

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2004

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

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a commission under the public seal of the state authorising me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office to such members as might hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the commission to the House.

The Clerk read the commission.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor on Wednesday, 17 March 2004 delivered a speech to parliament, of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy. I presume honourable members will take the speech as read?

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that today I received from the Auditor-General a report entitled *Audit report No. 5, 2003-04: Results of audits performed for 2002-03 on local governments*, and I table the said report.

HANSARD

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, you will notice that Hansard reporters are on the floor of the House today. This is part of a trial that is being conducted to see whether having Hansard reporters on the floor for the first two hours of proceedings will assist in picking up all parts of members' statements made during this time, including interjections. As it is a trial, I would appreciate receiving any comments from members about this trial.

NOTE-TAKING IN GALLERY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it has long been the practice to prohibit note-taking in the galleries of the House. This practice, originating in very early times, was probably designed to prevent a number of varying records of what was said or done in the House. In modern times, this rule appears anachronistic and unjustifiable, especially given that the Assembly's proceedings are now broadcast to the world at large. I advise that I have instructed that note-taking no longer be prohibited in the galleries.

Restrictions on unauthorised photography or filming, displaying signs or banners and disorderly conduct such as interjecting or applauding are justifiable and will continue to be prohibited, as they risk bringing disorder or disruption to proceedings.

FLAGS IN CHAMBER

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, in the last parliament the issue of flags in the House was raised. I undertook to investigate the issue in full and report back to the House in due course. I investigated this issue in the context of (a) the practice in other Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions, (b) established flag etiquette and (c) the physical configuration of the Legislative Assembly chamber and its close environment, such as the main entrance.

In respect of the practice in other jurisdictions, it is clear there are varying practices. It seems that on some occasions much is determined by the physical configuration of the relevant chamber. In one jurisdiction, the Australian, Territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown. In other jurisdictions no flag is shown and this has never been raised as an issue. As members are

aware, a flag should only be displayed in the manner befitting the emblem. If flags are flown inside a building, they must be mounted in a particular way, on a horizontal surface or on a staff.

Taking into account these matters and the physical restraints of the chamber and its entrances, I am not convinced it is practical to display flags in the chamber in an appropriate and safe way. In terms of desk flags, I have come to the very firm view that desk flags of any nature should not be displayed in the chamber during its normal sittings. I take this view for a number of reasons, including that I do not wish to see flags used as protests, I do not want different flags displayed in the chamber which may lead to an apparent or perceived division in the chamber, I do not wish to be placed in the position of ruling what different flags should or should not be displayed on individual members' desks, and I do not want to see the issue of flags trivialised.

In my view, using a desk flag to send any word of message—even a message as well meaning as support for the flag—is no different to protest banners or badges being banned from the chamber. Finally, I stress to members that as a passionate lover of flags and a committed vexillologist I have found this issue very difficult. It is a type of decision that will always stir different emotions and beliefs, but I trust that members will understand my reasons and accept the decision.

COURT OF APPEAL, DEFAMATION CASE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise the House that I have engaged counsel to seek leave to appear on my behalf as amicus curiae, or friend of the court, at a matter scheduled to be heard in the Court of Appeal later this month. The appeal is from a ruling in a defamation case on a point of law only. But at its heart lay issues concerning the powers, rights and immunities of this House. My only purpose in briefing counsel is to ensure that the powers, rights and immunities of this House are upheld appropriately.

RESOLUTION OF ASSEMBLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise the House that on 1 December 2003 I received advice from the Speaker of the House of Representatives that a resolution of this House that I had forwarded had been received and tabled in the House of Representatives. I table the Speaker's letters.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise the House that on 9 January 2004, the Clerk received a travel report from the former member for Keppel the Hon. Vince Lester. I table the report.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr A. M. Wilson

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: I move—

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

Mr Alexander McLachlan Wilson was born on 11 December 1920 in Rockhampton. Alec was educated at the Stuart Creek State School. Alec married Sybil Corney on 8 May 1946, later having three sons and four daughters. Prior to his election as a member of this House in 1977, Alec was employed in a variety of occupations, including as a carpenter, railway wagon builder, meatworker, locomotive fireman, and a trade union official and organiser for the Townsville Building Workers Industrial Union.

Alec was to then pursue a parliamentary career, taking with him a wealth of experience in local industries that would provide him with the ability to serve his electorate for the duration of his parliamentary career. Alec's parliamentary career began when he was elected as the member for Townsville South on 12 November 1977. Once in parliament, he wasted no time in demonstrating his support and commitment to serving the people of Townsville South. In his maiden speech,

Alec drew attention to the local industries and resources of Townsville. He highlighted the need for improved water infrastructure, including the need for a dam to service the Burdekin area, and improved roads and educational facilities for the Townsville South electorate.

During his parliamentary career, Alec served as the opposition spokesperson on works and workers compensation, northern development and maritime services, transport and main roads, and works and water resources. Alec was also a member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee and a member of the opposition party committees on transport, works and housing, industrial relations and transport. Alec held his seat until the 1986 state election.

Alec's funeral service was held at the Lakes Chapel, Townsville on 5 March 2004. I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to his family—to his wife, Sybil, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A large part of his electorate is now represented by the Minister for Child Safety, who will no doubt make a contribution in a minute. I knew Alec well. When I was party secretary I experienced a number of educational exchanges and a number of incidents that were beneficial to both of us. I think they led to both of us being better people. Alec was a colourful individual. No-one who knew him or met him or had any understanding of him was left in any doubt about his views on any subject at any time. For that reason, I had a sneaking admiration for his forthrightness. If I were to think of one word, 'forthrightness' is the exact word that would describe my view about him.

He did represent an important constituency. I think if one spent any time with him, as a number of ministers did—I know Mike Reynolds, Tony McGrady and Robert Schwarten will be saying something—one would know that he had very strong views about representing working Queenslanders. For that he should be acknowledged and tribute should be paid to him.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.45 a.m.): Alec Wilson was born on 11 December 1920 in Rockhampton. He unfortunately passed away suddenly aged 83 years on 29 February 2004. His funeral service was held on 5 March at the Lakes Chapel in Townsville. He was born to Robert and Jan Wilson nee McWilliam. A twin to his brother George, he had eight brothers and sisters. He married Sybil Maud Corney of Hughenden on 8 May 1946 in Townsville. He and Sybil raised seven children—three sons and four daughters. He is father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather to Don and Grace, Ann and Terry, Jean and Larry, Ian, David, Deborah, Robyn and Stewart and their respective families.

He was educated at Stuart Creek State School. He left school at the age of 14 to take on a job as a cleaner in the railway, gradually working his way up to a fireman driver. At the outbreak of World War II Alexander joined the Navy, though the railway refused to let him go because they deemed it to be an essential service that he was providing. After the war he became a carpenter and worked in Hughenden, Cloncurry, Mount Isa and Charter Towers before moving back to Townsville in 1968. He was a wagon builder and a meatworker.

His professional and community involvement included in the early 1970s taking on the position of organiser of the Townsville Building Workers Industrial Union where he gained great respect from the members for his tireless work and dedication. His political history included being elected to parliament on 2 November 1977 as a member of the Australian Labor Party. That was for the seat of Townsville South. With subsequent electoral redistributions I understand that much of his electorate was what is now Mundingburra.

He went on to serve three terms in the Queensland parliament. He was shadow minister for northern development and maritime services, shadow minister for transport and main roads, shadow minister for works and water resources, shadow minister for Aboriginal affairs, and member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee from 1978. I think that was probably a very interesting time for this particular place as the Annexe was being constructed. Alec Wilson retired from the Queensland parliament in 1986 at the age of 65 years. He was secretary of the Labor Party branch from 1964 to 1978.

Alec Wilson was particularly passionate about one of the essential commodities for growth, and that was water. An extract of his maiden speech to the parliament supports these concerns on reliable water supplies to the people of Townsville and the people in the Burdekin area. On 18 April 1978, Alec Wilson rose to state—

The importance of such a project is vital to the vast areas surrounding it. The areas it could supply with water include Townsville City, Thuringowa Shire, the Lower Burdekin area, the coastal plains between Mount Elliott and the Elliott River and the Burdekin River valley below the Leichhardt Ranges. When viewed in its right perspective as a source of water for mining, agricultural and secondary industries, as well as for the domestic supply of the ever-increasing population of the area and also as an energy source by way of hydroelectric power to help meet the future needs of the area, the building of the Burdekin Falls Dam becomes very important and indeed a must.

These concerns were responded to by the construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam—the largest dam in Queensland holding four times the water of Sydney Harbour—which was constructed under the former Bjelke-Petersen government. The issue of a reliable and secure supply of water for our communities throughout Queensland is today certainly just as important, if not more important than it was when Alec Wilson raised it with regard to his electorate in north Queensland in his maiden speech almost 26 years ago. On behalf of the opposition, I pass on our condolences to the family of the late Alec Wilson.

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Innovation) (9.50 a.m.): I wish to join in this condolence motion this morning to the late Alec Wilson. Alec Wilson was one of those characters that all political parties have from time to time. As a member of the Townsville Port Authority for some 17 years, I recall some of the discussions that I used to have with Alec, particularly when there was a proposed development in South Townsville that he did not necessarily agree with. Those discussions went on for fairly lengthy periods. Alec was also a great sparring partner to the late Tom Aikens, who was another old character, if I could describe him in those terms. Of course, in those days these characters did not debate the issues on television; they debated them on the steps of the old post office and other famous buildings around Townsville.

Alec was a regular visitor to Mount Isa. In those days, I was the mayor and Alec had a particular pet hate of parking tickets. Whenever he received one, he would pay me the courtesy of a visit. He would usually say, 'Mr Mayor, I think an error has been committed in that I have been given a parking ticket and I feel that the young lady has made an error,' or words to that effect.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned Alec's family. His wife, Sybil, was the real politician. She was the one who people would go to and knock on their door. She would resolve the problems and, in fact, resolve many of the problems that Alec himself had created. Alec's daughter Jean is a councillor on the Mount Isa City Council and is doing extremely well. As I say, I wanted to participate in this debate today because there are many things that many of us will say about Alec in the weeks and months ahead as we recollect his life. He was certainly loyal and faithful to the Labor movement and he was loyal and faithful to the people of Townsville. To his family, I wish to offer my condolences and say, 'Rest in peace, Alec Wilson.'

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.52 a.m.): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I also wish to pass on to the family and friends of the late Alec Wilson our sympathies and condolences. As various members have said, Alec was the member for Townsville South from 1977 to 1986. Before Alec came into this place, he had a varied career, being a meatworker, a locomotive driver, a fireman/driver, carpenter and then an organiser for the Building Workers Industrial Union from 1973. One can attest by the words said here today that Alec has been fondly remembered by those who knew him during that period.

From all reports, Alec was a larger-than-life character—one of those whom we have in our parties from time to time—but certainly when they pass from this life we remember them quite fondly for all the stories and all the good reasons why you should remember friends in this place. Obviously, Alec was held in high regard. In 1998 he was made an honorary life member of the ALP. I think that says it all. When your peers actually make you an honorary life member of the organisation of which you were a part and for which you worked hard over a long period, it indicates the esteem in which you are held.

In Alec's later life, he retained his interest in community affairs. He is survived by his wife, seven children, 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I wish to pass on our sympathies and condolences to Alec's family and friends.

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (9.53 a.m.): I join the queue of people who have expressed their condolences to Sybil on the loss of her husband and great mate, Alec 'Sweat Rag' Wilson. Alec Wilson got the name 'Sweat Rag' for obvious reasons in his time in the railways. He was a great mate of my dad's, and I send to Sybil my parents' condolences as well.

Suffice to say, Alec was crooked on just about everything. He was anti people who drank coffee, he was anti people who had long hair, he was anti people who got in the queue in front of him to get food—he was anti anybody in the dining room who got served before him—and he was quite antisocial to people who did not believe in his political beliefs. It is ironic that the Tories here today get to speak about him in kind ways, because he certainly would not have reciprocated, I can tell them.

Alec Wilson was a larger-than-life character. He was a person who had a unique form of campaigning. He felt that abuse was certainly a good tool to use in campaigning. Modern day methods would reject that. Tommy Burns would be able to tell members about the time on Charters Towers Road when a woman took right of way off Alec and he advised her of her parentage and various other things. One can imagine her returning home to her family that night and saying how she had run into a lovely member of parliament today—'And what did he have to say, dear?' Members can imagine.

The one great thing about Alec Wilson is that he never ever forgot where he came from or who he represented. The last time I saw Alec was, in fact, on a picket line in Townsville during the wharfies dispute. He was there at the front and he was telling the scabs inside what he thought of him—just as he should have been. He was a very, very old man by then. He never forgot his principles. He never forgot his mates. I say: if you are up there, old mate, rest in peace. I bet you're giving God some at the moment.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (9.56 a.m.): I would also like to pass on my condolences to Alec's family. I knew Alec when he was with the BWIU and, as it is known now, the CFMEU. As the previous speaker said, Alec certainly remembered where he came from. He took up the cause for workers and took it up in only the very forthright manner in which he could. I would just like to say that, on behalf of all those unionists whom he represented over all of those years, we remember you. Thanks, Alec.

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (9.56 a.m.): I was very proud to represent the state government at Alec's funeral just a few weeks ago. The speeches that we have heard today were very much the same as those I heard at the funeral. Alec was a great spokesperson on behalf of the working class. He and I went back 34 years when I joined the Labor Party in 1970. We had a close association in the many different parts of the party. The honourable member for Waterford was just reminding me of the Townsville regional council, which was a body that represented the EECs—or the SECs as we know them—and certain times that we had there. We remember those very, very fondly.

Alec had a great commitment to the people of his electorate. It goes without saying in some respects that when Alec beat Tom Aikens, the longstanding member for Townsville South, it was a day of great celebration in the Labor Party in Townsville. He beat Tom Aikens, who had been a member of parliament for 33 years. He beat him in 1977, ousting a very longstanding Independent who started his life as a member of the North Queensland Labor Party, became a representative of the North Queensland Party, became an Independent and was fondly known in his last years as 'Tory Tom'. Alec absolutely thrashed Tom in that election. It was a very fine win for Alec Wilson and the Labor Party.

In Alec's maiden speech to parliament he confirmed his very strong Labor credentials when he spoke about what he called the greatest social evil of our time—unemployment. He described unemployment as degrading, 'because the jobless feel unable to pull their weight in society when they are denied their right to work'. As the current member for Townsville, I know that Alec devoted much of his spare time, up to the time of his death, helping young unemployed people. He was closely associated with the Unemployed Workers Group in Townsville.

He was a champion of the working class. Alec Wilson told parliament that something was drastically wrong with the conservative state government of the day because the workers of Queensland were not receiving their fair share of the wealth from Queensland's rich natural resources. As we have heard today, he was also a great advocate for the Burdekin Dam. He was a great advocate for the irrigation that was required for agricultural purposes.

Alec was a great husband, father, worker, Labor parliamentarian and great union identity, and he will be sadly missed by his family and friends. As the member for Townsville, I would offer my very sincere condolences to his wife, Sybil, and his three sons and four daughters on their very sad loss.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Innisfail State High School

Mr Pitt from 2292 petitioners requesting the House to ensure that the gates of the Innisfail State High School remain open during lunch hours for students to cross the road to access lunches.

Traffic Lights, Petrie

Mrs Lavarch from 16 petitioners requesting the House provide traffic lights, including pedestrian crossings, at the existing Petrie roundabout located at the junction of Dayboro Road, River Street, Gympie Road, Anzac Avenue and Whites Road, Petrie.

Electricity Supply, Taroom

Mr Seeney from 151 petitioners requesting the House to rectify the unreliable supply and fluctuating voltage of electricity in the town of Taroom and surrounding area.

Mooloolaba Tavern Pty Ltd

Mr McArdle from 4 petitioners requesting the House to refuse the application from Mooloolaba Tavern Pty Ltd for a detached bottle shop and extended hours permit.

Tripcony/Hibiscus Caravan Park

Mr McArdle from 1020 petitioners requesting the House to: not approve the request for the property known as Tripcony/Hibiscus Caravan Park site to freehold; develop a united strategic direction for the future of the site; return the property to the trusteeship of Caloundra City Council and to not allow any commercial, state, local or public interest convert the property to freehold land in the future.

Gold Coast Harbour Vision 2020 Project

Mr Lawlor from 61 petitioners requesting the House to advise the Gold Coast City Council that the House will not agree to the recommendations contained in the "Gold Coast Harbour Vision 2020 Project—Report No. 1" and is against any commercial development of the Broadwater (including Wavebreak Is) and the western foreshore and any further reclamation.

The following honourable members have sponsored e-petitions which are now closed and presented—

Mining Leases, North Arm

Ms Molloy from 235 petitioners requesting the House stop all present mining activities and reject the mining lease application No. 50203 and further to stop any future mining of minerals in the North Arm district.

Proposed Development, Windemere Road, Alexandra Hills

Mr Choi from 54 petitioners requesting the House to restore the land at 48-68 Windemere Road, Alexandra Hills from proposed development to green space habitat under Redlands Shire Council green space mapping.

British Age Pensioners

Mr Wellington from 294 petitioners requesting the House to make strong representations to the British Government calling for the situation whereby British Age Pensioners resident in Queensland are denied indexation for their pensions by the British Government.

Rural Caregivers, Mentally Ill Program

Ms Phillips from 111 petitioners requesting the House to take all steps possible to assist the Fellowship provide the Help for the Rural Caregivers of the Mentally Ill Program until the end of the financial year (June 2004).

Child Safety

Hon. K. Lingard from 102 petitioners requesting the House call for a review of the current policies and procedures within the Child Protection Act (1999) in an eclectic approach to strengthening the laws, interventions and resources available to provide an unconditional response to the child's need for protection from harm, even in situations of harm where the harm is caused by the child's own actions or by someone outside the home.

Voting Age

Mr Neil Roberts from 129 petitioners requesting the House support lowering the voting age to either 16 or 17 for a more inclusive democratic process whereby younger people would be given the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their community by electing members of Parliament which best represent their interests.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 51ST PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received prior to the constitution of the 51st Parliament of Queensland, were deemed to have been tabled by the Clerk of the Parliament on the dates indicated—

23 January 2004—

- Letter of transmittal and Crime and Misconduct Commission Report—The prosecution of Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge: a report on an inquiry into issues raised in a resolution of Parliament

5 February 2004—

- Interim government response from the Premier and Minister for Trade and Acting Minister for Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Mr Beattie) to Report No. 65 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled Review of Audit Reports—Events Management

19 February 2004—

- President of the Industrial Court of Queensland in respect of The Industrial Court of Queensland, The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and The Queensland Industrial Registry—Annual Report 2002-03

4 March 2004—

- ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Limited and its Controlled Entity—Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2003
- Tower Trust—Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2003

8 March 2004—

- Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations—Annual Report for the period 1 July 2002-31 August 2003
- Moreton Cane Protection and Productivity Board—Annual Report for the period ended 30 September 2003
- Late tabling statement by the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (Mr Palaszczuk) regarding the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations Annual Report for the period 1 July 2002-31 August 2003 and the Moreton Cane Protection and Productivity Board Annual Report for the period ended 30 September 2003

15 March 2004—

- Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee—Report No. 64—Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 230 and Explanatory Notes for No. 230

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2003, No. 240 and Explanatory Notes for No. 240

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 291

Training Reform Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 293

Transport Infrastructure and Another Act Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 294

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—

- Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 295

Coroners Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 296

Coroners Act 2003—

- Coroners Regulation 2003, No. 297

Justices Act 1886, Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962, Small Claims Tribunals Act 1973—

- Justice Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 298

Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002—

- Personal Injuries Proceedings Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 299

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 10) 2003, No. 300

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 301

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Torres Strait) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 302

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 303 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 303

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2003, No. 304 and Explanatory Notes for No. 304

Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982, Trust Accounts Act 1973—

- Funeral Benefit Business Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 305

Integrated Planning Act 1997—

- Integrated Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 306

Private Employment Agents Act 1983—

- Private Employment Agents (Postponement of Expiry) Regulation 2003, No. 307

Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2003—

- Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Regulation 2003, No. 308

Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 309

Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 310

Food Production (Safety) Act 2000, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 311

Motor Vehicles Securities and Other Acts Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 312

Local Government Act 1993—

- Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 313

Electricity Act 1994—

- Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 314

Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995—

- Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 315 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 315

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 316

Water Act 2000—

- Water Resource (Warrego, Paroo, Bulloo and Nebine) Plan 2003, No. 317 and Explanatory Notes for No. 317

Water Act 2000—

- Water Resource (Border Rivers) Plan 2003, No. 318 and Explanatory Notes for No. 318

Water Act 2000—

- Water Resource (Moonie) Plan 2003, No. 319 and Explanatory Notes for No. 319

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

- Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule (No. 2) 2003, No. 320

Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995—

- Coastal Protection and Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 321

Grammar Schools and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 322

Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—

- Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 323

Hospitals Foundations Act 1982—

- Hospitals Foundations Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 324

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2003, No. 325

Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995—

- Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 326

Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995—

- Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2003, No. 327

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 11) 2003, No. 328

Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 329

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Forestry and Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 330

Forestry Act 1959—

- Forestry (State Forests) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 331

Housing Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 332

Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Housing Act 2003, Residential Tenancies Act 1994

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

- Housing Regulation 2003, No. 333

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2003, No. 334

Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, Agricultural Standards Act 1994

Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988—

- Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 335

Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 336

Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003—

- Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Regulation 2003, No. 337

Valuation of Land Act 1944—

- Valuation of Land Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 338

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—

- Coal Mining Safety and Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 339

Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 340

Disaster Management Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 341

Water Act 2000—

- Water Allocation and Management (Fitzroy Basin) Amendment Plan (No. 1) 2003, No. 342 and Explanatory Notes for No. 342

South Bank Corporation Act 1989—

- South Bank Corporation (Modified Building Units and Group Titles) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 343

Public Service Act 1996—

- Public Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 344

Education and Other Legislation (Student Protection) Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 345

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001—

- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 346

Training and Employment Act 2000—

- Training and Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 347

Health Act 1937—

- Health Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 348

Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003—

- Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) (Postponement) Regulation 2003, No. 349

Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003—

- Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Regulation 2003, No. 350

Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 351

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

- State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 352

Police Powers and Responsibilities (Forensic Procedures) Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 353

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 2003, No. 354

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 9) 2003, No. 355

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 10) 2003, No. 356

Weapons Act 1990—

- Weapons Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 357

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 358

Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 359

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 360

Adoption of Children Act 1964, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1994—

- Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Regulation 2003, No. 361

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 12) 2003, No. 362

Environmental Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 363

Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991—

- Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 364

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 365

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2003, No. 366

Fisheries Act 1994—

- Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 367

Fisheries Act 1994—

- Fisheries Management Plans Amendment Management Plan (No. 4) 2003, No. 368

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000—

- Property Agents and Motor Dealers Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 369

Water Act 2000—

- Water Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2003, No. 370

Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provision, No. 371

Major Sports Facilities Act 2001—

- Major Sports Facilities Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 372

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 373

Drugs Misuse Act 1986—

- Drugs Misuse Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 374

Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003 and Explanatory Notes for No. 375

Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact statement for No. 376

Marine Parks Act 1982—

- Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Amendment Zoning Plan (No. 1) 2003 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact statement for No. 377

Fisheries Act 1994—

- Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2003 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact statement for No. 378

Fisheries Act 1994—

- Fisheries Management Plans Amendment Management Plan (No. 5) 2003 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact statement for No. 379

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2003 and Explanatory Notes for No. 380

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 2003 and Explanatory Notes for No. 381

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 9) 2003, No. 382

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period) Notice 2003, No. 383

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984, Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

- Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 384

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2003, No. 385

Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977

- Financial Management Amendment Standard (No. 2) 2003, No. 1 of 2004

Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—

- Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 2

Water Act 2000—

- Water Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 3

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 4

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 5

Health Services Act 1991—

- Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 6

Civil Liability Act 2003—

- Civil Liability (Postponement) Regulation 2004, No. 7

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 8

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 9

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Workplace Health and Safety (Advisory Standards) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2004, No. 10

Duties Act 2001, Land Tax Act 1915—

- Revenue Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 11

Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 12

Introduction Agents Act 2001—

- Introduction Agents Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 13

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Property Agents and Motor Dealers and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 14

Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002—

- Residential Services (Accreditation) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 15

Security Providers Act 1993—

- Security Providers Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 16

Travel Agents Act 1988—

- Travel Agents Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 17

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2004, No. 18

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The following ministerial responses to petitions, received after the dissolution of the Fiftieth Parliament on the dates indicated were tabled by The Clerk—

16 January 2004—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mr Johnson from 138 petitioners regarding the completion of the Caboolture Bypass

2 February 2004—

- Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport (Mr Mackenroth) to a paper petition presented by Mr Johnson from 22 petitioners regarding public liability insurance

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment of Mr D. Fouras

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: I move—

That Mr Demetrios Fouras be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Appointment of Ministry

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.05 a.m.): I inform the House that on 12 February 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland

2001, Her Excellency the Governor accepted certain resignations. Mr Speaker, I have a list of the ministers here. I seek leave to have that list incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Accepted the resignations of—

ANNA MARIA BLIGH as Minister for Education;

MATTHEW JOSEPH FOLEY as Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts;

WENDY MARJORIE EDMOND as Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy;

THOMAS ALFRED BARTON as Minister for State Development;

ANTHONY McGRADY as Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province;

STEPHEN DOMINIC BREDHAUER as Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads;

DEAN MacMILLAN WELLS as Minister for Environment;

ROBERT EVAN SCHWARTEN as Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing;

JUDITH CAROLINE SPENCE as Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors;

HENRY PALASZCZUK as Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities;

STEPHEN ROBERTSON as Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines;

NITA IRENE CUNNINGHAM as Minister for Local Government and Planning;

MICHAEL FRANCIS REYNOLDS as Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland;

GORDON RICHARD NUTTALL as Minister for Industrial Relations; and

PAUL THOMAS LUCAS as Minister for Innovation and Information Economy

Mr BEATTIE: The Governor also accepted the resignations of Matthew Joseph Foley, Wendy Marjorie Edmond, Stephen Dominic Bredhauer, Dean MacMillan Wells and Nita Irene Cunningham as members of the Executive Council of Queensland and appointed Peter Douglas Beattie to be Premier and Minister for Trade and to be a member of the Executive Council of Queensland; Terence Michael Mackenroth to be Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport; Anna Maria Bligh to be Minister for Education and the Arts; Thomas Alfred Barton to be Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations; Anthony McGrady to be Minister for State Development and Innovation; Gordon Richard Nuttall to be Minister for Health; Robert Evan Schwarten to be Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing; Judith Caroline Spence to be Minister for Police and Corrective Services; Rodney Jon Welford to be Attorney-General and Minister for Justice; Paul Thomas Lucas to be Minister for Transport and Main Roads; Henry Palaszczuk to be Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries; Stephen Robertson to be Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy; Michael Francis Reynolds to be Minister for Child Safety; Frederick Warren Pitt to be Minister for Communities and Disability Services; Margaret Majella Keech to be Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development; Reginald John Mickel to be Minister for Environment; Desley Carole Boyle to be Minister for Local Government and Planning; Christopher Paul Cummins to be Minister for Emergency Services; and Elizabeth Ann Clark to be Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. The Governor also appointed those ministers to be members of the Executive Council. I seek leave to have their names incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Appointed—

TERENCE MICHAEL MACKENROTH;

ANNA MARIA BLIGH;

THOMAS ALFRED BARTON;

ANTHONY McGRADY;

GORDON RICHARD NUTTALL;

ROBERT EVAN SCHWARTEN;

JUDITH CAROLINE SPENCE;

RODNEY JON WELFORD;

PAUL THOMAS LUCAS;

HENRY PALASZCZUK;

STEPHEN ROBERTSON;

MICHAEL FRANCIS REYNOLDS;

FREDERICK WARREN PITT;

MARGARET MAJELLA KEECH;

REGINALD JOHN MICKEL;

DESLEY CAROLE BOYLE;

CHRISTOPHER PAUL CUMMINS; and

ELIZABETH ANN CLARK

to be members of the Executive Council of Queensland.

Mr BEATTIE: I inform the House that on 12 February 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council appointed a number of parliamentary secretaries: Karen Lee Struthers, Neil Stuart Roberts, Jo-Ann Roslyn Miller and Patrick Douglas Purcell. I want to inform the House that on 19 February 2004, in accordance with the same provision, Her Excellency appointed Lindy Helena Nelson-Carr and Linda Denise Lavarch as parliamentary secretaries. I seek leave to have the details of the parliamentary secretaries and the relevant sections of the constitution under which they were appointed incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

KAREN LEE STRUTHERS, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Multicultural Affairs) and Minister for Trade;

NEIL STUART ROBERTS, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport;

JO-ANN ROSLYN MILLER as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health; and

PATRICK DOUGLAS PURCELL as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing.

I inform the House that, on 12 February 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council approved Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2004.

...

LINDY HELENA NELSON-CARR, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in North Queensland; and

LINDA DENISE LAVARCH, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for State Development and Innovation

I inform the House that, on 19 February 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council approved Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 1) 2004.

I inform the House that, on 26 February 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001 Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council approved Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 2) 2004.

Mr BEATTIE: I also seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the appointment of Desley Carole Boyle as the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Women.

Leave granted.

I also inform the House that on 11 March 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor—

(a) Accepted the resignation of—

DESLEY CAROLE BOYLE as Minister for Local Government and Planning.

(b) Appointed—

DESLEY CAROLE BOYLE, to be Minister for Local Government, Planning and Women.

Mr BEATTIE: Finally, I inform the House that on 11 March 2004, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council approved Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 3) 2004. I lay upon the table of the House copies of the relevant notifications from the *Queensland Extraordinary Government Gazette*.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.08 a.m.): I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made and the honourable Speaker informed accordingly for the Hon. Anna Maria Bligh, Minister for Education and the Arts, to be Leader of the House. She did a good job last time, Mr Speaker. I thought we might as well keep her there.

GOVERNMENT WHIP AND GOVERNMENT DEPUTY WHIPS

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.08 a.m.): I have to inform the House that Mr Terry Sullivan, member for Stafford, has been appointed Government Whip and Mr Philip Gerard Reeves, member for Mansfield, and Ms Rachel Genevieve Nolan, member for Ipswich, have been appointed deputy government whips.

OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS; EXPENSES OF OFFICE, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.09 a.m.): I rise to inform the House of opposition appointments. I have been appointed Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Nationals, shadow attorney-general, shadow minister for justice and shadow minister for trade. Jeff Seeney has been appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, shadow treasurer, shadow minister for natural resources, mines and

energy and shadow minister responsible for decentralisation. Stuart Copeland has been appointed shadow minister for health and also the Nationals' parliamentary party secretary. Howard Hobbs has been appointed shadow minister for state development and innovation. Ray Hopper has been appointed shadow minister for public works and housing and shadow minister for racing and also Opposition Whip. Mike Horan has been appointed shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries. Vaughan Johnson has been appointed shadow minister for police and corrective services and shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. Shane Knuth has been appointed shadow minister for communities and disabilities. Kevin Lingard has been appointed shadow minister for tourism, shadow minister for fair trading and wine industry development, shadow minister for sport and also Leader of Opposition Business. Ted Malone has been appointed shadow minister for local government and planning and also Deputy Opposition Whip. Rosemary Menkens has been appointed shadow minister for child safety. Rob Messenger has been appointed shadow minister for education and the arts. Ian Rickuss has been appointed shadow minister for environment. Marc Rowell has been appointed shadow minister for emergency services, shadow minister for employment, training and industrial relations and shadow minister responsible for northern development. Fiona Simpson has been appointed shadow minister for transport and main roads, shadow minister for urban infrastructure and shadow minister for women.

I would like to take this opportunity to table a report of the expenses of the office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period of 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2003.

LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.10 a.m.): Today I am pleased to inform the House that I have been re-elected leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party. In addition to being leader, I will also be speaking on issues pertaining to the following portfolios: Treasury, Urban Development, Sport, Trade, Primary Industries, Fisheries, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy.

Government members interjected.

Mr QUINN: It is a long list. Dr Bruce Flegg has been elected Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Dr Flegg will also be speaking on Health, Transport and Main Roads, and the Environment. Mark McArdle, the member for Caloundra, will speak on matters pertaining to the portfolios of the Attorney-General and Justice, State Development and Innovation, Local Government and Planning, and Emergency Services. In addition, Mr McArdle is also the Liberal Party whip.

Mr John-Paul Langbroek will speak on Education and the Arts, Police and Corrective Services, Public Works, Housing and Racing, and Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin, will speak on Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development, Child Safety, Communities and Disability Services, Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, and women's issues.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Proposed New Standing Orders; Proposed New Sitting Program

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.12 a.m.): It gives me great pleasure to table draft proposed standing orders, which I do. Each member will receive a copy shortly. As all members would be aware, the standing orders along with sessional orders govern the conduct of parliament. It is essential that they be enforced, as they are in this parliament, to ensure the effective operation of parliamentary business.

As I said in debate on this matter in August 2001, the current standing orders work well. It is timely to look at this issue because most standing orders have been in place since early last century and some are even older. There are no major changes proposed. The main focus has been to modernise the language to make it more user friendly; make standing orders more accessible by including all standing orders relevant to members' conduct in the same chapter; include various matters arising from Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report recommendations; include some longstanding sessional orders; and clarify ambiguity. An example of ambiguous—in fact, baffling—language is standing order No. 169, which states—

When a blank is to be filled up, and there comes a Question between a greater and lesser sum, or between a longer and shorter time, the least sum and the longest time shall first be put to the Question.

There are some confusing things in this life but that defies logic or understanding. The language definitely needs—

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No, it is not a question from the opposition. The language definitely needs modernising to suit a parliament with 31 women members because the word 'she' does not appear once in relation to members.

An example of where longstanding sessional orders are proposed to become standing orders is the estimates committee process. All of these sessional orders have been incorporated with the exception of detail such as the proposed dates for committee hearings and allocation of portfolios, which is sensible enough. This document will be much more accessible, relevant and valuable to members and to you, Mr Speaker.

A meeting of the Standing Orders Committee will be convened as soon as possible to further discuss the proposal—obviously after people have had a chance to consider it. The current standing orders and sessional orders which will be moved by the Leader of the House this morning are in use until the proposed orders have been confirmed, after consideration by the Standing Orders Committee members.

I thank the Clerk and you, Mr Speaker, and other members of the Parliamentary Service who have invested time and energy in this draft proposal. The Leader of the House will move sessional orders containing a new sitting program which will be subject to a 12-month trial. I want to underline this: this is a 12-month trial. It has been devised to limit the number of very late sitting nights by having slightly longer but more regular hours. It will allow more time for debate. Lunch and dinner breaks have been reduced from one and a half hours to one hour, giving us more time for parliamentary business—roughly an additional two or so hours, because hopefully on Thursday nights we will finish at the dinner break.

I understand that members may have a range of views about the changes, but I encourage members to work with them. They are designed to make this place more family friendly, to facilitate better time management and to improve the productivity of our work for the people of Queensland. I refer them to the attention of members.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Report on Ministerial Expenses; Premier's Residence, Security Upgrade

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.15 a.m.): I wish to table the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July to 31 December 2003. I intend to start this third term of my government with the same strong commitment to openness and accountability that I have demonstrated since becoming Premier in 1998. The public report gives the community maximum transparency about the expenses of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and their offices.

This report shows that my government has continued to keep costs to a minimum. Compared to last year it shows substantial savings in administrative costs for ministerial offices and only moderate increases in salary costs. These are due to enterprise bargaining pay rises for all staff and incremental pay increases for some staff, which is logical. The government has made significant improvements across portfolios pursuing Smart State initiatives all while continuing community engagement. This report clearly shows that expenditure has been maintained at reasonable levels.

I want to raise a matter of some personal sensitivity. Because of accountability mechanisms which I am committed to, I want to share this with the House. I wish to advise the House that, due to security threats to my family and me, the police have recommended a security upgrade to my home. I brought the matter to the attention of both the Auditor-General and the Crime and Misconduct Commissioner. Cabinet, in my absence, has approved the upgrade. The matter was handled by my Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I absented myself from the cabinet meeting.

Work is currently under way to implement the police recommendations. Security for ministers, and indeed the Opposition Leader, has always been a matter that has been treated very seriously and in a bipartisan way. Security upgrades in the residences of these people have always been available where required and based on independent formal police security recommendations. For the information of the House, and with the maximum amount of openness and accountability, I seek leave to have the letters I sent to the Auditor-General and the Crime and Misconduct Commission on these matters and their replies to me incorporated.

Leave granted.

1 March 2004

Mr Len Scanlan
Auditor-General of Queensland
GPO Box 1139
BRISBANE 4001

Dear Len

Re: Security Upgrade of my Residence following a Home Invasion

You will no doubt be aware from media reports last Sunday week, 22 February 2004, a woman named Mary Shelley invaded my home. She subsequently pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court and was fined \$200.00.

This incident has been very disturbing for my family and I have asked the Police Crime Prevention Unit to give a security assessment on my home and to make recommendations for improvements.

Attached for your information is:

4. Police Report on the incident.
5. Security assessment on my residence by the Crime Prevention Unit.
6. Architectural site inspection and report by the Department of Public Works.

Following the incident there was significant media exposure of my home and there was a threat of a copy cat invasion. This threat was referred to the Police.

In light of the above, it is imperative that there be a security upgrade of my home, which I have asked the Ministerial Services Branch of my Department to expedite as soon as possible.

The reason for this letter is to provide you with the relevant reports and to indicate that I have instructed the security upgrade of my home to be completed as soon as possible. This work will be carried out at public expense, except for the clearing of foliage, for which I will be responsible.

Naturally, this upgrade will incur reasonable costs, but I believe that in the circumstances, it is appropriate. I am happy with my home as it is. If I were not the Premier, this change would not be made, nor would it be necessary.

In light of the amount of time I spend away from home, it is imperative that my family be protected.

If you have any concerns relating to the way I proposed to handle this matter, I would be grateful if you would notify me immediately. In addition, I would welcome any involvement you or your staff might have in this process.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

1 March 2004

Mr Brendan Butler SC
Chairperson
Crime and Misconduct Commission
Level 3, Terrica Place
140 Creek Street (Cnr Adelaide and Creek Streets)
BRISBANE 4000

Dear Brendan

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Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

Office of the Auditor-General of Queensland
Level II, Central Plaza One,
345 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

3 March 2004

The Honourable P D Beattie, MP
Premier and Minister for Trade
Level 15, Executive Building
100 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Premier

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2004 and enclosures regarding the intended security upgrade to your residence. I understand the concern which has led you to take the emergent action that is outlined in your letter to ensure that you and your family have adequate security in your home.

Based on the supporting information you have provided to me from the relevant agencies, the general concept of a security upgrade is clearly allowable and supportable from my perspective in terms of the requirements.

In regard to the site inspection and report provided by the Department of Public Works, the documentation supports an interim solution (costed at approximately \$4,000). Final security upgrading would, however, also need to demonstrate that value-for-money can be achieved, particularly where the upgrade involves a significant financial component such as fencing.

The Public Report on Ministerial Expenses provides a suitable mechanism for disclosure of expenses of this nature. While the guidelines indicate that you are able to approve security upgrades for Ministers, you may wish to formally table details of further expenditure proposals for significant expenditure on your own behalf, at Cabinet or Executive Council.

My officers will be reviewing the expenditure made on the security upgrade as part of the audit of the Ministerial Services Branch.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

L J SCANLAN
Auditor-General of Queensland

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION
GPO Box 3123
Brisbane Qld 4001

4 March 2004

The Honourable P D Beattie MP
Premier and Minister for Trade
15th Floor
Executive Building
100 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Premier

RE: SECURITY UPGRADE TO RESIDENCE

I refer to your letter and attachments of 1 March 2004 advising of a proposed security upgrade of your home following an incident in which a woman was convicted of unlawful entry to your residence.

I acknowledge the risks highlighted by this incident which have led to your determination that a security upgrade of your home is required.

You invited me to notify you of any concerns which I might have in relation to the way you propose to handle the matter. Thank you for the opportunity to provide general guidance on what probity issues should be considered in making such a decision.

In circumstances where valuable enhancements are to be made to the personal property of a public official, it is important to ensure that the process does not give rise to a perception of conflict of interest. This can be best achieved by the official who may receive a personal benefit ensuring that they remove themselves from active participation in the decision making process.

From the point of view of maintaining probity, it is important that any expenditure be based on independent assessments which establish the existence and extent of the need and which confirm the level of response is justified, proportionate and represents value for money. In this regard, independent advice could be taken on what is the minimum level of enhancement necessary to mitigate the risk as opposed to what enhancements are possible.

Greater care needs to be taken to ensure the probity of the process in the case of significant and costly enhancements than in the case of moderate interim measures to deal with an emergent situation.

In regard to significant and more expensive upgrading, you may choose to remove yourself from the decision making process by ensuring that decisions on the extent of the installation is made by persons independent of yourself and perhaps, by having authorisation of the expenditure considered by the Cabinet or Executive Council.

General transparency would be enhanced by public disclosure of the cost of any work performed.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

BRENDAN BUTLER SC

Chairperson

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Trade Mission

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.17 a.m.): On Monday I will be leaving on a 10-day trade and investment mission to Israel and Europe. With one in every four Queensland regional jobs depending on trade, it is essential that we increase our exports so that we can create more jobs. The itinerary I have arranged contains more than 30 functions, including major business receptions in Tel Aviv, London and Ireland and meetings with government and business leaders. There are also some meetings I will attend while on the continent.

This week I had the opportunity of meeting, along with other members of this House, a Mr Tom Kitt, the Minister of State for Development Cooperation and Human Rights, from Ireland and he, in partnership with Queensland, will be advancing trade and other mutual opportunities for us while we are in Ireland. I seek leave to have the rest of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Business leaders have been urging me for some time to increase the strength of our links with Israel because they believe there are very good opportunities for Queensland companies in several areas.

One of the highlights will be a visit to the Agricultural Research Organisation near Tel-Aviv which is heavily involved in research on agriculture in arid conditions and on marginal soils.

Queensland Police has consulted with Federal agencies and has advised that the threat level for the visit to Israel is high and that I should be accompanied by two police officers.

In the UK I will be supporting the work of Queensland companies which are seeking to increase their exports and to publicise Queensland products and tourism.

We have many links with Ireland which has proved itself to be the smart country in Europe.

Queensland became only the second government to enter into a whole-of government agreement with Ireland when, on a previous mission, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Co-operation.

We have a similar population and both focus on smart economic development particularly in information and communication technology, biotechnology, health infrastructure, and export development.

I will be holding further talks with Irish Ministers to develop results from this relationship.

I have also targeted specific objectives on the Continent.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Counterterrorism

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.18 a.m.): The terrorist bombings in Spain on 11 March are a jarring reminder of our world's potential for evil. All members will join me to extend sincere sympathies to the people of Spain and congratulate the millions of Spaniards who marched in defiance of terrorism in the aftermath of those attacks. Terrorism hates strength and defiance, so I am pleased to remind the House that Australian governments have grown stronger and more united in their response to the terror threat. On Monday, four days after the Spanish assault, the National Counterterrorism Committee, which comprises representatives from all states, territories and the Commonwealth, held a teleconference to discuss security arrangements, including transport security, in light of the Madrid bombings.

Five senior Queensland officials from my department and the departments of Police, Health, Emergency Services and Transport took part. On the same day the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee delivered timely recommendations about investigations of terrorist activity as part of its first three-year review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The PCMC

recommended extending the CMC's coercive powers for terrorism investigations. I can now inform the House that the government will broadly implement the majority of the PCMC's terrorism related recommendations in a bill expected to be introduced to parliament next month. The Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004 will strike the fine balance between protecting civil liberties and acknowledging the terrorism threat. It is all about preventing terrorism and being better able to respond to a terrorist event. The bill results from a government review of the strength of Queensland's legislation from a counterterrorism perspective.

At the end of last year cabinet approved the drafting of a bill based on submissions from the CMC, similar to its submissions to the PCMC. Policy officers are now studying the PCMC report as they refine and finalise the bill for its final consideration by cabinet. It will legislatively refer the investigation of terrorist related major crime to the CMC. The CMC and police will be empowered to conduct surveillance of a place where there may be terrorist activity but where the actual names of the people involved are not known. The existing law only allows surveillance of a specific person, not of property. The CMC will have the power to access financial records or seize travel documents of people suspected of involvement in terrorism. The bill will also contain other measures to improve our law enforcement agencies' ability to deal with terrorism and to ensure better cooperation between Queensland and interstate police on terrorist matters. Overall, it will mean that the police and the CMC have more muscle to investigate, prevent and respond to terrorist activity.

For the information of the House, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The government also has initiatives to address security of critical and mass gatherings infrastructure, including transport infrastructure. Queensland Rail has done detailed risk assessments of its key mass transport facilities and put in place preventative security measures.

The Queensland Police Services rail squad also bolsters rail security.

Last year, owners and operators of critical infrastructure—including transport infrastructure—were briefed by the two State counter-terrorism co-ordination units, and they will be kept updated.

The government will never balk at new ideas if they have the potential to make Queensland more secure, just as we will work in genuine partnerships with other governments and businesses to reinforce Queensland's safety.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Communities, Cape York

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.23 a.m.): We are righting wrongs, and we offer a brighter future for the indigenous communities in Cape York. Our alcohol management plans in indigenous communities are tough, but if we are to make life better, if we are to reduce the incidence of babies with foetal alcohol syndrome or if we are to reduce assaults and bashing, especially on women, we must change. Today I can report that, from the implementation of alcohol bans across cape communities, school attendance rates are generally showing a wonderful improvement. For example, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy says that at Pormpuraaw, school attendance rates have improved from 63 per cent in term 4 2002 to 88 per cent in term 4 2003. At Aurukun they have improved from 38 per cent in term 4 2002 to 50 per cent in term 4 2003. At Kowanyama they have improved from 68 per cent in term 4 2002 to 71 per cent in term 4 2003. In Lockhart River, school attendances averaged about 50 per cent for most of term 4 in 2003. According to Acting School Principal, Ken Schaumberg, in the first five weeks of 2004, attendances have been as high as 91 per cent and averaging above 76 per cent or better. A year ago they were in decline. A year ago there was no future.

DATSIP says that in Lockhart River there has been a 50 per cent reduction in average monthly offences against the person and a 90 per cent reduction in average monthly new assault presentations to the community health centre. These are a good start. However, we recognise that maintaining these early results will be a challenge. But meet the challenge we will. Taking action to reduce the harm from alcohol abuse remains our highest priority. These restrictions must stay in place for as long as it takes to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of these Queensland children and families. These Queenslanders are just as entitled to the government's support as anyone else, and we are not going to leave them behind. Tony Fitzgerald gave us three years. We tabled our response to him in April 2002 and we ended up with bipartisan support at that time to help the women and children of Cape York. We have 12 months to complete this program and then we will review it.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Daniel Morcombe, Red Ribbon Day

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.24 a.m.): I have a very sad matter to raise with the House. The unsolved mystery of Daniel Morcombe's disappearance has sparked an unprecedented public response. It is more than four months now since the teenager went missing while waiting for a bus at the Kiel Mountain Road overpass at Palmwoods, and his Sunshine Coast community has refused to forget him. Red ribbons have become a potent symbol of the community's resolve to continue the search for Daniel and to continue supporting his family. Wearing a red ribbon means that people have not forgotten Daniel. He wore a red T-shirt the day he went missing and his father, Bruce Morcombe, has said that red ribbons signal support for his family. They now feature prominently on letterboxes, fences, trees and car aerials throughout the Sunshine Coast.

The member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, my ministerial colleague, has approached me about holding a Red Ribbon Day in parliament to coincide with an event on the Sunshine Coast. So the next sitting day, Tuesday, 20 April, will be Red Ribbon Day and all members will be urged to wear a red ribbon. I hope all members support me on this. Yesterday I phoned Daniel's mother, Denise Morcombe, and talked to her about this proposal and she supports this approach, as I understand her husband does as well. Red Ribbon Day will show solidarity with Daniel's family and support the police who continue to assiduously investigate his disappearance.

I thank the many Queenslanders and people throughout Australia who have already made an effort to assist police. There have been more than 3,000 calls to Crimestoppers—more than for any other case since Crimestoppers began in Queensland in 1989. The community has pitched in with donations to support the printing of posters, bumper stickers, banners, flyers and billboards. Police and the Rotary Club are distributing more than 20,000 posters, appealing for information, to police stations and correctional centres, shopping centres, service stations, businesses, hotels and clubs in Queensland as well as some other government buildings here and in northern New South Wales, Sydney and Melbourne. Energex has asked for 1,500 bumper stickers which carry a photo of Daniel and the Crimestoppers phone number for its fleet vehicles, as have some shire councils and transport companies. Offers of help are continuing to roll in.

It is an inspiring response to a family's anguish and confirmation that our community abhors crimes against children. I am confident that every member will show that they share these sentiments by wearing a red ribbon on 20 April. I urge anyone anywhere who has information that might assist this investigation to call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Sessional Orders

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.26 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

From the beginning of Question Time today, unless otherwise ordered and notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders, the Sessional Orders for the 51st Parliament circulated in my name, be adopted.

SESSIONAL ORDERS FOR 51ST PARLIAMENT (FIRST SESSION)

Days and Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

1. (a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.
- (b) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—
 - 9.30am-10.30am (each day)—
 - Prayers
 - Messages from the Governor
 - Matters of Privilege
 - Speakers Statements
 - Motions of Condolence
 - Petitions
 - Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
 - Ministerial Papers
 - Ministerial Notices of Motion
 - Government Business Notices of Motion
 - Ministerial Statements
 - Any other Government Business
 - Personal Explanations
 - Reports
 - Notices of Motion (including motions for debate from 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Wednesday)
 - Private Members' Bills
 - Debating of Committee Reports (on each Thursday only)
 - Private Members' Statements (Time limit: 2 minutes)

- 10.30am-11.30am (each day)—
Question Time
- 11.30am-12.30pm (Tuesday)—
Matters of Public Interest (Time limits: Leader of the Opposition or nominee 10 minutes, other members 5 minutes.)
- 12.30pm-1.00pm (Tuesday)—
Government Business
- 11.30am-1.00pm (Wednesday and Thursday)—
Government Business
- 1.00pm-2.00pm (each day)—
Lunch break
- 2.00pm-6.30pm (Tuesday)—
Government Business
- 2.00pm-5.30pm (Wednesday)—
Government Business
- 5.30pm-6.30pm (Wednesday)—
Private Members' Motion (Time limits—mover 10 minutes, other members 5 minutes.)
- 2.00pm until adjournment moved (Thursday)—
Government Business
- 6.30pm-7.30pm (Tuesday and Wednesday)—
Dinner break
- 7.30pm-9.00pm (Tuesday)—
Government Business
- 7.30pm-10.00pm (Wednesday)—
Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business (in accordance with Sessional Order 1(c))
- (c) On a Wednesday after debate of Private Members' Motion—
- (i) if there are no Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Sessional Orders 9 and 11), the adjournment may be either moved immediately or otherwise the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved
- (ii) if there are Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Sessional Orders 9 and 11), the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved.
- (d) The motion "That this House do now adjourn" may only be moved by the Member occupying the position of Leader or Acting Leader of Government Business in the House.
- (e) As soon as the motion in (d) is moved, there will be an Adjournment Debate for 30 Minutes and then the question shall be put. (Time limit of 3 minutes for each member.)
- (f) The motion "That this House do now adjourn" may be moved by the Leader or Acting Leader of Government Business at any time despite the order of business.
- (g) If the House sits on any day other than a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, then unless otherwise ordered, the order of business shall be as follows:
- From 9.30am to 10.30 am—
- Prayers
 - Messages from the Governor
 - Matters of Privilege
 - Speaker's Statements
 - Motions of Condolence
 - Petitions
 - Notification and tabling of Papers by the Clerk
 - Ministerial Papers
 - Ministerial Notices of Motion
 - Government Business Notices of Motion
 - Ministerial Statements
 - Any other Government Business
 - Personal Explanations
 - Reports
 - Notices of Motion
 - Question Time (for remaining time until 10.30 am)
- 10.30am-1.00pm—
Government Business
- 1.00pm-2.00pm—
Lunch break
- 2.00pm-until Adjournment moved—
Government Business

Debate on Address-in-Reply

2. (a) Standing Orders No. 17 and 305 are suspended
- (b) Debate on the Address-in-Reply, shall be anytime within the time set aside for Government Business
- (c) Debate on the Address-in-Reply, together with any amendments, shall be no longer than 28 hours
- (d) Debate on the Address-in-Reply may be adjourned at any time to consider any other business
- (e) At the expiration of a maximum of 28 hours of debate, without further amendment or debate, the Speaker shall put the question for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply together with any questions for amendments that have previously been moved.

Questions

3. Standing Orders 67A to 70 are suspended and replaced by the following Standing Orders:

"Questions to Ministers

- 67A (1) Questions may be asked orally without notice or on notice for written reply.
- (2) At 10.30am on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, questions may be put to a Minister without notice relating to public affairs with which he or she is officially connected, to proceedings pending in the Legislative Assembly, but discussion must not be anticipated, or to any matter of administration for which he or she is responsible.
- (3) The total period allowed each day for the asking of questions without notice shall not exceed one hour. Every Member is entitled to ask one question on notice each sitting day, which should be lodged with the Clerks at the Table within two hours from the commencement of the day's sitting.

Questions to Members

- 68 (1) A Member may put a question of which notice has been given, in lieu of a question to a Minister—
 - (a) to any other Member of the House relating to any bill or motion, connected with the business of the House on the Business Paper of which the Member has charge; and
 - (b) to the chairman of a committee relating to the activities of that committee, however such question shall not attempt to interfere with the committee's work or anticipate its report or refer to any evidence taken or documents presented to such committee.
- (2) Questions may not be put to the Speaker.

Number of questions allowed each sitting day

- 69 (1) The number of questions which may be asked by any Member without notice shall not exceed one on any sitting day, except for the Leader of the Opposition who may ask two questions without notice.
- (2) If an answer to a question without notice requires too much detail, the Minister may request the Member to place the question on notice to be answered on the next day of sitting.

Notice of questions

- 69A (1) A question on notice from a Member is to be delivered to the Clerks at the Table.
- (2) A question on notice shall be typed or fairly written, signed by the Member, and answered and supplied to the Table Office within 30 calendar days.

Rules for questions

- 69B The following general rules shall apply to questions—
 - (a) In asking a question, no argument or opinion shall be offered, or any fact stated, except so far as is necessary to explain the question.
 - (b) Questions shall be brief and relate to one issue.
 - (c) Questions shall not contain—
 - (i) arguments;
 - (ii) inferences;
 - (iii) imputations; or
 - (iv) hypothetical matters.
 - (c) Questions shall not ask—
 - (i) for an expression of opinion or
 - (ii) for a legal opinion.
 - (d) Questions shall not be asked which reflect on, or are critical of, the character or conduct of those persons whose conduct may only be challenged on a substantive motion.
 - (e) Questions shall not contain statements of fact or names of persons unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible.
 - (f) The Speaker may direct that the language of a question be changed if, in the opinion of the Speaker, it is unbecoming or does not conform with the Standing Orders.
 - (g) Questions shall not be unduly lengthy.

General rules for answers

70. The following general rules shall apply to answers—
 - (a) In answering a question, a Minister or Member shall not debate the subject to which it refers.
 - (b) An answer shall be relevant to the question.
 - (c) The answer to each question shall not exceed 3 minutes."

Nomination of Temporary Chair

4. (1) Standing Order 13 is suspended.
- (2) The Speaker shall nominate a panel of not more than eight Members to act as temporary Chairs of Committees when requested by, or in the absence of, the Chairman of Committees.
- (3) Any temporary Chair while acting under this Standing Order shall have all the powers of the Chairman of Committees of the whole House, but shall immediately give place to the Chairman of Committees on their return and at his request.
- (4) If a vacancy occurs in the panel, the Speaker may nominate another Member to fill such vacancy.

Debating of Committee Reports

5. (1) On presentation of a committee report, the Member presenting the report may make a statement to the House for a period not exceeding 5 minutes and a notice of motion may then be given that the House take note of the report on Thursday next
- (2) On each Thursday, following Private Members' Bills and prior to Private Members' Statements, notices of motion for the noting of reports may be moved and debated without amendment
- (3) Members may speak on any such motion for 3 minutes.

Expiry of notices of motion

6. All General Business—Notices of Motion appearing on the Business Paper shall be deleted from the Business Paper after the expiration of thirty days from the day on which notice is given.

Putting of amendments

7. (1) Standing Orders 90 to 92 are suspended.
- (2) In respect of every amendment the Speaker shall put a question—"That the amendment be agreed to", which shall be resolved by the House in the affirmative or negative.

Bills Presented by a Member, read a First Time and Printed

8. Standing Order 241 is suspended and replaced by the following:

Bills Presented by a Member, read a First Time and Printed

241. (a) A Bill shall be presented by the Member who has obtained leave to bring in the same, and immediately after the presentation of the Bill the Question shall be put, "That the Bill be now read a First time," and "That the Bill be printed," both without amendment or debate.
- (b) Immediately after the Bill is printed, a Question shall be proposed "That the Bill be now read a second time" and the Member who has presented the Bill shall forthwith proceed to give an explanation of the Bill.
- (c) During or after such explanatory speech, additional information to assist in the understanding of the Bill may be Tabled for incorporation in "Hansard".
- (d) Further Debate on the Question "That the Bill be now read a second time" shall be adjourned for a period of at least thirteen whole calendar days.
- (e) When a Message is required, recommending that an appropriation of money be made for the Bill, such Message shall be presented to Mr Speaker and read to the House immediately after leave is granted to present the Bill.

Disallowance motions

9. Standing Order 37A is suspended and replaced by the following:

Disallowance of statutory instruments¹

- (1) When notice of a motion to disallow a statutory instrument or guideline pursuant to an Act² has been given, such motion shall be considered within seven sitting days after notice has been given.
- (2) The motion shall be set down to be considered during the time set aside for the debate of Private Members' Bills and such motions shall take precedence during that time until disposed of.
- (3) Despite (2), the Leader of the House may direct that the motion be set down to be considered in Government Business.
- (4) When the motion is called on it shall be debated and decided and if not moved, shall lapse.
- (5) Time for a debate of such motion is allocated as follows: Maximum of two hours debate; Mover of the motion, fifteen minutes; seconder of the motion and any other Member, ten minutes; Minister in reply, twenty minutes.

¹ Sections 50 and 51 of the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992* provides for disallowance, by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, of subordinate legislation. Sections 6 and 7 of the Act define "statutory instruments". Section 9 of the Act defines which instruments are "subordinate legislation".

² For example, s.296 of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001* enables the House to disallow guidelines by the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee

Power to Order Withdrawal of Disorderly Member

10. Standing Order 123A is suspended and replaced by the following:

Power to Order Withdrawal of Disorderly Member

123A.(1)The Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, may, after warning such Member, order any Member who in his or her opinion, continues to be grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber. The Speaker or the Chairman of Committees may order the Member to withdraw in accordance with the provisions of subsections (2) or (3).

(2)A Member ordered to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber under this Standing Order must do so forthwith, and must, during the remainder of the day's sitting, absent himself from the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

Without prejudice to any other right power or remedy of the House or of the Speaker or the Chairman, the Speaker or Chairman may without further warning but otherwise in the manner provided in the Standing Order as to Order in the House name any

Member who having been ordered to withdraw under this Standing Order fails to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber or to absent himself from the Legislative Assembly Chamber during the remainder of the day's sitting.

(3) A Member ordered to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber under this Standing Order must do so forthwith, and must, during the remainder of the day's sitting remain absent from the Legislative Assembly Chamber. However, the Member may enter the Chamber during the ringing of the bells for the purpose of voting in a division. Once the Speaker or Chairman of Committees has declared the numbers the Member must withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

Without prejudice to any other right power or remedy of the House or of the Speaker or the Chairman, the Speaker or Chairman may without further warning but otherwise in the manner provided in the Standing Order as to Order in the House name any Member who having been ordered to withdraw under this Standing Order fails to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber or to remain absent from the Legislative Assembly Chamber as set out in this subsection.

Debating of Private Members' Bills

11. (1) If a Bill introduced by a Member, who is not a Minister of the Crown, has laid upon the table of the House for a period exceeding ninety days and has not passed all stages, that Bill will be brought on for debate on the following sitting Wednesday evening. The House will continue to debate that Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Order 109 the maximum period for which a member can speak on the second reading of the bill, other than the mover, is 10 minutes.

Restrictions on identifying at-risk children in Questions

12. (1) A member may ask any question without or on notice of a Minister concerning a child subject to the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 so long as the question complies with this order and other existing orders.
- (2) A member should ensure that any question concerning a child subject to the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 is asked in a non-identifying manner such as by replacing any identifying features likely to lead to the identification of the child with a cipher such as "[name withheld]".
- (3) A member choosing to replace an identifying feature with a cipher when asking a question shall provide the Clerk of the Parliament with the "key" to the full identifying features relating to the question.
- (4) Any member of the Legislative Assembly who so requests shall be granted access to the "key" to the full identifying features relating to the question by the Clerk of the Parliament.
- (5) For the purpose of this order, the term "non-identifying manner" refers to information which if published would identify, or is likely to lead to the identification of, a child the subject of either the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992.

Restrictions on tabling documents identifying a children

13. (1) A Member must ensure that when tabling any documents concerning a child or children subject to the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 the document be tabled in a non-identifying manner such as by replacing any identifying features likely to lead to the identification of the child with a cipher such as '[name withheld]'.
(2) A Member choosing to replace an identifying feature with a cipher when tabling a document shall provide The Clerk of the Parliament with the 'key' to the full identifying features relating to the document.
(3) Any Member of the Legislative Assembly who so requests shall be granted access to the 'key' to the full identifying features relating to the document by The Clerk of the Parliament.
(4) For the purpose of this order, the term 'non-identifying manner' refers to information which if published would identify, or is likely to lead to the identification of, a child the subject of either the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992.

Speaking times—Committee of the Whole House

14. Standing Order 109 to the extent that it deals with speaking times in Committee of the Whole House on a Bill is suspended and replaced by the following speaking times:

Committee On a Bill

Member in Charge of Bill	No limit
Leader of Opposition or Nominee (on each question)	1 x 20 minutes; 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
Other Members (on each question)	1 x 10 minutes; or 2 x 5 minutes

Members' Register of Interests

15. Appendix I, titled Members' Register of Interest, shall replace the resolution establishing the Register of Members and Related Persons' Interests last amended on 19 June 2002.

APPENDIX 1 TO SESSIONAL ORDERS ADOPTED ON 18 MARCH 2004

MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The provisions of this Resolution continue in force unless and until amended or revoked by the Legislative Assembly in this or a subsequent Parliament.

Preamble

- It is vital that in a representative democracy the public have confidence in the integrity of their elected representatives;
- It is also vital that elected representatives be continually reminded that they exercise a public trust which should not be subject to any private interest;

3. It is also in the interests of elected representatives that they be able to demonstrate that at all times they have made scrupulous disclosure of their private interests;
4. The Legislative Assembly requires its Members to demonstrate a commitment to maintain the highest possible standard of propriety and to avoid and declare any potential conflict of interest;
5. The Members' and Related Persons' Registers of Interests are mechanisms to encourage and foster transparency, accountability and openness; and
6. The following provisions be recognised as the minimum disclosure required by Members and that Members be aware that the following provisions are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible financial arrangements which require, in the spirit of the resolution, to be declared.

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- | | |
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PART 1—PRELIMINARY

Definitions

1. In this resolution, unless the contrary intention appears—
 - "calendar month" means a period commencing at the beginning of a day of one of the 12 months of the year and ending immediately before the beginning of the corresponding day of the next month or, if there is no such corresponding day, ending at the end of the next month;
 - "child", in relation to a Member, includes an adopted child, a step-child or an ex-nuptial child of the Member;
 - "Clerk" means The Clerk of the Parliament;
 - "committee" means the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee;
 - "company" means a company, whether a private company or a public company;
 - "debenture" includes debenture stock, bonds, notes and any other document evidencing or acknowledging indebtedness of a company in respect of money that is deposited with or lent to the company;
 - "de facto partner", in relation to a Member, has the same meaning as s.32DA of the Acts Interpretation Act 1954;
 - "gift" means—
 - (a) the transfer of money, property or other benefit—
 - (i) without recompense; or
 - (ii) for a consideration substantially less than full consideration; or
 - (b) a loan of money or property made on a permanent, or an indefinite, basis;
 but does not include upgraded travel provided by an airline.

"joint venture" means an undertaking carried on by 2 or more persons in common otherwise than as partners;

"Member" means a Member of the Legislative Assembly;

"month" means a calendar month;

"nominee company" means a company whose principal business is the business of holding marketable securities as a trustee or nominee;

"officer", in relation to a company, means—

- (a) director or secretary of the company; or
- (b) any other person who is concerned, or takes part, in the management of the company;

"partnership" includes a joint venture;

"private company" means a proprietary company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

"public company" means a company, other than a private company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

"Register" means—

- (a) the Register of Members' Interests; or
- (b) the Register of Related Persons' Interests;

"Registrar" means the Registrar of Members' Interests;

"related person", in relation to a Member, means—

- (a) the spouse of the Member;
- (b) a child of the Member who is wholly or substantially dependent on the Member; or
- (c) any other person—
 - (i) who is wholly or substantially dependent on the Member; or
 - (ii) whose affairs are so closely connected with the affairs of the Member that a benefit derived by the person, or a substantial part of it, could pass to the Member;

"share" means—

- (a) a share in the share capital of a company;
- (b) stock;
- (c) a convertible note; or
- (d) an option;

"sitting day", in relation to the Parliament, means a day on which the Parliament meets;

"sponsored travel or accommodation" means any travel undertaken, including accommodation incidental to the travel, or any accommodation benefit received, otherwise than in an official capacity, by the Member or a related person in respect of which a contribution (whether in cash or kind) to the cost of the travel (including incidental accommodation) or the accommodation is made by a person other than the Member or a related person but does not include upgraded travel provided by an airline, or upgraded accommodation, or meals or sporting or cultural entertainment.

"spouse", in relation to a Member, includes a de facto partner of a member;

"statement of interests" means—

- (a) a statement of interests (Member); or
- (b) a statement of interests (related persons);

"statement of interests (Member)" means the statement of a Member's interests required to be given by the Member to the Registrar under clause 5;

"statement of interests (related persons)" means the statement of the interests of a Member's related persons required to be given by the Member to the Registrar under clause 5;

"trade or professional organisation" means a body (whether incorporated or unincorporated) of—

- (a) employers or employees; or
- (b) persons engaged in a profession, trade or other occupation;

being a body the object, or an object, of which is the furtherance of its own professional, industrial or economic interests or those of any of its Members;

"year" means period of 12 months commencing on 1 January.

Interpretation—terms relating to companies

2.(1) A person is taken to have a controlling interest in shares in a company if the person is able—

- (a) to dispose of, or to exercise control over the disposal of, the shares; or
- (b) where the shares are voting shares—to exercise, or to control the exercise of, any voting powers attached to the shares.

(2) The question whether a company is a subsidiary of another company is to be determined in the same manner as the question whether a corporation is a subsidiary of another corporation is determined for the purposes of the Corporations Law of Queensland.

(3) A reference in this resolution to the holding company of another company is a reference to a company of which that other company is a subsidiary.

Interpretation—forms

3.(1) In this resolution, a reference to a form by number is a reference to the form so numbered in the Schedule.

(2) Strict compliance with a form in the Schedule is not necessary and substantial compliance, or such compliance as the circumstances of a particular case allow, is sufficient.

Registrar

- 4.(1) There is to be a Registrar of Members' Interests.
- (2) The Clerk is to be the Registrar.

PART 2—STATEMENTS OF INTERESTS

Giving of statements

- 5.(1) In accordance with resolutions adopted by the Legislative Assembly and in a form determined by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee from time to time each Member shall within one month of making and subscribing an oath or affirmation as a Member, provide to the Registrar of Members' Interests a statement of—
 - (a) the Member's Registrable Interests as at the date of the election;
 - (b) the Registrable Interests, as at the date of the election, of which the Member is aware of related persons.
- (2) A Member must notify the Registrar in writing of any change in the details contained in the last statement of interests given by the Member within one month of becoming aware of the change.
- (3) Where in any year there is no change to the details contained in the last statement of interests given by the Member the Member is required to complete and lodge a 'no changes' of interests return. This form is required to be submitted to the Registrar within one month after 30 June each year and shall cover the period from the preceding 30 June or the last occasion upon which the Member supplied a statement of interest to the 30 June of the current year.
- (4) A Member is required to include in a statement of interests details relating to the interest of a related person only if the Member is aware of the interest.
- (5) A Member is not required to give, in any year—
 - (a) more than one statement of interests (Member); or
 - (b) more than one statement of interests (related persons); or
 - (c) more than one 'no changes' of interest declaration.

Form of statements and notice of change of details

- 6.(1) A statement of interests (Member)—
 - (a) must be in accordance with Form 1; and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by the Member—
 - (i) alone; and
 - (ii) jointly or in common with a related person.
- (2) A statement of interests (related persons)—
 - (a) must be in accordance with Form 2; and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by related persons otherwise than jointly or in common with the Member.
- (3) A notice of change of the details contained in a statement of interests must be in accordance with Form 3.
- (4) A notice of no change in details must be in accordance with Form 4.
- (5) The Committee may, by resolution, alter any of the above forms and notice of such alteration is to be made by the Chairman of the Committee to the Legislative Assembly within 5 sitting days.

Disclosure of interests

- 7.(1) A statement of interests required to be given by a Member must contain the following details—
 - (a) in respect of any company in which the Member or a related person is a shareholder or has a controlling interest in shares—
 - (i) the name of the company;
 - (ii) where the shareholding or interest constitutes a controlling interest in the company—details of the shareholdings of the company in any other company;
 - (iii) where the shareholding or interest is held in a private company, the details of the investments or beneficial interests of the company, but the value of those investments or beneficial interests need not be disclosed; and
 - (iv) where the shareholding or interest is held in a private company that is the holding company of another company—
 - (A) details of the investments or beneficial interests of the holding company, but the value of those investments or beneficial interests need not be disclosed;
 - (B) the name of any company that is a subsidiary of the holding company;
 - (C) the name of any company that is a subsidiary of any company that is the holding company's subsidiary; and
 - (D) the details of the investments or beneficial interests of those subsidiary companies, but the value of those investments or beneficial interests need not be disclosed;
 - (b) in respect of any company of which the Member or a related person is an officer—
 - (i) the name of the company;
 - (ii) the nature of the office held; and
 - (iii) the nature of the activities of the company;
 - (c) in respect of any family or business trust or nominee company in which the Member or a related person holds a beneficial interest—
 - (i) the name or a description of the trust, or the name of the company, as the case requires;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the trust or company;
 - (iii) the nature of the interest; and
 - (iv) details of the investments and beneficial interest of the trust, but the value of those investments or beneficial interests need not be disclosed.

- (d) in respect of any family or business trust in which the Member or a related person is a trustee—
- (i) the name or a description of the trust; and
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the trust;
- (e) in respect of any partnership in which the Member or a related person has an interest—
- (i) the name or a description of the partnership;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the partnership; and
 - (iii) the nature of the interest;
- (f) in respect of any real estate in which the Member or a related person has an interest—
- (i) the location of the relevant property (by reference to suburb or area);
 - (ii) the approximate size of the property;
 - (iii) the purpose for which the property is and is intended to be used; and
 - (iv) the nature of the interest;
- (g) in respect of any liability (excluding department store and credit card accounts) of the Member or a related person or a trust of which a Member or a related person is a beneficiary or a private company of which a Member or a related person is a shareholder—
- (i) the nature of the liability; and
 - (ii) the name of the creditor concerned;
- unless—
- (i) it arises from the supply of goods or services supplied in the ordinary course of any occupation of the Member or business of the trust or private company in which the Member or related person has an interest which is not related to the Member's duties as a Member of the Legislative Assembly; or
 - (ii) the debt is for an amount of \$10,000 or less;
- (h) details of any debenture or similar investment held by the Member or a related person;
- (i) in respect of any savings or investment account of the Member or a related person held with a bank, building society, credit union or other institution—
- (i) the nature of the account; and
 - (ii) the name of the institution concerned;
- (j) gifts valued at more than \$500 from one source, or where two or more gifts are made from one source during the return period exceed, in aggregate, \$500 provided that a gift received by a Member, the Member's spouse or dependent children from family members or personal friends in a purely personal capacity need not be registered unless the Member judges that an appearance of conflict of interest may be seen to exist;
- (k) in respect of any sponsored travel or accommodation received by the Member or a related person—
- (i) the source of the contribution concerned; and
 - (ii) the purpose of the travel.
- (l) any other source of income over \$500 per annum received by—
- (i) the Member or a related person; or
 - (ii) a private company, or a trust, in which the Member or a related person holds an interest;
- or where the source of income is under \$500, where that income might, in the judgment of the Member, involve sensitivity or be capable of misconstruction;
- (m) details of any other asset of the Member or a related person the value of which exceeds \$5000, other than—
- (i) household and personal effects;
 - (ii) a motor vehicle used only or mainly for personal use; and
 - (iii) superannuation entitlements;
- (n) the name of any political party, trade or professional organisation of which the Member or related person is a Member, or the name of any other organisation of which the Member is an officeholder or financial contributor donating \$500 or more in any single calendar year to that organisation;
- (o) any other interest (whether or not of a pecuniary nature) of the Member or a related person—
- (i) of which the Member is aware; and
 - (ii) that raises, appears to raise, or could foreseeably raise, a conflict between the Member's private interest and his or her duty as a Member.
- (2) A Minister or other Office Holder (recognised by s.112 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001) is not required to include in a statement of interests details of interests that are held by or imposed upon them in their capacity as Minister or Office Holder.
- Examples—
- Shares held by a Minister in a statutory or company government owned corporation on behalf of the State are not required to be included.
 - The fact that the Premier, Speaker and Leader of the Opposition are trustees in the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund under the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1970 is not required to be included.

Questions concerning statements

- 8.(1) If a question relating to whether a matter should or should not be included in a statement of interests is raised by a Member with the Registrar, the Registrar must—
- (a) subject to the terms of any resolution of the Legislative Assembly affecting the matter—attempt to resolve the matter without referring it to the Committee; and
 - (b) if the matter is not so resolved—refer the matter to the Committee.
- (2) A reference of a matter to the Committee—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) except with the consent of the Member, must not disclose the name of the Member.
- (3) The Committee must—
- (a) consider any matter referred to it; and
 - (b) if the name of the Member has been disclosed to it—give the Member the opportunity to be heard;
- after which it must decide whether the matter should or should not be included by the Member in the statement of interests concerned.
- (4) The Registrar must immediately notify the Member of the decision of the Committee.
- (5) If the Member informs the Committee in writing that he or she does not agree with the decision of the Committee, the Committee must—
- (a) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (b) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.
- (6) A report under subclause (5)—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) must not disclose the name of the Member.

PART 3—REGISTERS

Keeping of Registers

- 9.(1) The Registrar must keep, in such forms as the Registrar considers appropriate—
- (a) a Register of Members' Interests; and
 - (b) a Register of Related Persons' Interests.
- (2) As soon as practicable after receiving a statement of interests from a Member, the Registrar must—
- (a) in the case of a statement of interests (Member)—enter in the Register of Members' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement; and
 - (b) in the case of a statement of interests (related persons)—enter in the Register of Related Persons' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement.
- (3) As soon as practicable after receiving a notice of change of details under subclause 5(2), the Registrar must make such alteration to the details entered in the relevant Register as is necessary to reflect the change.

Custody of Registers

10. The Registrar is to have the custody of—
- (a) each Register;
 - (b) each statement of interests received by the Registrar under clause 5; and
 - (c) any notice of change of details received by the Registrar under subclause 5(2).

Tabling of Register of Members' Interests

11. As soon as practicable after—
- (a) the first sitting day of each Parliament; and
 - (b) the 30th day of June in each subsequent year during the life of that Parliament;
- the Speaker must cause a copy of the Register of Members' Interests to be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

Publishing of Register of Members' Interests

12. The Register tabled in accordance with 11(a) above shall be immediately published as a Parliamentary paper.

Inspection of Registers

- 13.(1) The Registrar must, at the request of a person, permit the person to inspect the Register of Members' Interests during normal business hours of the office of the Clerk.
- (2) The Registrar must, on request, make the Register of Related Persons' Interests available to—
- (a) the Speaker;
 - (b) the Premier;
 - (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
 - (d) the Chairman and Members of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee;
 - (e) the Criminal Justice Commission;
 - (f) the Auditor-General.

PART 4—COMPLAINTS

Allegations by Members

- 14.(1) A Member may make an allegation against another Member that the other Member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the disclosure of a matter under this resolution.
- (2) The allegation must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.
- (3) The Registrar must—
 - (a) refer the allegation to the Committee; and
 - (b) give the details of the allegation to the Member against whom the allegation is made.

Consideration of allegations

- 15.(1) The Committee must consider each allegation referred to it and, for that purpose, may—
 - (a) give each Member concerned the opportunity to be heard; and
 - (b) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit; after which it may—
 - (c) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (d) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.
- (2) The Committee must not make a report unless—
 - (a) it has given the Member against whom the allegation has been made the opportunity—
 - (i) to be heard; and
 - (ii) to make written submissions; and
 - (b) it has given the persons that the Member nominates the opportunity to be heard.

Complaints by public

- 16.(1) A person may make a complaint alleging that a Member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the disclosure of a matter under this resolution.
- (2) The complaint must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.
- (3) The Registrar must, before taking any further action in relation to the complaint, inform the complainant in writing that parliamentary privilege does not extend to any communication between the complainant and the Registrar.
- (4) The Registrar may require the complainant to give to the Registrar—
 - (a) details of the complainant's name and address;
 - (b) details, or further details, of the complaint; and
 - (c) copies of any documents or other material available to the complainant supporting the complaint.
- (5) The Registrar may refuse to take any further action in relation to the complaint if the complainant refuses or fails to comply with a requirement under subclause (4).
- (6) If the Registrar believes on reasonable grounds that there is evidence to support an allegation the subject of the complaint, the Registrar must—
 - (a) refer the matter to the Committee; and
 - (b) give the details of the complaint to the Member concerned.

Consideration of complaints

- 17.(1) Where a complaint is referred to it, the Committee—
 - (a) may request the Member concerned to provide an explanation of the allegation the subject of the complaint; and
 - (b) must, if the Member disputes the allegation—
 - (i) give the Member the opportunity to be heard;
 - (ii) give the persons that the Member nominates the opportunity to be heard; and
 - (iii) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit.
- (2) The Committee must make a report to the Legislative Assembly in respect of the complaint—
 - (a) if the Member concerned disputes the allegation the subject of the complaint—on completion of its consideration of the complaint;
 - (b) if the Member confirms the allegation—on receiving notice to that effect; and
 - (c) if the Member does not, within a reasonable period, respond to a request given to him or her under paragraph (1)(a)—on the expiration of the period.
- (3) The Committee must, with the report, recommend the action that should be taken.
- (4) The Committee must not, in the report, make a finding that is adverse to the Member concerned unless it has given the Member—
 - (a) full particulars of the complaint; and
 - (b) the opportunity to be heard in relation to the complaint.

Explanatory Notes

18. The Committee, either on its own initiative or upon request of the Registrar, may produce and publish explanatory notes to further explain the requirements of this resolution and the information to be included in the Registers.

PART 5—ENFORCEMENT

Effect of failure to comply with requirements

19. A Member who knowingly—
- (a) fails to give a statement of interests to the Registrar under subclause 5(1);
 - (b) fails to notify the Registrar under subclause 5(2) of a change of details contained in a statement of interests; or
 - (c) gives to the Registrar a statement of interests, or gives information to the Registrar or Committee, that is false, incomplete or misleading in a material particular;
- is guilty of a contempt of the Parliament and may be dealt with accordingly.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.26 a.m.): I second the motion.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.27 a.m.): I move—

That the question be amended by inserting after the words 'circulated in my name,' the words 'as amended to indicate that Ministerial Statements will cease at 10.15 am each day'.

In speaking to this amendment I will be brief. This morning we certainly will decide the sessional orders which will control the conduct of business in this chamber for the next three years. Over recent years many of us have witnessed occasions when ministers have made lengthy ministerial statements which have directly impacted on the opportunity of ordinary backbenchers from both the government and the opposition and Independents to make private members' statements on matters of great importance to their electorate, be it the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, western Queensland or northern Queensland.

My amendment is designed to ensure that all politicians, irrespective of where they are elected from, will have a greater opportunity than they had in the last parliament to speak on matters of importance to their electorate in this the people's House. I believe that we can do it better than how it was done during the last parliament when ministers took up lengthy amounts of time in making ministerial statements. I commend the amendment to the House and urge all members to support the amendment.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.28 a.m.): I second the amendment. I believe the amendment will create a situation that better reflects the intention of the introduction of private members' statements. The mover of the motion has explained his reasons for introducing it. I am happy to support it.

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.29 a.m.): I briefly take the opportunity to put on record the government's view of this amendment. The first hour of the day contains an opportunity for many items of parliamentary business to be conducted. These items are not always predictable. For example—and we saw it this morning—there are motions of condolence. It is unpredictable not only to know when they are happening but also how long they might take. Ministerial statements obviously take longer on some days than others. Private member's bills may or may not be introduced. Even with regard to petitions, it is not entirely possible to know how long they might take.

Can I say that it has been my experience that maximising flexibility is the way to maximise the smooth running of the House and gives us the best chance of getting through as much of that business as we can. I would be loath to support this amendment simply because having a straight cut-off like that denies us the opportunity to deal with those unpredictable events.

Can I just say in relation to ministerial statements that I think it is too easy for members opposite to dismiss the importance of ministerial statements. It is the only opportunity in many sitting weeks for ministers to put matters of public importance and of significance in their portfolios on the public record. If they were limited any further, I suggest that it would be the members opposite who would be the first to complain about a lack of transparency by the government.

I can understand the disappointment that some people have when they are not able to make private members' statements, but I can assure them that they are not the only ones who experience disappointment. There are many ministers on this side who are regularly disappointed about not being able to get their ministerial statements up, and they recognise that it is not an entitlement.

Unlike other members, I have the pleasure of reading all of the statements, including those that do not make it. I know how good they are, and I would not want the House to be denied the

opportunity to experience the same pleasure. On balance, I appreciate that the amendment has been moved in good will with the best intentions, but I do not believe it is the best way to achieve the smooth running of the business at that time of the day.

Amendment negatived.

Motion, as read, agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointments

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education and the Arts) (10.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

That for this session, unless otherwise ordered and notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, appointment of members to parliamentary committees and the establishment of the Travelsafe Committee, circulated in my name, be adopted.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES—APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP—

Members be appointed to parliamentary committees as follows—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—

Dr L Clark (Chair), Mr McNamara, Mr Lee, Mr Fraser, Miss Simpson, Mr Rickuss, Mr McArdle

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee—

Mrs Attwood (Chair), Mr Wells, Mrs Scott, Mr Finn, Mr Horan, Mr Messenger, Ms Lee Long

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee—

Mr Wilson (Chair), Mr Choi, Mr English, Ms Molloy, Mr Hobbs, Mr Copeland, Mrs E Cunningham

Public Accounts Committee—

Mr Fenlon (Chair), Ms Barry, Ms Jarratt, Mr Wallace, Mr Rowell, Mrs Menkens, Mr Langbroek

Public Works Committee—

Mr Livingstone (Chair), Ms Stone, Ms Male, Mr Poole, Mr Lingard, Mr Malone, Miss E Roberts

Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—

Mr Hayward (Chair), Mr Mulherin, Mrs Sullivan, Mr Lawlor, Mr Johnson, Mrs Stuckey, Mr Wellington

Standing Orders Committee—

Mr Speaker (ex officio) (Chair), Mr Beattie, Mr Mackenroth, Ms Bligh, Mr Springborg, Mr Seeney, Mr Lingard

SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRAVELSAFE—APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP—

- (1) That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Travelsafe, be appointed to inquire into and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland. In particular the Committee shall monitor, investigate and report on—
 - (a) issues affecting road safety including the causes of road crashes and measures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries and economic costs to the community;
 - (b) the safety of passenger transport services, and measures aimed at reducing the incidence of related deaths and injuries; and
 - (c) measures for the enhancement of public transport in Queensland and reducing dependence on private motor vehicles as the predominant mode of transport.
- (2) That the committee consist of Mr Pearce (Chair), Mr Briskey, Mrs Croft, Mrs Reilly, Mr Hopper, Dr Flegg, Mr Foley
- (3) That the committee have power to call for persons, documents and other things notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament.
- (4) That the committee may examine witnesses on oath or affirmation.
- (5) That a quorum consists of four members of the committee.
- (6) That the Chair of the committee or the Deputy Chair when acting as Chair, shall have a deliberative vote and in the event of an equality of votes shall also have a casting vote.
- (7) That as soon as practicable after the end of each year ending 30 June the committee shall prepare a report on the operations of the committee during that year.
- (8) That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with the requirements of standing order 13, I nominate the following members to form the panel of temporary chairmen for the present parliament: Mrs Peta-Kaye Croft, member for Broadwater; Mr Andrew Fraser, member for Mount Coot-tha; Ms Jan Jarratt, member for Whitsunday; Ms Carolyn Male, member for Glass House; Mr Jason O'Brien, member for Cook; Mr Robert Poole, member for Gaven; Mr Kerry Shine, member for Toowoomba North; and Mr Craig Wallace, member for Thuringowa.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Ministerial Motor Vehicles**

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.32 a.m.): I note that the Premier proposes to take Peter Forster's Child Protection Task Force report to cabinet next week before releasing it publicly. If the Premier has nothing to hide, will he also release the 635 pages of crash reports involving ministerial motor vehicles publicly? Can the Premier assure this parliament that no children or friends of his ministers have been involved in accidents involving ministerial motor vehicles?

Mr BEATTIE: Let us deal with both of these issues. I should thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The first issue he raises is in relation to child safety. I have made it clear—and the previous minister and current minister with responsibility have also made it clear—that when the report is provided to the government it will go to cabinet—that will be on Monday—and we will then release it publicly. Yesterday, Peter Forster dealt with a question that came about as a result of the openness and the consultation process that had been undertaken here. I urge the Opposition Leader to think very carefully about this area of child safety before there is an attempt to score silly political points.

Mr Mackenroth: Bipartisan support.

Mr BEATTIE: He has given bipartisan support to the implementation of the CMC recommendations, and they should be allowed to be implemented. Peter Forster is not in the department. He was contracted to carry out this work because he was outside the department and would work on the CMC recommendations and their implementation. Can I just urge the Leader of the Opposition to put aside the politics and think about the children, because at the end of the day what we need to ensure here is that children get a fair go. We have allocated the money. I have made it clear that if there is a need for additional money we will provide that as well. We will release the blueprint that is given to us by Peter Forster after it has been to cabinet on Monday.

The Leader of the Opposition made some references to children and cars. I want to make this point: one of the things we have sought to do in this parliament and in politics is to leave our children out of it. I have made it clear right from the beginning when I have dealt with these issues in relation to electorate vehicles that I would pull together all of the material. I did not hide the fact that I took it to cabinet. I took it there to make sure that we made changes. Yes, there were two changes. The first one was that we took away the right of children to have access to vehicles and, secondly, the vehicles have gone all together. No minister on this side of the House has an electorate vehicle—none. They are gone. I have also made it clear—and the Leader of the Opposition made some reference yesterday to ministerial vehicles—that from an FOI point of view, now that I have made the changes, unless there are some exceptional circumstances I cannot envisage, the information in relation to ministerial vehicles will be made available and he can FOI it like anyone else.

Mr Springborg: Six hundred and thirty-five pages is a lot of pages.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question.

Mr Springborg: What are you hiding?

Mr BEATTIE: This is the member's question. I am happy to answer it. If he wants to be rude and disrupt the parliament, that is not a good way to start the year.

Let me make this point: I made it clear that when I examined all of the material there was no minister who had breached the rules either individually or in relation to their children—none.

Mr Springborg: Why not release the documents?

Mr BEATTIE: Does the member want to wreck the parliament?

Mr Springborg: Why not release the documents?

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, it is his three minutes. If we want to talk about FOI and accountability, I would urge the Leader of the Opposition to go to Di McCauley's book launch tonight. He will understand about how FOI was treated under the Borbidge government, of which he was a part. I just say to honourable members: let the Opposition Leader be judged by the Borbidge years.

Mr Springborg: You have refined it into an art form.

Mr BEATTIE: He does not like it. He should read Di's book.

Government Jet, Alcohol

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. Was Teresa Mullan lying or telling the truth when she said that the minister knew a bottle of wine was on the government jet when it landed at Lockhart River?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Mr Speaker, as everyone in this House knows, this matter is before the Crime and Misconduct Commission—

Mr Springborg: But was she lying?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I will be fully cooperating with the commission and it will be under oath.

Mr Horan: Why don't you tell us now? That is what parliament is for.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I think they would be much better served to look at the people we are representing in this portfolio—people with heart and great dignity—and that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Land Clearing

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Premier. The federal government has refused to pay its fair share of Queensland's \$150 million tree clearing package. In doing so, it has accused Queensland of not negotiating properly or of offering inadequate compensation. Could the Premier outline the federal government's record on these two issues?

Mr BEATTIE: I would be delighted to. I might say that I hope we are not going to have any more bullying from the opposition when ministers try to get up to answer questions.

Mr Horan: Special privileges for certain ministers.

Mr BEATTIE: They do not need to be bullies. This is not the Liberal Party staff we are dealing with.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr BEATTIE: Contrary to the lines the National Party ran through the entire state election, the federal government has been heavily involved in devising and analysing Queensland's \$150 million tree clearing package. The Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, together with the federal government's Bureau of Rural Sciences, operating through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry—which is Warren Truss's department, so just pay attention—consulted frequently with senior Queensland public servants in devising a report from the federal government on the socioeconomic impact of the Queensland government's land clearing proposal.

In May 2003 an advance copy of the report was made available to Queensland officials. It was a fine document. For the first time, I am going to table it. Page 9, for instance, stated quite emphatically—

The overall cost to the national economy of achieving the 108 per cent Kyoto target in 2008-2012 could decrease by around \$600 million annually, if the Queensland land clearing abatement of 25 megatons of CO₂ per annum is achieved.

That is what was in the document. This compares to a potential one-off, not annual, Commonwealth outlay of \$75 million. That is what they said at the beginning. I table that document for the information of the House. For those who did not grasp that, our package, approved by John Howard and his federal departments, is going to save the federal government \$600 million each year. He cannot find a comparatively paltry one-off payment to Queensland farmers of \$75 million. Talk about short-changing. Who is the miserable one when it comes to compensating farmers?

It does not end there. Just one month later, May 2003, without any further reference to Queensland officials, the final report was published. Guess what? Page 9 has changed. It wasn't altered; the entire reference to \$600 million in savings to the Commonwealth has gone—vanished, flown the coop. In its place is a wishy-washy statement that says—

Reducing land clearing in Queensland would provide a highly cost effective contribution to initiatives to reduce emissions nationally.

Talk about honesty in negotiations! I will table the doctored version. We now have the truth: John Howard did not want the Australian public to know. He is happy for the Queensland taxpayer to

pick up his share of the \$150 million. He stands to benefit to the tune of \$600 million each year. Talk about being sly! It is a disgrace. I table those two pages, because now the truth is out.

Westminster Convention on Ministerial Responsibility

Mr SEENEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. When the minister was appointed, was the Westminster convention on ministerial responsibility explained to her? Does the minister believe that all ministers should abide by this convention of Westminster responsibility?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Yes, it was explained and yes I have read it. I think that we all take responsibility as human beings. I suggest to the member that he would be better off talking about the health, education, work readiness and sustainable employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which is what I will be doing in this ministry.

Relationships Australia

Mr REEVES: My question is directed to the Premier. Relationships Australia offers guidance and support for those suffering breakdowns or difficulties. Can the Premier offer any advice or support for those present who might be battling the pain of political separation or potential divorce?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. If only I could give them assistance; I would be only too keen. I want Bob Quinn to know that I will be doing everything I can to help him. We are with Bob.

Let us talk about Relationships Australia. In an article entitled 'Relationships and the Workplace' it gives guidance on how to resolve some things. It states—

When our relationships at home and work are going well for us we feel invigorated and alive, we like being at work.

It says under the heading 'How can I encourage my partner to communicate more openly?' that we must start by being honest. That is the first requirement. We have not seen a lot of that. It goes on to say 'How is the couple's income going to be shared?' That is one of the issues people have to talk about. Couples have to share their income. Talk about brawl!

This is where Jeff Seeney comes out on his own—K28, K29. This was all about \$29,000. Talk about high principles—K29! I have to tell members that unless they get the money right, they cannot love one another. That is the problem. We have to get the money right, then we can love one another.

Ms Bligh: It has ruined relationships before now.

Mr BEATTIE: It has. It says that for a relationship to be good, both partners must want to make it work and show goodwill. It says that we should not wait for them, that someone has to take the initiative. Which one of them is going to do it?

I really am saddened by this. I have had a look at some of the quotes. They really tear at one's heart when one reads them. Bob Quinn said in the *Courier-Mail*—

The National Party obviously considers the Liberal Party to be more of an enemy than the Labor Party.

I have to have say, 'Lawrence, how could you?' Lawrence said on ABC Radio on 8 March—

I believe the community at large is of the same opinion that factionalism has virtually destroyed the Liberal Party.

We do not have those factions in the Labor Party. We do not have that stuff. Factionalism has gone to the Liberal Party. It is amazing. The thing that disturbs me the most is the *Australian* on 5 March. This is very serious. It stated—

Seeney shouted at the staffers to 'stop using Lawrence's phone' before telling them to 'f... off—

That is a terrible word. I cannot believe one would use that language against another human being. No-one has ever heard me say that in a public place—

and vacate the coalition deputy leader's office.

Why one would want to be there in the first place, I do not know. That would be against workplace health and safety. He goes on—

When they complained they needed time to gather their things, Seeney, who coveted the well-position office himself, cut them short.

'Out now,' he snapped.

He is a sensitive new-age man. 'Out now,' he says. One cannot treat people like that, Mr Seeney.

Government Jet, Alcohol

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. Did the minister tell the investigating officer at Lockhart River that as minister she accepted full responsibility for alcohol being on board the government jet at Lockhart River? If so, why has she consequently washed her hands of the entire matter?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I thank the honourable member for the question. He actually has that statement completely incorrect, so I will not answer that. This is a matter for the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I will be cooperating fully with the commission. Evidence given to the commission is under oath. I would suggest that the shadow minister for this portfolio have more concern for the people involved. We are doing a huge amount of work in this area and together we will be making a difference.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. The minister has evaded the question. She has not answered the question. It is totally irrelevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Schools, Funding

Mr PEARCE: My question is directed to the Minister for Education and the Arts. The federal government recently announced a package of funding for schools billed as improving opportunity and choice. Would the minister be able to shed some light on how this funding will improve parents' choice of schools for their children?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank him particularly for the work that he does with schools in his electorate. I suggest that he tries to get some federal members of the Liberal Party up there to have a look at what really happens in rural schools in Queensland.

Last week the federal government announced, among much fanfare, a new funding package over the next four years for schools around Australia. One would think from the fanfare and the attempts made by Brendan Nelson, the federal minister, and the Prime Minister, John Howard, that this was a package of funding that would see significant new funds into all schools. One would think from the way that it was billed as an improvement in opportunity and choice that all schools in this country would be seeing significant new initiatives and increases in funding to boost what is happening out there in our classrooms.

I regret to inform the parliament that despite all of the fanfare and despite the rhetoric, there is not one new cent other than indexation being offered to public schools in Queensland as a result of the four-year package. What we saw last week was an attempt by the federal government, in my view, to play a very deceitful con job on the parents of children in our public schools. It was sold as a package that would increase opportunities. There is nothing in this package, despite the very significant number of dollars in it, that would see our public school children receive anything other than indexation, which means that the dollars will buy exactly the same in four years time as they are buying today—that is, we have simply seen a roll-over of the existing four-year agreement.

It does nothing in terms of new money. It does nothing in terms of any vision for any education in this country. It does nothing by way of extra incentives. It does not in any way address the fundamental inequities in the funding model that the federal government has put forward. During these four years, for the first time in the history of this country, in real dollar terms we will see a federal government spend more on the 445,000 children in non-government private schools than they spend on the more than two million children in the public schools of this country.

Brendan Nelson's press releases heap lies upon untruths. Apart from normal indexation, despite all of his claims, extra programs such as Languages Other Than English receive the same funding and English as a second language receives the same funding. The Country Area Priority Program receives the same funding. Literacy initiatives receive the same funding. Despite all of the Commonwealth's recent rhetoric, there is nothing for boys or educational incentives to employ male teachers.

I urge the members of this House, particularly those opposite who represent rural, regional and remote Queensland, to take it upon themselves to talk to their federal members. This package, which pretends to offer choice by subsidising more for children in non-government schools, does nothing for those children in their electorates who do not have private schools to attend and who rely on the public system to fund distance education and remote schools.

Child Safety Department, Staff Appointments

Mr HOBBS: I direct a question to the Minister for Child Safety. I refer to the advice from the minister and the Communities Minister to the staff of the former families department that they would be able to transfer to the new Child Safety Department. Given the shameful administrative practices and culture of the previous department, as highlighted in the CMC report, I ask: how does the minister intend to regain any public confidence in the new department if all he is going to do is transfer the staff? Will the minister give an assurance that staff appointments will follow an appropriate selection process as promised during the consultation with stakeholder groups and the Premier's commitment to fully implement the recommendations of the CMC foster care inquiry report?

Mr REYNOLDS: I thank the honourable member for Warrego for the question.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr REYNOLDS: I am going to take up something that the Treasurer just alluded to. About three weeks ago, I briefed in very, very good faith the Opposition Leader of this House on the basis of a letter that had been sent to the Premier in regard to the bipartisan approach that the opposition was going to take to this very important area of child safety. After reading the Opposition Leader's press releases, and after hearing some of the comments in the House today, I am very saddened by the fact that—and I say this with great respect to his shadow minister who I will, in fact, deal with on these issues in a very appropriate way—although the commitment was made during the election that the Opposition Leader would be taking on this portfolio himself, he has relegated it to a first-time parliamentarian. I say to the member for Burdekin that I say that with great respect. The Opposition Leader has not only disappointed the public of Queensland and the children of Queensland—

Mr Hobbs: The question was to you.

Mr REYNOLDS: In regard to the bipartisanship approach, we see that continuing by the member for Warrego today. I want to say two things in response to what the member for Warrego has put to me. First of all, as the Minister for Child Safety, I reiterate the Beattie government's commitment to implement every one of the 110 recommendations that were made after the CMC inquiry and given to Queensland on 6 January this year. As well, let me say that over the past five weeks I have met with 1,200 individuals and people from various stakeholder groups. I say to the member that, as the Minister for Child Safety, there will be a new culture within the new Department of Child Safety which will be implemented over the number of weeks and months ahead of us.

Mr Hobbs: But that comes from the people.

Mr REYNOLDS: I believe that it requires a bipartisan approach. I am saddened by the fact that today the member is giving us a non-bipartisan approach; indeed, a very partisan approach. I am sure that those people would not like that.

In terms of the appointment of staff to the new Department of Child Safety, I say to the member that he should have read today's *Courier-Mail*, because I actually articulated fully to a *Courier-Mail* journalist—and it is printed in today's *Courier-Mail* and I will say it to the member today—that we will be going through a process of workshopping with our Department of Communities staff on the basis of what the new culture means. That will be spelt out in the blueprint.

Mr Hobbs: It will be the same staff.

Mr REYNOLDS: The member should not be silly.

Mr Hobbs: I asked you the question.

Mr REYNOLDS: I suggest to the member for Warrego to listen to what I am saying. We will be workshopping the staff and then we will be selecting staff, through a process which will be spelt out in the blueprint next Monday, which I believe all the stakeholder groups will be very satisfied with.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Mudgeeraba, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Wynnum West State School in the electorate of Lytton.

Flu Vaccine

Mrs REILLY: I refer the Minister for Health to recent media reports about the importance of immunisation against the flu, and I ask: could the minister provide details of a new breakthrough

by Queensland scientists which will help to protect tens of thousands of people from the flu this year?

Mr NUTTALL: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a really great day for Queenslanders in terms of important discoveries right here in the heart of Queensland. Scientists in Queensland have isolated a new strain of flu, which has been used in a brand new vaccine that will be rolled out across Australia and, indeed, around the world. This vaccine has the potential to protect tens of thousands of lives and an essential element of it has been discovered right here in Brisbane.

The new vaccine strain will be known as the Influenza B-Brisbane and it was isolated at the Queensland Health Scientific Services Virology Laboratory at Coopers Plains. The Influenza B-Brisbane virus can protect against the new influenza type viruses that have emerged in Australia and other countries over the past year. Our scientists alerted the World Health Organisation and, after high-level analysis in Melbourne, it was recommended by the Australian influenza vaccine committee for inclusion in the Australian 2004 influenza vaccine.

Many other countries in the southern hemisphere are now expected to adopt this new vaccine. More importantly, this discovery was isolated from samples sent to our laboratories from hospitals and private pathology laboratories throughout the state as part of our health scientific surveillance system. Queensland Health's scientific services is Australia's most comprehensive public health science laboratory, incorporating public health and forensic science.

The influenza vaccine has to be updated every year because obviously viruses are constantly changing. I am pleased to say that the new vaccine is now available and, as part of encouraging others to have their flu shots this year, I will be having mine at the lunchbreak today. I encourage all members to have their flu shots and to not be frightened of the needle. Prevention is good. When I have my flu shot I will also have the pleasure of meeting one of the scientists who was responsible for this great work, Bruce Harrower.

Government Jet, Alcohol

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to a report in the *Courier-Mail* on 6 March that stated that his chief of staff ordered the police on two occasions to search the government jet for a bottle of wine, and I ask: is it common practice for the Premier's chief of staff to issue orders directly to the police and, if so, how many times has this occurred? Does that practice not breach the separation of powers?

Mr BEATTIE: My chief of staff does not issue instructions to the police. He has never done it and never will do it. If anybody contacts my office seeking guidance in relation to handling a particular matter—it would not matter if it was a minister or if it was the Leader of the Liberal Party—the advice my chief of staff would give, has given and will continue to give is: follow due process and follow the law. It is very simple. We are honest. We pursue these matters with integrity. If at any time anybody had rung my chief of staff and said, 'What do we do here?', he would have said, 'Follow due process. Follow the law.'

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Bullying will get you nowhere.

Mr Springborg: You supported a bully—Merri Rose. You wouldn't even sack her.

Mr BEATTIE: I do not have a bully as a deputy. The Leader of the Opposition does.

Mr Springborg: She was proven by your own process to be a bully.

Mr BEATTIE: I would never have raised this, but since he has forced me, how could Mr Springborg allow his deputy to stand over the Liberal Party staff? How could he allow that to happen? Lawrence, you have to have courage and fortitude. You have to have a bit of ticker, son. The Leader of the Opposition cannot let him run the National Party. He cannot let him run the show. If he keeps letting him run the show he will have fewer than 15 after the next election.

The person on the other side we love more than anyone else is Jeff Seeney. We love him. I want to see Jeff as leader. I am running a campaign: 'Jeff Seeney for Leader'. In one small encounter he managed to get the whole Liberal Party offside. He tried to get people in the Liberal Party sacked. They love him over there. Mr Seeney will get an enormous amount of loyalty from that part of the chamber. All he has to do is look behind him and see them there. They are part of the 'We Love Jeff Seeney' group.

Mr Springborg wrote a letter to the Police Commissioner in relation to various matters. The Police Commissioner wrote back to Mr Springborg and said—

Mr Whiddon was, in fact, of assistance to Police during the initial investigation. The proposition that he may have or may attempt to hamper investigations into this matter is not supported from the established factual material available to me.

Mr Whiddon behaved appropriately and honestly on this occasion. The Police Commissioner has established it. I have a great deal of faith and confidence in both of them.

Apprentices and Trainees

Mr ENGLISH: My question is addressed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. Can the minister inform the House of the state's performance regarding apprenticeship and traineeship growth?

Mr BARTON: I would love to inform the House. I thank the member for Redlands for the question. The figures released today show that Queensland continues to grow strongly in the training of apprentices and trainees. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research has estimated that in the December quarter of 2003 there were 67,900 Queenslanders undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. That is nearly 6,000 more than for the same period the year before. It shows that the record levels of apprentices and trainees that are being put through under the Beattie Labor government are continuing to grow. In the quarter, 10,400 new apprentices and trainees began their training and 8,300 received their qualifications, marking the end of their training period. It is a long time since I finished my apprenticeship, in 1968, but 8,300 young Queenslanders joined me in December of last year.

More than 60 per cent of the apprentices and trainees in our work force are aged under 25. It is also very exciting to see that Queensland leads the nation in the number of apprentices and trainees who are undertaking training while at school. School based apprenticeships account for 10 per cent of our total apprentices and trainees—more than double the percentage in every other state in Australia. We are very serious about that transition of young people from education into the work force through school based apprenticeships. School based apprenticeships and traineeships allow people to finish year 12 and at the same time gain the skills in the workplace through valuable paid employment—part of the earning or learning strategies of this government.

I also want to congratulate all those Queensland businesses that are taking on apprentices and trainees and encourage even more of them to do it, although of course, as I have demonstrated, they are already doing that at record levels.

I also want to salute the training efforts of students and employers alike. The Department of Employment and Training and the Training and Employment Board are once again hosting the Queensland training awards. These awards are in their 43rd year this year and recognise Queensland's top apprentices, trainees, vocational students, employers, schools, training providers and others committed to training. Nominations for this year's awards are now open. I urge all individuals and businesses committed to training to enter these prestigious awards. I am looking forward to recognising the best of the best when we get to awards night.

Nanango Hospital

Mrs PRATT: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. A constituent was recently airlifted to Royal Brisbane Hospital after complications developed from surgery undergone a week earlier. The hospital reportedly had insufficient towels to go around, patients had to reuse their disposable cups from previous days, and paper bags provided for patients to dispose of rubbish, for example tissues, were also out of stock and patients were instructed not to put anything wet in them as there were no more available. I brought this to the attention of the minister in correspondence dated 9 March. Has this matter been investigated? What has been done to resolve the shortages? How many other hospitals are experiencing the same problems?

Mr NUTTALL: I have not yet seen the correspondence dated 9 March. Since I have been the minister my office has been trying to respond to correspondence in a two- or three-week period. We will make sure we endeavour to get an answer to the member in relation to that matter.

Every day Queensland Health looks after some 28,000 Queenslanders throughout the state. We have over 130 public hospitals. We have over 70 private hospitals. We have 22 nursing homes and 70 or 80 community health centres. There will always be difficulties and problems when dealing with that volume of people on a day-to-day basis.

In terms of the issue raised by the member, we need to find out what time it happened. It may have happened over the weekend of the heatwave, for all I know. On the weekend of the heatwave, as you can appreciate, Mr Speaker, the hospital was inundated with people. I will get an answer to the honourable member.

In addition to that, our emergency departments are being inundated with people. They are being inundated because people cannot get bulkbilling at their local GP. If members opposite want to blame anyone for that, they should not stand up here in this parliament and try to undermine the health system in Queensland. They need to start talking to the federal members of parliament from this state—

Mr Beattie: Warren Truss.

Mr NUTTALL: Warren Truss is in the member's area. Members opposite should get him to start talking to the Health Minister about bulkbilling issues, which are affecting all of our hospitals. The federal government is shifting the load on to the states. I know that members of the federal government stand up and say, 'You've got GST money and you've got growth money,' but we all know that the money the states are getting is no different from what we were getting under previous programs. I am not going to stand here and try to defend the Commonwealth government for not genuinely addressing the issue of bulkbilling in this country. What it is doing to the people of Queensland is just not good enough.

As I said, our hospitals look after some 28,000 people every day. We have committed to a \$468 million program over the next three years to continue to improve health services for the people of Queensland.

Family Day Care, Blue Cards

Ms MALE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Communities and Disability Services. I refer the minister to recent media articles about the necessity for regular visitors to family day care premises to have blue cards. What steps has the Department of Communities taken to make the requirements in relation to blue cards clearer for family day care providers?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Glass House for her question. Just recently I had the opportunity to be in her electorate, and the feedback I got from community groups we interacted with is that she is doing a fantastic job and that people are supportive of her interest not only in young people but also in people in those community groups in general.

Mr McGrady: The election proved that.

Mr PITT: Mr McGrady is so right. The election result did prove that. Congratulations once again.

On 7 March I attended a community cabinet in Yeppoon. At that time I took the opportunity to speak to the conference of the Queensland Care Providers Association. It was a very big conference, with around about 300 or 400 people in attendance, and this issue was raised then. I had previously instructed my department to prepare a new fact sheet regarding the suitability card, or the blue card, and that fact sheet set out quite clearly the requirements that we would have for people who were going to have interaction with young people in family day care.

I would like to state again for the record that I make no apology at all for requiring people who do have regular contact with children in licensed family day care premises to have a blue card. That was set out in the Child Care Act 2002, and I intend as minister to make sure that is strictly enforced. I believe every member of this House, every parent and every Queenslanders will want us to do no less.

This is a measure designed to protect children, and it is to give parents and their guardians who put their children into day care some degree of confidence that their children are going to be well handled. There has been some speculation, however, in the media about who is required to have a blue card. That is understandable. That new fact sheet sets out the department's view of how to handle those issues. It provides, in my view, a series of commonsense advices and in no way can we ever consider it to be a watering down of the stance of the government.

Put simply, the department considers there are important principles to take into account in two of those. The first is the frequency of visits to the carer's home while they are caring for children. The second is the degree and nature of any contact between that visitor and the children. I have a couple of examples I would like to mention. If a carer's sister were to visit the premises twice a week and she is interacting with the children being cared for, then that person

would require a blue card. If a carer were to regularly order groceries over the Internet and a delivery person drops the order off every week, that delivery person would not require a blue card because, quite clearly, the nature and degree of contact with the children would be minimal.

Family day care is an important feature of our daily lives. It fulfils an important role in the child care industry and provides care to children in a home based setting. These commonsense measures that have been put in place in respect of the suitability card, or the blue card as we call it, are in the best interests of children and deserve the support of every member of this House.

Police Resources

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. We are delighted to hear of the establishment of the 14-man tactical crime squad in Maryborough. However, we are equally dismayed to hear that none of the officers appointed is a local. Local knowledge is critical to effective policing, especially in a crisis. A good many high-quality police officers serving in Maryborough and Hervey Bay feel snubbed by this decision. Will the minister revisit this decision in the interests of greater public safety and police morale?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have to say at the outset that staffing decisions are not a matter for the minister but for the Police Service itself. It is a very proud fact that the Beattie government has been adding an additional 300 police to the Queensland Police Service for some time, and by next year we hope to have 9,100 serving police officers.

It is also a matter of pride that we have established these tactical response teams. One thing I have learned over the last month or so of being the Police Minister—and I have travelled around Queensland and have visited over a dozen police stations now—is that police officers are moved regularly around the state and they benefit from that variety of experience. If honourable members were to talk to any police officer in Queensland who has performed a variety of functions within the Queensland Police Service, they will tell you about their experience serving in different parts of this state. I think most of them will admit that that experience has made them better police officers.

I value Queensland's Police Service. The police I have met have been very professional. They come across as being very dedicated and proud of the work they do. I think we have one of the best police services in Australia here in Queensland.

Mr Schwarten: In the world.

Ms SPENCE: Perhaps in the world. We have a terrific Police Commissioner, a very strong Police Service, and they will continue to enhance their professionalism. If that means that they are moved around the state, then serving police officers know that comes as part of the job.

Construction Industry

Mr WILSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. The current building boom in Queensland is forcing up the cost of many construction projects. What impact is this having on government projects and what steps are being taken to offset this problem?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his ongoing interest in the construction industry, where he worked as a union official prior to coming into this parliament. We do not have to be too clever to work out that there is a building boom in Queensland. We only need to look out the window of our offices to find 25 or 26 cranes out there on the horizon. While everybody thinks that is great for Queensland—and it is—building booms are not really that beneficial to the building industry, and that is for a number of reasons. One is that they drive up costs because of the competition that is around for trades. If honourable members want any evidence of how that works, just ask anybody in the building game and they will tell you, for example, that 18 months ago a block was \$1.80 to lay. It now costs \$4.80 a block to lay.

In recent projects we have found that experience ourselves. In the Gold Coast, in the honourable member for Mudgeeraba's electorate, we found that experience at Clover Hill school. Form work is up 20-odd per cent on what it was two years ago. Eighteen months ago it was 50c a brick to throw. Now it is about \$1 a brick. That is the downside of a building boom. The reality is that while we cannot just wring our hands over this we do not want to throw fuel on the fire either. We have to very carefully manage our role in the construction industry in Queensland. We cannot

just get tradespeople out of thin air. Ask any of the construction firms that are advertising in Victoria for plasters, for example, to move to the Gold Coast. They want to bring their families up as part of the deal. Ask any of the subbies who have had people headhunted at their gates, offering plasterers, tilers and chippies extra money to come and work down the road.

We do not want to throw more fuel on that fire but we do need to get projects built. The obvious example is whether you look at a program and how you reprogram it. The obvious example of how to do that is to take a project and break it down into the subcontractors that you need and see who is going to tender for it. We have had projects where we have had one tenderer. When I first came into this portfolio five years ago there were six or eight tenderers. They are saying to us they cannot price the job because they cannot get the subcontractors. We have to live with that. What we cannot do is cut corners. We will not do that. We will not sacrifice job safety. We will not sacrifice subcontractor payments, and we have to live with the outcome of all of that. One of the things that we do in public works is have alliances with contractors so that we share some of that risk. We will continue to do that where we possibly can.

Banana Imports

Mr HORAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries. I congratulate the minister on his reappointment to the position. I refer to the decision to allow banana imports from the Philippines and criticism of that decision by the banana industry. Under the minister's responsibilities he approved two scientists from his department to be involved in this decision making process. There has now been cast doubt on the validity of this decision and, as a consequence, additional submissions are being sought. Will the minister now join with the Queensland Nationals in making a submission objecting to this decision of Biosecurity Australia because of the detrimental impacts these imports will have on the Queensland banana industry?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. In the federal House 10 days ago Ron Boswell told a Senate inquiry into the revised draft import risk analysis for Philippine bananas that a question would be asked here in the state parliament. Either Senator Ron Boswell is Nostradamus or this opposition is operating via remote control from John McEwen House in Canberra.

The Queensland government together with industry is working very closely to plan its response to the draft revised IRA which was withdrawn yesterday by Biosecurity Australia due to an error it found in the report. Any Queensland government response to the IRA, which will now have to be revised again now that Biosecurity Australia has found an error in its own report, will be done in consultation with the banana industry, and I have had detailed consultations with members from the banana industry. As a government and as minister I have made it very clear that we do not want to jeopardise the banana industry by leaving it at risk to exotic pests and diseases.

With regard to the issue the honourable member mentioned in relation to DPI officers, let me just say this: with regard to the input into the IRA, five scientific experts employed by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries were engaged by Biosecurity Australia—two as members of the IRA team and three as members of the technical working groups. These scientists participated as experts in their own right, not as representatives of the DPIF. Their input was subject to confidentiality agreements with Biosecurity Australia. I am advised that all available relevant scientific information was accumulated by the IRA team and contributed to the content of the draft IRA report released on 20 February 2004. Significant differences exist between the draft IRA report released in 2002 and the revised draft IRA report.

I am advised that at no stage have members of the IRA team been asked to vote or sign-off that they agreed with every element of substance in the report. It is a nonsense to suggest that, because Biosecurity Australia engaged experts from Queensland in developing the revised draft IRA, the Queensland government supports the draft IRA. That is incorrect. In terms of the honourable member's assertion that I as minister gave the officers permission to go, that is a standing condition under Biosecurity Australia. That is done by the Department of Primary Industries. By asking this ridiculous question, what the opposition is doing is threatening Biosecurity Australia. That is what it is doing. It is threatening the process of biosecurity in Australia.

Mr Lucas: Bullying!

Mr PALASZCZUK: Bullying as it has done with our primary industries bodies by calling them absolutely gutless. It should apologise to them.

Ipswich Motorway

Ms NOLAN: I refer the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to the fact that the Ipswich Motorway desperately needs upgrading. Can the minister please provide an update on what is happening with talk of upgrading the Ipswich Motorway?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. She is a tireless advocate for her electorate and the city of Ipswich. The city of Ipswich is really Queensland's first city and one that is vital in terms of its connection with Brisbane and the rest of the south-east corner. It is true that the state of the Ipswich Motorway is very poor. In fact, I would hesitate to say that it is one of our worst roads and it needs to be upgraded to six lanes urgently. That is a very important need for this state. It is reaching its capacity of some 99,000 cars per weekday. That is becoming a safety and congestion issue on a continuing basis. However, it is a federally funded road. It is a National Highway. It is a road that is the responsibility of the federal government. The bottom line is that we have to wait for the federal government to hand us the money to do that job, and it is very important that we get it as soon as possible. I am told that the total cost of six-laning the Ipswich Motorway will be between \$600 million to \$700 million. That is a lot of money, but it is money that is urgently needed for the people of the city of Ipswich.

At this stage the federal government has only agreed to a package of interim priority safety works along the length of the motorway. It has requested detailed planning and details of delivery, and we have done that. In January the federal government announced its priority works package worth a total of \$66 million—as I said, we need \$700 million for the lot—in funding for the Ipswich Motorway to June 2006 and we are negotiating with property owners at the moment. The leader of the Liberal Party indicated earlier that the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party has responsibility for roads in this House. Indeed, he is not a shadow minister, but if he were a shadow minister he would be shadowing the federal member for Blair, Cameron Thompson, who is doing his best to do-over the member for Moggill. I have only spoken to the member for Moggill a few times. I find him a pretty decent sort of guy, but he must have some hidden side if Cameron Thompson wants to do him over, Michael Johnson wants to do him over and Michael Caltabiano wants to do him over. The Supreme Court has not helped him too much. I do not know what you have done, Bruce, but the Queensland government is strongly committed to the fact that we will be upgrading the Ipswich Motorway with federal support—we want its money to do it—and that is our chief priority.

The federal government, at the urging of Cameron Thompson, asked the Queensland government and made the \$66 million conditional upon us doing a study of a northern route for traffic from Ipswich. That is a condition, and we will do that and cooperate. But what we are saying first and foremost is that the Ipswich Motorway is the priority. It is a top priority for the people of Ipswich and it is a top priority for the Queensland government. Irrespective of what other studies are done or what the federal government wants us to do, we want it to look after people in the honourable member's electorate.

Four-year Parliamentary Terms

Mr WELLINGTON: I refer the Premier to the fact that this year two elections, one state and one local government, will have been held within two months. People are saying to me that they are fed up with elections and that they would prefer both elections to be held at the same time. Will the Premier hold a referendum for four-year terms for state parliament with elections to be held on the same day as local government elections in Queensland?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have to say that I share the view of most Queenslanders: we have too many elections. The sooner we abolish the federal government and the states have more rights, we will get a fairer say for all Queenslanders. Let me give the honourable member for Nicklin a very serious answer. I am committed, as is my government, to four-year terms. Our difficulty has been getting bipartisan support. The reality is that for short-term political gain there are some in this place who would rather advance their party than advance the state, and that unfortunately is regrettable.

In the past when the Deputy Premier and I have engaged in consultation on this issue, we have obviously had the government on side. We have had the Liberal Party on side. We even had, believe it or not, One Nation on side. But there is one piece of the jigsaw puzzle missing. It is called, as we all know, the National Party. Its strategy was very clear: it wanted to rebuild its numbers in the last election and it did not want us to have a four-year term this term, because it was hoping to win the next election, and that is a matter for the people. The reality is that I have

been reluctant to go to a referendum, and the reason I have been reluctant to go to a referendum is that there is a history in Australia of referenda losing unless there is bipartisan support. Our Constitution does not allow us to have a referendum at the same time as a state election, which is very sad. That is regrettable, because that is the logical time to do it. The logical time is at the next state election: have a referendum for a four-year term and then for that term to be four years. Unfortunately, our Constitution prevents that so we, in essence, need a stand-alone referendum. I would urge the National Party to rethink its position. All we have had is some silly political addendums added for cheap points.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No, those opposite are playing games. They are not serious.

Mr Seeney: What about FOI?

Mr BEATTIE: Read Di McCauley's book. I do not want to hear any more nonsense about FOI. Go and read Di McCauley's book. The Deputy Premier is going to be launching Di McCauley's book tonight. I have to tell members: I could not think of a better person to launch it. Those opposite should go and read the book and then come back and talk to me about FOI.

I will be working with the other political parties this term and Independents. I would hope that we could get some bipartisanship. Let me lay this pledge down: if I could get a unanimous resolution of this parliament for a four-year term referendum, it would be held before the next election.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Renewable Energy

Ms JARRATT: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment, and I ask: as a Smart State, what initiatives are we taking to reduce greenhouse gases and promote the use of renewable energy resources?

Mr MICKEL: It is delightful to have the member for Whitsunday back with us, particularly with a massively increased majority. I was going through the newspaper clips. When I looked at the alternative, personally selected by the Leader of the Opposition, I say to my honourable friend: what were you thinking?

Mr Springborg: Personally disendorsed by the Leader of the Opposition!

Mr MICKEL: Personally endorsed by the Leader of the Opposition! I am particularly keen to promote partnerships between government, industry and the community which will improve the take-up of renewable energy. One such partnership is the Solar Schools Program which is being coordinated by the Environmental Protection Agency and involves Ergon Energy and Energex. The partnership aims to promote community and business uptake of green power, leading to the development of new renewable energy projects in Queensland.

The latest project under the program will be opened today, and it will be opened in Emerald at the Central Highlands Science Centre. Ergon Energy has installed a solar power system at the centre. A rebate has been provided through the photovoltaic rebate program. The program is funded by the Commonwealth and administered by the EPA. It will involve a significant saving of electricity, but the exciting news is that we are opening a number of these throughout Queensland. The great news for the electorate of Whitsunday is that I look forward to going up there next week and opening one at the Hampden State School in the electorate of Whitsunday. I congratulate the honourable member for her forthright representations on this and also for the encouragement of the previous minister, the honourable member for Murrumbidgee, who ensured that these programs came to fruition.

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

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.32 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.33 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill I am introducing today, the first bill introduced to the 51st Queensland Parliament, delivers one of Labor's core commitments to the people of Queensland announced during the recent state election campaign. It delivers on a commitment which has been described as 'the most significant environment decision in Queensland's history'.

Today, the Beattie Labor government will put an end to the broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in Queensland by the end of December 2006. Today, the Beattie Labor government delivers the largest single reduction in greenhouse gas emissions ever in Australia. Today the Beattie Labor government ensures the long-term protection of Queensland's unique biodiversity. Today the Beattie Labor government provides certainty and a financial adjustment package to assist affected land-holders in the way they manage the land.

Queensland is a special place. And what makes it so unique is that it is one of the few places in the world where we can implement responsible and affordable precautionary measures to ensure long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. Our environment is complex and diverse, which is why this bill necessarily envisages particular outcomes for each of Queensland's 13 recognised bioregions. One size or one statute cannot fit all. We cannot adequately reflect the diversity of our landscape in legislation without providing for regionally based solutions to often complex interactions between people and the environment.

The Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2004 fulfils our commitment to the people of Queensland by reducing broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation to zero by the end of 2006. It will protect of-concern regional ecosystems on freehold land for the first time, in line with existing protections on leasehold land. It will also provide for the development of regionally based codes for land-holders to manage their land in a locally relevant and sustainable manner. These codes will provide guidance for vital vegetation management activities like thinning, encroachment, fodder harvesting and weed control, as well as for forestry practices and provisions for extractive industries.

Once finalised prior to the proclamation of this legislation, these regionally based codes will be used to assess future applications for clearing. The codes are transparent and will provide the necessary legislative force to ensure compliance. Because these codes will be developed within very tight timeframes they are deemed to be interim codes. It is intended that a comprehensive review of the codes will take place after six months for all applications outside of the ballot. All stakeholders will be consulted during this review. Importantly, these regional codes will draw on the significant investment in time, energy and intellect given by the community based regional vegetation planning committees over the past three years.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of these committees for the work they have done. The challenge was daunting and the work has not been easy. But I can assure these Queenslanders that their contribution is valued and appreciated and will form the basis of the regional codes referred to earlier. The draft plans they have produced are currently being assessed and, following consultation with stakeholders, will be put before a panel of respected scientists prior to finalising the regional codes.

This bill also consolidates Queensland's current fragmented vegetation protection laws by bringing the tree clearing provisions of the Land Act and the Vegetation Management Act under the umbrella of a single piece of legislation. It simplifies the previous complex requirements of those two pieces of legislation and brings a degree of simplicity and certainty for land-holders. This legislation is a historical line in the sand for how we, as a community, manage our often fragile landscapes and their natural limitations to ensure we remain economically and ecologically sustainable.

An important component of our election commitment was that over the next two and a half years clearing of remnant vegetation under the cap will be restricted to 500,000 hectares. This includes the area of permits issued since the halt on the receipt of applications announced on 16 March last year. As a result of the assessment of applications that were already in the system at that time, it is estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 hectares remain available for allocation through the ballot and assessment process.

New applications will be called for following the proclamation of this act and will go into the ballot which we plan to hold in September this year. Every successful application will then be assessed against the new regional vegetation management codes—a process that may take at least a year to complete. Successful applicants will then have between 18 months and two years to use their permits, with all clearing under the cap to be completed by December 2006.

We acknowledge that some primary producers who had not previously cleared their properties will be affected by this legislation. However, all land-holders will be able to participate in the ballot, and those who are unsuccessful and are significantly affected will have recourse to the structural adjustment package. The Beattie government recognises that it will not just be land-holders who will be affected. That is why assistance under the package will also be available for tree clearing contractors affected by these changes.

The only exceptions to participating in the ballot will be land-holders in the Cape York region, where no further applications for clearing will be accepted. To date there has been comparatively little clearing in Cape York. There are also long-term proposals for areas of Cape York to be World Heritage listed or placed into national parks because of their high biodiversity values. This government would be remiss if it did not take account of these values and of the importance of conserving internationally recognised natural assets for future generations.

For some time Agforce has been seeking an improved appeals process generally in terms of legislation administered by my department. While this is an issue which will receive attention beyond the scope of this bill, we have made provision for a streamlined tenure neutral appeal mechanism for both the conditions that may be attached to a permit or a refusal of an application. Before lodging an appeal, an applicant must first request an internal review of a decision. This review may result in a negotiated decision notice from the assessment manager. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision, an appeal can be heard by a tribunal set up to hear vegetation clearing issues under the Integrated Planning Act. The tribunal will be non-legalistic and include representatives of the stakeholder and scientific communities similar to the tribunal under the Water Act. This will provide a low-cost, user friendly, expert based appeal mechanism for all applicants. Ballot applicants will have no further right to appeal because of the timeframes to allow the ballot applications to be finalised by December 2006. However, ongoing applications will be able to appeal the tribunal's decisions to the Planning and Environment Court and applicants may bypass the tribunal if multiple development approvals are involved. I believe these provisions will provide a greater degree of choice for the applicant in how their matter can be resolved and ensures a level of transparency which have been sought by land-holders.

This bill also provides that, for the first time, deed of grant in trust lands for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander purposes, or DOGITs, which were previously exempt from the clearing provisions of the vegetation management legislation will be brought under this unified legislation. This ensures equity across the community, avoiding the prospect of one sector being able to undertake activities that are generally restricted for all others.

I come now to the contentious issue of regrowth. This issue has created more heat and anxiety than almost any other single aspect of vegetation management legislation. Under the existing framework for vegetation management in this state, regrowth is defined as non-remnant vegetation on regional ecosystem maps. The accuracy of these maps, which are generally at a scale of 1:100,000 has sometimes been criticised by land-holders. The problem has been that, at such a scale, it has been difficult for land-holders to relate what shows on the map to the vegetation on his or her property. However, under the new framework, land-holders will now be able to develop a property scale map that identifies regrowth at the property scale. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this aspect of the bill. This property scale map will replace the regional ecosystem map for that property.

The property scale maps, which will be known as PMAVs, or property maps of assessable vegetation, will be certified by my department. PMAVs will provide certainty for land-holders for the ongoing management of regrowth because they will lock in the map boundaries. This gives land-holders what they have been asking for—certainty and accurate maps which relate to their own properties and which allow them to carry out their normal operations without fear of breaking the law. My department will be working with stakeholders on the details of what will be required for certification of these property scale maps which will be defined in regulation.

Existing exemptions for forest practices on freehold land will remain under this new legislation. However, there will be a requirement for land-holders to notify my department of areas managed for forest practices. These areas will be identified on a PMAV and will still be assessable for any clearing or harvesting. Land-holders who are carrying out forest practices have said they require

guidance until the Queensland forest practice system code is finalised. Therefore, an interim code for forest practices will be put in place until the QFPC is completed.

While the focus of this legislation is primarily broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in rural areas, there are changes to the definition of 'urban' for vegetation management purposes. Currently urban areas include rural residential lands and areas identified in strategic plans as recommended for urban development. This legislation ties 'urban' to a local government's priority infrastructure area under a Priority Infrastructure Plan which local governments have until 2005 to complete under the new planning requirements. In the interim, the government will have the option of gazetting zones under individual planning schemes that meet the urban definition. Otherwise the current urban area definition will apply, with the exception of rural residential areas. These provisions have the effect of removing rural residential zones from the current urban area definition and will prevent the high clearing rates associated with the conversion of land from rural to rural residential.

As mentioned previously, the Beattie government was re-elected with a commitment to end broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation and ensure that affected land-holders were given a fair adjustment package—with or without the federal government. For nearly a year, the Commonwealth has dithered over the Prime Minister's promise to share responsibility for the \$150 million adjustment package. This is because the Commonwealth government is paralysed by deliberate and irresponsible undermining by the National Party, at both state and federal levels, and has been either unable or unwilling to deliver their half of the agreement.

The Queensland government is committed to the long-term future of our rural industries. We demonstrate this commitment by planning and investing in a sustainable future in partnership with our primary producers. That is why \$150 million over five years will be available to Queensland's land-holders to follow through on our commitment. Unlike the National Party, we will not play political games with the livelihoods of our land-holders. We are being upfront, honest, and fair in standing by our commitment.

The bulk of that funding, some \$130 million, will form a structural adjustment package similar to existing industry adjustment packages. It will assist land-holders significantly disadvantaged by the new vegetation management framework, with a focus on sustaining primary production in the affected regions. Twelve million dollars will be provided for targeted incentives to support land-holders willing to manage and maintain remnant and high value non-remnant native vegetation as part of their operation. The remaining \$8 million will be used to provide direct financial assistance to support rural industry groups in promoting best management practices in sustainable agriculture.

In May 2003, when I announced the immediate moratorium on accepting new tree clearing applications, it was with the agreement of the federal government. It was the federal coalition government that demanded Queensland provide 20 to 25 megatons of carbon emission savings to allow the Commonwealth to fulfil its greenhouse commitments under its Clayton's version of a Kyoto protocol. They wanted 'of concern' regional ecosystems to be protected in return for financial assistance for affected land-holders and refused to sign the Natural Heritage Trust II bilateral agreement worth nearly \$300 million to regional Queensland until the Beattie government agreed.

They agreed to and supported the fundamentals of the legislative and financial assistance package that is before the House today. On 22 May 2003, the federal environment minister led the announcement of the package. The next day, the Prime Minister told ABC TV that—

It's a very important environmental issue and I want to work co-operatively with the Queensland Government, and we are prepared to put money in.

Since then there has been a deathly silence while the National Party went about its work in the usual threatening, backstabbing and undermining way we have become so used to as evidenced by their bullying of stakeholders such as the Queensland Farmers Federation. As a result, there has been no response, no cooperation, and no money to address one of the most important environmental issues in Australia today.

That silence was broken only recently when the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry minister, Warren Truss, told federal parliament that Queensland land-holders would not have any financial support from the federal government on this, despite the Nationals' often repeated claims that \$150 million was not enough. He tried to support this with a spurious claim that Queensland had not consulted with the Australian government. That claim would be laughable if not for its gross inaccuracy and dishonesty, because at all times Queensland has been prepared to work with the

Commonwealth to finalise this package. While the federal government played for time last year, hamstrung by internal paralysis, it went through the motions of consulting with rural groups. During this time it was the Commonwealth that deliberately and pointedly excluded Queensland from these so-called negotiations which came up with nothing but ongoing prevarication.

This was another clear sign that the National Party contingent both in Canberra and here in Queensland were prepared to simply hang rural communities out to dry—to prolong the uncertainty, and deny land-holders fair adjustment and incentives. That is why the Beattie government decided to move decisively to bring this matter to closure and keep our commitment, both to land-holders and the people of Queensland.

Our package and this bill delivers to the Commonwealth exactly what they demanded—20 to 25 megatons of carbon emission savings and the protection of all 'of concern' vegetation—all for nil consideration. That is why there remains a moral imperative on the Prime Minister to abide by the agreement. We say to the Prime Minister, 'It's time to pay up. It's time to meet your obligations to contribute to the outcomes which your government sought when you agreed to contribute \$75 million to this vegetation management package nearly 12 months ago.' At the very least, the National Party, if it was in fact serious about increasing the financial assistance package, could insist that the Commonwealth's contribution be in addition to Queensland's investment. That might at least restore a modicum of credibility to the irresponsible position they have adopted over the past 12 months.

In conclusion I would like to record my appreciation to the rural industry groups and conservationists who have been involved in recent discussions over this bill. I know this is a difficult issue for many people in rural Queensland. There is a long, proud history of agricultural development in this state and I know land-holders want nothing but the best from, and for, their properties. That is why one of the fundamental principles underpinning this bill is certainty—certainty for land-holders and a workable framework for the future of vegetation management in Queensland.

This bill provides for ongoing management of regrowth. It allows for thinning of thickened vegetation and clearing where woody species have encroached on grasslands. These are key elements that land-holders across the state have been concerned about. Just as important, this bill also provides for the protection of our unique and irreplaceable biodiversity, the prevention of further land degradation from overclearing and delivers significant greenhouse gas emission savings.

I believe economic, social and environmental sustainability is not simply a slogan, but an important foundation for legislation that looks to and embraces the many challenges we all need to face across Queensland's diverse landscape. The bill I have introduced today is evidence of this belief and a demonstrated commitment to achieve balanced and responsible outcomes to ensure a long-term, sustainable future for our rural and regional communities. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (11.51 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Duties Act 2001.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (11.52 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Duties Amendment Bill 2004 amends Queensland's duties legislation to deliver on the Beattie government's election commitment to provide both transfer duty and mortgage duty relief for first

home buyers in Queensland. The level of transfer duty and mortgage duty relief for first home buyers will be extended by implementing the following measures:

- raising the maximum purchase price for a full rebate of transfer duty on first home purchases from \$80,000 to \$250,000;
- the transfer duty rebate on first home purchases above \$250,000 will be reduced by \$100 for every \$10,000 over \$250,000 and will cut out completely for first homes costing \$500,000 or more;
- raising the exempt amount for mortgage duty on a loan to buy or build a first home from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

To ensure that as many first home buyers as possible benefit from these measures, the government recently decided that the changes would take effect from 1 May 2004, a full two months earlier than the original 1 July date. This is the earliest date these measures can commence to enable sufficient time for financial institutions and law firms to implement any system and process changes.

The Duties Act 2001 will be amended to implement these changes, with effect from 1 May 2004. The announced changes will provide first home buyers with substantial transfer duty and mortgage duty savings. For example, first home buyers may obtain a maximum \$2,500 reduction in transfer duty or a total transfer duty exemption and a maximum \$1,000 reduction in mortgage duty or a total mortgage duty exemption. To prevent any abuse of these concessions by using minors to obtain the benefit of the concessions, the bill will require taxpayers claiming the benefit of either the first home transfer duty concession or the first home mortgage duty exemption to be at least 18 years of age. This requirement aligns with the 18-year-age requirement which applicants must satisfy to claim the first home owner grant in Queensland.

To cater for genuine circumstances where a minor may purchase a first home or obtain a first home mortgage, the bill will confer upon the Commissioner of State Revenue discretion to allow either duty concession in appropriate circumstances. This discretion is consistent with the discretion given to the commissioner to allow payment of a first home owner grant to a person under the age of 18 years.

Although the first home transfer duty and mortgage duty concessions were originally announced by the government on 28 January, the amendments will commence on 1 May 2004. Accordingly, there is scope for taxpayers to structure their transactions to gain the benefit of the amendments by schemes to defer transactions to a date after 30 April 2004. The bill will therefore include an anti-avoidance provision to address such schemes.

The provision will operate so that the new first home transfer duty concessions will not apply to certain first home transactions made on or after 1 May 2004, where a prior transaction or arrangement is made before that date. Examples of a prior transaction or arrangement include a pre-existing transfer or agreement which is replaced by another transfer or agreement for the same first home after 1 May 2004 or an option to purchase a first home granted before 1 May 2004. In addition, arrangements made before 1 May 2004 to defer a first home transaction until 1 May 2004 or later to gain the benefit of the new concessions will also mean that the new first home transfer duty concessions will not apply. If any of these situations arise, the parties will be able to claim only the existing first home transfer duty concessions as they currently stand.

This bill delivers substantial transfer duty and mortgage duty concessions in line with this government's commitment to assist first home buyers in the face of declining housing affordability. The remaining amendments contained in this bill are also designed to benefit the community by ensuring that these concessions apply as intended.

While these are important measures to assist first home buyers, duty changes alone cannot address all the difficulties faced by first home buyers. Many other factors such as the inequities in the Commonwealth First Home Owner Grant Scheme, land supply, housing density and social housing options have a real impact on housing affordability.

As I have maintained, a national approach to resolve these issues is needed and to this end this government will continue to fight for Commonwealth action on rising home prices. However, it should be remembered that the amount of duty paid by home buyers, not just first home buyers, in Queensland generally represents only slightly more than one per cent of the purchase price of their home and is not a major factor impacting on first home buyers. With the addition of these new first home concessions, Queensland now provides the most generous duty relief for first home buyers. For example, based on the median Sydney house price of \$500,000 in the

December quarter 2003, a first home buyer in Sydney would pay \$17,990 transfer duty whilst the transfer duty payable on the median Melbourne house price of \$371,000 is \$17,920. In comparison, based on Brisbane's median house price of \$350,000, the transfer duty payable by a first home buyer is only \$4,500. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

SUGAR INDUSTRY REFORM BILL

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (12.00 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Sugar Industry Act 1999 to implement the commitment by the sugar industry and government to comprehensive reform for the long term future of the sugar industry, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (12.01 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is important for many reasons. This bill implements real regulatory reform needed if the Queensland sugar industry is to survive and prosper. This bill also delivers on the government's commitment at the recent election to consult with the sugar industry to first secure regulatory reform then unlock the \$30 million committed to underpin those reforms.

This bill is historic. This bill is supported by industry through the heads of agreement signed by the Premier and the leaders of the Canegrowers and Australian Sugar Milling Council on 1 March 2004. I table a copy of the heads of agreement for the information of honourable members. The heads of agreement is an important document. The heads of agreement is the product of constructive whole-of-industry talks. It is a balanced agreement with sensible and workable compromise on behalf of the government, growers and millers. The heads of agreement states the industry's agreement in principle to the changes in this bill. The implementation of these principles in legislation has also been approved by industry. Further discussions were held and letters received by me from the industry on the detailed provisions of the bill. I table letters from Canegrowers and the Australian Sugar Milling Council dated 12 March 2004.

This bill recognises the significant contribution the sugar industry makes to the Queensland and national economy. The industry remains the cornerstone of many regional communities and provides employment and a livelihood for many thousands of Queensland families from Beenleigh in the south to Mossman and Mareeba in the north. It is a significant export industry with Queensland exporting 85 per cent of its raw sugar production. We are one of the world's largest exporters of raw sugar, with major customers in Asia, the Middle East and North America. The export focus and the relatively small domestic market mean that the industry has no choice but to be globally competitive.

Over the past few years, the industry's export position and competitiveness have come under significant pressure with the oversupply of raw sugar on the world market, the dominance of Brazil and the downward trend in the long-term average price of sugar. When I introduced a similar piece of legislation in April last year, I conceded that Australia cannot eliminate Brazil, that Australia could not reform the international market on our own and that Australia could not change the weather. But I did say that we could and must change the regulatory environment.

The commitment to regulatory reform is not new and it is not one the Queensland government has on its own. On 25 September 2002, the federal government and the Queensland government signed an historic memorandum of understanding on the sugar industry. This memorandum was an agreement to make fundamental change in the way the industry operates and provide \$150 million in support to the industry over four years.

The regulation remains under the jurisdiction of the Queensland government and under my portfolio responsibility as minister via the Sugar Industry Act 1999. However, the MoU clearly

stipulated both governments had an interest in ensuring that legislation does not impede increased competitiveness of the industry or the development of a more commercial culture.

Through the MoU both governments agreed that the following three areas appear to impede increased competitiveness and efficiency and are detrimental to cultural change and innovation. These are—

- the cane production area system;
- the statutory bargaining system; and
- the compulsory acquisition of raw sugar for marketing and selling within the domestic market.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the fact the Howard government has resisted pressure from within from the likes of De-Anne Kelly and more recently Paul Neville to tear up the MoU and walk away from the agreement.

I met with federal Agriculture Minister Warren Truss in Canberra recently and reiterated the Queensland government's commitment to reform and the MoU. While I appreciate the Howard government's continued support for the MoU, I do need to put on the record my disappointment with the role played by Canberra last year. The Howard government has consistently said the legislation was a matter for the Queensland government. However, it was not willing to guarantee the full \$120 million it was raising through the sugar levy to the restructure package. Obviously we were committed to the reform and the package.

I had the opportunity to briefly discuss the issue with Prime Minister John Howard at the Gladstone airport in June last year and he made it very clear that arbitration was the sticking point. The Queensland government proposed a compromise on the issue of arbitration in June last year. However, the federal government did not respond.

As I have indicated, there have been significant changes between this bill and the one presented in April last year. However, one very important point remains, and that is the federal government and the Queensland government agreement that the operation of the single desk for exports of raw sugar should be retained pending the scheduled review in 2006. The case for change is omnipresent.

There have been several significant studies regarding the impact of the Sugar Industry Act 1999 on the industry's competitiveness, productivity and future viability. In this regard, I draw the attention of the House to the—

- *Independent assessment of the sugar industry*, usually known as the Hildebrand report, commissioned by the Commonwealth government;
- *Cleaning up the act: The impact of changes to the Sugar Industry Act 1999* by the Centre for International Economics, usually called the CIE report, commissioned by the Queensland government; and
- *Review of constraints on industry competitiveness and innovation* by the Boston Consulting Group, commissioned by the Canegrowers organisation.

As I stated with the introduction of the 2003 bill, all of these important reviews are on the public record and very widely circulated and discussed within the industry and within government. The consistent message from the Hildebrand, CIE and Boston reports is that the sugar industry must achieve significant productivity increases if it is to be viable in the long term and that opportunities for such productivity improvements definitely exist.

Again, as I stated in introducing the 2003 bill, another consistent message from Hildebrand, CIE and Boston is that the present legislation supports and enables a culture in which any change that may adversely impact upon the less efficient can be and is blocked, holding the whole industry back. During this entire period the Queensland government has consulted. For instance, in late 2002 the Queensland government undertook extensive public consultation on regulatory change using the CIE report to promote discussion. Over 1,500 individual submissions were received, along with submissions from the main industry peak bodies—Canegrowers, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, the Australian Cane Farmers Association, Queensland Sugar Ltd and a number of milling companies. In addition, Queensland government representatives held a large number of meetings with industry stakeholders to discuss the issues raised in these reports.

The CIE report was particularly strong on this point. The CIE had no hesitation in stating that the main explanation for the industry's failure to fully take up productivity gains is what CIE terms the 'adverse effects principle'. This principle is embodied in both legislation and culture, but it is perpetuated by the present legislative structure. An update of the CIE report was recently

released. This updated report makes the case for reform even more stark. Essentially, the report finds that, if current prices continue, the survival of each and every district depends upon reform. Even the Burdekin-Herbert region needs these reforms to survive in the long term.

The bill introduced last year sought to implement changes to the Sugar Industry Act 1999 in three principal areas. Firstly, the bill aimed to discontinue individual cane production areas, or CPAs as they were known, from 1 January 2004. Contractual cane supply arrangements will replace CPAs. This will occur under the bill I am presenting today, but of course the timing has changed. These measures are proposed to take effect from 1 July 2005.

Secondly, the 2003 bill aimed to replace the existing compulsory bargaining system with a voluntary collective bargaining system with access to a dispute resolution system. Again, this is provided for in this bill, but it will be done in a transitional period over 18 months commencing on 1 July this year.

The current compulsory arbitration under the existing legislation will remain between 1 July and 31 December this year, but final offer will only be available if agreed by parties. An interim arbitration system will operate for 2005. Under these interim arrangements, growers can apply for arbitration within an individual area where the dispute affected a collective involving at least 75 per cent of average production supplied over the period 2000 to 2004 inclusive to a mill involved in the arbitration. Then from 1 January 2006 parties will decide their own dispute resolution system. The legislation will continue to provide for dispute resolution, requiring a supply contract to state a process for dispute resolution and requiring parties to a dispute to use this process.

The third area of reform under the 2003 bill was a system of case-by-case exemptions from compulsory vesting to be established for sugar intended for domestic uses. In the 2003 bill the government proposed to make significant changes to the single desk so as to allow greater flexibility. Therefore, the existing ministerial direction in regard to the price at which sugar is sold on the domestic market was to be revoked as it was only applicable in a regulated market. In discussions with industry following the election, we accepted the request from industry to maintain the ministerial direction on export parity pricing so that we can maintain the domestic single desk.

The integrity of the domestic single desk will be maintained. An exemption system from the domestic single desk will operate from 1 July this year for alternative products, such as ethanol and bioplastics, and bagged sugar for export. It is very important to state that the exemptions system will not operate for bulk raw sugar for use in manufacturing as requested by industry.

I would like to acknowledge the role of the Premier in reconvening the talks and the role of my cabinet colleagues—the Minister for State Development and Innovation, and the Minister for Communities and Disability Services—in those talks. I would like to thank the industry representatives for their constructive approach to the talks. I would also like to put on the record my thanks for officials from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the Department of State Development and Innovation, including Bob McCarthy and Paul Martyn. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to our new Director-General of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Jim Varghese. His help was well appreciated not only by me but also by the government. As honourable members would know, Jim is a very experienced and accomplished public servant who is playing a key leadership role in framing the reform package and its implementation.

Following the signing of the heads of agreement, I indicated that I would be seeking bipartisan support for this legislation. I believe that unanimous passage of these laws will send a strong message to the sugar industry and sugar communities that this parliament is concerned about its future and we are committed to working together in its best long-term interests. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PAYMENTS BILL

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (12.15 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to imply terms in construction contracts, to provide for adjudication of payment disputes under construction contracts, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (12.16 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will recall that I introduced the Building and Construction Industry Payments Bill on 25 November 2003 during the previous parliament. Following the dissolution of parliament the bill lapsed and now must be reintroduced.

Improving payment outcomes for all parties operating in the building and construction industry is a key priority for this government. Security of payment has been an issue for many decades, particularly in relation to subcontractors. While bad debts are not unique to the building and construction industry, the industry is particularly vulnerable to payment problems because it generally operates under a hierarchical chain of contracts. The failure of any one party in the contractual chain to honour its obligations can cause a domino effect on other parties resulting in restricted cash flow and in some cases insolvency. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Since 1998 the Beattie Government has introduced major legislative initiatives, which have improved payment outcomes for subcontractors working in the building and construction industry.

In October 1999 the "Better Building Industry Reforms" came into effect. Amongst a host of initiatives the reforms included the introduction of tough financial criteria for contractor licensing, a series of commercial contractual protection measures and the banning of persons from holding a contractor's licence in the event of their being associated in any significant manner with a failed business venture.

More recently, in July 2003, building on the previous reforms, significant amendments to the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991 came into effect extending the power of the BSA to ban persons from the industry who continually display a total lack of regard for their contractual and payment obligations.

These recent legislative reforms, coupled with the long standing Subcontractors' Charges Act 1974, mean subcontractors working in Queensland currently enjoy a raft of legislative protection measures designed to improve their payment prospects. However, these legislative measures of themselves will not necessarily result in improved cash flow outcomes for parties operating in the building and construction industry.

There are instances in the industry where a claim for payment by a subcontractor or supplier is disputed by his or her superior contractor resulting in payments being held up for lengthy periods while the dispute is being resolved. There is potential in the industry for these payments to be withheld unfairly to the disadvantage of the claimant.

The Bill now further builds on the previous reforms by establishing, in relation to construction contracts, a statutory based system of rapid adjudication for the quick resolution of payment disputes on an interim basis by an appropriately qualified and independent adjudicator. This will allow for payments to flow quickly down the contractual chain.

Rapid adjudication does not extinguish a party's ordinary contractual rights to obtain a final determination of a payment dispute by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction. The significance of an adjudicator's decision, however, is that pending final determination of the payment dispute, the party with the most commendable case, as determined by the adjudicator retains the moneys in dispute. Significantly, decisions by an adjudicator are enforceable as a judgment debt if a contracting party fails to pay moneys to a contracted party as determined by the adjudicator.

This represents a significant shift from the current system where responsibility for enforcing payment has ordinarily been left to the contracted party who has performed the construction work or supplied the related goods or services for the benefit of the contracting party.

The application of the Bill covers all forms of construction contracts other than contracts involving "resident owners" under the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000. The Bill will, however, cover owner-builders who engage contractors and tradespeople in a building contractor role.

The Bill will not in any way affect the operations of the Subcontractors' Charges Act 1974. Subcontractors may continue to utilise this Act as they have always done. However, a subcontractor will not be permitted to start, continue or enforce an adjudication once they lodge a notice of charge under the Subcontractors' Charges Act 1974.

In essence, subcontractors will be required to choose which statutory initiative they wish to utilise to obtain payment for construction work done. There will be nothing to stop subcontractors switching from one statutory initiative to the other if they believe that due to changing circumstances, the alternative option will result in a better payment outcome.

There is a default provision in the Bill which will apply when parties have not in the formation of their contract included the intervals for making progress claims, times for making payment and how such payments are to be valued.

In the absence of a contractual provision the Bill provides that payment claims must be made at monthly intervals with payment becoming due 10 business days after the payment claim is made. If the construction contract is silent on how a payment is to be valued, the Bill provides that the amount is calculated on the basis of the value of work carried out, including related goods and services provided.

An independent adjudicator with relevant expertise and registered to hear disputes will be contracted by authorised nominating authorities. As in other States it is proposed that private adjudicators conduct the adjudication on a user pays basis.

An adjudicator must make a decision on the dispute within 10 business days from either receiving the respondent's adjudication response or the expiry of the specified timeframe for receiving an adjudication response. The adjudicator has the power to call for further submissions, hold a conference and view the relevant construction site.

An adjudicator must provide to both parties reasons for a decision including the adjudicated amount and the payment date. If payment of the adjudicated amount is not made, the claimant can request an adjudication certificate, which can then be lodged in a court of competent jurisdiction as a judgment debt.

The important benefits of the rapid adjudication process are that it allows for a prompt interim decision on disputed payments, encourages communication between the parties about disputed matters and provides parties with a much faster and cheaper alternative to resolve the dispute without entering the court system. The adjudication process also allows unpaid parties to suspend work or the supply of goods until payment of the adjudicated amount is received.

The Bill also amends Part 4A of the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991 to complement and align with the rapid adjudication process.

There is no doubt this Bill is groundbreaking and will impact in a significant manner on payment relationships between parties involved in the performance of construction work.

The Beattie government's track record with regard to consultation with industry on all important issues is widely recognised. The government intends to review the operations of the new legislation after it has been in effect for 12 months.

The building and construction industry, and particularly subcontractors will benefit substantially from the introduction of this Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hopper, adjourned.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (12.18 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (12.18 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will recall that I introduced the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2003 on 25 November 2003 during the previous parliament. Following the dissolution of parliament the bill lapsed and now must be reintroduced.

In this House three years ago the Beattie government moved to recognise and clarify the legal ownership rights of landowners to the natural resource products on their properties, including the carbon absorbed or stored by trees or other vegetation on their land. When I introduced that earlier bill, I said that 'instituting a legislative framework to recognise carbon rights remains justified in the uncertain international policy environment arising from the pronouncement of President Bush of the USA revoking commitment to the Kyoto protocol'. Nearly three years have passed since I spoke those words and little has changed on the global policy front.

The news closer to home is no more encouraging. In January the federal government scrapped its work into developing a greenhouse gas trading scheme. It is a short-sighted move and a setback for land-holders who were in the best position to benefit from a carbon trading scheme which could have seen them making money from planting trees and managing existing vegetation.

Despite this renewed kick in the teeth for Queensland farmers from the coalition in Canberra, the Beattie government hopes that commonsense and vision will prevail. When it does, the legal recognition of carbon commodities will provide some certainty for land-holders wishing to be part of any future carbon trading scheme. The legislation passed by the Beattie government in 2001 applied only to freehold land. I made a commitment then that we would resolve the outstanding issues that were preventing a similar regime on leasehold land. Those issues have now been resolved.

Like its predecessor, this bill is simple in its intent and operation. It extends to leaseholders and other interested parties the ability to enter into contracts about the ownership, use and economic benefits of natural resource products such as timber and carbon commodities. These contracts may include a common law mechanism known as an instrument of profit a prendre. This enables tenure over the land and the contractual rights over natural resource products to be separated and registered on the lease and land title. It permits a lessee to enter contracts with other interested parties about the ownership, use and economic benefits of the natural resource products of plantations in line with the conditions of the lease. In order for a lessee to enter into such an agreement, the lessee must be the owner of the trees or other vegetation. Under the Land Act 1994, any improvements to the land, including plantations, are the property of the lessee, not the state.

As this second reading speech mirrors the one I presented when this bill was originally presented to the parliament during the last term, I seek leave for the remainder to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

There is one major exception to this. If trees have been planted to remediate illegal clearing, those trees cannot—and should not—be a commercial commodity.

Honourable members will all join me in agreeing that trees planted to try to make amends for the vandalism of illegal clearing must not be subverted by any creative application of this law. Those trees must be protected, and no person should be able to profit from their illegal acts.

This Bill, therefore, will amend the Land Act to ensure that any trees planted as a requirement of a compliance notice are not recognised as an improvement owned by the lessee.

Many people on leasehold land have, for some time now, indicated a desire to move into the forestry sector, which would include establishing plantations.

This Bill paves the way to enable those landholders to diversify into potentially profitable industries, and to establish commercial dealings in the natural resource products of plantations, like timber and, importantly, carbon.

Giving lessees the ability to maximise their returns from planting trees will provide an important incentive to manage the land sustainably. As well, it will provide opportunities for diversification into land use activities that will help underpin their long-term economic viability and sustainability, particularly where the property is no longer suitable for traditional rural production.

The Bill will also deliver the legislative changes required to support the implementation of the Draft Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which seeks to create mechanisms for trading natural resource products like timber and carbon.

An important benefit of this legislation is that it will prevent two separate carbon trading regimes from evolving—one for freehold, and one for leasehold. It will simplify the process for lessees wishing to enter the emerging market for carbon.

The second part of this legislation concerns the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act passed in 2002, which deals with the way we manage exotic invasive weeds and pest animals, and Queensland's stock route networks.

That act requires local governments to develop and implement pest and stock route management plans within one year of the Act's commencement: that is by 1 July, 2004.

As this date draws near it has become clear that this requirement won't be achieved by many local councils, through no fault of their own, meaning they would be in breach of the Act.

Obstacles including the upcoming local government elections and prior commitments to develop planning schemes under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 have affected local councils' ability to complete their plans.

The Beattie Government believes this legislation should be amended to ensure that local governments aren't in breach of the Act in July.

This Bill amends the Act to allow local governments two years from commencement (instead of one) to have the plans in place.

Mr Speaker, this Bill extends profit a prendre mechanisms to leasehold land to pave the way for future carbon trading regimes and promotes diversification and sustainability on Queensland's leasehold estate, and ensures that local governments have the chance to develop strong, robust pest and stock route management plans by extending the legislative deadlines.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hopper, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.22 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to enable the member for Nicklin to immediately introduce a private member's bill.

Motion agreed to.

RETIREMENT VILLAGES (PROXY VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.22 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Retirement Villages Act 1999.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.22 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce this bill as an Independent member of the 51st Parliament of Queensland. I present this bill in response to concerns raised with me by some of my constituents who live in retirement villages in Queensland. This bill is very short and simple. It amends section 133 of the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to allow a resident to appoint any person to be their proxy and speak and vote at resident village meetings, which is not the case at the moment. At present, if one lives in a retirement village in Queensland and cannot, for whatever reason, attend a residents' meeting, the act limits who they can appoint to be their representative to either the 'scheme operator' or another resident of the village. Clearly, a resident may feel that the management's representative or the other resident may have different views to their own and would prefer to choose their own representative to act as their proxy.

I draw members' attention to one incident where a resident was unable to attend a meeting and wished to appoint her solicitor as her proxy. She even gave him a power of attorney. The representative was ejected from the meeting on the basis of the narrow words in section 133 of the act. The resident had also submitted a postal vote indicating the way she wished to vote on motions of which notice had been given, but she wished her representative to be able to attend the meeting to vote on any other motions arising from the meeting and to speak on all motions. An alternative reason advanced by the chair of the meeting for ejecting the resident's representative was the fact that the resident had submitted a postal vote and that therefore she had no need or right to vote by proxy. The chair did not consider the argument that the resident wished her representative to vote on motions arising from the meeting which were not covered by the postal vote. Whether or not this interpretation of the act by the chair was correct, the matter needs clarification, which is the intent of this bill.

The bill is short and simple. It amends section 133 to provide that, as is the case under other legislation, any person may be appointed as a proxy. It also makes it clear that the postal voting subsections do not totally override the proxy voting subsections—that is, that someone who has lodged a postal vote as to motions that they have notice of may still appoint a proxy to look after their interests if other matters should arise at the meeting. I am aware that this act is generally under review at the moment, but the review seems to be proceeding at a leisurely pace. This one particular matter is causing concern to several of my retired constituents, and it is an easy matter to fix quite quickly. I would urge the House that by supporting my private member's bill we can fix it quickly and allay the concerns of many of the elderly residents in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Boyle, adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Keppel, I remind members that this is the member's first speech. I would ask that members offer him the courtesies of this occasion. I call the honourable member for Keppel.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (12.26 p.m.), who was received with government 'Hear, hears!', said: It is an honour and pleasure that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the First Session of the 51st Parliament of Queensland—

May it please Your Excellency—

'We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this State and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the First Session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our careful consideration, and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and prosperity of the people of this State.'

It is a great personal pleasure to have been accorded the honour of responding to the Governor's speech. The people of Queensland have endorsed the Beattie Labor government by returning them for an historic third term. The positive policies of the government during its first two terms,

and concerns for the citizens of this great state, have been recognised as promoting and improving their quality of life, and they have responded with their support. As part of that recognition, I have been honoured by the voters of Keppel in bringing that electorate back to the Labor fold, and I will strive to live up to that honour. Over the life of the 51st Parliament, the Labor Party will have 63 members to undertake the legislative program outlined by Her Excellency in her address, and I am pleased to be one of the members charged with that responsibility. I look forward to working with this great team.

The first Labor government, and probably the shortest at seven days, anywhere in this world was formed by Anderson Dawson in Queensland in 1899, and it is hoped that Queenslanders will continue to elect well-performing Labor governments well into this and the next century. It was with some awe and a sense of history that I entered this chamber for the first time. Perhaps like Banjo Paterson's *Man from Ironbark*, I felt like a 'man of mark' but really I am more like Paterson's *Clancy of the Overflow* and have 'seen the vision splendid', not of 'the sunlit plains extended' but a vision of the obligations imposed on me in being elected to this House and the ways in which we will seek to advance society's wellbeing.

I have an historic ancestor on my mother's side who walked the halls of this parliament over the period from 1870 to 1896. He was Sir Thomas McIlwraith, my great-great uncle. He served three terms as Premier from 1879 to 1883, 1888 and 1893. He annexed New Guinea for Queensland in 1883 and was made to relinquish it by Britain, who later had to recover it from Germany by force of arms. He was a visionary who tried to build a railway from Charleville to the gulf as part of a transcontinental rail. He failed through lack of funds in the 1890s. I hope I can show the same dedication to parliament and to this state as he did. His memory lives on in an engineering prize bestowed each year by the University of Queensland.

I come to this House after a background of service in communities across the state. I am a baby boomer, one of four children born in Longreach into a shearing family, of which I am immensely proud. My father was himself the son of a shearer. Many of his family were rural and railway workers, and each and every one of them has felt the impact of harsh government policies and attitudes. I am thankful to be part of a progressive, proactive and caring government.

To come from a working class background, as many of us have, and to reach this position by one's own hard work is a humbling experience. Coming from an Irish Catholic—more correctly, Celtic Australian—background, I was educated by the Presentation Sisters in Longreach. They always sat me in the front row, but I am not quite sure why. I think it was because I was talkative. I have now been relegated to the back row, and I hope it is for the same reason. Over the next three years I guess I will find out.

I commenced work at 15 in the old PMG. The old red bike in the summer heat was my penance. Then I joined the Magistrates Court service—thankfully, they had airconditioned offices—where I worked for 16 years in places such as Townsville, Mount Isa, Mitchell, Brisbane and various north and central Queensland communities, and had a year in Barcaldine working for Suncorp Insurance. During my early working years I also served seven and a half years with the Army Reserve owing to national service commitments. That was a Liberal Party approach.

I have worked as a solicitor in North Rockhampton for 24 years and have represented a wide variety of persons whose problems have made me aware of the difficulties which confront our society. My recreational pursuits of amateur theatre and rugby refereeing have also contributed to the person I have become. I am also president of the CQU Norths Chargers Rugby League Club in Rockhampton, which brings me into contact with a diverse and colourful group of people of all races and walks of life.

A love of the arts, especially Australian poetry, and sport has also given me contact with a wide spectrum of people who have helped shaped my knowledge of society in general. It has also given me a good insight into mainstream society. During my work in the court and legal system, working within community organisations, I have encountered a great many of the problems with which our society and this parliament must deal. The problems caused by alcohol, domestic violence, homelessness, crime and insufficient society support for our less well off have all been part of my working life. It seems that, although much has changed, more work is needed. I hope I am now in a better position to help people who have suffered through those problems.

My election not only resulted from my own work but is a tribute to a large band of supporters and friends who worked hard to help me get here. They come from all walks of life and are not all Labor supporters. In fact, some of my closest friends have never been Labor supporters but continue to provide their friendship, which I see as a personal endorsement of me and my ideals.

Firstly, I pay tribute to my parents, whose love and caring gave me a good education and upbringing, which I trust has shown through in my life and personal achievements, of which my election is the zenith. It saddens me that they are unable to be here today owing to ill health. My mother has one of my posters up in their room and tells everyone who will listen of my achievements. Some important family members are present to represent them as my election is also part of their pride in family.

My children and stepchildren, including even one in London, were my greatest cheer squad. My wife, Elizabeth, also deserves much credit for her love and support. She was there during the highs and lows, and when things did not seem to be working out, provided a quiet, steady shoulder to lean on. To my dedicated team, guided by Sophia and headed by Tony and Thelma, I say a great big thankyou. All candidates should have supporters like my family, of which there are many, the Murphy family who are all friends and strong supporters, Labor Party office staff, Emu Park and North Rockhampton party branches, and other good friends of long standing who were there not only for this campaign but, like me, started in 2000.

I acknowledge my long friendship and professional interaction with my parliamentary colleagues, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, member for Rockhampton and Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, who was always there when guidance was needed, and the quiet support of Jim Pearce, the member for Fitzroy, who has also assisted my campaign. To both of those colleagues I also say a heartfelt thankyou. I also thank those other parliamentary colleagues who were always very quick to lend support and assistance, and still are.

The electorate of Keppel was first created in 1912 when it was held by James Larcombe, who became the longest serving member of this House. The boundaries of the electorate have varied since that time and the seat did not exist under the name for 32 years from 1960 to 1992. For the 60 years during which it did exist, its people were represented by Labor for approximately 43 years, plus a further three years as Broadsound when held by Jim Pearce. It is my intention to meet the challenges and work hard for the benefit of all people right across the electorate and hope to continue its representation by a dedicated Labor member.

Keppel is a seat of differences. It has a large urban area in North Rockhampton where the problems of cities arise, a large seaside tourist and residential area, and a rural area separating urban and seaside areas. The residents of all of those areas are interdependent, as they are with Rockhampton, Gracemere and throughout the Capricorn region, and range from the well off to those less well off and the battlers. It has suffered from the closure of a meatworks as a major employer and experienced other economic problems, but all people have remained steadfast and worked to maintain their community. Hopefully, by my hard work and with the cooperation of the electorate, we can continue to improve our region and to have our major employer reopen and other benefits flow from this government.

The government has already shown its intention to continue listening and consulting with the community by holding a community cabinet meeting in Yeppoon. Our citizens have benefited from 69 such meetings since 1998, and the details received from the community can only be of assistance in carrying out our legislative program. It is a big thankyou to Premier Peter Beattie and his cabinet for this inclusive style of government.

We need to position Queensland for the 21st century, and it will be not only our fellow citizens who benefit from our deliberations but our own children and grandchildren. This Smart State should power ahead with positive policies such as those set out by our government. Advances in medicine, education and technology coupled with world-class emergency services, improved educational opportunities, industrial and trade strategies for the creation of jobs and job opportunities will be fully supported by those policies.

I have a strong commitment to social justice and believe that our less well off and those suffering from social problems caused by violence, alcohol, physical and sexual abuse will be helped by the programs proposed. Children and older Queenslanders will be especially catered for. Our environment and physical welfare will be advanced by our land, water and transport programs, and this government's continuing support for increased police numbers and operational capacity gives Australia personal security which does not exist in many parts of our world.

We as a state and part of the Australian Commonwealth have much to offer this nation. Many people come to Queensland because of its good government, not to mention the lifestyle and economic benefits if you work hard. We as a parliament must and will provide leadership and remain focused on our obligations to our people, and I will work with the committed team in this

House and to the best of my ability to represent the people of Keppel and the people of Queensland while I remain an elected representative of those people.

Once again, I thank my family and my team for their hard work and dedication and assure the voters who elected me that I will give my very best to representing the whole of an electorate which covers some of the loveliest areas in Queensland, of which we can all be justifiably proud.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole): Order! I call the member for Thuringowa to second the motion. I advise the House that this is the member's maiden speech. Consequently, I request that honourable members listen to his speech as convention dictates.

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.40 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I second the motion for the adoption of the address-in-reply moved by my colleague the member for Keppel. I begin by congratulating the Premier and his team on such an historic occasion. The people of Queensland obviously appreciate the good governance of the Australian Labor Party and its leader. I am sure that all members on this side of the House look forward to a positive and proactive term that will keep Queensland moving. This government has been returned so overwhelmingly because it has a positive plan for this state—the highlights of which are the creation of the Department of Child Safety and an extra \$468 million for the health system.

I proudly come to this place as the member for Thuringowa and a member of the Australian Labor Party. I am unashamedly and unabashedly a north Queensland. It is for the residents of Thuringowa and north Queensland that I will fight. Indeed, my family has been in north Queensland for over 130 years. We have seen the north grow and prosper to become one of the premier regions of this state. My family has always been Labor—no easy task when one considers my home town, Home Hill. This is a place not known for its Labor sympathies.

My great-great-grandfather was a customs officer in Ross Island in Townsville in the 1870s. I am following in the public service tradition. In those days Ross Island was part of the old Thuringowa divisional board. My great-grandfather, Jim Wallace, was the first stationmaster and postmaster in Home Hill. Indeed, the famous Wallace's Creek is named after him. Should honourable members wish to catch some mud crabs or a barramundi, I would be happy to be their guide.

My granddad, Alec, worked at the local Inkerman sugar mill, as does my dad. My dad, Don, and mum, Carol, taught me Labor values and hard work. They put me through school and university while bringing up four siblings all on a single wage. People like mum and dad are the backbone of our state and the Australian Labor Party. Indeed, my dad ran as the Labor candidate for the seat of Burdekin in 1989. I am proud to say that he won the Home Hill booth for the ALP for the first and only time in living memory.

That is why I am so passionate about the north. One could say that it is in my blood. I love the climate and the lifestyle, the friendliness of the people and, of course, the mighty North Queensland Cowboys, who I am sure will take the premiership soon.

Mr Mickel interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I thought that might get a rise out of the minister. In short, I want to work hard to make sure my region goes ahead. I served a wonderful apprenticeship before entering this House. I can boast having worked in all three levels of government: firstly, as an adviser to the former member for Herbert, Ted Lindsay; secondly, as an electorate officer for the former member for Townsville, Geoff Smith; and, finally, as an executive officer for one of our state's finest politicians, Tony Mooney. They taught me well.

Like me, the Beattie government cares about the north. I was indebted to have the Premier visit two schools during the election campaign—Kirwan State High School and Rasmussen State Primary School. I am sure that during the heat of the election campaign and the northern summer the Premier appreciated the airconditioning that his government delivered to these schools as much as the students and teachers. The government's \$3.1 million program to aircondition up to 117 new classrooms in Thuringowa and surrounds will be warmly welcomed in my electorate—or should I say 'coolly'. The new 70-bed nursing home in Kirwan and the new community health centre at the site of the former Kirwan Women's Hospital will also be welcomed.

This administration is also to be congratulated for its commitment to Thuringowa and Townsville residents with its budgeting of a further \$57 million as subsidy to NQ Water for engineering works on the Ross River Dam. This will guarantee a safe and reliable source of water for the twin cities well into the future. The provision of a reliable water source is essential for the development of north Queensland. With the construction of the Burdekin Dam stage one in the

1980s, under the direction of the then Hawke Labor government, our water supply was guaranteed in times of drought. This in turn has led to a boom in industry and population for the region. I note in the condolence motion for a former member for Townsville South, the late Alec Wilson, that he too spoke about the construction of the Burdekin Dam some 26 years ago.

The Department of Local Government and Planning projects that Thuringowa's and Townsville's population will double over the next 30 or so years. Combined with the inevitable increase in industry that this government's gas-fired base load power station will bring, there will be an even larger call on the resources of the Burdekin Dam.

Whilst the need is some way off, I believe that we should start planning in the near future for stage 2 of the Burdekin Dam. Construction of stage 1 took over 100 years of planning and agitation from the north. We cannot afford another 100 years for the dream to be realised. I will do my very best to put it on the agenda at both a state and federal level.

Planning for the future and unlocking the north's potential will be another of my goals whilst I am in this place. Over a century ago north Queensland led the way for Queensland when it came to Federation. Without the strong support from the north the vote in this state may have been lost. Many of the north's civic and political leaders joined together to achieve the common goal—a better deal for the north.

I am pleased to advise that the north's leaders have agreed to join together once more to forge a stronger north Queensland. My colleague the member for Mount Isa and Minister for State Development and Innovation has agreed, along with the Mayor of Cairns, Councillor Kevin Byrne, the Mayor of Thuringowa, Councillor Les Tyrell, and the Mayor of Townsville, Councillor Tony Mooney, to help organise and participate in what I will loosely describe as a convention on the north's future. This idea was born out of the efforts of the former managing director of the North Queensland Newspaper Company, Mr Max Tomlinson, who envisaged northern communities working together with the common good. Max has moved to Adelaide to take over the running of the newspapers in that part of the world.

Apart from many other papers in its stable, the North Queensland Newspaper Company is the publisher of the *Townsville Bulletin*, a newspaper renowned for over 100 years, like the ALP, for its championing of the north. Max's replacement, Mr Jason Scott, has agreed to consider continuing his company's involvement. Over the coming term I will be working with these gentlemen to get this convention under way. I hope the member for Cairns can join in this common goal.

Ms Boyle: I look forward to it.

Mr WALLACE: The common purpose of delegates is to ensure that the event is not simply a talkfest but a forum for politicians and business and community leaders to have a say and influence north Queensland's direction. Topics will be as diverse as transport, energy supply, the involvement of local government in the development process, migration to the north and state and federal funding for major projects.

It is a rare occurrence to get leaders of such calibre together, especially if one believes reports of the much vaunted rivalry between Townsville and Cairns. This just does not exist. We work well together. I am confident that a positive blueprint for the north will be the end result.

Locally, there are a number of projects that I will ensure are at the top of the government's agenda. In Thuringowa the impressive Riverway scheme will be a marvellous asset to the city providing recreation and cultural facilities across the twin cities of Townsville and Thuringowa. Features include a large swimming lagoon, cultural centre and first-class cricket and AFL sporting facility. Like many in the north, I look forward to watching a Sheffield Shield game right in the middle of Thuringowa.

Already the Beattie government has committed several millions of dollars towards the Riverway project along with the use of public land. Just like its funding for the Townsville Strand, this government has the runs on the board when it comes to the provision of recreation facilities for Townsville and Thuringowa. The extension of the community renewal scheme from Rasmussen to the Upper Ross is also a step in the right direction which deserves congratulations. The success of the Rasmussen scheme is measured in the increase pride in the suburb by local residents and their willingness to be involved in the project. Its extension to Upper Ross will ensure the area continues to improve in leaps and bounds. I would like to thank particularly the Minister for the Public Works, Housing and Racing and the Thuringowa City Council for ensuring the success of the scheme.

Because Townsville and Thuringowa are the powerhouses of the northern economy, an efficient transport system is essential. Already the joint state and federal \$40 million Douglas arterial project is taking shape. When completed, it will revolutionise the movement of traffic into and out of Thuringowa. My predecessor, Anita Phillips, deserves congratulations for securing the funds for this massive project.

Whilst not directly in my electorate, the Townsville port plays an essential role in the economy of Thuringowa. The government's multimillion-dollar pledge to develop the Stuart bypass and future eastern port access corridor are to be welcomed in the twin cities. I will do my best to finalise these two essential projects.

Also on the agenda for the coming term for the development in the port precinct is the construction of an ocean cruise terminal. As my community has an excellent harbour, a number of US warships and civilians cruise liners call into the port of Townsville each year. Not only is this excellent for our international relations but the contribution to our economy is enormous. You can just imagine 4,000 US sailors calling into the port of Townsville, being at sea for three or four months, with those US dollars in hand. It is a great boost to the economy.

Unfortunately, the port lacks facilities that cater specifically for these vessels and if berths are fully booked for sugar freighters, zinc freighters, et cetera, many ships are turned away. I am pleased that this government has considered the findings of a preliminary assessment report and confirmed that an ocean cruiser terminal is a priority project. The north looks forward to the further progress of this facility.

As members can see, I have taken a keen interest in the north and its development. I am overjoyed that I could be here as its advocate. Like many other members in this place, I could not have made it without the support of family and friends. I am pleased that my wife and daughter are up in the gallery watching me today. Firstly, let me thank my beautiful wife, Jennifer, who supported me on this journey: Xie xie ni—which, for the members' information, is Chinese mandarin for thank you. Of course, I must mention my gorgeous daughter, Gigi, who, whilst only three, has persevered through many late nights while mummy and daddy stuffed letters or undertook other campaign matters. Thank you, Gigi. She takes great delight in seeing the Premier on TV and calling him 'Pizza' Beattie. To my mum and dad, Don and Carol Wallace, thank you for your support and for teaching me Labor values.

I thank also my former boss and mentor, Townsville Mayor, Tony Mooney. Tony is indeed a gifted leader and Townsville is very lucky to have him. The transformation of the city under his leadership has been nothing short of stunning. I am sure that members on this side of the House would join me and wish his team well on 27 March. The Mooney team dominates the Townsville City Council, holding all 11 seats. I have no doubt that Tony will triumph next Saturday. For the information of the members of this House, that will mean that by the end of next term over 32 years of unbroken ALP administration at the Townsville City Council since the late Perc Tucker led the party to victory in 1976. That will eclipse the National Party's record in this place from 1957.

I give special thanks to my campaign director, Mr Barry Mitchell, who went out of his way to ensure success. To Paul and Cheryl Fletcher, I give a big thanks. To my good friend—and a wonderful person—Mrs Vi Cox, I could not have done it without you. I give thanks also to the former member who held my seat, Anita Phillips, who I trust will soon be the new federal member for Herbert. Finally, to the Premier, the State Secretary, Cameron Milner, and my organiser, Melissa Thomas, thanks for a professional and well-run campaign. It was indeed an honour to be involved.

Unfortunately, I cannot thank all of those who helped me here today, but from the bottom of my heart, your help was much, much appreciated. I could not have done it without you. I look forward to the term ahead and hope that I can make a positive contribution in this House for the benefit of Thuringowa, north Queensland and our wonderful state.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.53 p.m.): I am gratified to have the opportunity to participate in this address-in-reply debate, which is traditionally the first debate in the new parliament as members respond to the speech that was made by Her Excellency, the Governor, yesterday.

Mr Deputy Speaker, at the outset could I ask you to formally convey my personal congratulations and those of the opposition to the Speaker on his election to the high office of Speaker of this House. Mr Deputy Speaker, could I assure you, and ask you to assure him, that the opposition will be providing firm opposition in this House but we will be doing so in a way that will allow him, as Speaker, to perform his task, hopefully in an easy and friendly manner.

Could I also extend congratulations to every member of this House on the fact that they have been elected to the seat which they have held or won for the first time in the recent election. I know that to win a seat in this parliament is a high honour and every person who sits in this House should be proud of the honour that has been bestowed upon them. I congratulate each and every member, irrespective of where they sit in this House, on being elected to this parliament. I congratulate them on the efforts that they will make over the next three years in the functioning of this parliament.

I also reiterate comments that I made at the beginning of the last parliament in that it is the families and the spouses of those members as well whom we should recognise and congratulate whenever we recognise the efforts that are made by a member to be elected to this parliament. The families and spouses of members of parliament, again irrespective of which side of the parliament they sit, certainly make a huge contribution and make a lot of sacrifices. One of those sacrifices is giving up what would be considered a normal lifestyle. So I recognise the efforts that are made by all of those people. On a personal note, I certainly recognise the contribution and the sacrifices that have been made by my own family—by my own wife, Therese, and my children—in the efforts that I have made to be elected to the seat of Callide again.

As I have indicated in this House in the past, the electorate of Callide is certainly very different from a lot of the other electorates that members in this House represent. It is some 85,000 kilometres square and it has about 16 small rural communities. That in itself presents a lot of problems—not just at election time but during the three years of a parliamentary term—simply because of the geography of the electorate, the diversity of the electorate, and the fact that there is no one major centre to which everyone in the electorate relates. It is not hard to understand that, for somebody who lives at Wondai, or Widgee, or even Wandoan in the southern end of the electorate, the electorate office in Biloela seems a heck of a long way away—and not just in miles, not just in geographical terms, but in terms of the lack of community interest between those places. That presents a real problem for whoever represents the electorate—to be a local member to everybody in the community.

In that respect, today I want to put on record formally my appreciation and thanks to the staff in my electorate office who have done a tremendous job over the past three years to ensure that I am back here in this House today. To my two electorate staff, Mary Sharp and Flora Tomkins, I can only say a huge thank you. They, like the electorate staff who work in all of our electorate offices, are the interface between us and the electorates that we represent. They are the people who have to deal with our constituents on a daily basis. They do it every day, and I can only say that the two ladies who work for me do a wonderful job. I believe that they have made a huge contribution to the fact that I was re-elected to the seat of Callide.

I am gratified to say that I was re-elected with something of an increased majority. The primary vote in the seat of Callide increased from 40 per cent to 60 per cent—a 20 per cent increase in majority. After preferences were counted, it gave me a 72 per cent majority. I realise that some of the members on the other side of the House would like to have such a healthy majority. It certainly was gratifying for me as the member.

That indicates the fact that the support for the government in the area that I represent is very low. There was not much support for the efforts of the previous government and there was not much support for the programs that the current government proposed to put forward. That is indicated by the figures that I spoke of that came out of the recent election. Those figures were reflected not just in my electorate but across a broad area of regional Queensland. Across a broad area of regional Queensland, support for this government is at an all-time low. That has been brought about very much by the way in which Queensland has been divided under the administration of the Beattie Labor government. Queensland has been divided into the haves and the have-nots. It has been split to the point where it can quite truthfully be said that now we have two Queenslands: we have the Queensland that the Beattie Labor government supports and the Queensland that it persecutes. We have the Queensland in which particular groups of people are demonised for political reasons and purposes to justify the implementation of legislation in this House.

We saw huge swings against the government across those areas of regional Queensland, and they did not happen for no reason at all. Every member of this House should be aware of that. Every member of this House should appreciate the extent to which there is anger, frustration and dissatisfaction with the performance of the Labor government in Queensland. I hope that in the program that was laid out by the Governor yesterday, which set out the government's agenda

for the coming term, some efforts will be made to address that anger, frustration and dissatisfaction, which was reflected in the voting patterns across regional Queensland.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Mr SEENEY, continuing: I will now go through some of the issues that contributed to the huge swing against the government across rural and regional Queensland and talk about some of the issues that contributed to the huge margins that are now enjoyed by members who represent those seats. Two of them especially have been the subject of legislation introduced into this House this morning. I appreciate the constraints that puts on discussion of those issues, Madam Deputy Speaker, and you can be assured that I will not debate the issues.

Suffice it to say, the Beattie government's vegetation management regime was a major issue in the angst, frustration and dissatisfaction that was expressed at the state election. It will continue to be so, because it is a legislative regime that is seen as grossly unfair and politically motivated. It impacts substantially not only on individuals but also on a range of communities right across that part of Queensland. The second piece of legislation that was introduced into the parliament this morning deals with sugar industry reform. That, too, was a major issue in the state election. It was an issue that also contributed greatly to that feeling of anger and disaffection.

No doubt both of those issues will be debated at length in this House when those particular pieces of legislation progress. I look forward to the debate on both of those pieces of legislation. I look forward to putting forward the views about those issues that are held almost universally in the electorate that I represent. Those views are held almost as universally across rural and regional Queensland. They were a major contributor to the margins that I and other members now enjoy.

The other area in which the Beattie government has failed regional Queensland very dramatically is drought relief. It is worth noting that this morning the Minister for Primary Industries alluded to this in an answer he gave here in the House. While the issue seems to be lost on the urban media, it is certainly very relevant in regional Queensland. The figures speak for themselves. The Beattie Labor government can find only \$12 million in assistance while the federal government has been able to spend well over \$100 million. Those figures are totally damning and illustrate better than anything else how the rhetoric is so different from the reality when it comes to the performance of the Labor government.

There were a range of other issues in the election. The election was said to be about children. The Premier put on one of his better acting performances when he called the election and said that we had to have this election to solve the issues in the Families Department—the appalling mismanagement of the Families Department that the Premier was blind to and pretended he did not know about and the incompetent minister who oversaw that system, which was responsible for the deaths of 90 children. Suddenly it became an issue about which we had to have an election.

On behalf of the opposition I reiterate what the Opposition Leader has said. That is, we will provide bipartisan support to fully implement the 110 recommendations of the CMC report. We will provide that bipartisan support. That does not mean that we will not ask questions in this House on that issue. It does not mean that we will not ask questions of the minister. It does not mean that we will not be putting forward an alternative view about how those 110 recommendations will be implemented. The member for Rockhampton and the other interjectors on the other side of the House who like to question our bipartisanship, as they did this morning in question time, can be assured that we will continue to put those questions, we will continue to raise these issues and we will continue to pursue this issue to ensure that those 110 recommendations of the CMC report are implemented.

It is important that the children of Queensland are protected. It is important that we do not see a repeat of the diabolical situation that was presided over by the Beattie Labor government and the previous incompetent minister, who is now the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The Police Service can only hope that her administration of that department is better than her administration of the families department.

One of the highlights of the election campaign for me was the fact that we were able to illustrate the shocking situation in places such as Cherbourg in my electorate. We were able to use the election campaign to focus on places such as Cherbourg, to illustrate just how hypocritical and hollow the government's stance was and to put pressure on the Premier and the government to visit places like Cherbourg and deal with the reality of the situation rather than endlessly repeat the rhetoric.

I will not get an opportunity to deal with all of the issues on behalf of the opposition. Shadow ministers who will speak after me will deal with areas for which they have particular responsibility. As shadow treasurer, I would like to make some observations about the government's economic performance.

Despite Labor's claims to the contrary, the fact is that the current government now collects more than \$1.1 billion more each year in taxes, fees and fines revenue than when it first came to government. The state government, like all state governments, gets 100 per cent of the GST revenue. All of the GST revenue comes directly to the state. GST revenue is already well in excess of what was predicted when the GST was introduced.

There is an opportunity for the state government to look at things like stamp duty and see whether we can reduce stamp duty and abolish stamp duty in time. The suggestion has been met with the same sort of response that met Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen when he suggested that Queensland abolish death duties. But abolish them he did, and all other states were subsequently forced to follow suit. I hope that in Queensland we in the opposition, we in the National Party, can drive this issue of attacking stamp duty and dealing with it in exactly the same way. It needs to be looked at in the light of the enormous growth in state revenue that has occurred in the last few years, especially with respect to GST revenue. That growth will continue as the receipts from that consumption tax continue to grow.

The Beattie Labor government now collects \$156 more each year in taxes and charges from every man, woman and child in Queensland than it did when it first came to power. That gives opportunity for the tax base to be examined in a way that will ensure that there is more economic growth. At the same time this government rakes in extra revenue, the Treasurer in the last budget embarked on the single biggest borrowing splurge in Queensland's history, with a bill to taxpayers in the order of \$1.4 billion to fund Labor's election promises—\$1.4 billion we put on the Bankcard and that is \$1.4 billion that will have to be repaid by future generations of Queenslanders. We will be looking to see how that money is spent. It is inevitable that it will be borrowed and that Queenslanders will have to pay it back. We as an opposition in this House will be looking to see how that money is spent to ensure that we get an economic return for that unprecedented borrowing.

While there is a commitment in the government's platform to economic development—and that was echoed in the Governor's speech—and certainly all sides of this parliament support economic development and would like to see the state performing better, it is pertinent to point out once again the difference between rhetoric and reality. Look at the government's record. Look at the scrapping of the proposed Brisbane-Darling Downs waste water pipeline, the greatest economic contributor that south-east Queensland could have had and a great environmentally friendly project as well; the collapse of the LG chemical plant in Gladstone; the loss of Austoft, a Queensland firm which has relocated to Brazil; the interstate relocations of Kellogg, Incitec Fertilisers and Herron Pharmaceuticals; the loss of Mount Isa Mines to a company based in Switzerland; and Qantas's decision to locate its new budget airline interstate.

The one that I know has had the biggest impact on the part of Queensland that both I and the member for Rockhampton represent is the collapse of the AMC project. What a shocking debacle that was. What a shocking debacle that this state government oversaw with the AMC project. How many small businesspeople throughout central Queensland have lost money because they followed the Premier's recommendations and invested money? Not only have they lost money directly in their businesses and their investments; they as Queensland taxpayers share in the \$150 million loss that this government has inflicted. The money that was invested in this project was invested in the most amateurish way with almost no security and now we have almost no possibility of recovering it.

There has also been a marked lack of investment in infrastructure. Since 1998 Labor has not finished the construction of one single new water infrastructure project—not one. Paradise Dam in my electorate is at last proceeding thanks to the efforts of members on this side of the House to put pressure on people like the member for Bundaberg and the member for Burnett—who is no longer here—because this project is years behind, despite the pressure we have brought to bear in this House. The member for Bundaberg can be assured that we will continue to bring that pressure to bear to ensure that project is completed and to ensure that the water is used in a way which will ensure the regional development of that part of Queensland.

We have seen massive cost blow-outs in the Goodwill Bridge and the Suncorp Stadium—a monument to the Treasurer. We have seen the Department of Public Works paying for the painting of non-existent fences and putting roofs on houses two or three times in the same month.

That is the legacy of people like the member for Rockhampton and that is the reality behind the rhetoric that we heard in this government's election campaign.

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! Before calling the member for Mount Coot-tha, I remind members that this is his first speech in this House and I ask that he be extended the courtesy of the House.

Mr FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (2.14 p.m.): Madam Deputy Speaker, can you pass on my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his re-election. I often recall a conversation I had at the Grand Central Hotel in my home town of Proserpine in north Queensland a couple of years ago. A young man only a couple of years younger than me approached me saying, 'You're involved in the government in Brisbane, aren't you?' Without really waiting for an answer he proceeded to tell me that 'they' really should do something about that road down his way. As he explained his view of the world and how a lot of what 'they' were doing was wrong or misguided, he casually added, 'I don't actually care about politics. I don't even vote, but they really should do something.' There it was in perfect microcosm: the yawning gap between this notion of 'us' and 'them'; between what 'we the people' think and what 'they' do; the bankrupted trust between the citizen and their agent—not just a healthy cynicism but a complete absence of faith in the institutions of our democracy.

During the months I spent knocking on the doors through the hills of Paddington, Bardon, Toowong and the surrounding suburbs of the Mount Coot-tha electorate, I came across other people so utterly disconnected from politics that they had never enrolled to vote and denied my urging them to not only obey the law but also see the value in their own power to participate. Research by the Electoral Commission of Queensland released last year found that 29 per cent of people aged between 17 and 20 in Brisbane did not even know it was compulsory to enrol. Add to that those who know it is compulsory but do not enrol, those who are enrolled but who have failed to keep it up to date, those who enrol but fail to vote or those who vote only to have their name marked to avoid the fine and you quickly survey the fundamentals of a generation dangerously close to uncoupling from our democracy. If there is a control room anywhere, then the big orange light should be on.

To be sure, the ills of our democracy are now almost unconsciously accepted and in no way is this limited to one demographic. It being now the common wisdom that interest in politics is in decline, politicians held in abysmal regard, a sense that it does not really matter who wins anymore and a camaraderie centred on the notion that the exercise of one's vote is to be undertaken principally to avoid the fine. We can point then to the existence not only of the consciously disengaged, those who undertake to actively avoid participation in our democracy, but also of the unconsciously disconnected, those who have never assumed the value of their own participation.

The matter of our need to awaken the unconscious forms a central endeavour of what I offer today. In *The Unconscious Civilisation* we are said by John Ralston Saul to 'deny the legitimacy of the individual as a citizen in our democracy. The result of such a denial is a growing imbalance which leads to our adoration of self-interest and our denial of the public good.' I believe in the value of the individual as integral to the worth of the common good. I believe in the obligation of the individual to the common good and the obligation of the community to the individual.

I was not elected because I am one person. I have not been elected to a position of power but to one of obligation. I was elected to hold a position of trust for the term of this parliament—nothing more and certainly nothing less. This position is not mine to do with it as I please and nor is it anyone else's. It is not to be exercised or utilised in pursuit of gain or glory. Nor is it a matter for me to claim any sense of accomplishment at the mere fact of my election. What matters is what comes next. What matters is what you do with that entrustment and what matters is the manner in which you discharge your obligations and necessarily precedent to that how you configure the nature of your obligations in this place.

There are scores who have been accorded the honour of having their name recorded on the wall outside this chamber as having been elected to public service. This can never be the extent of one's endeavour. I recall a certain former parliamentary leader in our country declaring that, ultimately, leadership is about doing what is right, not just what is popular. Happily, many times what is right will be popular. Indeed, this is not merely a function of circumstance but causally related. Our democracy functions to adjudicate matters to be right or wrong, and if a decision is mandated then it is definitively right regardless of its arguable normative value.

Nevertheless, I come to this place with an intellectual affinity to the Burkean principle of representation. Mindful of the raw mechanics of our election to this place, it is my fervent view that we must not only be mere functionaries of the majority but also be the guardians of the few. If we are to re-engage and awaken the unconscious, we need to be more than predictably reflexive. If we are to have an active civil society, we must have a truly deliberative parliamentary assembly. How we as a parliament auspice public deliberation is central to any ambition of an enlightened civil society. We must be the authors of ideas and the defenders of inquiry. The microchip and gene mapping were not invented in one day. The *Glassbead Game* was not written in one day and *Hotel Sorrento* was not filmed in one day. So why, I wonder, must every idea promoted in political discourse be adjudicated upon in one day? The rush to pronounce an idea as infallible or disastrous within one spin cycle surely detracts from our obligations as a deliberative assembly. Our first duty must be to thoughtfully seek out and investigate what is worthy, just and true, and surely this lofty pursuit is never to be completed within 12 hours.

Rather than achievement, right now I sense only the enormity of the awesome horizon of opportunity. To my mind it is a dereliction of duty upon being elected to this place to merely enjoy the view. No-one should enter this place to only watch the sunset or marvel at the dawn. Horizons stretch out before us to entice us to the limit, to chase the rainbow, to lure us to the next. It is the task of each of us to reach for horizons that further our cause. We must strive to govern for what is to come, to take an over-the-horizon view. We must never govern just for today.

The ephemeral reportage of government are the flowers and thorns that wilt quickly. It is the far-sighted plantings that reap the true bounty. To that end I offer some thoughts. I ask for nothing more and hope for nothing less than that these ideas might last longer than 12 hours. As an MP, the work in achieving success for our electorate is comprised, for the most part, of the hopeful lobbying of the executive, should we find ourselves part of the government, or the constant generation of noise in support of an issue, should we be sitting in opposition. To get a school ramp installed, find a grant for a new fridge at a soccer club or install a pedestrian crossing represents a significant investment in bureaucratic effort. This takes time and is characterised by the lingering doubt of ultimate success at every step. I believe we should consider giving MPs a greater ability to act of their own volition. Departmental priorities mean little to the local football club that has a busted barbecue. Voters wonder what MPs actually do. Let us permit them to act, to do, to respond and to quickly demonstrate their worth.

I also wish to address the manner in which we govern, not just for our own constituency but, in the Burkean tradition, for other concepts of constituency not contemplated by single member representation for geographic divisions. I address our obligation to govern to promote equity not just contemporaneously or across genders, backgrounds, orientations or religions, but intertemporally and intergenerationally. There has been many a word spoken about saving an animal species, a river or a forest for generations to come, but less often do governments realise their incumbent responsibility to save our cities, our health and our education systems for generations to come.

My generation has recently been told to work forever, but we have grown up being told to never expect that we would hold a job forever. We are admonished to stop spending and save harder to gain entry into a property market that has made a quantum leap beyond the reach of many of us. But for many of us, casual employment is all we have ever known. We are told to study harder and longer to gain more skills to secure one of the scarce jobs of tomorrow, but we are told it will cost more and more to gain these qualifications. For the most part we have been told this by a generation of people who have enjoyed economic and employment security, have benefited from ballooning residential values and have picked up their degrees free of charge. We have even been lectured on the 'survival of the species' while otherwise having the end of freedom enacted in front of us and our own aspirations to flourish talked down under the fog of fear. With all due respect, perhaps we should not wonder long why there is a caustic disregard for the institutions of our democracy amongst this generation.

Mount Coot-tha is one of the youngest electorates in this state. Nearly half—a staggering 47 per cent—of all those domiciled in my electorate are between the ages of 19 and 39, compared to just 29 per cent statewide. The folk of Mount Coot-tha are a discerning mob. Their cumulative profile shows them to be educated, hooked into the Internet, employed and earning above average incomes and are geographically mobile.

Inaugural speeches can sometimes amount to soliloquies of gratitude. I direct my first expression of gratitude to the people of Mount Coot-tha, who have discerned me worthy of their trust and, in so doing, provided me with this humbling opportunity. I direct this gratitude to every

voter: those who voted for me and those who voted against me who obliged themselves and the rest of us by voting in the election. To those of every age and creed, background and persuasion, I undertake to you my every effort to serve in this parliament to your best interests now and in the future.

How then do we govern for the future? We must provide for the future. When we unpack the components of demographics and productivity that drive our economy we should be confident that Queensland is uniquely placed to meet these challenges. Our prudent fiscal management has grown our net worth and our absence of net debt is the envy of many governments. We have a growing population and high levels of employment participation. Indeed, I am proud to be joining a government that is truly looking over the horizon.

Our efforts to drive job generation, support new industries and invest in education and skills development should be the model for governments throughout Australia. What is the Smart State? It is jobs and it is our future. We need to be careful, however, that at times of economic prosperity that we should not be embarrassed by our surplus or visit the temptation to diminish our fiscal capacity in acts of short-termism. We should look to the longer term investment of our surpluses into financial assets that have the capacity to provide for the future, to build the infrastructure that will drive productivity and withstand the pressures of our demographic destiny.

This is not folly. In 2011 it is predicted that the pressures of an ageing population will begin to bring pressure on the capacity of all governments to sustain service levels. Our ability as a society to accommodate these pressures will be determined in large part by the federal government. I believe in the underutilised ability of state parliaments to be incubators of innovation in our federation. In current times I believe in the obligation of this parliament to create an island of justice for Queenslanders in the sea of injustice in which we find ourselves.

The matter of our federation is worthy of more dignified debate than the discourse of blame shifting, responsibility dodging and callous policy set-ups. I am proud to be part of a government that funds dental health care and will trial the imposition of bulk-billing clinics near our public hospitals. The courage of this government in meeting those challenges is worthy of commendation.

Perhaps over the horizon lies a time when cooperation and commitment to policy solutions will characterise our federation. The states must be provided with the capacity to deliver their services, not be squeezed by a Commonwealth government spending like a drunken sailor and raising short termism to a practised art form. The answer for so many reasons is not simply the GST, the illegitimate child of the Commonwealth of which it is so ashamed that it does not include it in its budget statements. Here is my challenge to the Commonwealth: please take back the money from the GST—every last cent, 100%. In return it might perhaps consider dedicating a modest 40 per cent of Commonwealth income tax receipts to all state governments.

I would like to return to my central theme of enlivening our democracy. In thinking carefully about the causes of a lack of faith in our democracy I considered the case of someone turning 18 in December this year, who will most probably wait until well past their 20th birthday to exercise their right to vote. It may be that every other obligation and privilege of attaining legal adulthood will be exercised by them for more than two years before their opportunity to participate in our democracy is provided to them. Perhaps by obliging younger people to contribute to our society long before we deal them into our democracy contributes to a disconnection from the political process. It is time again for a debate on the merits of dealing in our younger citizens at an earlier time into our democracy.

The debate on making government relevant to our citizens has a further dimension. At the birth of our entry as Queenslanders into our nation's federation could anyone have certainly predicted that the framework of our joining would carry us the distance reached today? Doubt toward a new endeavour should never deny our aspirations to undertake such endeavours. Ultimately, the examined life makes a virtue of uncertainty. To that end, I am of the view that as a state in our great nation, we should entreat our pioneering spirit and contemplate our own expression of the essential Australian spirit. I think the following passage says it succinctly—

The meaning is simple and ... irresistible—as simple and irresistible as the idea of a Commonwealth of Australia was to the Australians of a century ago.

The meaning then was a nation united in common cause for the common good. A nation which gave expression to the lives we lead together on this continent, the experience and hopes we share as Australians.

The meaning now is still a product of that founding sentiment—it is that we are all Australians. We share a continent. We share a past, a present and a future. And our Head of State should be one of us.

The same practitioners of the intellectual dishonesty that broke the nation's heart in 1999 today preach about the worth of our great friend, the great nation of the United States of America, a country built on the full expression of their own determination as a people. A modern presidential inauguration's prayer provides an instructive message, 'The founders knew then that to endure their nation had to change.' And so must we. As a nation and as a state our founders always contemplated our need to update and refine the architecture of our government. From the tables of the *Lucinda*, they knew we would not forever stand still. I am proud to be joining a government that has been at the forefront of this chapter in the forging of the narrative of the Australian story.

Some other bloke named Fraser hung around in politics for a while and is remembered for a few things, including the famous quip 'life wasn't meant to be easy', and it surely is not. But it is easier if we embrace the things we have rather than yearning for things not yet attained. I have plenty.

In the gallery I have three of the good folk of the electorate of Whitsunday, who so wisely returned my friend Jan Jarratt at the poll, along with a resident of the enlightened citizenry of the division of Aspley, which astutely chose to re-elect the finest ever member for Aspley. My parents and my grandmothers have travelled from Proserpine and from Trouts Road in Aspley to hear what I have to say. They have been listening to what I have to say for a few years now. I am glad that they are in the gallery to finally hear me say thank you—most especially to my mother, Jeanne, who expended her long service leave in a hot, windowless, non-airconditioned office on an old used car lot during the seemingly interminable days of the election campaign. My dad, Peter, my brother, Ben, and my sister, Catherine, also arrived toward the end to lend a hand to what was truly a family campaign.

I would also like to thank the state of Queensland for the opportunity to receive such a fine education as the one I did at Proserpine State School and Proserpine State High School. Not many people can name five Academy Award winners, five Australians of the Year or five Nobel prize winners, but most people can name five of their teachers at the drop of a hat. I have outlined some of the values I hold true in this speech today, and a good many of those were learned at my state schools. Education is my passion and I am lucky to have so many great schools in my electorate and I will be their fierce advocate.

In the gallery today there are also present many other people, some of whom were in the room when I first joined the great Australian Labor Party. To Aide-de and Skiptoma, a rare find and the embodiment of the Labor Party, I finally get to record my thanks for teaching me and giving me so much. To Greg, simply my eternal gratitude for having faith in me. No-one has given me more. I have known Michael Dart even longer, and I thank him for his certain dedication to keeping the ship upright—a class act from day 1 way back in August last year.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the ALP state office, from Tash through to Cameron, and say thank you not just for the assistance during the campaign but for providing me with so many enriching challenges. I have benefited from support from across our great party and from many people in the union movement, and I thank them all. I would also like to make mention of my colleagues in Canberra. My good friend Tim is about to lead a famous campaign that will restart the enrichment of the narrative of the Australian story.

On the floor of this chamber I have a good many friends and mentors. We cannot just talk of mentoring of the next generation, of the importance of the leaders of tomorrow, without doing something about it. It is a proud moment for me to thank my colleague, the member for Nudgee, for taking a chance on me. Neil is a role model for integrity and hard work, and I strive to meet his standard. The member for Rockhampton taught me while in his employ that you can never compromise on compassion in politics. The former member for Ipswich and former Treasurer personified for me humility in politics. I also want to acknowledge another former member, the first ever Labor member for Mount Coot-tha, who provided me with every support.

I also make mention of another member who provided me with much guidance and opportunity. I was proud to serve in his office in the dark days of opposition, but I am prouder still to be here today as a part of his government—a government with a record that has been so resoundingly endorsed by the people of Queensland in recognition of his leadership.

We always save the best until last, and so I thank my wife, Therese, who is also here. I have said before in front of crowds much larger than this that she is my lover and my team-mate, my best friend and my soul mate and now it really is on the record. 2004 has already been a big year in our house, and it is about to get bigger. I cannot wait for our future together.

I want to close by borrowing from William Faulkner to plead at the start of my time here for a nobler, more hopeful pursuit than the quest for survival alone. I would like to adapt Mr Faulkner's most articulate acceptance speech made in December 1950—

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems with the spirit. There is only the question, when will I be blown up? We must relearn that the basest of all things is to be afraid and, knowing this, forget it forever. We must relearn that there is no room for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honour and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.

Without knowing this, we labour under a curse. We are concerning ourselves with defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. We grieve on universal bones, leaving no scars.

I, like Mr Faulkner, decline to accept the end of humankind. It is easy enough to say that humankind will be all right because we will endure and survive. I believe that we must not just endure, we must prevail. And it is our privilege, as the voice of our fellow citizens, to help us all not just endure but to flourish. Together with the artists, the poets, the writers, the film makers, the teachers, the mothers, the fathers, the grandparents and all of the story tellers it is our job to reinforce our capacity as a people to lift up hearts so that we as a citizenry can endure and prevail. Where there is life there is hope, and we need some more of that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Robina, I welcome to the public gallery students, teachers and parents from North Arm State School in the electorate of Nicklin.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (2.34 p.m.): Firstly, on behalf of the people of Queensland, I congratulate the Governor on her appointment late last year. We have been blessed in this state by our choices of Governor. They have been of exceptional quality, as has been proven in the past. I am quite sure that this governor will match that high standard.

Also on behalf of the people of Robina, I pass on to the Speaker my congratulations for his election to the high and ancient office of Speaker of this House. I congratulate also members who have been elected to this chamber for the very first time. As we have heard just now, those new members come into this chamber full of hope and vigour with a vision of the future and we ought not diminish that in any way, shape or form, because their long-serving presence in this chamber will ensure that the ideals of the chamber continue on. One of the great things about democracy is that if we all respect and nourish democracy and the parliament that serves it, it will serve the people of Queensland long into the future. As I have repeatedly said in this chamber, that is part of our obligations and responsibilities as members of this chamber.

Thirdly, I thank the people of Robina for extending my service in this chamber for another three years. This is my seventh election; my sixth successful one. I am eternally grateful for those good people on the central part of the Gold Coast for showing fine judgment in terms of who should represent them in this chamber for the next three years.

Mrs Reilly: They are all good people.

Mr QUINN: They are all good people. Even though they get a bit confused when they vote for the Labor Party occasionally, they are forgiven in the longer term.

The people of Robina on the Gold Coast are like most other people on the Gold Coast. They want to see the provision of quality services, protection of the environment—things that will enhance their lifestyle and make life more meaningful for them. In that respect, as I said, they are like most people on the Gold Coast and indeed most people in Queensland. They have a number of issues which I think deserve to be addressed by this government over the next three years. I take great heart at the fact that in the Governor's address the government did outline a number of issues that are important to the people of the Gold Coast and the people of Robina in particular.

One of the issues I am referring to is that which I raised exactly three years ago in my previous Address-in-Reply speech when I said in this chamber that there needs to be an accident and emergency ward at Robina Hospital. Lo and behold, three years later—it took them a while to get there—there is a commitment to provide that A&E service. I am looking forward to that service opening as quickly as possible. It will provide an essential service not only to the people of Robina but also Mudgeeraba, Burleigh, Currumbin and the southern and central part of the Gold Coast, where it is urgently needed. It is simply not acceptable these days to have the sixth largest city in Australia having one A&E department servicing almost half a million people. The people of the Gold Coast deserve better than that. Finally, the government has indicated it is going to provide that service.

The people of Robina, quite rightly, want to see an improvement in the public transport system on the Gold Coast. Again, this has been on the agenda for a number of years. We have seen no real improvement over that period. The people on the Gold Coast, some 75 kilometres from Brisbane, look at Brisbane and their public transport system and they see the government providing \$30 million or \$40 million, even more in terms of subsidy towards the Brisbane City Council buses. They see the Citytrain network and the ferry system in Brisbane. They look at what they have on the Gold Coast and they say, 'Why aren't we being given the same level of public transport on the Gold Coast as the good citizens in Brisbane enjoy?' That is a fair question. It ought to be one of those issues addressed by the Minister for Transport in this House over the next three years. We have to make sure that public transport on the Gold Coast gets additional funds to improve the service. From my perspective, I have only to drive from my house to my office, which is about two or three kilometres, and it takes me 15 to 20 minutes through the traffic every morning. And I am going against the flow on many occasions. I will mention this in the broader context later on. Roads and public transport are becoming a critical issue on the Gold Coast and an even greater issue in the south-east corner of the state.

At the central part of the Gold Coast we are glad to see the Gold Coast Convention Centre finally reaching completion and nearing the official opening. It is 90 per cent built and nearing official opening but it is already too small for the future. The government needs to step up to the plate and provide the additional funds to expand the centre to make sure that it can meet the demands that Jupiters and the other providers on the Gold Coast are factoring in over the next five to 10 years.

Public transport is a critical issue that faces the south-east corner of the state. I am pleased to see that the government has taken our initiative to put in place an urban development policy. The Premier called it urban management. This is one of the ideas we put forward in the election campaign. Everyone now understands that over the past five or 10 years there simply has not been enough attention paid to making sure that the plans for the south-east corner of the state have enough teeth. It is time for the government to make hard decisions about what these plans mean to local councils and what they mean for the master plan for the south-east corner of the state. There is no doubt in my mind—and more people are talking about this—that there is a lack of forward planning, a lack of transport and a lack of provision of government services in a timely manner and in appropriate places. This is contributing to people's concern about what their lifestyle will be like in the south-east corner of the state.

Bound up with that is providing open space, green corridors and protecting the available bushland. I am pleased to see that the government copied our idea of providing a south-east bushland fund where the government can step in and purchase critical pieces of bushland and save them for future generations in the south-east corner. That is a great initiative. I am pleased the government copied our idea. I look forward to the Minister for the Environment coming into the House announcing those purchases, particularly in urban areas, and making sure that the green corridor runs from Noosa to the border and west to Toowoomba. That will be critical in enhancing our quality of life and protecting the environment in this part of Queensland over the next five to 10 years.

Everyone has to understand—and I am sure they do—that we have tremendous growth pressures. On average, 75,000 people move into the south-east corner of the state every year. We need to start putting these critical plans in place now; five years time will simply be too late. We may as well pack up and go home. That is how critical it is.

We look forward—and I understand the bill will be presented in the House today—to the reduction in stamp duty for first home buyers. I have the pleasure to announce that that is our initiative copied by the Labor Party. We do not mind. If the government is so bereft of ideas that it has to take our ideas, we are happy with that. We are happy to see good ideas implemented. Good ideas do not come from only one side of the House; they can come from both sides. No government should be abashed or ashamed to say, 'We have taken that idea off the opposition because it is a good one.' We will gladly give it to them as long as it provides a benefit and improves quality of life for people in Queensland.

As has been said, we have provided bipartisan support for the child protection measures. We really want to see them in place. Everyone is sick and tired of the debate now. We understand we have a problem. We simply want it fixed. It is time for us to put the legislation before the House and make sure this happens over the next two to three years. It is a critical piece of policy initiative that simply needs to be supported if we are to go forward.

One of the other things about the election campaign, in my view, is that the people in Currumbin demonstrated that they are not going to tolerate poor standards of government any longer. I do not want to plough over the old ground of the past 12 months, but they were quite emphatic that they expect a higher standard of behaviour from ministers of the Crown and the government than ever before. If ministers want to play the silly games that we have seen played by a former minister, then the public will make a judgment, and make a judgment they did in Currumbin. They made it in droves. A huge swing against the incumbent minister sends a message to the government that the people of Queensland now want a better standard of ministerial behaviour than they have had in the past.

Quite frankly, it saddens me to see that this state government started its new agenda with another controversy over a minister. That was a sad indictment. Even sadder was the way in which it was handled. It was all over a \$10 bottle of wine. There are other issues involved. At the end of the day, it was a sad start by the government. The public of Queensland now expect better. They certainly will not accept any further excuses, apologies and promises to fix it as we have had over the past three to six years. Those days are gone. Those excuses and that veneer has worn out. They now expect a higher standard all round. Our job is to make sure the government understands that.

On behalf of the people of Robina, I pass on my congratulations to the Speaker and the Governor and wish them well during their term of office. I look forward to participating in debates in this chamber on behalf of the people of Robina.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! I call the honourable member for Yeerongpilly. This is the member's maiden speech and I ask honourable members to listen to it with all the decorum that is set out in the conventions for a maiden speech.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (2.47 p.m.): I am honoured to reply to the Governor's address and, in doing so, deliver my first speech to this parliament. I begin by acknowledging that we gather today on land traditionally owned by indigenous Australians. I express sorrow for the acts of previous governments in their treatment of indigenous people, and say sorry directly on behalf of my ancestors. I welcome the appointment of the member for Clayfield as the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. Appointing a ministry dedicated solely to indigenous issues reflects the urgent need to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged Australians. I hope that when I leave this parliament I look back knowing that indigenous people have longer life expectancy, reduced infant mortality rates, higher levels of education and employment, reduced incarceration rates and a much better quality of life.

I recognise my predecessor, the former member for Yeerongpilly, the Hon. Matt Foley. Matt served in this House for 14 years and was a minister in both the Goss and Beattie governments. Matt began his first speech with the words 'I come to this place to achieve change.' Matt certainly achieved change. Matt can be particularly proud of his work to promote women and advance the lives of indigenous people. Perhaps Matt's greatest legacy, however, is his thorough and uncompromising commitment to eradicating the corruption that had poisoned government in Queensland before 1989. Let us never return to those dark and shameful days.

There is no greater role for government than reducing poverty and financial hardship. This was fundamental at Federation and remains fundamental today. Until recently, however, issues relating to poverty and hardship had not been at the forefront of the political debate. I am heartened by the recent Senate inquiry into poverty and financial hardship and commend the work of the committee. I draw the House's attention to the recent address by the federal shadow minister for families and community services. Labor is putting poverty and hardship firmly back on the agenda.

I commit my first speech to raising awareness of some of the issues of hardship experienced by Australians today and to giving definition to the issues that will focus my efforts whilst I maintain the confidence of the electors of Yeerongpilly. Governments have talked a lot in recent times about aspiration and achievement. Governments must establish an environment that allows people to aspire and achieve, an environment free of poverty and disadvantage.

Several public figures have spoken of the 'ladder of opportunity' and helping people climb the rungs. But without targeted government strategies to reduce poverty and disadvantage, the first rung of the ladder will remain out of reach to many Australians. The ACOSS submission to the recent Senate inquiry defined an important role of government as drawing attention to poverty and disadvantage, taking action to reduce it and monitoring progress in addressing it. Sound economic policy alone will not do the job. Progress is much more likely to be made when

governments make commitments that are tied to performance targets. If we want to get people onto the first rung of the ladder we have to ask ourselves: are we monitoring poverty and disadvantage? Are we reducing it? What are our targets to eradicate it? These fundamental questions must underpin the actions of government today.

There are many aspects of poverty and financial hardship. Today I will draw attention to some of the current issues of national importance in the areas of core Labor values: employment, health, housing and education. I turn first to employment and the labour market. In 1998, the then Beattie-led Queensland opposition set an unemployment target. That target of five per cent was criticised by some people. However, when the promise was made, unemployment in Queensland was 9.5 per cent. Today, the figure is 5.9 per cent. The Beattie Labor government deserves recognition for developing a bold target and going for it. I remain hopeful that future Australian governments will once again set a national target of full employment and that that target not be undermined by partisan politics.

Employment levels are critical to reducing poverty and hardship, but we must also ensure both security in employment and adequate wages. A brief look at earnings in this country shows that minimum wages have decreased since 1984 and that new jobs are not high-paying jobs. Eighty-seven per cent of jobs created nationally in the 1990s paid less than \$26,500 per annum. Much of this is due to the increased casualisation of the work force. In 2000, 27.3 per cent of the paid work force was in casual employment—more than double the number in 1982. One example is the manufacturing industry, where labour hire firms now cover 19 per cent of the work force with 97 per cent of their workers casual employees. Halting rampant casualisation must be a goal of governments today if we are serious about fixing poverty and disadvantage. Casual workers have poor job security, variable incomes, no paid leave and low advancement prospects.

In the main, loadings for casual workers has barely increased over the past 30 years, but what has happened at the other end of the spectrum? In 2001, the top 100 Australian CEOs earned 65 times the federal minimum wage. One year later, they had jumped to 89 times the federal minimum wage. This group of Australian CEOs now earns in excess of \$38,000 per week. The widening gap between the rich and poor and the increasing number of people in poverty are what the Prime Minister should consider when he says that the poor are not getting poorer.

Any consideration of disadvantage in the workplace must also look at pay equity and work and family issues. It is shameful that in 2004 women still earn on average \$130 less per week than men. I particularly acknowledge the work of two trade unions, the LHMU and the ASU, who continue the struggle to increase income levels for women workers. Their work in the child care industry must be highlighted. Childcare workers are among the lowest paid and yet have the day-to-day responsibility of looking after our children. The reward that they receive is simply not commensurate with the responsibility that they bear. I also recognise the work of the trade union movement for their focus on work and family. Access to paid parenting leave is at the forefront of work and family issues in Australia. Sadly, there are few opportunities for parents to secure adequate leave following childbirth. It is no wonder that women believe that they will lose job security if they have extended leave. A 2001 OECD survey found that Australia had the lowest employment rates of mothers of children under six, the lowest employment rates for lone parents and we ranked 15th in the work force participation of mothers in couple families. Currently, paid maternity leave is available to only 35 per cent of women in the work force and low-income earners are less likely to have access to paid leave. Only 30 per cent of women earning between \$20,000 and \$29,000 have access to paid maternity leave compared to 65 per cent in the \$50,000 to \$69,000 range. Many paid maternity leaves are inadequate. Almost 40 per cent of certified agreements with paid maternity leave are limited to two weeks leave. A further 20 per cent are limited to six weeks leave.

It is time for a modern policy. Governments must have a target that 100 per cent of the work force will have access to paid parenting leave and the ILO's recommended minimum of 14 weeks leave must be our benchmark. Not only is paid parenting leave essential for the health of the mother and child, it provides opportunities for parents, including fathers, to provide family support and bond with the child in the first three months of life.

It is with great disappointment that I stand here today as the federal Australian government dismantles our universal health care system. The decline in bulk-billing and the rising cost in basic health care means that fewer people who need health care will get it. This is not a better system. A better system is when fewer people need health care, not simply when fewer people use it. This

approach of the federal government should come as no surprise. The current Prime Minister in 1987, when talking about what he would do in government, said—

We will get rid of the bulk-billing system. It's an absolute roort.

He went further to say—

We will be proposing changes to Medicare which amount to ipso facto dismantling. We will pull it right apart.

He is certainly doing that. In 1996, 80 per cent of GP visits were bulk-billed. Last year, that figure had fallen to 69 per cent. This trend must be reversed. In the years to come, we must look back on this period as a flesh wound for the universal system, not as a death knell.

Waiting lists are a key indicator of a performing health system and are integral to reducing poverty and disadvantage. If surgery is required to reduce pain or increase mobility, then the longer it takes to have that surgery, the longer the potential dislocation from the work force. The Beattie government is to be commended for its health platform with a focus on shortening waiting lists. We are already injecting funds to reduce waiting lists and our independent audit will inform the development of targets for waiting times and strategies to achieve these targets.

The right to equal access to a full range of health care services must be protected. The government must maintain and advance this right not only through funding a universal system but also by ensuring that access to health services is neither limited by the Criminal Code nor by moral majorities of law-makers. Queenslanders must be able to make their own decisions about their health care within a system that allows them to do so with dignity.

I now turn to affordable housing. The link between affordable housing and hardship is that affordable housing allows households more income to be spent on essential services. Of critical importance is the percentage of income households spend on housing. The 2002 ACOSS housing blueprint reports that 35 per cent of households receiving rent assistance—and they are the poorest households—spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent. Nine per cent of these households spend more than 50 per cent. These levels are much too high and all Australian governments must urgently develop strategies to ensure housing availability for low-income earners that meets the international benchmark of affordability, considered to be a cost below 30 per cent of income.

All members in this House would have been approached by people seeking public housing and there is clearly more demand than there is supply. To address some of the unmet demand, we must set a target for increasing public housing just as we set our unemployment target. ACOSS recommends a national target of six per cent of households living in public housing—double the current Queensland component. However, the real problem in public housing is that funding under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is declining. Base grant funding under this agreement has fallen 54 per cent over the last 10 years. It is not acceptable that federal governments trumpet massive surpluses while cutting the funding agreement that provides shelter to low income and disadvantaged people.

In addition to public housing, changes are needed to the taxation system and government and private investors must work towards agreements with mutual benefit from the construction of affordable housing. As Brisbane grows and house prices increase, ensuring that people on low incomes can afford housing will be one of our biggest challenges. The partnership between the states and the Brisbane City Council that is currently providing affordable housing must continue to expand.

Of course, when we talk about housing, the greatest problem is homelessness. In a prosperous country such as Australia we still have unacceptable levels of homelessness. The 2001 census found that there were 100,000 homeless people in Australia, and sadly more than half of these are children or young people. Australia is a wealthy country; we can afford to make homelessness a thing of the past.

I turn now to education. Access to a quality education is the key to addressing poverty and disadvantage. Education provides pathways into employment. However, entry level jobs now require a greater skill base and the completion of secondary education is a basic requirement. The ACOSS submission to the Senate inquiry describes an Australian labour market where secure, full-time jobs are increasingly being rationed to those with the highest skills. People with limited formal education and vocational training are disadvantaged. Government investment in early childhood education and increasing school leaving ages are critical.

The long-term impact of government investment in early childhood education was recognised in the report of an earlier Senate inquiry that estimated that every dollar of early childhood

spending is likely to save \$7 in later expenditure on remediation. The Beattie Labor government knows the importance of investing in education. Our education and training reforms for the future involve a massive injection of funds into education and training and include the introduction of a preparatory year of schooling and school retention strategies. Queensland children will be starting school at a younger age and will be earning or learning right through to at least the age of 17.

However, whilst Queensland ensures that every child has access to education and training, access to university gets harder. It does not take a university degree to work out the link between financial hardship and debt, but it does take a mean-spirited government to burden our young people leaving university with massive debt. Since 1996, the Australian federal government has cut funding to higher education by \$5 billion. At the same time it has allowed universities to increase HECS fees by up to 25 per cent and allocate 30 per cent of places to full-fee paying students.

It is very disappointing that some universities have felt pressured to increase fees to gain a perceived marketing edge based on a premise that a higher fee equals greater prestige. The federal government has created an environment of slashing funding, promoting education for the rich and pitting universities against each other. In effect, this has shifted the burden of providing education directly on to students, a group whose average annual income in 2000 was \$12,500. HECS fees are simply massive taxes with deferred payment options imposed on people with low incomes. For many, particularly women, the reward for attending university is financial hardship caused by long-term massive education debt. Supporters of shifting this burden onto students should look closely at what is happening in New Zealand. More than half of New Zealand's home loan institutions are now taking higher education debts into account when determining home loan approvals. Burdening people with lifelong debt and hardship is the logical extension of Australia's current higher education policies. The ideal of free education and recognition of the incredible boost this country received following the Whitlam government abolishing university fees must drive government higher education strategies.

I have touched on but a few of the issues associated with poverty and hardship that government must address. In raising these, I recognise that there are pressures on government to fund essential infrastructure and to develop budgets that target service delivery within responsible financial guidelines. I am pleased that there is a federal debate on taxation and the national surplus. We must break the mould of governments that make the community poorer by slashing spending on services to provide individual income tax cuts on the eve of an election. In Queensland we must continue to examine our economic model in order to target expenditure for infrastructure and services that reduce disadvantage and hardship. We must bury forever the populist mantra of the low-tax state constructed by government prior to 1989. Strategies and targets to eradicate poverty and disadvantage will fail if this mantra is allowed to again dominate debate on public expenditure. Competitive taxation models allow Queensland to attract business and investment whilst ensuring a revenue stream to fund service provision.

I also note comments by the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Queensland Council of Unions, Professor John Quiggin and others regarding Queensland's fuel subsidy scheme. Whilst it is neither Labor Party nor government policy to make changes to this subsidy, I believe it is time for it to be examined. QUT's Professor Layton estimates the annual cost of the fuel subsidy at \$500 million per year. Reallocation of at least some of these funds could provide a significant injection to essential infrastructure. Any changes to this subsidy would need to be undertaken with caution, however. Increases in fuel prices will most affect people who travel long distances to work and who do not have adequate alternative transport options. These are often people on low incomes. On balance, however, I am concerned about the economic and environmental sustainability of continuing to subsidise fuel consumption.

I thank the electors of Yeerongpilly for the honour of representing them in parliament. As I begin my representative role, there are a number of local issues which I will advance with vigour in partnership with local residents and community groups. Recent reports of potential passenger jet usage of the Archerfield airport are concerning. Aircraft noise greatly affects the quality of life of residents under flight paths. I will strongly oppose any expansion of the use of Archerfield airport that will negatively affect the amenity of local suburbs or residents' quality of life. Heavy transport usage on local roads will continue to be an issue for Yeerongpilly residents, particularly as the federal government controlled national freight route runs through the electorate. All levels of government must work together to provide better options for heavy transport that reduce traffic impacts on residents. We must provide the necessary transport infrastructure to provide alternatives for passing through traffic and, where possible, reduce reliance on road transport.

In the last term of the Beattie government the Treasurer and Minister for Sport announced a proposed development of the Tennyson power station to include a state tennis centre and residential development. This exciting proposal will provide better sporting opportunities for local people. The nature of the development, however, will need to satisfy local concerns about traffic, river access and the impact of residential density in the final proposal. The dedication of the Oxley Creek Common as green open space provides fantastic opportunities for residents of Rocklea and surrounding suburbs. Together with the Brisbane City Council, local groups and community consultation, this valuable asset will develop into a highly used public space whilst its environmental values are preserved.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the people and organisations that provided the background for the detail of this speech, including the QCU, the Queensland Council of Social Service, the Australian Council of Social Service, the ACTU, the National Union of Students president, Jodie Jansen, and Mr Noel Morris of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. I recognise with warmth and gratitude the support that I have received over many years from many Labor Party members locally and across Queensland. In particular, I thank my core campaign team of Cameron Crowther, Jo Clark-Jones, Ken Boyne, Alana Tibbitts and my nephew Tom Lembo, who at four years of age provided a special campaigning charm. Those of you who have met him will know all about that charm.

Several trade unions have provided me with support and guidance over the years, particularly during the election campaign, for which I thank them. Trade unions are too infrequently recognised for the work they do in eliminating poverty and disadvantage in our society. Thanks also to my family members, some of whom are in the gallery today, for the support provided me over the years. In particular, I thank my parents for providing me with an upbringing in which curiosity and an awareness of world events was encouraged. I also recognise my late grandfather, Keith Charles White, the former mayor of the city of Williamstown. Keith passed away whilst I was young but still provides me with my earliest political memories. I know how proud he would be seeing me embark on a representative commitment to community service. Finally, I give special thanks to my partner, Terri Butler, both for the love and support she has given me for many years and also, I hope, in advance for coping with the constraints and pressures that accompany life in partnership with a politician.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (3.06 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker Fouras, in rising to speak for the first time in the 51st Parliament of Queensland, I ask you to convey to the Speaker my sincere congratulations on his elevation and reappointment to that high office, which is a very important one, and I congratulate you on your responsibilities as the Chairman of Committees in this House. To each and every new member of the House—my National Party colleagues, Liberal Party members and government members—I give my sincere congratulations. This is a great honour that has been bestowed on us again to represent the people of Queensland in the 51st Parliament of this great state. I congratulate the Premier and his government on their re-election. It was a campaign where they thoroughly thrashed us—there is no doubt about it—and that recognition must be given. Whilst we need to look at some of the issues that come into vogue in relation to our flogging at the polls, we also have to look at ourselves and become a more formidable opposition. It does not make me happy that we are not in coalition with our Liberal colleagues at this point in time, but the fruits of that will not be far away, and I hope that they are not far away. To each and every one of my colleagues in the National Party, I congratulate them on their re-election and look forward to working very closely with them over the next three years.

I have been appointed shadow minister for Police and Corrective Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. These are two very important functions. Over the past 12 years I have had the honour of being the opposition's spokesman for Transport and Main Roads and then being minister and then opposition spokesman again. My very able colleague the member for Maroochydore will handle that area of responsibility and will do it very professionally and very ably. However, I want to reflect this afternoon on Police and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. Police powers across the state are very important. As we are now part of the international stage of terrorism, more than ever we have to shoulder the responsibility of giving our police the powers they deserve—the powers they need—to uphold the safety and the traditions that we are accustomed to here in Queensland. I asked this question on notice in the parliament today to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services: when is the Queensland government going to introduce into this House the powers for police to negotiate or enter into phone tapping? Every other state in the Commonwealth enjoys that power. Now, with terrorism on our doorstep and with many other issues at play—drug runners, murderers, rapists and that element of society none of

us condones—I believe it is paramount that we give police those powers so they can close in on that element of society that causes unrest and hurt to many of our good people.

I know that the former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy has left the chamber, but I say that I look forward to working with her in her new role as Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I put on the record that I think Judy Spence did an exemplary job as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. She made a lot of hard decisions. There has been controversy in recent weeks over a bottle of wine being taken to Lockhart River, but it was Judy Spence—she received bipartisan support from the opposition and all members of this House—who had the guts, grit and determination to introduce into this parliament those very tough laws in relation to the regulation and control of alcohol in Aboriginal communities.

Alcohol is a real problem. It is a scourge on not only those communities but also on the whole of Queensland. As the custodians of this state we are responsible for making certain that we introduce legislation that will give those people quality of life and return them to conditions that the non-indigenous community of this state enjoys. The primarily important thing that comes with that legislation is re-education. To quote the Premier in times gone by, we need to regain that lost generation—give them purpose in life, give them reason to want to have a life, educate them, give them good health standards and eliminate foetal alcoholism and all of the other things that come and go against the women of those indigenous communities. I refer to the abuse those women have received over the years because of alcohol. It is paramount that collectively we make a difference. By ensuring we drive that agenda, we will make that difference. I hope that the new Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will carry on with the tools that have been left to her to make certain that we make a difference.

The other area I touch on is country racing. I note that the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing is not present in the chamber, but I look forward to working closely with him to make a difference in this area. Country racing was flogged by the former minister. I do not seek to criticise the former minister, but it should be recognised that country racing is part of the social fabric of rural and regional Queensland. It has been decimated because lip service has been paid to it. It is an unfortunate situation. I have already spoken to the minister. Hopefully some rectification will be made.

I know that the parliamentary secretary with responsibility for racing, the member for Bulimba, has already spoken to people in rural and regional Queensland about this issue. It is not only about reinstating the social fabric of some of those areas; it is about regenerating jobs and promoting growth in rural and regional Queensland, where some \$80 million to \$180 million a year is generated from country racing. I do not say that lightly. The situation that now exists is one we have to reverse. I trust that Rob Swarten and Pat Purcell, with the help of responsible input from members of this House and certainly members of the opposition, can make a difference.

Again, I know that the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing is not present in the chamber, but I do want to touch on the area of housing. It is always a contentious issue in my electorate of Gregory. In the past I have had some great responses from the Minister for Public Works in relation to getting housing into some of those far-flung areas of the Gregory electorate. I hope we can see some of the voids filled in the near future.

I know that tree clearing legislation was introduced into this House today. Vegetation management is another very contentious issue. I appeal to the minister and the government to show some understanding when it comes to debating this legislation. I know that there is talk about remnant clearing and about the total shutdown of clearing by 2006. We are talking about the future viability of rural producers right across Queensland. Many of these people live in my electorate. There are some very nervous people out there at the moment. They are wondering how they are going to repay funds to financial institutions.

In all fairness to those people, they are not environmental vandals. Those people have been the custodians of that land for nearly 200 years in some places. The electorate of Gregory has a fragile environment and is a very low rainfall area. If they had been environmental vandals they would not have survived in that country over this long period of time. I myself was a man of the land at Quilpie—a very low rainfall area—for many years before I became the local member in 1989. I can assure members of this House that proper management skills are what help you survive in areas of low rainfall. I refer to the great droughts of the mid 1960s, the early 1990s and the early 2000s. If people were environmental vandals they certainly would not have survived to date.

In her opening address in the Legislative Council chamber yesterday, the Governor made reference to the fact that the government will put in place a drought water task force. That is something I salute and think is good. Two years ago in this House I raised with the Premier the possibility of instituting a task force to address this issue, which is not going away. Whilst western Queensland has had some good rain in recent months, it is only interim relief. That interim relief will be all over by the end of winter if we do not get follow-up rain. The only saviour in the channel country is that there has been a channel flood. Many of those western areas, especially in the Diamantina, Barcoo, Bulla and Paroo shires, and Quilpie in my own area, have not had sufficient rain. The situation is very grave.

I ask the members of that task force to show some leadership, especially in the areas of local government, where they are endeavouring to improve their water supplies. It is paramount that those water supplies are upgraded so that we can see growth in some of those areas. There cannot be growth in places such as Longreach—they have a really acute scenario on their hands—because of the water situation. Whilst it is very minimal at the moment, certainly a lot of dollars have to be spent there to improve the existing situation.

I also touch on the area of roads. Roads are probably one of the most important communication links we have in our state. I congratulate the new minister, Paul Lucas, on his elevation to that very high level of responsibility of Transport and Main Roads. I certainly look forward to working closely with him and to making a difference in relation to the road infrastructure in the 12 local authorities in my electorate. I applaud the \$568 million in programs such as the Smart State Building Fund and safer road funding. I believe this is an initiative—I hope it will flow on to local government—through which local government can rebuild and put in place infrastructure that has been fragmenting over a long period of time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you know as well as I do that if we do not have good roads we do not have safe roads. I see from the Governor's speech of yesterday that it is part of the government's policy to bring about safer roads. I applaud the government on its road safety program. I was the minister responsible for the introduction of speed cameras in this state to bring about a reduction in the road toll. There is more to road safety than reducing the road toll. We also have to lower the number of people who are maimed and injured because of the ludicrous behaviour of some of the drivers on our roads.

At the same time, if we do not have quality infrastructure, quality pavements, that will progressively get worse. Because our state is growing at the rate of 50,000 people per year, that problem will certainly be compounded wherever it may be—whether it be here in the south-east corner, in the remote areas that I represent, the far north, the gulf or the coastal areas of Queensland. It is very important that we recognise that the whole of Queensland needs to be advantaged by this. I trust the government will give due recognition to this.

The other area I want to touch on this afternoon is rural education. I believe education is absolutely paramount to the ongoing viability of our citizens and the children of this state, regardless of where they live. I said in my first speech in this House 14 years ago that equality of education, regardless of where we live—whether it is Birdsville, Brisbane, Bedourie or Bamaga—is important. It is a difficulty faced by some of our rural families because they do not have the money to send their children away to boarding schools. I pay tribute today to the great work done over a long period by the Isolated Children's Parents Association, especially by Jack Beach from Julia Creek who has worked very closely with the minister in bringing about a difference to remote and rural education.

I have mentioned in the House before the great work that Anna Bligh has implemented in her bypassing program with regard to rural schools. It is working wonderfully. I hope we can see an extension to that program over the coming years so we can encompass more schools and make a difference to more children. One of our great neurosurgeons comes from Boulia. His father was a shearer and because they saw a child who was gifted they moved to give that child good education and access to university. These are the sorts of kids who are out there and we must give them that opportunity. I trust we can give them that opportunity because, regardless of where they are, regardless of their social status—

Ms Struthers: You are exactly right. Brendan Nelson needs to hear this.

Mr JOHNSON: I have spoken to Brendan Nelson about this. I take the interjection from the honourable member, but I am not playing politics with this. This is a very important issue and one that we have to address. We cannot play politics with it because it is about the future of our kids.

The other issue I want to touch on today while I am talking about health services is that of Birdsville Hospital. I would like to pay tribute today to Frontier Services for the great work it has done in providing health services to Birdsville over the last 80 years. I know that the Australian government has given \$500,000 towards the new clinic in Birdsville. I note that the new Minister for Health, the Hon. Gordon Nuttall, is in the House. I congratulate him on his elevation to the Health portfolio. I trust our relationship will be better than that which I had with the last minister. I thank the minister for the \$200,000 that he has just made available to the Birdsville clinic because it will make a difference, I can assure him.

Mr Nuttall: Take me out there some time.

Mr JOHNSON: I will take the minister out there; that is no problem. We are hoping to receive \$400,000 for the regional partnership program and \$500,000 for the Diamantina Shire Council. This is a plus for Birdsville. This is a plus for the tourists and for the local people who live and visit that area every year. It is a real win for that community.

The other area I want to touch on today is that of aerial services or flying medical services. I understand that the Flying Surgical Service will be removed from Mount Isa and taken to Townsville. This is the greatest kick in the guts that we can receive. The minister has to reverse this decision. We have seen the service removed from Longreach to Mount Isa. We now see it removed from Mount Isa to Townsville. Where is the rural practice in that when we see a service for the bush being removed to the coast? I know a lot of the major hospitals are in those areas, but the intent behind the Flying Surgical Service is that surgery is performed in country hospitals so those patients do not have to go away from their communities, their loved ones and their families. This will mean they have to go to the coast at great expense to themselves.

The other area I want to touch on is the sad state of affairs in the central highlands health services based in Emerald. We have a real dilemma with respect to expectant mothers and their infants. In the instance of first births, they are asking those mums to go away to Rockhampton or Brisbane or somewhere on the coast to give birth to their infant. This is a very unfortunate situation. I know we have a shortage of midwives, but professional people should not have to tell those mothers that they do not want them in Emerald and that they can go somewhere else. A brand new hospital is being treated with absolute contempt by members of this department. I have to say here today—and I do not say this lightly to the minister—that I hope the minister can intervene and see first-hand the issues confronting expectant mothers and other issues in relation to health and the central highlands. This is an area that is out of control and one we need to do something about in a hurry.

I also want to touch on the cost of flying into rural Queensland. It costs \$1,072 return to fly from Brisbane to Mount Isa, \$872 to Longreach, \$1,198 to Birdsville and \$1,217 to Bedourie, yet we have seen QantasLink and Virgin advertising \$29 fares. I appeal to the Minister for Transport and I appeal to commonsense. I know these are subsidised services but I appeal to the minister to bring about some sanity to give some fairness to this issue.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Shine): Before calling the honourable member for Cook, might I remind honourable members that this is the honourable member's maiden speech and therefore I ask that he be heard in accordance with the conventions of the House.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (3.26 p.m.): I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land and by thanking the people of Cook for putting their trust in me to represent them in this parliament. The Cook electorate is like no other in this parliament. It starts at the Papua New Guinea border to the north and includes the 17 inhabited islands of the Torres Strait, the five northern peninsula area communities at the tip of mainland Australia, the eight Aboriginal communities on the balance at Cape York cornered by Kowanyama in the south-west, also including the mining township of Weipa and the Cook shire centred in Cooktown. It stretches south from there to the Douglas shire, the main centres of which are Mossman and Port Douglas. It then extends further south to include the three most northern beach suburbs of Cairns. Just to make life especially interesting, it now takes in parts of the Mareeba shire around Kuranda, north of the Barron River.

While the electorate of Cook has changed over the years, for the last 30 years the seat has been more than adequately represented by two men whose intelligence, work ethic and determination to better the lives of the people they represent shall always be my guiding principle. I refer to Steve Bredhauer, who is in the gallery today, and Bob Scott. Thank you, gentlemen. The

reason Cook remains in Labor hands today and the reason I stand here is because of the work they have put in over many years.

When you have an electorate as diverse as Cook, with a distinct and unique culture in Torres Strait Islanders, a large Aboriginal population and a host of other issues facing regional and remote Australia, the difficulty is knowing where to start. Previous members have done a bit of a cook's tour, so to speak. Today, however, I will try to keep it issue focused and work my way around the electorate starting with environment protection. The reason I start with this topic is not just because of the pristine areas the electorate encompasses but also for much more personal reasons. I was born in 1969—a landmark year in terms of the evolution of human endeavour with the lunar landing. While the technological advances space exploration has brought about are remarkable, I am more interested in the changes in human consciousness created by the ability for the first time to look back at ourselves from outer space.

I think that the moon landing gave us a chance to see our planet for what it really is: a small vulnerable rock in a sea of inexplicable infinity. It is from this perspective that my generation must face its future. For some, while the hairs on our head are numbered, from now on it is the very trees and rivers and other natural resources that we must attentively manage. Our role as the 89 custodians of this large portion of the planet gives us the responsibility for some very important areas of national significance. The question of this age and of this society is how we maintain sustainable economic growth without impacting negatively and permanently on the natural environment. I think a large part of the answer for breaking the nexus between economic growth and environmental protection is careful planning.

The future of a large part of my electorate has been planned for under the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Study. It acts as a blueprint for the future land management of this important region. That is why it is of concern that there are still large areas of extremely high conservation value that remain unprotected on Cape York Peninsula. The cape remains as one of the world's great unexplored wildernesses. The necessity to ensure that it remains that way for the enjoyment and prosperity of future generations is imperative.

It was, therefore, very pleasing during the recent election campaign to receive a commitment that a re-elected Beattie government will spend \$7.5 million for voluntary acquisitions of land of high conservation value on the cape. The commitment comes on top of the groundbreaking wild rivers policy, which gives added protection to 17 of Queensland's large pristine river systems. Fourteen of these rivers are within the Cook electorate.

Another commitment given during the campaign was to begin compiling the case towards World Heritage listing for appropriate areas on Cape York Peninsula. This is a critical step towards the future economic prosperity of the region. It is high time the Commonwealth government stopped ignoring the importance of the area and joined the Queensland government in protecting it and presenting it to the world.

This government has also committed an additional \$5 million for acquisition of land of high conservation value in the Daintree area. The history of the subdivision of this precious and rare low-lying rainforest is one of the most sordid tales in Queensland's political history. It would certainly rival the late-night demolition of the historic Bellevue Hotel, to give it some perspective for southern based members. Certainly there will be no prizes for guessing which party was in power when the rainforest was carved up and sold off. So it falls upon us on the Labor side of politics to do the patently obvious right thing and protect this unique environment, not just for the environment's sake but because it guarantees the jobs and businesses of thousands of people in the tourism industry. This area is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet which, through careful research, may unlock the doors to all sorts of medical understanding.

I would like to acknowledge the previous Minister for the Environment, Dean Wells; his policy officer, Ross McLeod; and Damian McGreevy from the Premier's office for their work in developing these important policies for the future of this planet. I look forward to working with the new Environment Minister on their implementation.

Unfortunately, however, there remain some significant impediments to the implementation of these policies. One significant factor stands between the protection of these globally significant areas and the potential for these areas to create sustainable employment for local people. That factor is conservative politicians at all levels. It is not my intention to be overly negative in this inaugural address, but certainly there is a view held by people who represent a very narrow interest that World Heritage protection is paramount to locking up Cape York Peninsula. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. I ask those people who hold that view to consider the

economy of the Daintree area before parts of it were World Heritage listed and compare it to the economic base which exists there today. It is like chalk and cheese. Today the Daintree area with its World Heritage listing is providing more jobs and more services for more people than at any time in the area's history. There is no reason to suggest that the same dramatic change cannot happen in parts of the cape to assist people living there who are desperately in need of employment opportunities. Labor is doing more to open up the cape, especially through road construction, due largely to the work of my predecessor.

In the near future the government will hopefully sign off some policies and protocols to allow for the management of national parks by Aboriginal people. This will not only provide valuable employment for Aboriginal people but will also create a much more interesting perspective for visitors to those national parks. It is hoped that the pace of property management agreements, which seek to ensure the future of the cattle industry on Cape York, is accelerated throughout this term. While I set out talking specifically about environment protection in the Cook electorate, you can see how closely the issue is linked to tourism and economic development.

A few years ago I attended a lecture by the historian Henry Reynolds, who indicated that there are about 7,000 different human cultures but for a variety of reasons they were being overshadowed by seven large cultural blocks. He said that unless the seven large cultural blocks took positive steps to accommodate the smaller ones, we are in danger of losing those groups.

In the electorate of Cook there is a separate and distinct cultural group whose traditions go back many centuries. They are Australia's other indigenous people, Torres Strait Islanders. Torres Strait Islanders are very enthusiastic to maintain their cultural traditions as they engage in the business of the wider world. Anyone who is lucky enough to travel to the Torres Strait sees—on the surface at least—paradise. The clear blue water and sandy beaches of many islands are the stuff that holiday postcards are made of. Certainly there is a growing movement amongst many islands to improve their tourism infrastructure and start attracting more visitors to their ideal location. The Queensland government, through the Department of State Development, can assist this industry, which clearly has an enormous potential for growth in the long term, with coordinated marketing and grants for individual businesses and projects. Efforts will also need to be made to ensure that indigenous people are included in the development of the industry at all levels.

There are a number of things that hold the Torres Strait back from reaching its full potential and have enormous impact on the quality of life and health of people living there. The first of these is the cost of living. By virtue of its distance from Cairns and Brisbane, not only is the cost of all goods in all parts of the Torres Strait expensive but so is the simple act of moving from one island to another to visit family and for other functions. Because the islands have little space to farm vegetables and meat in any large-scale method at this time, prices of these staple foods are high. There are health implications as a consequence of the high cost of living, both at a physical and spiritual level, especially when people are isolated from their family.

Many of these issues also pertain to people living in Aboriginal communities on Cape York Peninsula. The Torres Shire mayor, Pedro Stephen, has called for a committee of inquiry into the high cost of living in the Torres Strait. I want to publicly support that request and ask that it extend to Cape York as well.

Another important issue facing the six islands of the Torres Strait is erosion. On a couple of these islands, such as Yorke and Poruma, the erosion is quite simple. I would like to invite the new Environment Minister to visit these islands with his departmental officers in the near future and to offer what assistance he can to the very concerned people living there.

There is debate occurring throughout the Torres Strait at the moment concerning the future government structure for that region. The debate is occurring at two levels with some people calling for a new board structure for the Torres Strait Regional Authority. While generally speaking the authority is a Commonwealth institution, it works closely with state government agencies, especially in the field of infrastructure improvement. At the state level many people have been watching the proposed changes to the governing structure in Aboriginal communities with interest and are waiting patiently for us to engage with them if similar changes are to be implemented in the Torres Strait.

I want to talk now about alcohol management plans. I raise them when I am talking about economic development in the Cook electorate because I believe they are the cornerstone for change. Honourable members may have noticed that there has been a bit of information in the news recently about the plans and, as best I can, I have become somewhat knowledgeable about their implementation. I want to put my support for alcohol management plans on the record

straight away. For too long the ravages of alcohol abuse have destroyed Aboriginal families and communities. I also want to place on record my regard for the former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and the Premier for having the courage to finally do something when so many people before did nothing. I also acknowledge the comments made by the member for Gregory in the previous speech.

One thing, however, that must be understood about the plans is that they are the first step of a long journey. The theory is that only when Aboriginal people working through their community justice groups and in partnership with their government take control of alcohol abuse can we move forward with improving health, education and employment standards. Having said that, though, and acknowledging that the Premier is steadfast in his determination to push forward with the plans, what I will not support is alcohol management plans that are imposed upon communities. Each AMP, as they are known, is different. They are different because they were formed in consultation with the community justice groups. However, I cannot support plans where the wishes of the justice groups have been set aside. There is widespread support for the plans by nearly every person I have spoken to about them in my electorate. The concern of people is that they are not having a say in the detail of the plans. In places like Mapoon and the northern peninsula area this is particularly so.

The first alcohol management plan which was agreed to was in Aurukun and has been in place for over 12 months now. It is now timely for a warts and all review of its effects. I think the Premier indicated today that the initial results are largely positive. Through you, Mr Speaker, I would urge the Premier to visit Mapoon and the Northern Peninsula area, sit down with the people there in the community justice groups and listen to their concerns and take them into account. There is a genuine commitment to making these plans work, but without the support of the communities themselves it is going to be made more difficult. Once alcohol management plans have had the desired effect—and there is no doubt that in a place like Aurukun the plans have had a marked effect in a short period of time—it is then up to other government agencies to increase their engagement with Aboriginal communities. In the long run, both Aboriginal and Islander people must provide as much of their own government services, whether it is in the critical area of housing, police, road construction or education, for example, as possible.

There are other economic opportunities opening up for people on Cape York Peninsula, particularly in the cattle, fishing and mining industries. While I wholeheartedly support the tree clearing legislation the Minister for Natural Resources introduced into the House today, I think the legislation must include provisions for projects of regional significance that allow Aboriginal people the opportunity to expand and develop their economic base. I will speak more on this matter during the second reading debate of that bill.

I think a major impediment to economic development in Aboriginal communities is the quality and quantity of training that is delivered there. Many Aboriginal people are sick and tired of training. Many are walking around their communities with all sorts of qualifications with little opportunities to employ them. Other training which may be of use and interest to people is delivered in a culturally inappropriate manner. Often an agency will get a good idea for a project and immediately send some trainer in the community to round up a few interested bodies, and nicks off two days later with his cheque in tow. The community is often left with no ongoing support and the project with no chance of success.

It is important to emphasise that in addition to alcohol management plans there are a number of positive changes happening in Cape York communities. In two weeks time, on 27 March, Aboriginal councils will begin the transition that will see them become the same as nearly every other council in Queensland. It would surprise many members to know the wide variety of services community councils are expected to deliver. Amongst other things, community councils provide normal council services and are also expected to run the post office, the police force, Centrelink services, employment services, funerals and a host of other services. In addition to improving the financial accountability requirements of these councils, the change is also intended to try to relieve the large burden placed upon these councils. The fact of the matter is that Aboriginal and Island councils simply do not have the resources to do all that is asked of them. For example, the Wujal Wujal council is not in a position at this time to fund a vehicle for its community police, making it very hard for them to undertake their duties, especially in relation to enforcing alcohol management plans.

Generally speaking, the proposed changes to local government have been welcomed in the Cook electorate, though there remains a large amount of work to be done to ensure the transition is achieved as soon as possible. When you have an electorate that has over 30 primary schools,

a similar number of health clinics, five hospitals, five high schools, numerous police stations and hundreds of kilometres of state roads, a critical issue is asset management. It is fair to say that since the Goss government was elected in 1989 there has been considerable improvement to state government infrastructure in the electorate after many years of neglect. It is important that adequate resources are allocated to ensure that those assets remain in good condition so that they can continue to serve the communities where they are situated.

None of this is to say that the programs and services that are delivered through this infrastructure are less important. In fact, there are a number of programs being delivered through the region that are making or have the potential to make enormous improvements to the lives of people in Cook. One such program which is being delivered through Queensland Health is the chronic disease program. This program is providing case management to all individuals fronting remote health clinics and helping reduce the incidence of diabetes.

In the same vein, the delivery of the education curriculum is very different in my electorate to any other. In particular, in some remote communities for the majority of students English is sometimes a second or third language. Teachers who go into these communities are a special breed and face a range of issues that simply are not experienced in other centres. Despite the challenges, there are a number of schools doing some exceptional work. For instance, the Thursday Island State High School was named the *Australian* newspaper school of the year in 2003. The school, under the guidance of principal Tony Considine, has turned around its attendance and literacy rates, and similar improvements are being made in primary schools across the region, such as the Badu Island State School, under the guidance of principal Steve Foster. A critical issue, though, for students in the Cape and Torres Strait is at a secondary level, where there is not easy access to a high school. An important issue for those people may be that the state government will need at some stage to provide boarding facilities in a centre like Cairns for high schools for those people to be able to access a decent standard of education more readily.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Shine): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Moggill, I remind honourable members that this is the honourable member's maiden speech, and therefore I ask that he be heard in accordance with the conventions of the House.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (3.47 p.m.): In the democratic traditions of this place, I begin by pledging my loyalty to the people of Queensland and the people of the electorate of Moggill, and I commit myself to work diligently for them while I remain in this place. I want to record my thanks to the people of Moggill and to the enthusiastic and hardworking group of supporters who assisted me throughout my campaign and made it both enjoyable and successful. I shall try to live up to the standards that they rightly expect of me, having given me their support.

I extend special thanks to my family, who have put up with their father's longstanding ambition to enter this House. It is not easy to explain to my teenage sons why their father is suddenly so busy and has so little time for them, yet they appear to understand that he is doing something that he considers important.

Moggill is an area characterised by detached housing, with much of the electorate on larger suburban and semirural acreage blocks. The community has a high proportion of professional and businesspeople, academics and senior public servants. In short, it is a highly educated self-reliant community. But if one thing characterises the community of Moggill electorate more than any other it is that it is a community of families. People have chosen larger blocks and semirural ambience as a great place to raise their children and enjoy the area's lovely natural amenities. The Brisbane River meanders along the edge of Moggill for many kilometres and provides a relatively preserved river scape—an environmental corridor that local residents and myself intend to jealously protect.

Residents understand that there will be continuing development in keeping with the explosive growth in south-east Queensland but they do not want their natural beauty desecrated and their roads choked by lines of motionless traffic. I have committed myself to be a vocal and vigorous—and, yes, even at times annoying—advocate for the people of Moggill in their fight to preserve the area's natural beauty and to get a fair go in the allocation of resources for transport and community services. I repeat that all Moggill residents are asking for is a fair go in the allocation of the state's resources.

There is a widespread belief abroad in Moggill that because the area has generally returned Liberal representatives it has suffered neglect at the hands of successive state and local Labor administrations. It is not hard to see where such a belief arises. We have one road in and out of

the Moggill electorate and it is used by or affects almost every person. I know members are waiting for me to mention it. Yes, we are talking about Moggill Road.

Year after year we have never seen the funds allocated in the Roads Implementation Program. This is a measure of this government's lack of priority for our area. Further, residents of Moggill know that mere upgrades will never fix what ails Moggill Road. Kenmore has become a bottleneck with three schools, 10 sets of traffic lights and a roundabout at Brookfield Road that simply cannot cope.

While this may sound a familiar story around Brisbane, unlike many other bottlenecks, the Department of Main Roads has preserved a short transport corridor that links Moggill Road to the Centenary Highway. Building this three kilometres of road would remove the through traffic that passes along Moggill Road at Kenmore and Chapel Hill. It would not add significantly to the traffic volumes on the Western Freeway as it would not be bringing new traffic into the area. It would cut 15 to 20 minutes off a trip to Brisbane for many but it would also make our three schools safer. It would enable Brookfield and Kenmore Hills residents to get out on to Moggill Road in the morning and it would help residents of Kenmore and Chapel Hill by reducing rat running and returning their local retail strip to the more appropriate levels of local traffic.

It is very hard to see any justification for not building such an obvious solution, especially given the longstanding neglect of roads in the area and the budgeted funds that we have never seen. The Premier is quoted as saying that he would govern for all Queenslanders not just those of his political persuasion. Well I intend to hold the government to that commitment. Members will be hearing from me time and time again about this problem that grows worse with every new housing estate.

No discussion of Moggill Road would be complete without considering public transport. Moggill residents understand we cannot just continually add more cars to the roads in Brisbane. The Liberals will support strong public transport alternatives. The construction of the short link between Moggill Road and the Centenary Highway offers exciting prospects for public transport. Access to fast, efficient public transport should be available to all residents of a city like Brisbane.

Karana Downs, a beautiful, family-orientated area along the Brisbane River in point of fact has no public transport whatsoever. Some time ago a brief trial of a bus service was deemed to have produced insufficient patronage and was abandoned. One does not have to be very bright to realise that, after years of the total absence of public transport having forced from the area many people who need or depend on it, a short trial of a bus service is not going to produce high levels of patronage. It requires a consistent service that people can depend on for the long-term to encourage the return of that patronage.

Whilst local residents may be self-reliant in many areas, important community services need to be established for the future. Kenmore police station remains empty. Our local state government health clinic is at Spring Hill. Of particular concern to me is that no provision has been made now or into the future for a community centre, a library or youth facilities. Land with potential for community facilities is rapidly disappearing in our area. The youth and the retirees of the future will not thank us for our lack of foresight in not making provision for them now.

Leadership is about vision—vision to act now before the opportunity is lost forever. I asked a number of prominent citizens in Moggill for their vision for our area. All began with road transport and the fact that our achievements will be limited if we fail to address Moggill Road. All wanted to see fast, efficient public transport available to the whole community. All wanted our environment and waterways—with particular mention of Moggill and Pullen Pullen creeks and the Brisbane River—preserved for the future. All wanted our lifestyle preserved by sensibly controlled and compatible development. All wanted to see community facilities where local youth and community groups could meet, where a library may one day be housed or an SES base or even a health centre. All wanted to invest in the education of our young people—building on the excellence already achieved in our area by schools such as Kenmore State High School.

Over the two terms of the present government, infrastructure spending has dropped alarmingly as a percentage of budget outlays and road funding has actually declined in absolute dollar terms. Infrastructure is investment in the future. Infrastructure is about planning and investing today to make sure we maintain the lifestyle and jobs that Queenslanders aspire to in the future. It is about planning and investing in railways so that continued economic growth does not automatically mean our streets must be choked with more and more trucks. With strong growth in Ipswich, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast it is myopic that the government has not even started to plan a western ring road corridor to link these growth areas.

Among the serious neglect of infrastructure right across south-east Queensland I want to focus my remarks on one particular infrastructure failing of the present government—the ageing and inadequate electricity transmission network. Residents of Moggill have endured repeated and prolonged blackouts and brownouts. First Energex blamed storms, although these are a regular feature of summer in Queensland. Then the blackouts continued in fine weather so Energex had to blame the effect of heat on their ageing distribution network. It is strange that Moggill residents would lose power just as the evening peak period began. The Energex recordings defined wide areas that were like affected.

In my experience, if it waddles like a duck and it quacks like a duck it is generally a duck. This duck is called load shedding. I do not understand why Energex and the state government cannot just come clean and tell us what has happened to our electricity supplies. However, I do know that the residents of Moggill from Karana Downs to Chapel Hill do not see the funny side of regularly losing power at peak periods and throwing out freezers full of food or watching their appliances blow up. I do know that electricity demand is growing strongly and Moggill residents will not face next summer with any more confidence than the one that has just gone. I can only presume that Energex and the state government are embarrassed about the special dividends that have removed the cash flow from Energex and the mounting debt as the government keeps its own debt off balance sheets and in its GOCs.

My closing remarks reflect my 25 years serving the health care needs of Queenslanders. In this time, around 100,000 Queenslanders have been through my consulting room. In the past, Queensland boasted the best public hospitals in Australia. We enjoyed probably the best primary health care system in the world. What has happened? We are witnessing serious problems in general practice and a hospital system that, while still having the skeleton of a world class system, has lost its focus. The public hospital system has taken its eye off the main purpose for its very existence—that is, to deliver quality and timely care to those in need.

The present Health Minister has announced a \$20 million package to reduce hospital waiting times. I applaud anything that reduces the waiting time for the many long-suffering patients. But let us not kid ourselves: there are endemic problems in the public health system that can never be fixed by stopgap measures. The continued haemorrhaging of highly skilled specialists from our public system, poor morale, nurse shortages and the lack of resources and equipment must all be addressed before we return our public health system to what it used to be.

This system could be thrown into complete chaos if the federal colleagues of those opposite ever succeed in cutting out the private health insurance rebate and making private health insurance unaffordable to those groups who have the greatest need of it, the elderly and the chronically ill. This sort of intrusion of political ideology over commonsense would be the very worst thing that could befall our already chronically ill health system. The focus in health needs to be brought back to patient care.

In conclusion, I look forward to the next three years of robust debate in this House.

A government member: Guaranteed.

Dr FLEGG: The member opposite should just wait. I acknowledge that most members on both sides of this House share my enthusiasm for making the lives of Queenslanders and their families as fulfilling and successful as we possibly can, even if they do not want to do that to my life. We live in an era of dynamic change, of ever-accelerating change. Let us not forget that our families and our young people are the future and let us not lose sight of how this rapid change will impact upon them. Members on both sides of this parliament need initiatives and leadership to deal with problems such as youth alcohol and drug abuse; the growing trend of new technologies such as the Internet to be used for exploitative purposes, particularly against children and families; childhood obesity and the impact of increasing urban density on families and children. It is clear that the state government needs robust opposition, and that is what we propose to provide.

Mr Mickel interjected.

Dr FLEGG: The member should just wait his turn. I trust that when we look back on the achievements of this parliament in three years time, the citizens of Queensland and their families will have benefited by our leadership and our achievements.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Lockyer, may I remind all honourable members that this is the member's first speech. Therefore, I ask that he be heard in accordance with the conventions of the House.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (4.03 p.m.): It is my honour to have been elected by the people of the Lockyer to represent their interests and the interests of Queenslanders generally in the parliament in the state of Queensland. I hope that I can fulfil the honour and trust the electors have placed in me. My limited political experience has confirmed the importance of the parliament's role in protecting the people of Queensland from the excesses of government. Madam Deputy Speaker, may I publicly extend to you, to the Speaker and to other members of parliament my congratulations on your election. We have been given the responsibility as custodians of Queensland not to impede people striving for a better standard of living.

I would also like to thank my wife, Ann, for all the support that she has given me through our long relationship. Ann is up in the gallery this afternoon. Thank you, Ann. My sons Luke and Joel have also been a great help. Unfortunately, my parents, Roy and Elsie Rickuss, have passed away, but I would like to express my gratitude to my parents, especially my mother, Elsie, who had a big influence not only on me but also on my three brothers, Roy, Vernon and Allen, and my sister, Evelyn Young. Elsie managed to instil in us a sense of right and wrong, fair play, honesty and compassion. My elder siblings have always been very supportive in my endeavours since I can remember. They have always been willing to help their little brother.

The youngest of five, I was raised at Slacks Creek on the outskirts of Brisbane. My primary education was at Eight Mile Plains State School. I then attended Sunnybank State High School. I began work part-time on a small-crop farm at Eight Mile Plains owned by Richard and Dehyll Musch. The Musches, including Dorothea and Charles, had a big influence on my life. It would be remiss of me not to mention Cliff Eastaughffe and Dorothy Gibson, Ann's parents. They have been influential and supportive of Ann, me and our family. This family support has been greatly appreciated. I would also like to mention a couple of teachers at Sunnybank State High School, Ken London and Terry Cooley. They tried to help a lot of teenagers at that high school. They must have done something right as two out of the 13 new members of this place are from Sunnybank State High School: the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek, and me. So I thank Sunnybank State High School and all the teachers involved.

I would also like to thank Lynton Brimblecombe, who was my campaign manager, and his wife, Melinda, who also put a lot of effort into my campaign. Their friendship is much appreciated and I am sure that it will be long lasting. My campaign team worked very hard, as did all my supporters across the Lockyer. I would like to thank them all with a special mention to Edwina Stark and Elaine Kamholz. Thank you.

I now turn to the issues of the Lockyer. The Lockyer is a very diverse electorate, stretching from Toowoomba in the west to Greenbank in the east, Coominya in the north and Harrisville in the south. The Lockyer is bordered by 12 other electorates: Southern Downs, Darling Downs, Cunningham, Toowoomba South, Toowoomba North, Nanango, Ipswich West, Ipswich, Bundamba, Algester, Logan and Beaudesert. Lockyer is a large electorate so close to Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

The electorate has a mix of rapidly expanding urban areas around Ripley, Greenbank and Flagstone in the east with steady growth in the rest of the electorate. Some of this growth is in rural residential, village areas and smaller towns' urban growth. The electorate is still predominantly based on agriculture or related industries, but this is changing with more people using the area as a dormitory area while they work in Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

The Lockyer has a wonderful mix of agriculture: from large properties in the thousands of hectares to small, intense productive blocks of several hectares. In the Lockyer and Fassifern areas, agricultural production is adapting and changing with the times. Some of the more traditional crops such as potatoes and onions are being replaced with crops such as shallots, baby leaf, lettuce and flowers. People in the dairying industry are diversifying into horse studs and spelling yards. It is wonderful to see such innovation by the people of the Lockyer. A lot of these newer industries that I have mentioned are very labour intensive so the chance of employment in the Lockyer area is much improved.

The Lockyer also has wonderful education facilities, with in excess of 50 state schools and four high schools: Gatton, Laidley, Flagstone Community College and the Faith Lutheran College at Plainlands. I encourage the government of the day to speed up the process of airconditioning the schools of the Lockyer electorate. The Lockyer is hotter than Brisbane but it has similar levels of humidity, which makes the schools in the area in the summer months almost too uncomfortable to work and learn in.

The Gatton campus of the University of Queensland is also a wonderful facility for our youth in which to further their education. It is also an important employer in the Laidley and Gatton shires. This campus is over 100 years old and could be greatly improved by extending the electric rail line from Rosewood to Withcott. That would give students from all over south-east Queensland, particularly Ipswich and Brisbane, fast, reliable and affordable transport to this progressive teaching facility. It would also benefit the Lockyer electorate as a whole by improving and increasing the infrastructure and employment opportunities.

The Lockyer electorate has some innovative light to heavy industry businesses which not only manufacture for the local area but also export to South-East Asia and Europe. TYCO Southern Cross at Withcott are part of a multinational company, as is Withcott Seedlings. Other businesses such as Peak Engineering, a major truck maker at Peak Crossing; Ag Mac; Stark Engineering Company, which started as a blacksmith's shop two or three generations ago; Nolans Transport, which employs in excess of 150 people; and Hayes & Co Auctioneers of Harrisville are all major contributors to the local communities. These businesses continue to grow and employ and expand. All of these businesses need related services such as accountants and solicitors. Fortunately, most of this expertise is available locally. There are wonderful people living in and working in the Lockyer doing amazing things. So we as law-makers must make sure that the laws that we make are fair and just and do not impede people unnecessarily.

The Lockyer has two major highways which run through it—the Warrego, which has four lanes, from Ipswich to Toowoomba and the Cunningham Highway, a major southern highway from Ipswich to Warwick. Unfortunately, the passenger rail service is only electrified to Rosewood. If this was extended to Withcott while a new tunnel is being built for Toowoomba with the line eventually going to Toowoomba, this would be a wonderful asset for the Lockyer and hopefully keep some of the 20,000 motor vehicles a day that travel the Warrego Highway off the roads. The public transport service could also be greatly improved in the eastern and southern ends of the shire. Maybe there could be some innovative thinking with the interstate railway line. This would greatly help areas such as Greenbank and Flagstone.

The Greenbank-Flagstone areas are growing rapidly with the expansion of land development, and there will be more increase in the near future. The population in south-east Queensland is expected to keep expanding in the next decade and this area is relatively close to Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan and Beaudesert. The area is ideal to absorb some of this urban development. As the interstate railway line and easements are already available, I hope that with the help of other local members of parliament we will be able to develop some realistic and efficient public transport for the Lockyer and surrounding electorates, whether it be by using the available rail easement or by such proposals as a spur line from Goodna south to Beaudesert and improved bus services.

One of the most innovative projects for the Lockyer electorate would be the renewed water project. This project was first proposed by the Queensland National Party's Waste Water Management Policy Committee. This proposal was taken up by interested people, including John Miles and Ray Hawley, who proposed the project to the Water Infrastructure Task Force in 1995. The project was taken to the next level by City to Soil and Vision 2000 by people such as Bernie Sutton, Keith Jackwitz, Clare Wilkes and Lance Pollock from City to Soil and Phil Jauncey and John McVeigh of Vision 2000. This could be one of the great renewed water projects of the world, even as a staged project to the Lockyer Valley in the first instance from the west of Brisbane and the Ipswich and Logan treatment plants. Whether the water is reused once or several times, we must not let such a valuable resource as 100,000 megalitres of nutrient-rich water pour into Moreton Bay. Let us get started with this environmentally friendly project.

This appears to be one of the few long-term solutions to our water problems. The Ipswich City Council is now looking at assisting the Lockyer and Warrill valleys with some of its renewed water. Let us face it: it is not rocket science; it is being used all over the world. I await the report on the use of Wivenhoe water for irrigation purposes. This could be a very useful supply of water across the Lockyer to Swanbank and Warrill valleys to help the rural areas with the renewed water until the renewed water is made available.

I want to thank Mr Lawrence Springborg, the Leader of the Nationals, for having the confidence to appoint me as the shadow environmental spokesperson. This will be an interesting and challenging role that I will try to fulfil with the utmost diligence. I am sure that this position will be made much easier with the support of my fellow National parliamentarians. Good commonsense, rationale and sound science are the main components that need to be brought to this portfolio. No matter what legislation the government of the day introduces, if it is not commonsense, sound and science based, the people of Queensland—that is, land-holders who

control vast tracts of land to small blocks—will have difficulty complying and therefore make the legislation unworkable. I am committed to people and opportunity. I want people to succeed and to pursue excellence. Their success will help us provide for the less fortunate in our society.

Let us make Queensland a more compassionate and caring society not only for now but for future generations. Let us give the people a hand up, not a handout. I hope this parliament will grasp the nettle and make some of the big decisions like electric rail to Toowoomba; improved services to the Greenbank, Harrisville and Willowbank areas; more water for the Lockyer and Fassifern; a second range crossing; and improved health and education facilities in the Lockyer. If I can help achieve some of these goals, I will feel that I have been very successful not only for the people of Lockyer but also for the people of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole): Order! I call the member for Surfers Paradise. I remind honourable members that it is the member's maiden speech. I would ask them all to convey the courtesies that he deserves during his speech.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.14 p.m.): I am truly honoured to represent the residents of Surfers Paradise in this House. I am humbled by the support that I have received and their support of the Liberal Party, and I thank the people of the electorate for their confidence. I was chosen to represent the Liberal Party for the Surfers Paradise electorate 12 months before the election. In that time and during the by-election in 2001, I was able to meet many of the people of the area. Many of these people are patients and friends of mine. From the shop owners to the residents in the high-rises and to the families in the suburbs behind the coastal strip, it is a delight to see how far the area has come since I moved back to the Gold Coast 17 years ago.

Surfers Paradise is an area that has seen great change and great expansion. Surfers Paradise is an area where people have dared to achieve, and the proof is in the pudding. The region is now a magnet for domestic and overseas tourists to come and see the golden beaches and the glitter strip. Many others are staying here permanently as the suburbs of the central Gold Coast expand, with people escaping southern winters in favour of our warm Queensland sun.

Six years ago my community service on the Gold Coast with the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce led me to politics—an ambitious choice, something my fellow members will know all too well. The Liberal Party's philosophy has always appealed to me more than any other. It has been shown that this philosophy of the individual being rewarded for hard work and enterprise is the catalyst for a thriving economy and higher standards of living whilst always maintaining a social safety net for those who need a helping hand. It is my first commitment that these are the principles and ideals I wish to uphold in this House. Government should not interfere unnecessarily. However, let the individual be as free as a functional society will have them.

There are many people to acknowledge who have helped me to have the opportunity to speak in this House today. First of all, I want to thank my wife, Stacey, and my three wonderful children, Chloe, Bronte and Piers. Stacey is the calming centre of our family and helps maintain a serene household where friends and visitors are happy to visit while I descend and depart like a cyclone. Stacey has every right to be apprehensive about the latest Langbroek adventure that I have taken her on. I have to admit that I share some of her apprehension. Most importantly, however, she is there for all of us and I love her dearly.

I also want to thank her parents, Alex and Liz Smith, for accepting me so readily into their family nearly 20 years ago. Considering that I came from a completely different background, they have been a wonderful support and loving grandparents. I must also thank my parents, Jan and Anne Langbroek. They came here as migrants from Holland and the USA in the early sixties and provided everything my sister Kate and I needed as we were growing up. Thank you, mum and dad, for your unconditional love. Importantly, they taught us to have self-confidence in our abilities and to be independent and aspirational when sometimes those around us, though well meaning, can be discouraging. Australia has truly been a wonderful place for our family. In the words of Dorothea Mackellar—

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel sea,
Her beauty and her terror,
The wide brown land for me.

I also want to thank Rob Knight and Councillor Bob La Castra who asked me to join the Liberal Party five years ago and my wonderful team of volunteers who helped us to a memorable win on 7 February. They included my campaign director John Lander, Les Howson, Cate Lawlor, Darren Sly and Tony Tooma as well as the hardworking Liberal Party members of the Moncrieff Federal Electorate Council.

I have had some helpful mentors over the last few years. I wish to thank Brisbane based senators Senator Santo Santoro, Senator Brett Mason and Senator George Brandis for their support. I also want to thank the federal member for Moncrieff, Steven Ciobo, and his wife Astra. Let me also note my sincere appreciation for the tireless work of Queensland Young Liberal President Mark Powell and the members of the Young Liberal movement who, too, worked tirelessly on my campaign. I would not be here without you all.

The election result was the culmination of a great deal of hard work by many people. We have achieved a memorable result. I am the first Liberal to represent the electorate since Bruce Bishop in 1977. He, too, defeated a sitting MP, Sir Bruce Small, who was a former mayor of the Gold Coast. I certainly hope my achievements will be looked on as favourably as Mr Bishop's. The electorate has had some wonderful representatives. Sir Bruce Small, as I previously mentioned, was 'Mr Gold Coast' for many years. Another former member in former Premier Rob Borbidge has also given me a great deal of support in my endeavours. Finally, I want to thank my predecessor Lex Bell. I know Lex as a patient of mine, and he is an honourable man. He has given the Gold Coast great service for many years as a mayor and a member of this House. I wish him well in his future endeavours.

I am the first dental surgeon to be elected to the state parliament since 1938. This, I hope, is more due to the small numbers in the profession as opposed to this being a terrible place for a dentist to come. I am sure that I will find out in due time. I suppose it is also an irony that a dentist comes to a place where pain can be inflicted as opposed to inflicting himself. Working in the profession for over two decades, one gains some knowledge into the areas where the government can assist in better oral health care. While school dental vans and public dental clinics do a very good job under a great deal of pressure, more can be done. Fluoridation of our water supplies is an example.

The argument for fluoridation is very strong. Fluoridation will make our children's teeth better. We already add vitamins to many everyday items in our diets such as bread and cereal. Why not supplement our water with fluoride? It has been proven that water fluoridation is the most efficient form of using fluoride to strengthen teeth. While fluoride tablets and adding fluoride to toothpaste are very efficient, water fluoridation provides these benefits to all.

The world's leading health authorities support the concept—authorities including the World Health Organisation, Australian Medical Association, American Medical Association and British Medical Association. They see the benefits of such an initiative, in particular the benefits it provides to children—strengthening their teeth from day one—as well as the benefits for those from low socioeconomic groups who may not be able to afford dental care.

Water fluoridation, along with a correct diet, provides a cost-effective method for healthier teeth. Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Canberra and Hobart all have fluoride added to their water. The government is adamant on pursuing its Smart State mantra, yet how smart is it to place our children's teeth at undue risk by not fluoridating our water? I can assure the Minister for Health that I will be an ally in securing bipartisan support for this measure—an important measure for the health of Queenslanders.

Having lived on the Gold Coast and worked in the Surfers Paradise area for a long time, I have seen the area grow. As with any such area, the constant challenge for elected representatives is to keep infrastructure in step with the increases in population. The Gold Coast is Queensland's second largest city and Australia's sixth largest city, yet we are treated like second-class citizens by the present government. Whilst we are thankful for the convention centre, the Gold Coast is still proportionally forgotten in terms of funding. In Brisbane the state government funds tunnels, buses, river cat and ferry networks, buildings, bridges, stadiums and roads as part of joint initiatives with the Brisbane City Council. There is no such relationship with the Gold Coast City Council and, as such, the Gold Coast is forgotten.

Main arterial roads, especially through central Surfers Paradise, need to be improved. The current state of the roads was fine for the holiday village atmosphere of the Gold Coast 15 years ago but does not accommodate the thriving metropolis today. In the western suburbs of Ashmore, the duplication of the Ross Street bridge must be urgently completed to ensure a better traffic flow

into the growing suburb of Carrara. Similarly, it is my aim to work with community representatives and officials to find a solution for a viable east-west route from Surfers Paradise to the Bundall business district.

The Gold Coast is Queensland's fun capital. One of the problems associated with being the hub of entertainment is a potential increase in crime. I commend Assistant Police Commissioner David Melville on his efforts to clean up the image of Surfers Paradise. I also assure him that I will work with him to ensure police numbers in Surfers Paradise are increased to reflect the actual population of the area, which swells to over double in the holiday season and regularly on weekends as well.

In 2003 the Gold Coast had 16 police officers per 10,000 residents. This is compared with 24 in Cairns, 20 in Rockhampton and 20 in Townsville. These figures are also based on the Gold Coast's permanent population. In fact, the Gold Coast figure can be halved due to the tourist population. This represents an indelible deficiency in police numbers on the Gold Coast and one that must be rectified. One way to achieve more police officers on the Gold Coast is to secure a police station in Benowa or Ashmore. At present the residents of those suburbs rely on assistance from the non-local Surfers Paradise Police Station and Southport Police Station.

The electorate also has an underrated green behind the gold. The electorate encompasses the Gold Coast Botanic Gardens. I will work with the council to attract more people to this beautiful facility. We also have the Cascade Gardens and lengths of beachside parkland that Gold Coasters and visitors come in droves to enjoy. One such area is on the Spit. I am a member of Friends of Federation Walk, which is a volunteer group that has made a scenic path through the Spit for all to enjoy. Importantly, the electorate houses the MacIntosh Island park, the backdrop for the Indy race. I will work with community groups to secure the park's future without compromising the present success of the Indy festival.

I turn to more statewide issues. I will vehemently campaign for a smarter allocation of funds in our health services. My family has been touched by loved ones having to battle with debilitating diseases. My father's brother died from multiple sclerosis and now my brother-in-law, Murray Kirk, has been struck down by motor neurone disease. I have watched him deteriorate from a strong family man three and a half years ago to someone who is wheelchair bound with an increasing need for nursing help. Having talked with Murray and his wife, Maryanne, one realises the discrepancies in the health system.

Compared with Victoria, the options available in Queensland for illnesses of this nature are appalling. For instance, at the Calvary Health Centre in Melbourne the following services are offered in their palliative care ward—basics such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy, along with music therapy, which provides patients with a diverse and very individual relief from the pain of their illness and the rigours of intense medication and treatment. Social workers are available to patients and their families if they need advice or a shoulder to cry on in such a trying situation. This is coupled with pastoral care and chaplaincy for the strain such illnesses bring to families. While some of these services are offered in Queensland, they are limited by comparison. While I am not advocating a new allocation of funding, I am certainly calling for this House to look into a smarter allocation of current funds. Queensland lacks a facility that would help families carry the cross that they manage, mainly on their own.

As a father of three children, I live with the constant anxiety of 'is what I'm doing is right thing?' The current generation of schoolchildren do not have the strong family unit that was once present. In any given class there is a mixture of children with two always-present parents, children with one weekday parent and one weekend parent, children with one parent and children with a guardian. None of these structures is wrong, and saying so would be unfair. The problem, however, for legislators is: how do we overcome this instability in the family unit to produce stable members of society? By 'stable' I mean young Queenslanders with the resolve to achieve, young Queenslanders who do recognise that they do not need to be destructive or delinquent to express themselves—destructive expression such as graffiti.

Unfortunately, the Surfers Paradise electorate is increasingly being tarnished by graffiti. I commend the work of the parliamentary graffiti task force for its work to date; however, there is more to be done. Graffiti, as the task force has correctly recognised, is the result of behavioural problems that can be detected and addressed at a young age. I am committed to working with the other members of this House to implement more effective mechanisms for the detection of early childhood behavioural problems and at the same time implement more effective ways of addressing those problems before they become too great in adolescence. The flow-on benefits will be great. As Rudy Giuliani points out in his book *Leadership*, one broken window leads to

another and the problem escalates exponentially. If we can deal with the issues leading to graffiti rather than concentrating on punishment after the fact, that first instance of graffiti is less likely to occur. Therefore, the problem will be easier to control.

One of the beauties of growing up with migrant parents is the enthusiasm they have for the Australian lifestyle. Too often second and subsequent generation Australians take for granted the way we live. We are not scared of going to sporting events as generally there is no riotous behaviour, as there is overseas. We are not scared of voicing our opinions as the worst we will receive in return is ridicule, not rifles. We enjoy an exceptional quality of life, with our five mainland state capitals all currently in the 10 most livable cities in the world. This demonstrates something that no string of adjectives can explain.

While Australians are democratic, tolerant, patriotic, compassionate and friendly, there is something intangible over and above these things that makes us Australian. I mention this because Surfers Paradise plays host to many overseas visitors who get addicted to this X factor in our personality. They keep coming back for more and more. The flow-on benefits to our economy and the marketability of our state are enormous. Add to that the fact other Australians are moving to our state by the thousands and we realise that Queenslanders, more so than the rest of the nation, are very attractive to domestic as well as overseas visitors. The more Queenslanders can do to aid this growth and market our greatest resource—ourselves—we should do.

Surfers Paradise has got it all. The coastal strip has golden beaches and a vibrant night life. The suburbs have a firm family orientation that gives the Gold Coast its friendly face. The electorate has the heart of the Gold Coast business district. All of this, though, is tied in with its strong community spirit and a will to see the Gold Coast succeed.

I look forward to working with my Liberal colleagues over the next three years. I commend Bob Quinn on his strong leadership to date. I also look forward to working with the other fresh faces in the Liberal parliamentary team. Together we will form a strong opposition ready to keep the Labor government accountable for its actions. I thank the people of the electorate for placing their faith in me. I look forward to working with the people of the Surfers Paradise electorate in the years ahead. With such a changing demographic in the area, I cannot rest on my laurels if I am to succeed next time around. I love the area and I love the people. I will work hard to accommodate their needs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Before I call the honourable member for Burnett, I would like to also remind the House that it is his maiden speech and requires the courtesies that convention requires.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (4.30 p.m.): It is an honour and a great privilege to be a member of the 51st Queensland Parliament and to have sworn and reaffirmed my allegiance to the people of Queensland, Australia and our sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It is an honour and a great privilege to be the new member for Burnett, and it is also an honour and a great privilege to be a member of the Queensland National Party and official opposition.

I have to confess my journey to this historic chamber was not planned. As a child and a teenager playing in the red dirt cane fields of South Kolan, I never harboured dreams of becoming a politician, and I will be the first to admit that I am only standing here before you because of God's grace. Of course, he was ably assisted by the good voters of the Burnett, whom I humbly thank and ask that they offer this prayer: that I have—that we all have—the courage to listen to and follow God's will and learn from the example given to us by his Holy Son and our Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I offer all the glory.

I would like to dedicate my election victory to my mother, Irene Dorothy Messenger, who died on 10 September 2002 aged 59 from bowel cancer. Her love and support I have felt and continue to feel during every heartbeat of this wondrous journey. I would like to remind honourable members that the Queensland Cancer Fund has a dedicated hotline for anyone requiring information. The phone number is 131120. It is a number that could save you or your loved ones' lives.

Once or twice in a quiet moment since my election on 7 February I have felt the burden of my constituents' expectations. As all honourable members in this chamber know, there are so many good people who are hurting and who need our help, and I have been left wondering if there are enough hours in the day to get all the work done. When I experience those feelings and self-doubt, and fatigue weakens the mind and the body, I take heart from the example shown to me by a man who is in the public gallery today watching proceedings, my father, Des Messenger. In the early 1960s dad was a cane cutter—a Burnett cane cutter—who during the crushing had the

job of cutting and loading 20 tonnes of cane a day. Each tonne of cane cut and loaded earned him and our family about \$1.60. He fed, clothed and put a roof over mum, me and my two brothers, Greg and Danny Messenger, with his sweat, grit, determination and love.

Des Messenger has never had any fear whatsoever of hard work. So when I think that I have run out of puff and I cannot make one more phone call from an airconditioned office to a constituent, write another letter of support or make one more speech petitioning a minister, the touchstone I will always turn to, my reality check, will be two cherished memories. One is of my father covered head to toe in black soot swinging a cane knife in the Burnett sugar fields. The other is that of my mother, Irene Messenger, laughing and joking with the other women of our district while they picked tomatoes in 35 degree tropical heat. I thank Irene and Des Messenger—mum and dad—for giving my brothers and me unconditional love and for showing us the meaning of hard work.

I eagerly look forward to the opportunity that the 51st Parliament of Queensland offers me for hard work. I would like to think that I am bred for it. In fact, the people of the Burnett right now are crying out for community leaders who are not afraid of hard work and who are not afraid to speak out if they think that something is wrong. The Burnett, the most beautiful and dynamic state electorate in Queensland, covers an area of around 7,506 square kilometres and takes in approximately three local government areas—Isis, Burnett and Miriam Vale. You will find the Burnett on the coast after about a five-hour drive north of Brisbane. The electorate has a population of more than 35,000 souls and has to face some enormous challenges, some of which I will list now.

The health crisis: nowhere in Queensland will you find a hospital which needs additional resources and a comprehensive independent review more than the Bundaberg Base Hospital. I believe that staff morale is at rock bottom. Since my election I have had a steady stream of Bundaberg Hospital health professionals in my office or on the phone telling me stories of bullying, unsafe working conditions, understaffing and overworking. I would encourage and urge the honourable member for Sandgate and Minister for Health, Mr Nuttall, to waste no time in establishing this comprehensive review of the Bundaberg and district health services, which of course serves the people of the Burnett.

I would respectfully suggest that this review must be structured so that health professionals who have spoken to me are encouraged to come forward and give their testimony without fear of a health management reprisal or backlash. These dedicated professionals must be allowed to tell the truth while avoiding any possibility of placing their careers with Queensland Health in jeopardy. These workers' stories must be heard and acted on if the people of the Burnett are ever to enjoy the level of health care that they richly deserve.

The unemployment crisis: I also feel that it is my duty to inform this 51st Parliament that my electorate is suffering from unacceptably high unemployment. Our state's unemployment rate according to the Queensland Treasury economic policy branch is 6.2 per cent. The Burnett's unemployment rate is at least double that. Youth unemployment is more than 35 per cent. These figures give the Burnett the dubious distinction of maintaining one of the highest unemployment rates in Australia. That is an outrageous injustice. We need more state government help. We need a plan like the enterprise zones program, which was launched by the National Party's honourable leader, Lawrence Springborg, on 15 January this year in Bundaberg. It is a plan which launches an investment assault on regional and rural Queensland. At the heart of this plan is the enterprise zone policy, which offers tax concessions and discounted charges to new industries which choose to establish themselves in rural and regional Queensland. We in the Burnett need more investment and industry to destroy the outrageous injustice of unemployment.

The sugar crisis: I cannot mention unemployment without also mentioning the sugar crisis. This is not an exaggeration. The sugar industry is on the canvas; it is on its knees. It has been king hit, sucker punched by corrupt world prices, drought, the rising Australian dollar and unfair state government charges and taxes. Some 35,000 jobs are in the industry and they are at risk, and the only reason that those 35,000 jobs have remained in the industry, the only reason that we have not had massive unemployment, social upheaval and industrial turmoil is that cane farmers have shouldered more than their fair share of the load and worked for nothing for at least the last three years, possibly more.

Cane farmers have grown their crops for nothing and in many cases have incurred huge losses. They have run up massive personal debts so that an industry which employs 35,000 people can still survive. The most common charge made by the ill-informed commentators is, 'Why don't the sugar farmers become more efficient and lower their cost of production?' The facts are

quite plain: Burnett growers and Queensland sugar growers, given the social and industrial conditions they operate in, are some of the most efficient and best growers in the world. So why are many facing financial ruin? I would say loyalty—loyalty to their industry, loyalty to 35,000 workers, loyalty to Queensland.

Now it is time for Queensland to return that loyalty. It is time now for the government to prove to the growers that their loyalty was not misplaced. How will Queensland return that loyalty? By lowering the cost of sugar production. The cost of producing sugar is far greater than the returns on growing it. The cost of production in Queensland is between \$250 and \$270 per tonne of sugar. The return on sugar is now about \$200 per tonne. Because of the distorted and corrupted world markets, the growers know that a state government cannot influence the price they receive for their commodity. Sugar growers know that they, like all other Australian primary producers, are price takers. The sugar growers also know that, because of heavy regulation, a state government can lower the cost of sugar production. The state government can immediately lower the cost of sugar production through reductions in state water charges, state electricity charges, state stamp duties and state taxes. It will not be the definitive answer or solution to the sugar crisis. The federal government must play its role, but that would be a damn good start. It is the start that sugar growers want. It is the start that 35,000 workers want. It is the start that Queensland wants. Like many sugar producers, I believe that canegrowing does have a bright future in the Burnett. All we need for that to happen is for the Queensland government to show some loyalty to the sugar industry, some loyalty to the bush.

I do not have time in this, my maiden speech, to examine in detail all the other crises and important problems which face the people of the Burnett and which have already been presented to me and my staff. I will, however, be bringing them before the chamber during the course of this 51st Parliament and I will take the time now to name just a few: the child protection crisis, the seafood industry crisis, the education crisis, the public housing crisis, the crisis in the delivery of basic infrastructure—power and water—the law and order crisis, the racing industry crisis, the crisis in public liability insurance and the land clearing crisis. These crises and challenges can be overcome—must be overcome—if the people of the Burnett are to ever realise their full potential. These challenges and crises will be overcome only by hard work, clear thinking, commonsense and a commitment by every member in this parliament to do the right thing by the bush, to do the right thing by Queensland.

In the Burnett the word on the street, in the hospitals and classrooms and on the factory floors is that if you do not live in Brisbane or the south-east corner then you do not count and you will not be given a fair go by politicians who are in charge of the purse strings in Brisbane. I was elected by my Burnett constituents to send a message to the politicians and people who live in Brisbane: there is a world north of Noosa and it is worth visiting and it is worth helping.

The Burnett is a perfect patch of Queensland coastline and hinterland which stretches from Woodgate and the Burrum River in the south to Turkey Beach in the north and makes the claim of being the birthplace of Queensland. This claim is supported by the fact that Captain Cook came ashore in 1770, hence the naming of the spectacular township of 1770.

I invite all members to visit the beautiful Burnett and sample our legendary produce, scenery and hospitality. The main industries you will find are, as I have mentioned, sugar; horticulture, which brings almost \$400 million per year to our region; tourism—we are the gateway to the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef—beef production; seafood; sawmilling; and tree cropping. They are just a few of the industries that I choose to name.

I think that it is appropriate that I name some of the key people who contributed to the Nationals' Burnett victory. My leader and political inspiration, the honourable member for Southern Downs, Lawrence Springborg, maintained a cracking pace and visited my electorate three times during the campaign. The honourable member for Callide and Deputy Opposition Leader, Jeff Seeney, also visited and shared his considerable experience, as did the honourable member for Cunningham and shadow minister for health, Stuart Copeland. The honourable member for Toowoomba South, Mike Horan, brought the thunder and rain with him when he visited and we attended the Miriam Vale cattle sale. Senator Nigel Scullion from the Country-Liberal coalition in the Northern Territory furnished me with valuable and expert seafood industry knowledge during his visit to the Burnett. Deputy Prime Minister and federal National Party Leader, John Anderson's visit and launch of the Nationals campaign office, which I shared with the outstanding National Party candidate for Bundaberg, Sergeant Jack Dempsey, was the electoral icing on the cake and ensured my victory.

I must pay a special tribute to the National Party's federal member for Hinkler, the Hon. Paul Neville. Paul and his delightful wife, Margaret, importantly made sure that I was fed as well as offered fine fellowship and practised political advice. Roger Harcourt, the National Party State Director, and his team kept my political ship on course with his astute management, discipline, application and dedication.

I have named democracy's generals. This is also an appropriate time to thank the workers, the selfless volunteers, the foot soldiers of democracy who gave their valuable time and energy to the National Party cause so that I was given the best possible chance of winning February's poll. My campaign director, Ernie, and his good wife, Elaine Jobson; Mr and Mrs Pickup; Mr and Mrs Neilsen; John Evans; Mr and Mrs Joe Gatt; Tom Berry; Laura Whittingham and her partner, Brendan; Lorraine Tyson; Keith Roberts; proud dad-to-be Tim Langmead and his wife, Fleur; Katie, Flora and Tim Barwick; Gavin and Fay Peterson—all these people have helped me more than they could ever know and it was a privilege to share the victory with them. Another gentleman whom I have mentioned previously and whose company I felt privileged to share for the duration of my Burnett campaign is Sergeant Jack Dempsey, the former Nationals candidate for Bundaberg who, in my opinion, is destined to become an honourable member of this parliament because of his good nature, honesty, humour and outstanding work ethic.

Before I close I think it is appropriate that in the light of recent and tragic world events I express my deepest sympathies for the people of Spain during this, their time of grief, suffering and sorrow. On behalf of the people of the Burnett I offer them our sincerest condolences after the despicable and heartless terrorist bombing in Madrid. I pray that those people who were wounded recover quickly and that the families and friends of the innocent victims find comfort and strength in the loving arms of God. I also honour and salute the Spanish heroes who rushed to the aid of their fallen comrades. This senseless and cowardly butchery reminds us that one government cannot stop a determined and well-resourced modern terrorist who is hell-bent on bloody murder.

After studying these terrorists' manifestos and observing their actions I believe that there is only one condition that will make these fundamentalists voluntarily stop their cowardly attacks and butchery: we surrender our culture and adopt their fundamentalist beliefs. It is my opinion—and I hope that someone more learned than me can prove I am wrong—that the people responsible for this bloody treachery will only stop their killing when all the people of the worlds think as they do and live as they do. This war on terrorism is not being fought over oil, water or land; it is being fought over culture. At stake is the freedom to choose our beliefs and our culture. Throughout the years our freedom was handed to us by selfless generations who truly understood and still continue to understand the meaning of the world 'sacrifice'. In battlefields all over the world wherever freedom and basic human rights were threatened, Australians willingly spilt their blood, willingly sacrificed themselves because they knew that at stake was our children's and grandchildren's freedom to choose their beliefs and culture.

Today we are being asked to sacrifice. With every Bali and Madrid bombing, every September 11, Australians, Spaniards, Americans—all countries who waged war against this brand of terrorism—are being asked the question: how much do we Australians, we Queenslanders, value our freedom? How much are we prepared to sacrifice so that we have the power to choose our own beliefs, determine our culture and chart our own course in history?

More than ever I am reminded of the saying that all it takes for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing. If we choose to ignore this evil of terrorism, if we good people choose to do nothing, we will be cursed and condemned by the generations to come. I do not believe that will happen. I believe that Burnett residents, Queenslanders, Australians, are all in the majority decent and good people who are prepared to confront evil with courageous decisions and actions. In the same manner we will confront the economic and moral challenges and crises I have detailed today, and that is with courageous decisions and actions and then, God willing, we will be rewarded with triumph and victory.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fraser): Order! Before calling the member for Caloundra, may I remind members that this is the member's maiden speech and he should be afforded the courtesy that that deserves.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (4.50 p.m.): I am honoured to stand in this chamber as the member for Caloundra and offer to Her Excellency the Governor on behalf of the people of Caloundra their best wishes. The boundaries of the electorate positions it wholly on the coastal strip, where the best social qualities of Queensland—sea, sand, blue skies and friendship—make it an ideal destination.

The seat itself forms part of the city of Caloundra and, over the past 10 years, the demographics of Caloundra and indeed the Sunshine Coast have changed dramatically, making it the 10th fastest growing regional area in Australia. Caloundra has seen enormous economic growth from what could be described as a coastal resort to a dynamic urban environment, taking into account large-scale tourism together with property development and retail growth unprecedented in its history. This growth has brought with it many bonuses and a number of needs, to which I will return later.

Caloundra, as a seat, is rightfully proud of its political heritage, claiming Premiers Frank Nicklin and Mike Ahern at a time when the current seat formed part of the seat of Landsborough and, more recently, Joan Sheldon who was a member initially for Landsborough and then Caloundra from 1990 to 2004. Mrs Sheldon was the first female Leader of the Liberal Party, the first female Treasurer of Queensland and the first female Deputy Premier of Queensland. This is the calibre of person Caloundra elects to parliament and, although I do not put myself in that category, I am honoured to say they have elected me. I hope I can help them achieve their needs. Joan Sheldon worked for the electorate of Caloundra and for the greater benefit of all Queenslanders during her time in parliament, and I undertake to do so to this parliament.

I am first and foremost the member for Caloundra, yet with pride I bring with me the fundamental principles and beliefs of myself and my party. I am a firm believer in rewarding effort and in a government that maximises the individual and private sector initiatives; encouraging our citizens to achieve for themselves and their family by providing incentives; providing equal opportunity and the facilitation of the highest possible standards of living, health, education and social justice; and preserving Australia's natural beauty and the environment for future generations, to name but a few. These principles focus on the needs and aspirations of those we serve and who we have an obligation to protect.

Proudly, I can say that the seat of Caloundra is served by many groups and organisations who put in hundreds of volunteer hours each week to provide essential social support and without which we would all be the poorer. Such groups include Red Cross, Rotary, Save the Children, Caloundra Ratepayers and the Caloundra Hospital Auxiliary to name a few. Time does not permit me to name them all, but I pay tribute to all such groups and their members and wish them well in their endeavours.

Additionally, Caloundra is well supported by what I call economic groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils and Tourism Sunshine Coast. Again, these groups are critical to Caloundra's long-term development and prosperity. Yet perhaps the most important element of Caloundra's population is its families—the mums, the dads, the aunts, the uncles, the grandparents and step-parents who daily face a rapidly changing world and who through it all continue to bring up their children and instil in them the best principles of our society. Today they have a most difficult task, but they rarely shrink from that obligation. Most of all, they deserve to be honoured by this House, as they hold the fragile minds of our future in their hands.

Caloundra is well served, as I said, by the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, which is the body formed by the councils of Noosa, Maroochy and Caloundra to lobby for infrastructure and funding across the coast. The councils are to be congratulated on this step, and I will assist them in any way that I can to achieve their goals.

I earlier stated that Caloundra's growth has brought with it significant needs, and those needs are mirrored throughout the Sunshine Coast. The local newspaper, the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, reported on Sunday, 14 March 2004 that between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003 10,148 people had relocated to the Sunshine Coast. By comparison, the largest migration prior to this was 8,400 people in any one year. The reasons for this migration are manyfold, including lifestyle and affordability. But, of course, these people have to be fed, housed and educated, and they need access to hospitals, transport, roads and entertainment.

As I stated earlier, the seat of Caloundra is part of the Sunshine Coast region, and in its *Report on the Sunshine Coast Regional Economy* for the third quarter 2003, AEC Economics projected a population for the Sunshine Coast of 441,797 people by 2021, or a yearly growth rate of 2.9 per cent. That can be compared with the projected state growth rate of 1.6 per cent per annum. Additionally, in relation to travel demand, the report stated that by 2011 trip times will increase by around 35 per cent and the amount of car travel on the local roads will increase by more than 300 per cent. There are significant issues Caloundra will need to deal with not only immediately but, in my opinion, in the medium to long term. These needs include our transport

system, health services, education, the environment, our personal security, developing business and creating jobs and assisting those in need.

No area can survive without an adequate transport system—a system that not only takes goods and services from place to place but also ensures its residents can access shopping, schools, hospitals and resorts to name a few. The economy of the seat of Caloundra is entering a new phase, yet the transport system is wholly unable to deal with the current situation, let alone the expected explosion in the future. Immediately, Caloundra Road must be four-laned from Pierce Avenue to the Bruce Highway. Caloundra Road is the main feeder road into Caloundra from the highway and is used by thousands of vehicles daily. The housing developments immediately adjacent to Caloundra Road and the surrounding area of Pelican Waters make this essential. Indeed, with the new industrial estate located off Caloundra Road, purportedly 12 to 18 months away, this and the construction of an alternative route to the Bruce Highway are economically essential.

Caloundra's population in the 50 years and over age group exceeds the national average. Thus there is a higher need for public medical services. Though Nambour General Hospital remains the mainstay for delivery of such services, our growing population demands the expansion of services at Caloundra General Hospital and Caloundra dental services. Dovetailed with this is the necessity to provide dedicated bus services to the hospital in Nambour as opposed to a one-and-a-half to two-hour one-way trip currently endured by many who reside in Caloundra.

Securing our children's education is an investment in our future and one of our most important obligations. Caloundra is well served by the principals, staff and parents of the children who are all dedicated to achieving just that. Yet the public schools in Caloundra have now reached saturation. We must now move to identify the location of the next public school, secure the purchase of the land and plan that school's construction.

We are well aware that development comes at a cost—one being the loss of green space. The balance is very difficult to strike yet our obligation in this House is clear. Caloundra's growth, as in all other areas, is driven by forces that, on the whole, are difficult to contain yet we must realise that we must preserve the reason many of us moved to the area—that is, the environment. This obligation includes our responsibility to future generations. For although we may enjoy and use the environment, it is also our obligation to maintain its benefits for years to come. Specifically I refer to Tripcony-Hibiscus Caravan Park, which is an area of approximately three hectares located just outside the central business area of Caloundra. Ideally, this should be maintained as green space and returned to the people of Caloundra to do with as they deem fit.

Population increase brings with it additional personal security risks. This, in particular, is an ongoing issue in Bulcock Street, the main street of the electorate. There is a strong need for a police beat to be established to combat a growing problem in this area, particularly at night and on the weekends. In fact, a full strategic plan to cope with the growth in the region's policing needs must be developed urgently.

One of the most important facets of any region is its economy. Caloundra and, indeed, the Sunshine Coast is well catered for in the retail, construction and property development areas. Yet the economy of Caloundra needs to diversify. It must use its current strengths to establish new employment opportunities. At present, the Sunshine Coast University is working with local government and business to provide IT infrastructure, yet, in my opinion, this needs to be supplemented by a greater use of apprenticeships and school based traineeships. We cannot allow skilled worker levels to fall at the current rate. We need to acknowledge the necessity to arrest this trend and put in place plans to do so.

This is an integral step if Caloundra is to diversify its economic base in the near future. In particular, I would like to see manufacturing and green industries encouraged and supported. This can only occur through the cooperation of local, state and federal governments. By increasing worker levels and retaining people in Caloundra we continue to grow a positive community spirit and a positive community economy.

Finally, there are those in our community who, for reasons of age, health or other reasons, are in need of assistance and protection. This place is responsible to ensure that the rights of such people are protected and their needs met. One of the areas of concern is public housing within Caloundra. There is a dire need for accommodation to be made available.

The people of Caloundra are about to embark on major changes over the next two to 15 years touching many of the areas I have just outlined. It is an exciting time in the life of what was once a sleepy coastal hamlet but, rather like the slumbering dragon, it is now awakening. If

Caloundra is to move forward then we will require millions of dollars of infrastructure of both a physical and social nature to be put in place. I intend to lobby this place to achieve those funds.

The people of Caloundra have entrusted me to provide the structure and assistance for developing their lives and assisting them in attaining their goals. It is an obligation I do not take lightly. I will strive to do my utmost not to disappoint them.

There are many people who have assisted me to attain this position today. They have worked tirelessly for they have a belief in my abilities and the policies of my party. I can never repay them, but I certainly acknowledge each and every one of them. I will read their names into *Hansard*. They include: Lesley Godwin, Ken Hinds, Mo Barnes, Frank and Pam Gower, Gloria and Norm Stevenson, Rhonda Smith, Jarrod Bleijie, and Joan and Colin Butterworth. There are many other people whom I should name but time prohibits me doing that. I simply say to each and every one of them that I hold them dear.

I wish also to thank the people within the Liberal Party as a whole for their support to me and my family over the last seven to eight years—in particular, during the campaign period. There is, however, one lady who more than any other person has been with me and has never lost faith in what I was doing. My wife, Judy, provided me with inspiration in time of doubt and support when my spirits were low. I have seen her surrender personal goals so as to allow me to achieve success. I thank her sincerely and love her dearly.

To my Liberal colleagues in this place, I will endeavour to meet the high standard of my office and their expectations. Finally, I congratulate all members in this House on winning or retaining their seats. I thank them kindly for listening to me today.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fraser): Order! Before calling the member for Burdekin, I remind members that this is the member's maiden speech and that she should be accorded the courtesy the occasion demands.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (5.05 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, would you please convey my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to this very significant position with the 51st Parliament of Queensland. I feel totally honoured to be able to address the parliament as the member for Burdekin. I deem it a great privilege to have been elected to this position. I am imbued with a sense of deep loyalty to the constituents of the Burdekin electorate for having placed me here.

I experience genuine pride in being the first woman to be elected to the seat of Burdekin, in having lived the majority of my life in the Burdekin electorate and in having it as my birthplace. In fact, I can even lay claim to being called a local, which is a major compliment in many areas of rural Queensland.

The Burdekin electorate is most diverse. It encompasses the coalmining area of Collinsville with its adjacent pastoral lands and the horticultural farming district of Bowen to the south. Half of the constituents of this electorate are actually in the Lower Burdekin sugar growing region of Giru, Home Hill and Ayr. To the north, in Townsville city, a third of Burdekin's electors live on the southern side of the Ross River. They share urban and industrial interests. To the west are the farms of Woodstock.

I was born in Collinsville and actually grew up in the bush. Our sons now carry on my family's pastoral tradition of 70 years in the Collinsville district. I am proud to say that I never attended primary school. In fact, all my primary schooling was done by correspondence. I subsequently trained and worked as a school teacher. Recently I have spent my time in Home Hill where we are a family of fourth generation sugar cane farmers. Our family's core business is cane and cattle.

The rich coalfields of Collinsville and Newlands in the Bowen River Basin are an integral part of the Burdekin electorate economy. This huge industry is currently at risk through lack of water. Eungella Dam, which feeds the Bowen River, is at 25 per cent capacity. There has been little irrigation from the Bowen River since June last year and, without further rain, mining operations as far south as Moranbah might also be severely disadvantaged. Plans for mining, for farming and for pastoral expansion are forestalled for lack of water storage. There is a major need for increased water infrastructure in this area, not only to progress future development but also to basically sustain the existing industries.

This electorate has a very large horticultural industry. Produce includes the well-known Bowen mangoes and Bowen tomatoes, Gumlu capsicums and a huge assortment of various other fruit and vegetables grown from Alligator Creek south through the electorate to Bowen. This area provides produce throughout Australia and exports world wide. Its farmers are some of the most

technologically advanced world wide. They provide Australia with not only the cheapest but the best-quality produce to be grown anywhere. No country has fresher, better fruit and vegetables than Australia, and in winter months these mainly emanate from the Burdekin electorate. The horticultural industry has not only battled the tyranny of distance but also major business costs, the scourge of drought and the availability and enormous cost of water. In representing the horticulturalists in this electorate, I am keenly aware of the enormous problems that they are currently facing.

The electorate has a large cattle industry. Much of its contribution is processed through the largest meatworks in north Queensland and this meatworks is also situated in the electorate. The sale of a significant live export quota adds another boost to the national economy. The once large fishing industry in the Burdekin waters is now under major threat of extinction. The Burdekin is one of the few areas from which fresh reef fish is sold right across Australia. Under new reef and fish management laws to be introduced, consumers across Australia are becoming aware that they could be losing the opportunity to ever again buy fresh reef fish. Not only are professional fishing enterprises affected but, of course, so are the recreational fishermen. These two groups are speaking with the one voice in the Save Our Seafood Association recently formed in my area and their concerns are very real.

The electorate contains several large agriculture projects as well as many small businesses and light industries. The innovative attempts of so many businesspeople in this area must be truly commended as those businesspeople search for alternative areas in which to diversify in their attempts to survive. Within my electorate, there are two major base metal refineries in Townsville as well as a coal-fired powerhouse in Collinsville. Of the four sugar mills in the Burdekin, one is the largest in Australia. The gas pipeline, which is currently under construction and running through the electorate from Moranbah to Townsville, should provide opportunity for future expansion. Abbot Point is already a major coal exporting port connected by rail to the Collinsville and Newlands mining fields. However, the construction of a rail link connecting the southern Bowen Basin mines to Newlands would provide the capacity to double the capabilities of Abbot Point immediately. This coal currently goes to Hay Point. With a rail extension, more loading could come to Abbot Point and relieve the pressure that is on the Abbot Point outlet, which is already stressed. The Abbot Point port and surrounding area has huge potential for further development. The whole area is rich in future industry potential, which must be advanced. But a delicate balance exists between environmental concerns and existing legislation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the concerns expressed by large numbers of residents in the southern Townsville suburbs about proposed high-impact industry development in their environs.

Urban racing features strongly with the Townsville Turf Club at Cluden Racecourse. Sadly, though, other country racing clubs in my area, the Burdekin Turf Club, the Bowen and Bowen River turf clubs, are not so fortunate as they battle the loss of so many race days. A huge economic as well as social deficit is a consequence of that loss in those districts. As well, horse breeding and training as significant industries have all but disappeared in those areas.

An important facility for north Australia in the electorate is the Lavarack Defence Barracks, which houses the 3rd Brigade. Currently, there are 7,800 regular, reserve and civilian Navy, Army and Air Force personnel based there. The total expenditure from that base within the Townsville community is \$500 million annually, which is a significant part of the Townsville economy. The internationally recognised Australian Institute of Marine Science adds a further dimension. Also situated in the electorate is the Townsville Correctional Centre. Education is catered for with 43 schools. Vocational training is provided at the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE—Burdekin College and also at the Australian College of Tropical Agriculture—Burdekin Campus. Also in the electorate are three hospitals.

The Burdekin area also contains some of Australia's finest wetlands which harbour a wide variety of bird life and other fauna. There is potential for significant tourist opportunities in this wetlands region. However, the industry that I believe has the most economic impact across the region from the perspective of the farm gate to the consumer is the sugar industry. The Burdekin electorate encompasses an area that produced 9.3 million tonnes of cane, 1.3 million tonnes of sugar to the value of \$300 million and supplied approximately 30 per cent of the state's output of sugar in 2003. These operations are some of the most efficient in the world. Cane farming activity could also be regarded as some of the most environmentally friendly farming operations in the world. The sugar industry in the Burdekin prides itself as being on the cutting edge of technology, both mechanically and environmentally. The sugar industry offers Australia an excellent opportunity for greenhouse gas reduction in energy use in the long term, both in vehicle fuel and

in cogeneration. It is of interest to note that the sugar industry has also one of the most closely monitored irrigation schemes in the world as well as probably one of the most productive and innovative irrigation schemes in the world.

The sugar industry is in crisis and needs real assistance: short-term assistance and a long-term business economic plan. State legislation controls the sugar industry and this is the state government's responsibility. The state government's previous offer of assistance to the sugar industry does not address the real issues. I urge the state government to really look with compassion towards the sugar industry—an industry that grossed \$1 billion towards the Queensland economy in 2002.

The Burdekin has the largest subartesian basin in Australia. This as well as water from the largest dam in Queensland, the mighty Burdekin Dam, is the lifeblood of the sugar industry and many other industries. Yet one of the biggest issues facing the electorate is the taking of profits from the management of water out of the area and into Brisbane. Water is a precious commodity, absolutely vital to rural Queensland, and must be managed wisely, efficiently and with regard to the people of the local communities who depend on it. A key aspect of the Council of Australian Governments—COAG—water reforms is the local management of river systems. Currently, this is not being applied in most areas of Australia and therein lies one of the biggest crises facing the Burdekin electorate.

However, my real passion is seeing young people and adults achieving their potential in life. Being involved in vocational training now for many years has made me really aware of how desperately insecure the world of work is today, especially in country areas. Could I say that the greatest export from my area is our youth, who take with them the principles and attitudes of a country upbringing, which invariably places them in positions of significant management responsibility.

Recently, I received a letter that deeply touched me. I am part of a group of local citizens who are working towards the formation of a local community bank to help rebuild community and business confidence in my home town of Home Hill. A young woman wrote to me because she had seen my name involved with this group. After growing up in Home Hill, she is now working away from the area, because there are insufficient job opportunities there. She asked me how and when she could apply for a job in this new local project, which is still only a vision. Her message was one of so many from young people in country regions today: when a town is their home, they want to go back to live and work there and give their children the benefits of the country lifestyle that they received. I believe that we have a responsibility to manage the state's resources so that opportunity is possible. Where is the act of support for small business and the value adding needed for so many of our primary products?

I look forward to the challenge of being the shadow minister for child safety and working towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Crime and Misconduct Commission report from a bipartisan approach. Our children are our heritage. Our children are our future and they are our responsibility, and I see this as a critically important department and portfolio. There is too much negativity in our community today and too much negativity being generated. So many people feel that there is nothing for future generations to look forward to. It is our responsibility to bring back confidence in this magnificent nation and in this state of Queensland and to provide them with real hope for the future.

I have a vision for the Burdekin electorate. My vision for the Burdekin is one of industry development and further infrastructure within the region. I have a vision of security—security of employment and personal safety for all—a vision of compassion and care for all our residents, and a vision of equity in services and facilities in northern Queensland. My aim is to bring the voice of the Burdekin to Brisbane. We do not come empty handed. We have much to offer. The Nationals stand for commitment and sustainable development. I know the value of hard work, and my commitment to the fine people of the Burdekin is that I will work very hard for our community.

In the words of Kahil Gibran, 'You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.' My success in the recent state election was due totally to the hard work and commitment of a wonderful team of people whose faith demonstrated the strength and principles of democratic party politics. Among the many volunteers, I wish in particular to acknowledge Don Pickard, Jan Callow, Terry Williams and Jim Gist as well as a dedicated team of Young Nationals whose energy and enthusiasm infused us all. As well, I am deeply indebted to the unconditional love and support of my wonderful family. To my wonderful husband Ray, to my two sons and daughters-in-law and to my very special daughter, I thank them all sincerely as they

bravely encompass this family lifestyle challenge. I care very deeply about the future. We have earned our heritage, and I intend to fight for it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: (Mr Fraser): Order! Before calling the member for Currumbin, may I remind honourable members that this is the member's maiden speech and I ask that the member be afforded the courtesy of the occasion. I call the member for Currumbin.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (5.22 p.m.): As the new Liberal member for Currumbin, I am honoured, proud and privileged to present my inaugural speech to this House. With respect for the traditions of this democratic institution, I pledge my loyalty to this the 51st Parliament of Queensland and to the people who reside in the Currumbin electorate. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the people of Currumbin who in giving me their vote also gave me their confidence to represent their views, concerns and their aspirations. It is my belief that actions speak louder than words. My community activity over a number of years supports this belief.

But now let me tell members about Currumbin. The seat of Currumbin was derived from the southern portion of the South Coast electorate in the 1986 redistribution. Located on the most southern aspect of the Gold Coast and bordering New South Wales, Currumbin plays an ambassadorial role as the southern gateway to Queensland. The border is invisible until summertime when it causes havoc for businesses, families, schoolchildren, tourists and locals alike with its time differences. Currumbin is one of the most beautiful, diverse and nostalgic electorates in Queensland encompassing the lush Currumbin and Tallebudgera valleys and magnificent golden sands of our world-famous beaches. According to Australia Post office history, the word 'Currumbin' means high up or places where high trees grow. Nearer the coastline it has also been referred to as a place of shifting sands. And of course local historians have recorded the famous beach parties of the fifties which stamped Coolangatta as the fun spot to be during summer.

The Currumbin electorate comprises 146 square kilometres with a population in the 2001 census of 41,401 people and with an enrolment of 29,559 as of 30 May 2003. The demographics are changing quickly in line with land values, creating a shortage of low-cost housing and a rapidly increasing number of homeless people. This is most prevalent in our seaside suburbs of Coolangatta, Kirra, Bilinga, Tugun and Currumbin as land prices soar and the wooden and fibro shacks are pulled down to make way for apartments which are snapped up by retirees. We need to address the situation of homelessness as a matter of urgency before the chills of winter hit.

Other suburbs have also been affected by the price rises. Tallebudgera was once dubbed 'nappy valley' because of the high number of young families. It is now more appropriately called 'teen valley' as it has become too expensive for young families to purchase property there. Large numbers of youths roam the streets during the weekend evenings looking for things to do. As a responsible society we need to engage these young individuals in meaningful activities and encourage them to complete their schooling.

Our principal production is tourism, light industry, service establishments mainly based around accommodation, retail and manufacturing industries and is mostly residential with some agriculture in our beautiful hinterland. Currumbin is home to the Gold Coast airport with its own international airport supporting some 800 immediate jobs to our electorate, the John Flynn Hospital with its 24-hour casualty department and the unique Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary which is renowned for its feeding of cheeky lorikeets. We have 15 schools and preschools, nine surf-lifesaving clubs and numerous sporting, recreational and community clubs or associations.

My family and I have resided in Currumbin Waters since 1987 when we moved from Adelaide. My husband Richard purchased a medical practice with surgeries in Kirra and Tweed Heads and amalgamated them into one surgery in Coolangatta 12 years ago. Whilst my initial career was nursing specialising in paediatrics—hence my keen interest in child safety—the past 20 years have seen me run my own small business as a communications consultant. This role brought me into contact with many charity and community groups who required help and led me to become proactive in local community projects and matters of concern within my electorate and throughout Queensland. I will mention a few of these as they shed some light on the handful of Liberal shadow portfolios I have recently been allocated.

During 1994 I had the pleasure of coaching Perry Cross to become Australia's very first motivational speaker on life support. Together we raised money and more importantly awareness for quadriplegics and paraplegics both on the Gold Coast and beyond. The courage and spirit of this young man is remarkable. In acknowledgment of his superhuman efforts to overcome his severe disability, he was recognised as Young Queenslanders of the Year in 1995. Last year I went in to bat for him again, this time over a severe cut to his carer funding package. Carers play

an intimate role and are, in many cases, treated as part of the family. Keeping ventilated quadriplegics out of hospital wards and at home saves the government a considerable amount of money, and this should be encouraged, not penalised.

As a member of the Save Our Hospital Committee together with several thousand residents, we took to the streets of Southport in 1998 to lobby the state government for more funding for the Gold Coast Hospital. I was particularly appalled to learn that the paediatric ward was not airconditioned and that the tourist population was not factored into the funding. I shall continue to lobby this government for a better deal for our hospitals and an end to revolving-door staff employment policies that see us treated as second cousins.

In 1999 I joined the Coolangatta Community Renewal Association, a group of volunteers whose goal is to provide a safer community for children and their families. We were determined to create a community centre in Coolangatta, an area starved of services and high in need of a centre which could provide education, support and civic pride. To date we have secured funds to relocate and renovate an old house from Mudgeeraba to a site within the school grounds. This project has involved three levels of government and will hopefully be operational by the middle of this year. I am proud to note that this project is listed by the Gold Coast South district of schools as a district innovation. Volunteers who contribute here are the lifeblood of many communities and are to be treasured. Let us make their goals easier to achieve by working closely to support them.

Leading up to this election, Currumbin was thought to be a very safe Labor seat, with a margin of 14.5 per cent. In giving me a mandate to represent them, the people of Currumbin have made it transparently clear they wanted a member who will not desert them for Brisbane. They wanted a member who does not make promises they cannot fulfil. They wanted a grassroots local member who is prepared to stand up and fight for them, a member who will ensure that consultation processes are made openly available to a broader range of residents, not just committed business groups or recognised community associations. My commitment to the people of Currumbin is to provide ample avenues for consultation, to listen actively, to gain a thorough understanding of concerns, to speak on constituents' behalf, to care and to be ready to assist ably when injustice, disability or unemployment affects them. Above all, my commitment is to be honest.

There are several specific issues that the people of Currumbin want resolved. On top of their list is the long-awaited, much-promised Tugun bypass. The Gold Coast Highway between Tugun and Kirra carries 54,000 vehicles per day, and forecasts suggest that traffic may double by the year 2015. The matter is indicative of previous poor regional planning, detracting from the quality of life in so many areas of south-east Queensland.

Already mentioned in this House is that the Gold Coast is Australia's sixth largest city and growing rapidly. We deserve a better deal. The patience of the constituents of the electorate of Currumbin and the wider community is wearing very thin, and it is therefore crucial that I work vigorously to make sure the promises and plans of the preferred route for the Tugun bypass—west of the airport—are brought to fruition. It is vital for this government to keep the pressure on New South Wales to negotiate a successful outcome.

Traffic problems are spreading through the suburbs as people try to find routes to avoid known congestion spots. Works at Stewart Road are exacerbating the existing congestion and putting undue pressure on Currumbin Creek Road, which requires the implementation of immediate safety measures if we are to avoid a fatality in the future. The installation of an Armco rail and a raised pedestrian crossing will do much to alleviate this accident waiting to happen, yet pleas to the local member for this course of action have fallen on deaf ears in the past.

Another issue causing headaches for the electorate is the Tweed sand bypass project, which commenced some three and a half years ago. Our world-famous beaches are being choked with sand due to the New South Wales and Queensland governments' 24-year Tweed sand bypass pumping agreement. Locals, lifesaving clubs and tourists alike have been complaining to their local member for two years. These complaints have also fallen on deaf ears. People find it incomprehensible that our state government would sign off on a lengthy process such as this, give 60 per cent of the control to pump to New South Wales and not have provision for annual review. They want to see more flexibility in this project.

Since the sand pumping began, the mouth of Currumbin Creek has silted up far more critically than in years gone by. As a founding member of the Fix Currumbin Creek Committee, I am determined that Currumbin Creek must be cleared to ensure safety in crossing the bar. In fact, just recently the creek mouth was nominated as one of the five most dangerous swimming locations in

all of Queensland. Also in recent times our volunteer marine rescue has been unable to assist stricken craft on numerous occasions. There is a very real danger of homes further up the creek being flooded. Even worse still is the water quality. Fish stocks and breeding grounds are all declining. Ongoing maintenance of the creek mouth must be undertaken so that the VMR, fishermen, recreational anglers and other creek users can access and return from the ocean safely.

As I enter the final chapter of my inaugural speech, I wish to take a few moments to recognise and thank the colossal number of people who supported and assisted me during the year-long campaign to win Currumbin and all those who helped on polling day. I say 'colossal' because there were literally hundreds of people involved in some way; however, there are simply too many to list here in the House today. Without the help of these dedicated and generous individuals I would not be here today.

The seat of Currumbin had been held by Labor for 11 years and, as stated, required a mammoth swing of 14.5 per cent for it to change hands. It is therefore fitting to firstly acknowledge the outstanding effort of the members of my campaign committee, chaired by my husband, Richard. They were all committed 110 per cent and applied themselves wholeheartedly and acted in a professional manner. The Currumbin branch has worked tirelessly for years towards this goal and are to be praised for their loyalty, dedication and never-quit attitude. The Burleigh branch support was sincerely appreciated, as was the efforts of the members of McPherson FEC, or federal electorate council.

My deep personal gratitude is extended to the following people, who went the extra mile for me on numerous occasions: Mr Brad Smith and the Fix Currumbin Creek Committee; Ruth and Keith Fleming; Heather Haynes OAM; Anne Hertel; Robert Wright; and Alan Campigli. To my dad, Eric Coleman: I thank you for firing up the Liberal spirit within me all those many years ago. To my greatest fan, 88-year-old Jean Russell: this win is dedicated to your beloved Wilson, who passed away three years ago and was one of the most fervent Liberals you could ever hope to meet. To my husband of 27 years, Richard: it is difficult to put into words how much I value the special nature of our precious relationship. Your absolute belief in me, together with your unconditional love, has made my dream to become a member of parliament come true. Our children, Olivia and Edward, have been full of support and encouragement throughout this campaign, which was a great comfort to me.

I wish to thank Mr Neil Laurie, the Clerk of the Parliament, and his colleagues for delivering our three-day new member induction program in February. Your patience, knowledge, courtesy and professionalism are commendable, and I thank you.

I stand before this House proud to be a Liberal and part of Bob Quinn's new-look team. For the last three elections the Liberals have outpolled all other non-Labor parties in the state. This will give us a platform for the future. I am looking forward to being part of such a talented and enthusiastic team. What we may lack in seat numbers is more than compensated for by our united determination to keep the government accountable and focused on the real issues affecting Queenslanders. May my positive actions continue to speak louder than my words, and may we all in this House work together in this robust atmosphere for the betterment of all Queenslanders.

I would like to finish with a quote that has carried me through the last few years. I hope that you will find it of some value. 'Character is the ability to listen to your heart, hear what it says and follow it through, no matter what in your mind you think you may lose.'

Debate, on motion of Ms Clark, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. E. A. CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (5.38 p.m.): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 20 April 2004.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. E. A. CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (5.38 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (5.39 p.m.): I rise to speak about a problem at the Toowoomba Base Hospital in the provision of services for those who are affected by alcohol and other drugs. There is a unit there called ATODS—Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services—which has for many years provided a wonderful service. Over the recent years of Labor government we have seen the funding and resources provided to ATODS gradually decline. It is an area of great need.

I was advised recently of a mother who wished to have her user son registered on the methadone program as he needed help, and needed help urgently. She was told this was not possible until 19 March 2004 as there was no longer a weekend program or a doctor on duty at the weekend who could provide that particular assistance. It has been proven that at night, on weekends and at Christmas time are the times when users are at their most vulnerable and desperate point and they cry for help, and if none is available many can resort to suicide. We had a tragic episode of that at the hospital. It is not the fault of the staff because they are working themselves to the bone in an endeavour to provide this help. They just simply do not have the resources or the systems any longer to provide the sort of care that they used to be able to provide.

Admission for medical detoxing is now through the accident and emergency department, and they only admit for medical detoxing on Mondays and only then if complications are demonstrated. Patients then have to be sent to Brisbane because there are no public detox beds any longer at the Toowoomba Hospital. When this happened recently and two persons were referred to Brisbane, only one was admitted in Brisbane and the other was told there were no beds for him and he would have to return home. The ATODS staff are doing all they can, but funding is inadequate for existing programs for users, for counselling for parents, for partners and families of users.

We hear a lot about extra money that is going to health, and there are a number of areas of the health system that do need support. I would like to see a portion of this extra money that is promised to Toowoomba provided for this service at our hospital because we are a major regional centre serving the vast areas of south-western Queensland. It is not just for Toowoomba but all the people of the south-west, the Lockyer and the South Burnett. These people, when in desperate need, need help.

We have seen examples in recent years of the rehabilitation and medical beds for the elderly being gradually cut back at the hospital to the point where there is never enough to service the needs. Recently during heatwave conditions we had the problem of no airconditioning in the day ward for people who were receiving cancer treatment. I spoke up about it through the media and fortunately virtually within two days some airconditioning was put into that hospital. We desperately need to have MRI facilities at our hospital because it is a major hospital servicing so many people. I call on the new Health Minister to hear what I have said tonight and to ensure that the ATODS section, rehabilitation and medical areas and our MRI facilities receive appropriate funding.

Time expired.

Cook Electorate

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (5.42 p.m.): Unfortunately, today I was unable to finish some parts of my maiden speech. The electorate of Cook is so large that it is very difficult to cover all of the issues in one sitting so I appreciate the opportunity to get back on my feet and conclude with a few remarks. One of the most important things I was unable to do in my maiden speech was to thank my wife. It is the second time I have forgotten to do it. So it is most important that I get back up and thank my wife, Annette, for all the support she has given me over the years. Annette and I met in London about 10 years ago now. She is from Innisfail and I am from Cairns and we met in London. She is a great support to me and it was very disappointing I was unable to put my appreciation to her on the record during the course of my inaugural speech.

We have one son, Sean, and he is in for a hard life. The member for Cook is notoriously absent from his home. I think previous members for Cook have spent 40 weeks a year on average away from their home. So it is a tough road that we have in front of us but we are up to the challenge and we are looking forward to the opportunity.

My father is in the gallery today and I would like to thank him for coming down. Unfortunately, my mother could not be here with me but I carry her spirit with me always. There are so many

issues in Cook to cover in 20 minutes. Today was the introduction of the Sugar Industry Reform Bill. We have a sugarmill in Cook at Mossman. It is probably one of the smallest sugarmills in Queensland servicing about 600,000 tonnes of sugar per year. The mill is desperate to survive. It is doing everything that it can to survive. It has asked its growers to take a cut in the amount that they receive. It has asked its workers to take pay cuts to keep it afloat, and that is a mill that no matter what wants to survive. It is probably one of the most marginal in Queensland, but I look forward to continuing that debate during the second reading stage next month.

There are so many other issues. There is erosion at Clifton Beach that I would like the Minister for the Environment to come and have a look at. That is a good job. It is not so onerous but certainly there is some work to do. There are flooding problems. On the front page of the *Cairns Post* today some of my constituents cannot get to their properties because the Barron River at the moment is in full flood. There are so many issues, but I do thank the House for the opportunity to get back on my feet and thank my wife for her support.

Royal Children's Hospital

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (5.45 p.m.): I rise on a matter of importance to all children and their parents. The Royal Children's Hospital is the tertiary referral hospital for the whole of Queensland for sick children—children with neurological conditions, hydrocephalus, cancers and leukaemia. The best medical advice is that children who may need serial scanning should be scanned by MRI, which does not expose them to damaging radiation.

If we are the Smart State, let us provide the equipment necessary for best practice to care for the children of our state. Access one day a week and only then when adults do not have precedence over them is not acceptable for the children of Queensland, nor is shunting them around to various private facilities and giving them general anaesthetics in less than optimal circumstances. The government should listen to the clinicians and to the patients who have been calling for an MRI machine for the Royal Children's Hospital for quite some time now. The government was elected on a platform of child protection. Let us do something for the children of Queensland at the major hospital that cares for them when they are most vulnerable and most in need, and provide the necessary equipment to care for them in the best way possible.

Harmony Day

Ms STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (5.47 p.m.): Harmony Day is being celebrated on Sunday, 21 March. It is a national day to celebrate racial diversity, a day to shine the spotlight on the provisions of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and for all of us to check that we are all meeting our legal and moral responsibilities under this convention. In the lead-up to this day, I take this opportunity to express my great pleasure at being given the responsibility for assisting the Premier with multicultural affairs in Queensland. I am proud to be a member of a government with a record of acceptance of diversity and genuine support for multicultural Queensland.

Even though Harmony Day is a designated day on our annual calendar of events, I believe it is in our everyday lives that we create harmony in our society. Members, every day we must embrace and value the wonderful array of cultures that make up our community. Every day we must value the substantial contribution made by the many migrants who have made Queensland their home.

Every day we must act to reject racial intolerance in all of its forms. These small daily acts of humanity become critically important as the world faces the challenges wrought by terrorism. I am very disturbed by the inhumane treatment of many asylum seekers—for instance, by the Howard federal government. I remain very disturbed at the overt fear that the earlier actions around the *Tampa* and the children overboard incidents have created amongst our community. This fearmongering has been totally irresponsible and has created unwanted hysteria and fear in the minds of many people. These actions have taken us back decades.

I heard a comment recently that there is no such thing as other people's children; that we are all responsible for children in our community. Yet the Howard government I think did some of the most outrageous, scandalous and deceitful acts in locking children up behind razor wire and in festering the fear around this children overboard incident. It is taking us a long time to recover from those incidents.

I want to pay tribute in the lead-up to Harmony Day to the great work that is being done by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, the office of the Queensland government that has responsibility for implementing our multicultural affairs policy. They are doing some great work around the state, as are many agencies like the Immigrant Women's Support Service, QPAST and others. They are working tirelessly to promote racial equality and harmony, and I congratulate them on the efforts they are making.

I encourage all members on Sunday, 21 March to think about Harmony Day and to take action in their daily lives and in their community to renew their commitment to the social cohesion that marks Queensland's maturity as a great state.

Pacific Paradise Bypass

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (5.50 p.m.): A welcome announcement from the state government during the election campaign was its promise to fund a \$35 million Pacific Paradise bypass and new interchanges on the Sunshine Motorway on the Maroochy north shore. This is an issue which I have pursued with the government since I won the agreement of previous Main Roads Minister Vaughan Johnson to instigate a study to create a new Pacific Paradise road network. While it took his successor, Steve Bredhauer, six years to complete this study—and we are still waiting for the full details to be publicly released—I was delighted when the state government matched my commitment and the commitment of the Leader of the National Party during the election campaign to upgrade this road network to the north. In the last five days of the campaign the Deputy Premier announced that the work would occur at a cost of \$35 million, and I will be holding him to that promise.

However, more needs to be done to unlock the gridlock on our roads. If the Sunshine Motorway bridge over the Maroochy River is not duplicated there will still be traffic jams several times a day, seven days a week. The bridge's duplication is not in the forward funding program, which we know is the Roads Implementation Program, and it was not announced during the election campaign or as part of the Smart State Infrastructure Fund. If it does not commence within the next two years a bad situation will become disastrous.

Already 30,000 vehicles a day cross this bridge and I understand that duplication of roadworks is required at about 22,000 vehicles per day. So we have a bridge which is already carrying far in excess of what is estimated to be the ideal ratio of vehicles.

But the Beattie Labor government chopped some \$250 million from the base funding for Main Roads five years ago, and this has had a significant impact upon the road networks of Queensland, particularly in the growth areas, particularly in areas such as the Sunshine Coast, where we have seen quite rapid growth in population. There does need to be good planning of roads, but that seems to be all that this government has been doing in the last few years—planning roads and not building them. My commitment is to focusing this government on actually building the roads, not putting in place further road studies that can take five to six years before we see desperately needed infrastructure, which is not only about moving people and moving businesses but also about saving lives and protecting people from what has been a situation of deteriorating roads on the Sunshine Coast.

Sri Lankan Buddhist Temple, Ellen Grove

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.52 p.m.): On 6 March I was invited to the official opening of the Sri Lankan Buddhist monastery at Ellen Grove. Among the specially invited guests were Venerable Dhammawasa Nayake Thero; Mr Peter Abedeera; Lord Mayor Tim Quinn; Bernie Ripoll, the federal member for Oxley; the federal Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs; and Councillor Les Bryant from the ward of Richlands.

I was pleased to be with my colleagues to celebrate the opening of the monastery and I congratulated all of the members of the community for making it happen. There is still a large debt for them to pay and they are seeking donations and sponsorship from anybody who can assist them. My own electorate of Mount Ommaney has a broad cross-section of ethnic communities and cultures. During my tenure as the Labor member for Mount Ommaney I have met a number of people from the Sri Lankan community throughout the electorate. Each one I have found to be courteous and supportive. I have made some sincere friends in this community. These people have intermingled with indigenous and Australian-born residents to make our suburbs rich in

diversity and in character. They regard themselves as Australian and do not like to be singled out and made a fuss of.

As a representative of the Mount Ommaney electorate, I try to bring all cultures together by encouraging people in the community to express their culture and diversity in a variety of ways through cultural festivals and activities, community education awareness programs and by supporting initiatives of all groups and working with them. There is a lot that I do not understand fully about their customs and traditions, but I am willing to learn. My job as the local representative is to instil this desire in others to close any gaps that may be created by racial intolerance.

Most Australians open their hearts and minds to others and appreciate the value that ethnic groups bring to our community—their skills, their religious traditions, their pursuance of peace, their sense of family and community values and their life experiences. The Beattie Labor government's multicultural policy and the Office of Multicultural Affairs does a lot to support groups such as these in Queensland through a cultural diversity support scheme, a language support program, improved access to legal and justice services, establishing a multicultural register of interest and developing acceptable protocols for multicultural services in Queensland.

My strong political desire is to lead the community into harmony, to listen closely to the needs of all individuals in the electorate and to fight for their rights as equal citizens by providing opportunities for advancement in our society.

We are lucky to live in a country where multiculturalism is promoted and we can reap the benefits of each other's traditions and cultures, where we can all live together in peace with respect for each other's religion and beliefs. I congratulate the Sri Lankan community for sharing their hospitality on that day and their most precious beliefs with us to enable us to join them in celebrating the opening of their monastery.

Bushland, Gladstone

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.55 p.m.): I rise to speak about a block of land in Philip Street in my electorate that has for a number of years now been a source of controversy. The community, particularly those who live in close proximity to the land, wishes to see the entire block kept as natural bushland. It has to be acknowledged that its past use included animal husbandry, but over quite a number of years it has reverted back to natural bushland. People see it as an important lung in the city.

In the past I have had quite a bit of dealing with this land, particularly with the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing's departmental staff to the point at which at one stage we had an agreement that part of the land would be used for aged care and low-cost housing and the rest would be kept in its natural state. I remain supportive of that view. However, the majority of the people in the community who did respond to the issue wanted to see the land kept in its natural state. Prior to the last election I said I would support them in their call.

Although he would not gift the land to the council for open space purposes, the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing generously offered a deal to the Gladstone City Council in relation to the purchase of the land for half the market value and an arrangement for the payment of that land and the use of that money for public housing. Unfortunately, Gladstone City Council rejected that offer and we are now back to the situation where the Minister for Housing has stated that he will make the land available for public auction.

I do not blame the minister for losing patience. It has been controversial and it has been elongated in terms of negotiations. I seek leave to table a letter from Maria Mohrholz in relation to the land.

Leave granted.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: In that letter she asks the parliament of Queensland, the minister and the Premier to allow more time to negotiate a solution in terms of the community and that block of land. The Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing has said that it will be made available for auction or sale in the first week of April.

A community group whose representative is Mr David Caffin is looking at ways of funding the purchase of that land with council as the conduit because the government needs a recognised entity to be the purchaser of that block of land. But he and the community do not believe that in the short time available they will have the opportunity to approach all of the industries that they are hoping will co-fund the purchase of the land for it to be kept as open space.

The purpose of my speech in the Adjournment debate tonight is to seek some additional time from the Premier and the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing to allow the community to be able to work on some options in keeping the land for open space.

Mr G. Kitching

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (5.58 p.m.): I rise in this chamber this evening to pay tribute to my late uncle George Kitching, known as the 'mayor of Ebbw Vale'. My dearly beloved uncle passed away on the same day that the Queensland election was called. Needless to say, the state election campaign was a time of total grief for me, a time of great sadness and a time when my extended family needed me more than ever.

My uncle George was married to my aunty Kay Kitching for nearly 45 years. They were, as she says, joined at the hip. Uncle George was born on 28 February 1937, the third of four children of parents Hugh and Elsie May Kitching. My uncle George, my mother, Edith, my aunty Isabella and my uncle Bill grew up at 13 William Street, Station Hill, Bundamba. Uncle George attended Bundamba State School and Silkstone State School before he entered the work force. He commenced his working life at Bishop and Woodward, a clothing manufacturer in Ipswich, where my mum also worked. Not long after, he left to work in the coalmining industry, where he remained for the rest of his working life—overall a 45-year contribution to the coal industry. He worked at underground mines such as Sunrise and Southern Cross, where my father, George, also worked and also in the open-cut coalmines.

The coalminers of Ipswich, the underground boys, developed in my uncle George at a very young age the qualities of brotherhood, union solidarity, loyalty to your mates, a love of the Australian Labor Party, a lifelong commitment to social justice and equality for all and a very clear understanding of what was right and wrong or fair or unfair. My uncle George was devoted to the coalmining industry and he believed with all his heart in the spiritual bond that existed and still exists amongst coalmine workers and their families. I am proud to have been brought up in one of the great coalmining families of Ipswich, as these values have been and will continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

My uncle George was devoted to making sure that the coalmining contribution to the city of Ipswich and Queensland generally would never be forgotten. He was an avid collector of mining lamps and other memorabilia at auctions and antique shops, and of books on the history of coalmining. In fact, I still have the Pete Thomas books in my home.

My uncle wanted a large statue of miners with the lamp and pick at the entrance to Ipswich. I will be discussing this with the Ipswich City Council in the near future. For his community work uncle George was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal. He was devoted to his community and to his family and he will always be remembered as a great family man.

Uncle George was a member of the Dinmore Riverview branch of the ALP and he was loved. I would like to pay tribute to my aunty Kay Kitching, who never left my uncle's side during his illness. He was in St Andrew's Hospital, Ipswich, Ipswich General Hospital and the Wesley Hospital. On behalf of my family, I would like to thank the doctors and nurses at the hospitals who provided excellent care for him. My cousins Tony and Tracey were a great support to my aunty Kay during this traumatic time.

I wish to pay tribute to them for their courage and devotion to their mother and my uncle George. The family would also like to thank Major Rodney Walters of the Salvation Army Corps at Bundamba, who conducted the funeral service. As we sang the hymn All Things Bright and Beautiful, it was clear to us that uncle George Kitching was indeed a bright and beautiful man, a mauve butterfly who has left our earthly life to fly into heaven. May he rest in peace having made the world a better place.

Multiservice Special Operations Unit

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (6.02 p.m.): Yesterday the Governor's speech contained references to the government's proposals for the forthcoming term, and in particular I wish to refer to the construction of an \$8.6 million multiservice special operations unit complex in Brisbane. I applaud this initiative, which will put special operations personnel at the forefront of preventive

terrorist disasters and hopefully equip our personnel by educating them to organise communities in the event of terrorism, natural disasters and the like.

This issue confronting our society today will not go away. When we see the atrocities of New York and now as recently as Madrid last week, we wonder when we may be the next. We have to equip our personnel to make certain that we have preventive measures in place, that we do alert our communities as to what could happen and may happen. But at the end of the day I believe this to be a worthwhile initiative and one that, as I said, I applaud the government on.

I believe this must be fast-tracked. I hope that the government is in the position to be able to fast-track this agenda for the betterment of not only our special forces and our special operations personnel but also the protective communities at large across the whole of Queensland.

As I referred to in my address-in-reply speech this afternoon, I call on the government to immediately implement the opportunity for Queensland police to have phone-tapping powers, which would bring them into line with the other states. This would help them identify this type of element in our communities. These people are the scum of society. We should be giving our police every tool to enable them to maintain the thin blue line and do what they do best, that is, protecting the communities of Queensland and Australia.

I cannot highlight enough the importance of this. Yesterday I read in the *Courier-Mail* about the bleeding hearts and civil libertarians saying that it is an invasion of privacy. There is nothing more invasive of privacy than someone blatantly and discriminately taking another person's life through an act of evil. That act of evil, whether it be terrorism, murder, rape or whatever, cannot be condoned in our society. I believe we should give our Police Service every opportunity to make it the best in the world, to give it the equipment and tools to make it the best in the world, so that they can carry out what we as Queenslanders and the people of Queensland deserve, namely, the best protection from that professional outfit that our Queensland Police Service is.

Land, Stafford Heights

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (6.05 p.m.): For about four decades, the six hectare tract of land described as 818 Rode Road, Stafford Heights, was set aside for future school use. With the development of other schools in nearby suburbs the Chermiside West State School was never built. In December 1994 the Labor Housing Minister decided that the site should be purchased by the Department of Housing from the Education Department, and it was to be developed for a mixture of public and private housing—80 per cent private and 20 per cent public. There was some opposition to this from the local people, but the Labor Party kept to its guns, held public meetings and explained its purpose.

In 1995, the Liberals said that they would oppose any sale of the land or any development for housing. Yet when the Liberal Party came into power from 1996 to 1998, what it did was the opposite. In May 1996 Liberal Housing Minister David Watson lodged a development plan for consideration in principle. The intent of this action was to determine the Brisbane City Council's reaction if the department was to sell the land to maximise the department's return by demonstrating to developers what the council would support.

The application for consideration in principle for a preliminary subdivision was lodged with the council on 22 December 1997 by Dr Watson and was approved on 23rd February 1998. This was done with the full knowledge of the local Liberal councillor. I seek leave to table some documents about this, including a plan, letters from some Liberals and a flyer that forms my response to that.

Leave granted.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: There is one major difference between what the Liberals are saying and what the Labor Party has said. Right from 1994 the Labor Party has said that this land should be developed for a mixture of public and private housing. The Liberal Party, in opposition, said that it would not do anything about it. But the question has to be asked: is the Liberal Party telling the truth? Because when we look at its record, what it said is not what it did.

In 1995 the Liberals promised not to develop the six hectare tract of land at 818 Rode Road for housing, but between December 1997 and February 1998 in government the Liberal Housing Minister, with the full knowledge of the Liberal councillor, applied to the Brisbane City Council for a housing subdivision at the 818 Rode Road site. In June 1998 the Liberal Housing Minister, David Watson, tried to sell off the land for a housing development. And now, in March 2004, the Liberal

council candidate says he will not sell off the land for development. But can we believe the Liberals? If the Liberals did not tell the truth in the past, why would we trust them now? They said one thing for the last 10 years in opposition, yet when they had the chance in government, they did exactly the opposite. We cannot believe what the Liberals are saying. Their local councillor cannot promise something, because they cannot deliver. In the past they have not told the truth, so why would we trust them now?

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.