highly effective. However, despite this, the number of people sustaining injuries and having to be hospitalised has been increasing. In the 12 months to the end of June 2002, the number increased by 79 on the previous year. Therefore, tougher measures are necessary. From a legal background, whilst these measures obviously affect a person's civil liberty as they are forced to undergo a procedure when they may be unconscious, the statistics to which I have referred indicate and justify the need for these steps to be taken. As a young articulated clerk I can remember the kerfuffle when the first breath testing laws were being debated and introduced. There was a great protest from the legal profession, led by the legendary Dan Casey one night, in these terms. Prior to that, the only way police could prove drink-driving was to get the driver to walk an allegedly straight line and give evidence about that performance. Of course, in some cases it was difficult for the police to come up with the required result. This legislation enables people to be tested whether they be conscious or unconscious when they enter hospitals.

One aspect which interests me is the fact that not only will doctors be able to take these tests but so will others, including registered nurses, when requested by police officers. This includes other people who are usually persons involved in the taking of samples of blood. There is protection here against interference or foul play in the sense that, other than doctors, these people will not be called out to administer such tests. These tests, as I understand it, will have to be taken in hospital. I hope that this will provide the necessary protection against any foul play. Likewise, those persons are protected under this legislation from civil liability for any act done or omission made honestly and without negligence. Therefore, they have to act honestly and be able to show that they have acted without negligence. I am not sure whose onus it is to prove that, but perhaps the minister can refer to that in his summing-up. There is a requirement in the act that the person taking the test has to form a reasonable suspicion that the person from whom the sample is being taken is under the influence. That may in practice lead to some interesting arguments.

Finally, I commend to the House the report of the Travelsafe Committee dated 22 December 1997 concerning compulsory BAC testing. A lot of work went into that report. The current chairman, the member for Fitzroy, made a very worthwhile contribution to this debate tonight. He and his committee have done a lot of work, have a lot of knowledge and will contribute to the saving of many lives in Queensland. If we do nothing else in this parliament but achieve that result, we can hold our heads up pretty high.

I refer members to page 62 of that report, because it refers to a number of points that have been incorporated in this legislation to which I might briefly refer. One of the committee's conclusions is that medical practitioners, nurses and other persons trained and certified by hospitals should be allowed to take breath and blood samples. Of course, that is what we are talking about tonight. A legal onus should be placed on patients liable to be tested, including patients unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate, to provide samples. Of course, that is the very essence of this bill tonight. Paragraph 229 of the report states—

The committee also believes that doctors, nurses and other people who are certified to take samples should be indemnified from civil and criminal liability for anything they properly and reasonably do in the course of taking blood and/or breath samples.

Of course, in his second reading speech the minister indicated that protection will be provided to these people. Further, there will be provisions dealing with the unnecessary court appearances of people like doctors, paramedics and nurses so that they do not have to attend court unless absolutely necessary. Those were some of the specific recommendations of that Travelsafe Committee report. I am pleased to see that they have been adopted. I commend the legislation, and acknowledge the minister and his department for the work that they have done.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.17 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill 2002. This bill addresses the very serious issue of drink-driving on Queensland roads. In some cases it is necessary for police to request a driver involved in a road crash to allow a sample of blood to be taken for the purpose of blood alcohol content testing. However, until now the application of these requirements has excluded drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate. This has meant that some drivers who have been responsible for incidents resulting in fatalities or serious injuries to other persons have evaded blood testing and subsequent prosecution. The bill extends police powers so that they

can request a health care professional to take a blood sample from a driver who is unconscious or unable to communicate and has been admitted to a hospital as a result of a road crash. These amendments remove any doubt that the government considers drink-driving a serious matter.

The bill also seeks to make better use of medical resources in hospitals in terms of the taking of blood specimens for the purpose of blood alcohol content testing. Currently, legislative provisions allow only a doctor to take a blood sample for blood alcohol content purposes following a request from a police officer. Given the remoteness of some parts of Queensland, it can be quite common that access to doctors and hospitals is limited. In addition, in all areas of the state it is customary that registered nurses are actively involved in attending to the treatment and care of patients. In acknowledging these practices, the bill expands the provisions relating to doctors taking blood samples to allow registered nurses also to take blood when requested by a police officer.

The legislation will also allow qualified assistants to take a sample if directed by a doctor or registered nurse following a request by a police officer. A 'qualified assistant' is defined as a person whose duties include the taking of blood. However, these amendments will not require persons other than doctors to be called out to another place, such as a police station, a vehicle or a vessel, for the purposes of taking a blood specimen.

The bill also considers some of the risks that health care officials have to face and addresses those issues. Health care professionals will be provided with an indemnity from civil liability for an act done, or omission made, honestly and without negligence. The bill also protects health care professionals against any other person who attempts to obstruct the taking of a sample from a person. Any person who obstructs the taking of a sample from someone else may be guilty of an offence. In taking samples of blood from drivers in a hospital following a road crash, health care professionals are also protected against the operation of section 246(1) of the Criminal Code, which relates to assaults.

The bill also considers that there may be times when it is inappropriate or unreasonable for a doctor or nurse to take a blood sample. This includes where the doctor or nurse reasonably believes that taking the specimen would be prejudicial to the person's treatment and also where the doctor or nurse has a reasonable excuse for not taking the sample. This adequately covers situations where it may be detrimental to take a blood sample because a person has sustained serious injuries and needs surgery, as well as situations where the doctor or nurse is unable to take a sample because they have been called away to attend to another medical emergency.

The issue of limited medical resources within hospitals and laboratories is also addressed by the bill. Restrictions are established on instances when analysts, health care professionals and others involved in the blood taking and testing process may be required to appear in court to give evidence. In summary, the bill ensures that any ambiguity within the drink-driving legislation has now been dealt with, and also addresses adequately significant issues associated with health care professionals, who are one of the key stakeholders in this initiative. The minister should be congratulated on these amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (6.21 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly on the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill. With over 70 people losing their lives and nearly 500 people being hospitalised from crashes where blood alcohol level was a factor, it is obvious that as a government we need to go harder on drink-drivers. Currently, drink-drivers cost the state \$120 million each year. While this is an enormous cost to our state, it is insignificant compared with the loss, pain and suffering drink-drivers inflict on innocent people daily. The social consequences are huge.

Police investigating road accidents will now have the power to request blood tests on unconscious drivers. This is another prong in the 'don't drink and drive' campaign. It should be of concern to all in the community that the number of casualties due to drink-driving is on the rise. However, these new laws take on the fight against drink-driving. My only sorrow is that it has to take a road crash to make some of these fools realise the damage they are capable of causing when they drink and drive.

Earlier in the year, the local community was devastated when we lost some of our young people due to a road accident. The busy intersection of Fitzgerald Avenue and Rochedale Road, with many floral tributes, was a reminder of how dangerous our roads can be and the tragic consequences that occur when we do not practise road safety. It was a reminder that every week more than six of our family members, friends, neighbours or colleagues will start a journey that they will never complete. This figure is far too high. It is hard to believe that there is a nine per cent rise in convictions for drink-driving, with 2,000 people charged each month. We can thank

the police for doing a good job in catching these drivers. However, the figure sends out a message that we need to do more to get drink-drivers off our roads.

Currently, police can request a blood sample from drivers who attend hospital following a road crash only if they are able to communicate their consent to having a sample taken. This bill will provide for the taking of blood from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash for the purposes of blood alcohol content testing. This will resolve the inequity of being able to test conscious drivers but not unconscious drivers.

Police may request a doctor or nurse to take a specimen of blood from a driver who is or appears to be unconscious or unable to communicate for the purpose of blood alcohol testing. As with the case of conscious drivers, who can currently request a second sample for their own purposes, a second sample will automatically be taken from patients who are unconscious or unable to communicate.

Clause 3(4) provides for a widening in the category of persons authorised to take a blood specimen for a laboratory test when a police officer has required one to be taken. The expansion will enable registered nurses and qualified assistants whose duties include the taking of blood if directed by a doctor to take blood samples when requested by a police officer. I am sure this will be of great assistance to smaller country hospitals in rural areas. It is also important to note that the medical and health professionals would be able to refuse a request if they believed the taking of a blood sample would compromise the patient's health in a medical emergency. Where a person hinders or obstructs a health or medical worker in taking a sample an offence will have occurred.

This bill is about empowering police to ensure that drink-drivers are not escaping conviction because the police are unable to ask for that blood sample. We all expect our loved ones and ourselves to be able to drive safely on our streets. Hopefully, this bill will be a giant step in the fight to rid our streets of drink-drivers. I commend the minister for bringing this bill into the House. I believe that anything that will make our roads safer is a good thing, and this bill will assist in doing that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (6.25 p.m.): Drink-driving takes an horrific toll in Queensland. A lot of people have spoken about the huge financial impact of drink-driving on Queensland. We know that people are being killed and that people can no longer work because of drink-driving. We are aware of the strain placed on the health system by the victims of traffic accidents involving drink-driving. Although the financial toll to Queensland is huge, it is important to bring the issue of drink-driving back to the human level. We are talking about Queenslanders of a range of ages, from young to old, who are dying daily on our streets. We are talking about the families of those people who have to suffer the loss of those loved ones or who have to live through and suffer the serious injury of loved ones. To me this human toll is the greatest cost associated with the offence of drink-driving.

It is important to realise that the victims of drink-drivers and their stupid behaviour extend beyond those involved in an accident and their families and friends. The victims also include the courageous police, ambulance and fire officers who turn up to these scenes day in, day out, week in, week out and cut maimed, twisted bodies out of cars and fight to save people's lives. My brother, a Queensland ambulance officer, has seen such scenes first-hand, and I have seen the effect this has had on him. A number of my former police colleagues, particularly those in the Accident Investigation Squad, are required to turn up to these horrific scenes and perform professionally despite the human chaos and carnage that surrounds them. The stress and toll on emergency service workers should not be underestimated. These are all flow-on effects, both financial and social, that Queensland can no longer ignore. I commend the minister for introducing this legislation, which takes another step forward in trying to combat the road toll in Queensland.

Drink-driving is an horrific offence. As I said, its toll cannot be counted. A number of people have escaped justice in the past by either feigning unconsciousness or actually being unconscious and therefore not being able to be directed to provide a blood sample. This bill seeks to right that wrong. In any civilised country, with rights come responsibility. People have to undergo a series of tests to get their drivers licence and with that take on the responsibilities to observe all the rules and laws related to driving on Queensland roads. With the right of free and easy access around the state of Queensland via a motor vehicle comes the responsibility to do the right thing. It is important to acknowledge that, unfortunately, many people do not do the right

thing. This bill will tighten this loophole and hopefully catch an increased number of people who are responsible for causing this carnage on our roads.

**Ms Keech:** That is why it's a good bill.

**Mr ENGLISH:** It is a great bill. Unlike the private member's bill debated in this place a few weeks ago, this bill is somewhat better balanced in that it gives the police an active role in determining who should and who should not be tested rather than putting the onus on the doctors to test everyone, which I think will create a huge waste of resources at a huge cost for possibly very little gain. This bill has a much better balance in that the police will have to assess if a person should be tested and if there is sufficient evidence to justify the blood test on an unconscious person. I like the fact that the police are involved in making that assessment while doctors are involved in making medical assessments on behalf of an unconscious patient. Another important feature of this bill is the protection it offers for the doctors, the nurses and all other staff who may be directed to take blood from an unconscious person. I can imagine that the doctors, nurses and other associated allied health staff who may be directed to take a blood sample will enjoy the protection offered by this bill. Again, I commend the minister for his work and his ongoing commitment to road safety in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (6.32 p.m.): I rise to speak about the amendments contained in this bill to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 in relation to blood alcohol testing. The object of this bill is to provide for an amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 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.

A range of measures are currently used in Queensland to combat drink-driving, the most effective of which is RBT—random breath testing. 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. 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 unfortunately increasing.

I must applaud the minister and the Transport Department for being of valuable assistance with regard to the issue of hooning, especially on the Sunshine Coast. It is a sad fact that all too often alcohol, drugs and speed are major contributing factors towards our tragic road toll, and these fatalities include people who modify or hot up their cars. While contributing to this debate tonight, I must point out that in relation to introducing proactive initiatives to attempt to curb the road carnage I know both the minister's commitment and indeed the entire Beattie Labor government's commitment to see both injuries and deaths on Queensland roads reduced. These changes will dovetail into other legislative amendments in a positive way and will be well embraced by our community. The hooning legislation is another measure that recently passed through this House.

Today in question time the minister mentioned the confusion faced by the federal member for Fisher, Peter Slipper, when he wrote to the state minister complaining about the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Well, Minister, not only is Mr Slipper often confused about who does what at the various levels of government but he will undoubtedly misrepresent your reply. I will point out to the House his most recent lies to the Sunshine Coast residents whom I represent. I seek leave to table the relevant documents from which I will quote.

Leave granted.

**Mr CUMMINS:** Go Mooloolaba is a well respected business group in the same mould as a chamber of commerce. In Mr Slipper's column in Go Mooloolaba's August newsletter he said—  
Over 200 people held a public meeting I convened recently in an attempt to address the issue of hoons on the Sunshine Coast.

...

The meeting, held at Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club on 8 July, was also attended by State Members Fiona Simpson and Chris Cummins, as well as Maroochy Councillors Steve Dickson, Joe Natoli, Barbara Cansdell and Caloundra Councillors Tim Dwyer and Gordon Wallace.

...

I must say the performance of the Labor Member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, at this meeting left all present both angry and stunned. Mr Cummins turned up to the meeting very late, read from a prepared statement which included an attack on me, and then walked out of the room, refusing to answer questions from the audience.

Mr Cummins total lack of interest in the views of those constituents present comes on top of his lack of action with the HMAS Brisbane project. The Labor Member for Kawana has shown the arrogance of which the Beattie Government is now becoming known.

I will also quote from the most recent Slipper report under the heading 'Peter Slipper works with community to solve coast's hooning problem'. The article states—

Mr Slipper said regrettably the State Labor Member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, had adopted an arrogant and negative approach to these efforts to resolve this problem.

'Mr Cummins has shown a complete unwillingness to work with other elected representatives on this issue and did not even have the courtesy to stay at the meeting and listen to the views of our local councillors, or Miss Simpson,' Mr Slipper said.

'Mr Cummins has even told State Parliament that we are "...too stupid to realise that it is a state government issue being addressed before the state House.'" (Hansard: 7 August 2002).

Mr Slipper said unfortunately, Mr Cummins did not seem to understand that this problem would not go away if the community did not work together.

His inference that I left the meeting without him knowing is a blatant lie, and here is the proof of the deliberate lie that Mr Slipper put to the Sunshine Coast community. On 1 July 2002 he wrote—

This meeting is scheduled to take place at 7:30pm on Monday 8 July 2002 at the Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club, and your attendance would be most appreciated.

If you are able to attend, would you please notify my office of your availability by close of business on Friday 5 July 2002.

I faxed Mr Slipper on 3 July, saying—

Dear Mr Slipper,

I wish to accept the invitation to your 'Hoon Forum'.

As I have another community meeting on the same night, is it possible to address the meeting as early as possible?

He did not respond to that, so on 8 July I sent another urgent fax—

I refer to my fax ...

As stated in that fax, I have another meeting to attend and urgently need to know when I am listed to speak this evening.

So this is the day of the meeting. The fax continues—

Would you be kind enough to forward through to me as a matter of priority the agenda for tonight's meeting and/or advice as to when I am scheduled to speak.

He faxed back, saying—

As yet we have not finalised the agenda for this evening, but we anticipate you should be able to speak by just before 8pm.

So I was on the agenda to speak at 8 p.m. I had advised him that I had other things to attend to. In fact, I handed out questionnaires across the community to allow people to have input. So I advise the minister that he will obviously be misrepresented again. The minister is acting in a very proactive way in reducing the road toll. We know the difference between state government issues and federal government issues. It is a pity that many on the conservative side do not. I commend the minister and commend the department for bringing this legislation before the House.

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.38 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill, which closes an important loophole in drink-driving legislation by allowing blood to be taken from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash for the purposes of blood alcohol content testing. In doing so, the bill will prevent a number of potentially culpable drivers from escaping penalty for drink-driving. Until now, only conscious persons who attended hospital following a road crash could be tested for alcohol and/or drugs if requested by police. People who were unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate could not be tested. This situation has led to inequitable circumstances in allowing some road users to evade responsibility from serious offences. Hospitals have been used as safe havens by some drivers to avoid being blood tested by feigning unconsciousness or pretending they were unable to communicate.

The proposed amendments will empower police to request a blood sample for analysis from drivers who are or appear to be unconscious or unable to communicate. These persons will no longer be able to avoid their responsibilities, as all drivers will be subject to the same treatment. People who drink and drive are a hazard on our roads. They are placing not only themselves but

also all other road users at serious risk. Too many people have been tragically killed or seriously injured on Queensland roads as a result of drink-driving. Whether it be someone we know directly or indirectly, almost everybody has been affected at some stage by the tragic results of persons who drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The personal grief suffered by the family and friends of those affected by the results of drink-driving is devastating. The cost to the community in this regard each year is extremely high and is increasing. It is imperative that all persons involved in this irresponsible activity are able to be detected and penalised accordingly.

Penalties involved with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are harsh. This is because this is a serious offence. These amendments are sending a very clear message to all road users. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is unacceptable. People who drink and drive will be caught because they will be blood tested, whether they are conscious or not. We want our roads to be safer. I am confident that this bill provides an opportunity to reduce drink-driving and road crash trauma in Queensland and will raise community awareness about the level of drink-driving. I am very pleased to see a tougher position being taken against drink-driving and praise the government and the minister for introducing this legislation in an effort to make our roads safer. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (6.41 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to speak in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002. It is a sad fact that despite continuing road safety improvements and regular media campaigns focusing on the dangers of drink-driving alcohol use is still considered to contribute to the substantial proportion of the more severe crashes. Often these accidents result in a fatality. Until now potential culpable drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate are escaping penalty for drink-driving when they are admitted to hospital following a road crash. This legislation allows police to request from a qualified person the taking of a blood sample from the driver involved in the accident who is or appears to be unconscious or unable to communicate. The legislation therefore resolves the inequity that exists between these drivers who currently cannot be tested and conscious drivers who can. All Queenslanders will no doubt welcome these amendments as no-one wants drink-drivers escaping from what they rightfully deserve. I commend the minister for his commitment to road safety. But briefly, not only is the minister capable of bringing about responsible penalties, he is also capable of making funding available for important road upgrades that make safer roads for Queenslanders.

When I was elected one of my No. 1 priorities was to highlight to the minister the neglected state of one of my electorate's key main roads, the Hope Island-Oxenford road. This road provides the access for most of my constituents to the M1 and is the preferred route for visitors to the Gold Coast who travel on to Sanctuary Cove, Paradise Point and other tourist spots in my electorate. However, until now that road has been in dire need of a facelift—and a good one at that. Potholes and unsealed shoulders have marred that highly utilised road for far too long. Late last year the minister announced funding to upgrade the road from the Monterey Keys roundabout to the Sanctuary Cove roundabout. The works not only addressed fundamental repair concerns but also included significant asphalt resurfacing to help control traffic noise caused by the surface. However, the dilapidated state of the road continued past that stretch into the electorate of my colleague the member for Gaven from Monterey Keys Drive to the M1. I worked together with the member for Gaven to secure funding to ensure that this part of the Hope Island-Oxenford road is treated in the same upgrading as that part of the road in my electorate. Please have no illusions; this is a big concern for all my residents.

With the minister announcing recently available funding of \$330,000 and work starting this week, along with many residents who travel on that road I am pleased with this outcome. The government has heard my representations and demonstrated its commitment to building better and safer roads. I will continue to monitor the maintenance of that road. I thank the member for Gaven, the minister, Gavin Massingham and the Main Roads staff for their assistance and cooperation with regard to this important matter for my electorate. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (6.43 p.m.): I rise to support the bill before the House. As I mentioned in a debate on 31 July in this chamber, I was a member of the Travelsafe Committee that produced report No. 22 on compulsory BAC testing which was tabled in the House in December 1997. Through that inquiry, which took us to various parts of Queensland, we met with medical staff, police operational staff and other persons who were involved in road safety. That inquiry enabled us to see two important things, the first being the effect that alcohol has on the road toll. In other words, the consumption of alcohol by drivers is a direct contributor to

deaths on the road. There is absolutely no doubt about that. I am pleased that after a decade or more of constant road safety campaigns that message is starting to get through. Our young people actually take that message on board much more than did my generation. It is noticeable that the young people of today do allocate a designated driver. They are more responsible than my generation was in driving and not drinking.

The inquiry's report also showed that a small number of persons avoided the intent of the law because of the loophole that it contained. That is why this bill was introduced. It is also why the shadow minister, the member for Gregory, introduced a private member's bill. I said to the member that I thought his was a good bill but that this one is better and that is why I support this bill.

There is no doubt that the detailed hearings that the Travelsafe Committee conducted led to the conclusion that something had to be changed to allow for the taking of blood samples. A number of difficulties were posed to the committee by various health and road safety professionals. People in the remote areas of Queensland in particular raised the issue of timing in respect of getting persons to hospitals or medical centres to have blood samples taken. The timing of those samples being tested and producing a result was also another mitigating factor. As well, the training of both health professionals and police personnel was a matter of concern. Despite all these concerns and reservations, the overwhelming evidence before us was that we had to take steps to ensure that persons involved in fatal accidents could have their blood alcohol content tested.

Other aspects of this legislation may in the future need to be changed to tighten up the legislation. I believe that future inquiries by either the road safety sections of our Transport Department or the Travelsafe Committee of the parliament will indicate that there are other sections in which the intent of the legislation is not met and that further amendments will need to be made to this legislation.

The evidence presented to the Travelsafe Committee was not unanimous from all quarters. Some health professionals had reservations, and some police had reservations about what responsibilities would be put on their shoulders in order to obtain these samples. Despite all those reservations there was sufficient evidence before the Travelsafe Committee—which we had gained from interstate visits, particularly to Victoria and Sydney—from medical experts on how to assess a person's blood alcohol content and give indicative readings of what that person's BAC would have been at the time of the accident.

There is no doubt that the tragedy of the loss of life through road accidents is one of the hardest burdens for any family to bear. What adds to that burden is if that family believes that the person responsible for the death of their family member was under the influence of alcohol and, because of this loophole, escaped being brought to justice. The message is out there loud and clear for our drivers: the fatal four are speed, alcohol, fatigue and not using restraints. That message has been sent out to the Queensland public over several years. I support this bill because it will close a loophole. I encourage the minister and his department to keep this legislation under review, and if other loopholes have to be closed to fulfil the intent of the law then we should close them.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (6.49 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002. I commend the minister and his staff for the work they have done in bringing this bill before the House. I also acknowledge the member for Fitzroy, the chairman of the Travelsafe Committee, for the work he has done and the report Travelsafe has made in relation to road users.

This bill will bring a lot of closure to families who have tragically lost members on the roads. In my electorate a man lost his wife in a road accident. She was crossing a pedestrian crossing and was hit by a vehicle travelling too fast while the driver obviously was not paying attention. Whether or not that person was unconscious is irrelevant in my opinion, but no blood was taken from the driver. That driver got very good legal representation and was not found at fault. There was no case to answer. I or anybody else in this chamber would find that very hard to accept.

The person who lost his wife has not accepted it and will not accept it. He himself has done some work. He found out where the driver came from, that he had been drinking all that afternoon and that he obviously had a fair bit on board. I know the family and other friends of theirs reasonably well and I have counselled this man. I said to him that this bloke being prosecuted, going to jail or whatever will not bring his wife back. It will not change what has happened and he should try to move on. He just cannot get to that stage.

Through this bill, people who have lost loved ones who are clearly not at fault will be able to put these things behind them. I do not see how people could be at fault on a pedestrian crossing unless they darted out and the driver did not have a chance to stop. That was not the case in this instance. This legislation will close the loophole relating to the taking of blood samples for alcohol content testing.

The minister will make sure the legislation stays up to scratch. I know how keen the minister is to ensure road safety. I have heard the minister speak on road safety—about how upsetting road trauma is for families and how upset he is at the waste and carnage of people from our community. We would not accept such a death toll if we were engaged in a war. Because this is a road toll and the numbers of deaths are not the result of fighting in some war somewhere, it seems to be acceptable. It should not be.

Our children are very responsible. I have had numerous functions at my place. My sons and daughters have had people over and alcohol has been a part of their functions. They do share the driving around. It is not just the girls who do the designated driving. In my day it was a case of 'I'll drive there and you drive back'. That is the sharing we used to do.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr PURCELL:** I know that the member for Gregory would probably be of the same opinion. But the boys do put their hands up. When it is their turn, they do not drink and do share the driving. I think they are very responsible. It is only a very few that are causing the carnage that is happening on our roads. We need to make sure that those few people know that there is a reasonable chance they will be caught. That possibility is a great deterrent in any society. If people think they will be caught for doing something, they usually do not do it. We have considered a couple of bills today along similar lines. I commend the bill to the House.

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (6.54 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate this evening. The member for Gregory has indicated that the opposition will support the bill, although I know it proposes a number of amendments. I do not intend to deal with the detail of those proposed amendments in my speech in reply to the debate, suffice it to say that when we come to the committee stage I am happy for us to have a discussion about those amendments. However, most of the provisions contained in the amendments were in the private member's bill before the House about two weeks ago and the parliament decided not to proceed with that bill.

I thank members on the government side of the House for the contributions they have made. I have had many representations on this issue from members on this side of the parliament and from ministers. To be fair, I have also had many representations from members on the other side. I know that this is not an issue of political divides. This is an issue on which everybody wants to see improvements made in the interests of road safety and saving the lives of Queenslanders on our roads. I share the concern of every member, as I have said in this parliament on many occasions and outside as often as I get the chance. I do regard it as important that we have that opportunity.

I want to give a bit of a history lesson, though, in respect of this particular issue, given the criticisms by the member for Gregory of the role of the government and my personal role in relation to this matter. The original report of the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee was tabled in this parliament in 1997. I did not become the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads until the end of June 1998. Governments are required to respond to bills from committees within three months. I can tell members that between December 1997 and the end of June 1998 there was no response to the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee by the previous coalition government and by the member for Gregory when he was the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads.

I also say that when our government did respond to the report and decided not to proceed with compulsory blood alcohol testing at that stage that report was tabled in the parliament. There was no disagreement from the member for Gregory or any of the members opposite with the decision of the government at that time. I did indicate that it was a matter we were prepared to review.

The member for Gregory claims that the government only acted after he introduced the private member's bill. That is in fact untrue. When he introduced the private member's bill we were in the process of working through this issue. Whilst the member for Gregory did make some endeavours to consult in relation to the bill—I know, for example, that he wrote to the director-

general of Queensland Transport and he wrote to the Police Commissioner asking them for their views—

**Mr Johnson:** That is the sort of thing you do.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** No, it is not. I have to tell the member that it is not the proper thing. In fact, it is absolutely not the proper thing to do. He should go and have a talk to Russell Cooper about the separation of powers.

For the key stakeholder groups, such as the professional organisations—the doctors and the nurses and various others who would be affected by this—we wanted to have a process of consultation. Some of the amendments the member for Gregory proposes would in fact not be supported by those key stakeholder groups. We as a government have agreed—a number of honourable members have alluded to this—to adopt a staged approach to the implementation of blood alcohol testing. We do believe that it is important that people who are unconscious as a result of road accidents are not able entirely to escape detection if they have been drinking and that has possibly contributed to the accident.

We need to continue to work with the stakeholder groups to make sure that we have the proper processes in place before we go to the next stage. A number of the issues that the member for Gregory has raised and will move by amendment, the government has flagged we will pick up as part of the second phase of the implementation of compulsory blood alcohol testing in the near future. But once again, it needs to be done in a consistent, organised and consultative way so that we make sure that we take all the key stakeholder groups who are affected by those decisions along with us at that time.

**Mr Johnson:** Why can't you do it now?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have just explained that. I would like to particularly thank the member for Fitzroy, who is the chair of the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee, for the contribution that he made tonight and also the other members of the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee. In my view, it is one of the most important committees. All the committees are important, but it is a most important committee of this House. We work very closely with the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee on a range of issues, but particularly in the area of the road safety. I thank the member for Fitzroy and all the other members of that committee for the role that they play in helping us to promote and improve road safety and save the lives of Queenslanders on our roads. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Debate, on motion of Mr Bredhauer, adjourned.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (7.01 p.m.): I move—

That in accordance with the Constitutional Instrument signed by the Governor on 8 August 2002 and published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* on 9 August 2002, the House at its rising do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 3 September 2002, at the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am looking forward to a parliament in north Queensland.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (7.01 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Kenmore Police Community Consultative Council

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Lib) (7.01 p.m.): Next Monday evening, 26 August 2002, the Kenmore Police Community Consultative Council will be holding a public meeting at the Kenmore State High School auditorium to hear an address by the Queensland Police Commissioner, Mr Bob Atkinson, and the Assistant Commissioner, Mr John Banham. The community is waiting for that evening with a fair degree of anticipation.

The Kenmore Police Community Consultative Council was the first such metropolitan council in Queensland. We began the process not long after I became the member for Moggill in 1989.

The first chairman was my predecessor, the Hon. Bill Lickiss. Bill was a great stalwart of the community, having served as a member for 26 years. He had also been Attorney-General. So he brought a great deal of experience and respect to the position. He set the consultative council going in the right direction.

Those early days saw quite a successful range of events and activities. We dealt with traffic issues and policing issues such as new Neighbourhood Watch areas, graffiti, vandalism and dangerous and destructive skateboarding as well as other related issues. Today, the council is led ably by Mr Paul Daly, a well-known and respected local businessman and someone who runs a disciplined council meeting.

The issue that concerns the community the most is the downgrading of the Kenmore Police Station. As I have said on previous occasions in this place, the 1992 decision to close the station and move to what was referred to as clustering was a retrograde step bound to fail.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hear, hear!

**Dr WATSON:** I note Mr Deputy Speaker supports that. He helped organise things at the time. Despite the assurances from the Police Service at the time that this would not result in the downgrading of the Kenmore Police Station, this is precisely what happened. With that downgrading came the inevitable loss of police activity in the area and, of course, local knowledge.

**Mrs Edmond:** The coalition closed all four clusters.

**Dr WATSON:** The Minister for Health is right and it was a retrograde step. I agree. A couple of weeks ago there was a public meeting at Brookfield Hall concerning the future of the National Trust property at Moons Lane. While that meeting drew people from right across the electorate, it was obvious that those living in Moons Lane and the adjacent Royston Street would be particularly interested in attending. They did attend, and I am told that, coincidentally, that night many homes in those streets were robbed—although that, of course, may have occurred after the meeting finished. A proactive local police presence, which had been re-established in 1997 but was closed down under the present police management, may have foreseen that likelihood and perhaps been in a position to ensnare the perpetrators. In fact, it was late night, early morning local policing that caught a previous break and enter group in the 1997-98 period. We will welcome Commissioner Atkinson next Monday. We sincerely hope that he will finally deliver that which was promised 10 years ago.

### **Zillmere-Stafford Triple A Project**

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (7.04 p.m.): A state government Community Jobs Plan grant of around \$91,000 has helped place a number of long-term unemployed women into jobs in Brisbane's north east. On Friday, 16 August I was pleased to join Councillor Terry Hampson at a graduation ceremony at the Zillmere Community Centre to congratulate the 12 women who completed 22 weeks of community job placements and training under the state government's Community Jobs Plan program.

It was a very moving event. Many of the women involved had overcome difficult personal circumstances to make themselves jobs ready and confident participants in the job market. I wish them well in their future careers and congratulate all of them on their achievements. I will name each of the participants: Dilupa, Debbie, Robyn, Azeb, Sharon, Trish, Roslyn, Angie, Tracee, Nimo and Jenni. Four of the women have already secured full-time employment from the program and others are expected to follow suit.

The Zillmere-Stafford Triple A Project was a joint initiative between the state government, which contributed \$91,000, and the Brisbane City Council, which contributed \$40,000. Participants received paid work in a number of local community organisations. The project coordinator assisted the women to map out their career paths and assisted them in their search for full-time employment.

Recently, the Brisbane City Council adopted a place management strategy in its local planning process and identified both Zillmere and Stafford as communities on the north side that faced considerable levels of disadvantage. Of particular note is that these areas have a high level of public housing and single parents, particularly women.

I thank the Brisbane City Council for doing a wonderful job in managing this project. I particularly make mention of Susan Spilsbury and Colleen Kelly, who made great contributions to the success of this program. I also thank the many local community organisations and schools that supported the participants in the program. I particularly mention the Taigum State School, Qualtime, Stafford Hub, Jabiru, Zillmere Community Centre, St Flannan's School, Lifeline Chermside, Lifeline Bowen Hills, Queensland Council of Carers, Nicklin Program, Community Living Project, John Wesley Gardens and Zillmere State School.

The Triple A Project is aimed at giving valuable administration experience to women who have been out of the work force for long periods. The participants involved both young and mature-age women, indigenous women, and women from culturally diverse backgrounds. I say well done to all of them. As I have indicated, the Community Jobs Plan is part of the state government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, which aims to create more than 56,000 jobs for Queenslanders over six years.

### **Prostitution Act**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (7.07 p.m.): I wish to raise a blatant breach of the Prostitution Act 1999 and to flag in this parliament that I will be writing to the Police Minister and the Prostitution Licensing Authority to ask whether the law will be enforced. I refer to section 94 of Prostitution Act 1999 which states—

A person must not publish a statement intended or likely to induce a person to seek employment as a prostitute.

The maximum penalty for that is 100 penalty units. I also refer to section 94 of the act, which states—

Evidence that an advertisement or statement has been published in relation to a licensed brothel is evidence that the brothel's licensee published the advertisement or statement.

I now refer to a *Sunshine Coast Daily* article of 11 August 2002, which was subtitled 'Owner seeks 100 sex workers for Coast first' and then goes on to state how much they will pay the prostitutes and lists a phone number for 'employment inquiries'. If this is not a breach of the act, what is? If this section of the act is not enforced and the appropriate inquiries are not taken by the enforcement agencies, I have to ask what other standards a blind eye will be turned to in regard to the Prostitution Act.

My office contacted the Prostitution Licensing Authority to ask about the application of the law. I understand that my office was advised that there had been some 400 complaints concerning advertising breaches or concerns about advertising in relation to the Prostitution Act. The government said that the law would be tough. This is the government's act. I want to know, if these standards are allowed to slip, what other law—L-A-W—within the Prostitution Act will be ignored.

I will certainly be watching this. The article is quite blatant. It actually states the number where employment inquiries can be made. This article appeared in the news pages of the *Sunshine Coast Daily*. Ignorance of the law is not a defence. The fact is that this is supposed to be a licensed premise under the government's act. I am most concerned about whether the enforcement agency is enforcing the act and whether there are the appropriate budgets to enforce the act.

I will also be asking the minister that question, because my office was advised that the authority did not have the adequate budget in that regard to address such breaches. I certainly will be following those issues up because these communities have not had the opportunity to choose where these brothels go and the laws were supposed to be protecting the community. If the government is going to ignore the laws that it puts through the parliament, the community will be most disturbed.

Time expired.

### **Redbank Plains State High School Art Expo**

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): Redbank Plains State High School in my electorate has a brilliant reputation for its arts programs. Last night, I had the pleasure of officially opening the school's art expo. Over 100 parents, students and teachers attended the opening

ceremony on a cold and rainy Ipswich night. We celebrated the student's works in art and craft during the year to date. The artists at Redbank Plains State High School have great talent. I viewed many and varied art forms and was extremely impressed with the creative talent of our students from grades 8 through to 12. The art expo prizes were awarded to the following students: year 8, Thuan Phong; year 9, Kylie Evans; year 10, Katrina Black; year 11, Tammy McDermott; year 11 DIA, Tammy McDermott; year 12, Erin Todd; and year 12 DIA, Jeremy Trench. The art expo logo winner was also Jeremy Trench.

The art department has many capable teachers, including Nicolie Clarkson as the head of department—currently on leave—Janet Wyvill as acting head of department, Rachael Ingham as the art coordinator, who explained the meaning of the artworks to me last night, and Suzi Bennett, Corinne Bevis, Sean Doyal and Brenda Trezise, a teacher-aide, from the art department. They provide great inspiration for our art students and I thank them personally for their hard work in putting this art expo together.

The art expo was sponsored by myself, as member for Bundamba, Councillor Victor Attwood and Australian Meat Holdings, amongst others. This sponsorship meant that the students received prizes, including sets of oil paints, calligraphy sets, art visual journals, acrylic paints and brushes. I provided the major prize of a book entitled *Secret Knowledge* which had been signed by the Premier, the minister for Education, the Minister for The Arts and numerous other ministers and parliamentary secretaries. I know that this book will be treasured by the outstanding student who won the top art prize for the school.

Redbank Plains State High School is a great state school, led by principal Mr Ian Ferguson. It has over 1,200 students with about one-quarter of them coming from 25 different cultural backgrounds. This cultural diversity is celebrated in the school and in our wider community.

I also congratulate the students who won the highly commended prizes: year 8, Lyn Nguyen and Kieren Finlayson; year 9, Daniel Dittman and Sarah Perkins; year 10, Abby Gee and Peta Butcher; year 11, Ben Nichols and Melissa Dittman; and year 12, Rachel Buckley and Gemma Dearden. They are absolutely outstanding art students and, in my view, they are simply the best.

### **Cooloola Range Sporting Complex**

**Miss ELISA ROBERTS** (Gympie—Ind) (7.12 p.m.): Recently, along with the federal member for Fairfax, I was invited to an inspection and briefing at the Curra State Forest regarding the proposed Cooloola Range Sporting Complex. The management committee of the Cooloola Range Complex Association was set up in 2000 in response to the news that they would have to find an alternative site by 2007 where they could hold their weekly meets and annual shooting events. The CRCA, which is made up of representatives from a number of sporting gun clubs such as the Gympie Pistol Club, the Gympie Clay Target Club, the Gympie Sporting Clays, the Gympie Small Bore Rifle and Silhouette Club, and the Gympie Service Rifle Club have come up with the concept for a new world-class complex which would make the region the shooting capital of Australia, perhaps even the world.

Members of the association are aware of the fact that they will have to meet strict guidelines and criteria in regards to residential distances and noise controls, et cetera. However, they are confident that they have found the ideal spot for such a complex, and they have drafted a very impressive proposal outlining all the considerations and constraints of such a huge endeavour, with great depth. Those involved in the design of the complex are keen to promote a responsible attitude towards sporting shooting and will implement the safest and highest possible standards of behaviour by all sporting shooter participants.

The association has been encouraged by Australia's medal tally in both the Commonwealth and Olympic games and would like to see even more successful shooters representing Australia in the future. It is my belief that those who do display a responsible attitude towards shooting and the inherent dangers involved in such a sport should be able to continue to carry out their various state and national championships, local meets and interclub activities. Once established, the range would also be able to cater to the police force and other government services, as well as the military for use in training activities.

I am happy to support this organisation and I hope that with the assistance of state, federal and local levels of government their wish for a combined club-run range will become a reality.

### Queensland Schools Debating Team

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.14 p.m.): From 28 July to 4 August the Queensland Schools Debating Team competed in the national championships in Adelaide. I congratulate the team on their efforts. Although they did not bring home the cup, they acquitted themselves extremely well. I make this comment wearing two hats: both as the local member of one of the participants and as a proud father. The team consisted of Tom Gole and Gobind Kalsi from Gregory Terrace, Diwaka Prakash from Brisbane Grammar and was captained by Dominic Sullivan from Padua College, a school in my electorate. The reserves were Jack Fuller from Indooroopilly State High School and Rebecca Nyst from Somerville House. Their coach was a magnificent young man, Simon Quinn, who was in the Queensland team in 1997, 1998 and 1999, in the Australian team in 1998 and 1999, and the world championship team in 1999. The manager of the team was Ryan Goss, another fine young man, who was in the Queensland, Australian and world championship teams in 1999. These two young men gave of their time and effort over many months to help the students in the open debating team. The parents expressed their gratitude to Simon and Ryan at a thank-you function for the time and effort they had put in.

The Queensland Debating Union, with Cate Mapstone and the other helpers, were a good support for the team. The Queensland Debating Union adult team of Meghan Chalmers, James Fischer and Matt Smith actually won the adult championship in Adelaide. I pass on our congratulations to them.

I would like to take a moment to thank Ms Patricia Dwyer, the vice-rector of Padua College, and Mrs Janet Jedroszkowiak, the head of the languages faculty, who have worked with the debaters at Padua over a number of years and have helped that school gain prominence in debating this year.

I would also like to take this time to say to my son Dominic, as he finishes his secondary schooling, that his sister, his brothers, his mum and I are very proud of his achievements. He has been dux from years 8 to 11 and he is doing well in his year 12 studies so far. He made the open teams in volleyball and basketball, he took a constructive part in the United Nations Youth Association and represented Australia at The Hague International Model United Nations in January this year, and he has contributed to others who have done well. I say to Dom: we are very proud of you.

**Mrs Edmond:** He takes after his mother.

**Mr Copeland:** He must do.

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN:** I take that interjection from my colleagues. Yes, it is great when kids take after their mother. It gives them a much better start in life.

We are proud of Dom and all of Queensland is proud of the Queensland Schools Debating Team and those members from the Queensland Debating Union who helped them reach such a fine standard.

### Leyburn Sprints

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (7.17 p.m.): I rise tonight to pay tribute to a fantastic event which I was happy to attend on Saturday and Sunday in my electorate, the Leyburn historical sprints. It was the seventh historical sprints that have been held at Leyburn and it is an event which has changed the face of historical motor racing in Queensland. As one of the competitors said at the presentation ceremony of trophies on Sunday evening, before Leyburn existed most of the events that were in existence on the historical motor racing calendar were circuit races. However, since the advent of the Leyburn Sprints, we have seen the advent of the Noosa Hill Climb, the Lowood Sprints, the Gatton Sprints, the Pittsworth Sprints and now the Speed on Tweed.

This is a wonderful event which I have been attending every year since it started seven years ago, only missing one year in that time. Unfortunately, this year I was there only in my official capacity, but I have to say that it was more fun than work. I did not compete this year, unfortunately, because I have sold my little car which was so much fun. However, it was a great event.

It is held at Leyburn because that was the site of the first Australian Grand Prix held in Queensland back in 1949. The person who won that first grand prix, Mr John Crouch, was actually

in attendance at this event. He won the first Australian Grand Prix held at Leyburn in a Delahaye 135 motor car.

An event such as this is absolutely vital to a small community such as Leyburn. Leyburn is a wonderful, friendly community and really has built a niche for itself with this sort of event. The number of people who come from out of town numbers in the thousands. The fact that community groups are able to benefit from money coming in from outside their own community is really terrific. I shall list some of the groups that were able to raise money over the weekend. From Leyburn there was the P&C Association, Progress Association, Historical Society, Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Swimming Club, CWA, playgroup, town fire brigade, country music club, Pratten Hall Committee, Back Plains P&C, Nobby State School P&C, Clifton scout group, Karara Public Hall Committee, Allora Clifton BlueCare and Clifton Lions Club. These are all groups from small towns that would struggle to raise the amounts of money needed to go back into the communities to do such good things for these small towns.

I pay tribute to the people who organised this event—the race committee of Mike Collins, Greg Whittaker, Mike Lightfoot and John Jones; and the Leyburn Motor Sprints Committee of Chairman Ann Collins, John Nitschke, Marjorie Hagin and Dian Lukehurst. I thank John and Margo Jones from Motor Sport Management Services, who are professional racing event managers right across Queensland. They even work at the Gold Coast Indy. To have them organising the Leyburn historical sprints is fantastic. It is an absolutely brilliant event. I encourage everyone to visit whenever they can.

#### **Rocky Point Rural Fire Brigade**

**Ms KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (7.21 p.m.): I am pleased to inform members that the rural tradition of a strong and vibrant rural fire brigade service is alive and well in my electorate of Albert. On 3 August I was fortunate to be present at the official opening of the new shed of the Rocky Point Rural Fire Brigade. I was privileged to represent the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Mike Reynolds. The brigade has a long and proud history, being formed in 1971 with Paul Sultmann as its chairman. In fact, some of the original members were present last Saturday to see the long-awaited shed open. The brigade is now a class 3 brigade, with 20 active and 120 support members. The firefighters, working alongside a hardworking ladies auxiliary, have dug deep over the years to ensure that the area remains well equipped and well prepared to deal with local emergencies.

I would like to acknowledge the current executive of First Officer Brian Carrant, Jennifer Truloff, Greg Smith and Barry Kriedmann for their leadership and commitment to this most important of rural services. Officers Noel Haase, Lee Zipf, Adrian Brumm, Gordon Maas and Brian's wife, Win, as well as Amy and Vanessa Chandler, are just a few of the active members who give up their precious time to help out their community. With role models like these, it is little wonder so many kids want to be firefighters when they grow up. I am pleased to say that the new building was a result of real community cooperation. Local residents and businesses, councillor David Power from the Gold Coast City Council and the Queensland government's Department of Emergency Services all worked in partnership to ensure we secured this fantastic new facility to the area. I was pleased to play my role in securing tenure of the land as quickly as possible. I thank Minister Reynolds for his keen support of this brigade and all of Queensland's rural fire brigade services who do such an important job.

I was honoured to be presented with this toy fire truck by First Officer Brian Carrant, who was recognised by all speakers for his dedication, hard work and quiet leadership in getting the shed to the opening stage. In fact, Brian has been leading officer at the brigade since 1979. This little truck was expertly made by Mick Callurn and was quite a hit with the youngsters in the crowd. It has been quite a hit here tonight. I already have many orders from members. Current and past members of the Rocky Point Rural Fire Brigade have every reason to feel proud of the opening of their new shed and the vital service they provide, because the community is very proud of them.

#### **Toowoomba Young Women's Christian Association**

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (7.24 p.m.): Last year, Toowoomba's YWCA celebrated its 70th birthday. Today, as it has over the last 70 years, Toowoomba's YWCA remains a creative, dynamic organisation committed to building on the achievements of the past. Its work has in recent years placed it firmly in the national spotlight with the receipt of national awards and the acknowledgment of the broader community. For example, it won a major employment service

contract with its community work coordinator tender, recruited four vibrant young women onto its governance committee to encourage the development of young women into leadership positions and provided innovative program services, such as Work for the Dole, Project Self-Discovery and the Get Set for Work programs, to hundreds of disadvantaged young people.

Last year, Toowoomba's YWCA programs impacted on 242 young people's lives, delivering over 4,912 program hours, with approximately 65 per cent of program participants gaining sustainable employment or further training. Providing high standards of accommodation for a variety of disadvantaged people remains a high priority for the YWCA. This includes women and men on low incomes, young women requiring emergency accommodation, people with different mental and physical disabilities and those experiencing significant social disadvantages. Remarkably, the Toowoomba YWCA's Gowrie House operates and provides these types of services without core funding or support from government.

Over the years, however, the YWCA board through running Gowrie House has felt many frustrations. Firstly, no matter how desperate the need is, due to insurance and facility constraints the YWCA can only take residents and clients over the age of 16. Secondly, through Gowrie House the Toowoomba YWCA recognises on a weekly basis the very real need for a women's and children's emergency accommodation service through ongoing phone inquiries and attempted referrals from other services such as the Salvation Army, family services, community mental health and St Vincent de Paul. That Toowoomba does not have a non-domestic violence shelter for homeless women and children is something that both the Toowoomba YWCA and I find very disturbing.

Another concern I share with the YWCA is the provision of emergency accommodation to young women over the age of 18. Limited funds from Mission Australia that have been coordinated by Toowoomba's dynamic and inspirational Young Women's Place helped the YWCA provide this service in the past. However, these services have now finished because of a lack of funding and no future prospects for further financial assistance. Therefore, yet another desperate need within Toowoomba and a top priority for the community over the next 12 months must be the establishment of such a crisis accommodation service. Behind the scenes at YWCA in Toowoomba there is a very committed staff team. In particular, I acknowledge the contributions of past president Julie Ryan, current president Anne Stuart, executive director Pamela Yensch, treasurer Sharon Learmonth and their program staff team led by program director Sue Ross.

### **St Peter's and St Paul's Community Fair**

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.27 p.m.): Recently, the St Peter's and St Paul's schools held their annual community fete. It made a grand total of \$46,078.34—not a bad amount of money for a small parish school. It had enormous community support. The day was a huge success. I personally congratulate all those hardworking people who contributed their time and energy to making the day a memorable one. As a forerunner to the day, the school had the pleasure of a visit by the B-105 morning crew on the Friday before the fete. Most of the students from the school and their parents were there to share in the breakfast and activities on the morning. I was lucky enough to have relative Martin Purcell and his wife and children visiting me from Maryborough, and they also enjoyed that barbecue that morning. Jamie Dunn and morning crew were happy to promote the school fete on air.

This year, the fete committee wanted to do something different from the usual fundraising activities. They thought that it would be a wonderful idea to create a project which would get all the children from St Peter's and St Paul's schools involved. It was decided that the children would create three pieces of art, which would be auctioned at the fair. John Walvin from Walvin Constructions, a local building firm in my electorate, made up the timber frames, and one of the mothers used her picture framing skills to stretch the canvas, ready for painting. These canvases were about one metre wide by one-and-a-half metres long. So, they were quite large.

The children from preschool and year 1 painted 'A Day at the Beach'. The children from years 2, 3 and 4 painted 'A Fair Day'. The children from years 5, 6 and 7 chose 'Sports Day' as their topic. Annie McGuffines, one of the committee members, put an enormous amount of time and effort into coordinating this project. However, she said it was very satisfying to see the amount of enjoyment the children got out of displaying their artistic talents. All the hard work and effort paid off on fete day. There were a number of families all trying desperately to outbid each other, all wanting to be the triumphant ones to take home the beautiful artwork. Annie anticipated that the artwork would be successful and showed good foresight by organising the canvases to

be photographed so that prints could be made and sold on the day. The unlucky parents who missed out on the canvases could take home prints to frame.

The auction went very well, raising a total of \$3,900 for the three paintings and a further \$1,500 for the prints—a grand total of \$5,400. A special mention should be made in relation to Madonna Codd's efforts in coordinating the art union. The art union this year was very successful, raising over \$6,000. I am happy to report that once again the chocolate wheel was a huge money-spinner. This is something I happily work on every year and on which I have worked for nearly the last 25 to 30 years. This year I had the pleasure of working with the principal, John Power, coordinating the stall and raising an impressive \$2,382. A special note of thanks goes to all the stall convenors and their cheerful helpers on the day. Without their hard work and dedication, the St Peter's and St Paul's School Fair would not have been the enormous success it was.

The House adjourned at 7.29 p.m.