



WEEKLY HANSARD

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51ST PARLIAMENT

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FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2005

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. T McGrady, Mount Isa) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

Report

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that today I received from the chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission a report entitled *Police powers and VSM: a review—responding to volatile substance misuse*. I table the report.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Noosa River

Ms Molloy from 3,009 petitioners requesting the House to ensure that the approval for the two storey floating restaurant on the foreshore of the Noosa River is not used as a precedent for similar projects on the Noosa River.

Big Brother

Mr Foley from 44 petitioners requesting the House to immediately withdraw all financial support provided to the Big Brother television program and commit to not funding Big Brother or similar ventures in the future; immediately cease the promotion of sexually explicit and highly graphic material to children and young people; withdraw all previous public statements of support for Big Brother; and take all practical measures to ensure inappropriate material is not made available to children through another medium including internet, mobiles or any other new media, in particular where the alternative medium is promoted to children on television or radio.

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

Dr Flegg from 583 petitioners requesting the House to immediately reconstitute the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry as a matter of urgency allowing evidence to be heard and a report to be delivered to Parliament and the people of Queensland.

The following honourable member has sponsored an e-petition which is now closed and presented—

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

Dr Flegg from 127 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately reconstitute the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry as a matter of urgency allowing evidence to be heard and a report to be delivered to Parliament and the people of Queensland.

PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Premier and Treasurer (Mr Beattie)—

- Response from the Premier and Treasurer (Mr Beattie) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr Wellington from 931 petitioners requesting the House to remove the investigation area at Bridges (Yandina) from the South East Queensland Regional Plan for Industry

Minister for Child Safety (Mr Reynolds)—

- Response from the Minister for Child Safety (Mr Reynolds) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr Wellington from 171 petitioners requesting the House to support the terms of the Private Members Bill "Child Protection (Recognition of Relative Carers) Amendment Bill" addressing the issue that grandparents, as relative carers, receive no funding for caring for their grandchildren

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Palaszczuk)—

- Annual Report on the administration of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, reporting period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Infrastructure Development

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): The government has forged a new partnership with industry and universities to build an engineering force that will deliver our massive infrastructure program. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The government has forged a new partnership with industry and universities to build an engineering force that will deliver our massive infrastructure program.

We have launched "Engineer your Future", a campaign to attract young Queenslanders into engineering by offering scholarships and promoting the profession's future-building role.

Queensland is booming, with the government poised to spend \$55 billion on infrastructure in the south-east—and invest billions in export and other infrastructure in dynamic regions.

None of these projects will be finished without engineers, who turn brilliant concepts into reality.

However, last week, one employment website alone had about 1200 engineering job vacancies in Queensland.

This workforce shortage, coupled with huge projects on the drawing board and underway, is a boon for graduates and professionals.

Yet only 1600 people enrolled in university engineering courses in 2005, in response to more than 2000 enrolments.

The well-paid, satisfying engineering jobs of the future will only go to Queenslanders if more local people start training now.

To build up the workforce, a team comprising the government and more than 30 businesses and 6 universities is offering:

- More than 60 scholarships and bursaries for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year engineering students in 2006
- A new Smart State Engineering Scholarship program offering scholarships to three first-year university engineering students starting in 2006
- A \$47,000 newspaper advertising campaign jointly funded by the government and industry
- A new website, www.qld.gov.au/engineer and
- An information campaign in schools about engineering careers.

The government invites other companies to come forward to support this initiative and place their information on the Engineer your Future website.

Advertisements began to run in national, metropolitan and regional newspapers on Saturday, and the early feedback is exciting.

As of 1 pm yesterday (Wednesday, September 29) there were:

- 1201 web hits directly from the link advertised (www.qld.gov.au/engineer)
- 4607 total web pages viewed
- 41 Telephone calls
- 39 online forms submitted
- 54 emails
- 147 forms downloaded

The private sector has also made positive comments.

For example, the Chief Executive of the Queensland Resources Council, Michael Roche, said the government's initiative was timely as the state's booming resources sector has a strong demand for engineers.

The Queensland Major Contractors Association, Engineers Australia and the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia also welcomed the initiative.

Paul Hummel, Executive Director of Engineers Australia Queensland Division, said: "It is very encouraging that, in The Year of the Young Engineer, the Queensland Government is providing funding, as well as creating partnerships with the tertiary and corporate sectors, to drive the momentum for careers in engineering for more of our young people."

The quality of our engineering is world standard, but only about 6% of Australian graduates are engineers, compared with 28.4% in Singapore and nearly 20% in Japan.

Meanwhile, China produces about 350,000 engineering graduates each year, more than the total of Australian graduates.

I seek leave to have the list of participating companies and universities incorporated in *Hansard*, to give them due recognition.

THE ENGINEER YOUR FUTURE TEAM

Businesses:

Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd
Barclay Mowlem
Bechtel Corporation
BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance
Clough
Comalco Aluminium Limited
Connell Wagner
CS Energy
Energex
Ergon
GHD Pty Ltd
Golding Contractors Pty Ltd Hatch
John Holland Group Pty Ltd
Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd

Macmahon Contractors
Maunsell Australia
Parsons Brinckerhoff
Powerlink
Queensland Electrical Transmission & Distribution
Queensland Major Contractors Assoc
Queensland Resources Council
Rio Tinto
Roche Mining
Sinclair Knight Merz
SNC-Lavalin Australia Pty Ltd
Stanwell Corporation Pty Ltd
Tarong Energy
Thiess Pty Ltd
Worley Parsons
Xstrata Coal Australia
Xstrata copper

Universities:

Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
University of Queensland
University of Southern Queensland

Government Agencies:

The Coordinator-General
Department of Main Roads
Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Department of Public Works
Queensland Transport

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Rockhampton

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): I have a report on next week's sitting of the parliament in central Queensland. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Next week from 4 to 6 October the House will sit in Central Queensland for the first time in our Parliament's history.

It will be only the second sitting of Parliament outside Brisbane since 1859, following the first regional sitting in North Queensland in September 2002.

This is about taking Parliament to the people, and the sittings at Rockhampton's Pilbeam Theatre will be the centerpiece of a five-day festival of democracy, including Cabinet on Monday, executive council and a Youth Parliament on Friday.

The North Queensland sitting was enormously popular—more than 8,000 people attended with up to half of these being school children.

Here's a challenge: let's see if Central Queensland can top that.

Importantly, more than 3,600 students from 35 state and 15 non-state schools and 2 tertiary institutions are expected to see Parliament in action next week.

That includes 1,780 primary students, 1,122 junior secondary students and 723 senior secondary students.

On Friday 7 October 2005, 87 senior secondary students from 7 state and 5 non-state schools will form a Youth Parliament at the Pilbeam Theatre.

The sitting proper will be heralded by an Aboriginal welcome to country on Tuesday at 9.30am.

Parliament will sit between 9.30am and 7.30 pm on Tuesday and Thursday, and from 10.30am to 9.00pm on Wednesday.

Following the popularity of a special evening Question time in Townsville (attended by more than 1,000 people), Question time on Wednesday will occur between 7.30pm and 8.30pm.

There will be a range of free community activities associated with the sittings.

They include a barbeque on Tuesday from 1.00pm—2.30pm at Riverside Park.

All Ministers and most Members have indicated they intend to attend.

There will be a community engagement program at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre in East Street from 1.00pm from Monday 3 October and closing at 12 noon on Friday 7 October.

School children will be a focus and they will be involved in mock voting and performances of the play, *Citizen Jane*.

The Centre will also house displays of Parliamentary artefacts, memorabilia from the Parliament's O'Donovan Collection, and the Parliament's exhibition of the centenary of women's right to vote.

Visitors will be able to vote on the People's Choice Award in the Multicultural Photographic Awards.

On the eve of the sittings, Cabinet will meet at Gracemere Saleyards.

This will coincide with the Brahman stud sales and be another chance for Ministers to get out of George Street and mix with real Queenslanders.

On Thursday Governor in Council will convene at Kenmore—a magnificent location redolent with historical significance.

Kenmore was built in 1893 for the Honourable John Ferguson, with the intention of being the Governor's residence.

It is now owned by the Sisters of Mercy and is the administrative centre for the Mater hospital.

Mr Speaker, the people of Central Queensland, like all Queenslanders, elect and pay for Members, so they should be able to check that we are fulfilling our "job descriptions".

Enthusiasm for regional parliament vindicates the government's commitment to staging one regional sitting of Parliament each term.

Notwithstanding the importance of the event, I am mindful of the need to contain costs.

The cost is expected to be similar to that incurred for the North Queensland sitting, which was \$432,144.

However, final costs won't be known until all accounts are received.

I thank the House for continued support of this initiative and look forward to joining members in Rockhampton.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Reds

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): I have a report on the Queensland Reds announcing their move to Suncorp Stadium. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I can inform the House that Queensland Rugby are today announcing that the Queensland Reds Super 14 team will play home games at Suncorp Stadium in 2006.

This wonderful Stadium will now host top class rugby union, rugby league and soccer year round.

We wore a lot of criticism with the redevelopment of the Stadium but now it is one of the most popular venues in the country and recognised around the world.

Fans will now be able to watch exciting rugby at the best stadium in the world—complete with wonderful atmosphere, unrivalled comfort and facilities, and superb views of action on the field.

Queensland's 2004 clash against the Waratahs at Suncorp attracted more than 42,000 and the match against the Brumbies earlier this year, which was effectively a dead rubber, still attracted more than 28,000 patrons.

World Cup matches and other Rugby matches played at Suncorp Stadium were sensational and it will be great to see rugby at this venue on a more regular basis.

I am sure fans will welcome this announcement by Queensland Rugby and support the Reds as they set about establishing a dynasty of supremacy at the Cauldron.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Tennis Centre

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): I have a statement on an agreement to build the \$60 million tennis centre planned for a riverfront site at Tennyson. Contracts have been signed. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

A new, purpose-built \$60 million State Tennis Centre planned for a riverfront site at Tennyson on Brisbane's south-west moved a step closer to reality today.

The contracts have been finalised by the State Government and developer Mirvac Group which paves the way for work to begin on site by the end of the year.

Completion of the Centre is expected by December 2008 so it is ready for play in January 2009.

It will be a wonderful facility that will provide a new home for tennis in Queensland, create local jobs and provide a boost to the local economy.

It will also hopefully herald a new golden era of tennis in our sporting State and for the first time in years, Queensland will be able to compete with the other States for major tournaments.

The Government announced in late June that it had selected Mirvac as the preferred developer of the Tennyson Riverside Development after a competitive bid process.

Mirvac Group Queensland CEO Chris Freeman said the finalisation of contracts was a major milestone for Queensland, for the sport of tennis and for the Brisbane community.

Mr Freeman said Mirvac was excited about the opportunity presented by the Tennyson site and he was looking forward to working with the State Government to deliver a much-needed community tennis facility as well as a Centre capable of hosting major international tournaments.

Mr Freeman advised that now the contracts have been signed Mirvac will be working towards starting site remediation works in December this year.

Mr Freeman also advised that Mirvac is committed to keeping the community involved through each stage of the development and had already commenced a community consultation and communications program.

The Tennyson facility will be the home of the Queensland Academy of Sport tennis program and the first purpose-built state tennis centre in Australia with all three 'grand slam' surfaces.

It will include 23 International Tennis Federation standard match and training courts, including a centre court, 16 acrylic hardcourts, two grass courts and four clay courts.

The Tennyson Riverside Development will also incorporate a high quality residential development comprising approximately 385 residential apartments overlooking the river and the city and extensive community facilities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Lexmark Indy

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): I have a report on the Lexmark Indy. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The countdown to one of the most popular sporting events in Australia has begun.

It is only 20 days until the 2005 Lexmark Indy 300 carnival commences on the Gold Coast.

This year's four day spectacular promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Ticket sales are already very strong and hopefully we will crack the record four day attendance last year of 309,583

There is a huge program of on-track action including the Champ Cars, V8 Supercars, V8 Utes, Aussie racing Cars, and Carrera Cup porsches.

Off-track there are more than 40 different events including street parades, exhibitions and gala balls.

This year there is also the added bonus of the debut of our own green and gold Team Australia.

The Lexmark Indy 300 brings numerous benefits to our State.

The 2005 event will be held on the streets of the Gold Coast from October 20-23 and I encourage everyone to come along and enjoy all the action.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Stadium

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): In relation to the Gold Coast stadium, HOK has been appointed as the successful design consultant. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Gold Coast Stadium has moved one step closer.

HOK Sport has been appointed as the successful design consultants for the 25,000 seat stadium at Robina.

It is an exciting concept and I am sure the new stadium will become an iconic landmark in Queensland.

It is a high quality design which makes good use of the land and site specifications.

HOK Sport has a strong background in world class stadiums including Telstra Stadium, Telstra Dome and our own Suncorp Stadium.

They will now prepare detailed designs based on their successful proposal.

Final costings of the Stadium will be determined after the selection process for a building consultant is completed by the end of October.

Construction of the Stadium is expected to commence in mid 2006 with completion in time for kick off of the 2008 NRL season.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Walk to Work

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): I also have a report on walk to work. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

We are all well aware of the repercussions of not getting enough exercise—and I don't just mean putting on weight.

According to the National Public Health Partnership 2002, physical inactivity ranks second to tobacco as the highest contributor to ill-health in Australia.

It is estimated that each year in Australia, physical inactivity costs \$377 million in direct health care and is associated with about 8000 preventable deaths.

Dr Keith McNeil, who led the surgical team that successfully performed Australia's first two triple organ transplants at the Prince Charles Hospital, has said 'Prince Charles Hospital probably wouldn't exist if it wasn't for smoking and obesity.'

Regular physical activity, like walking, reduces the risk of:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Type II diabetes
- Musculoskeletal diseases such as osteoporosis
- Colon cancer and
- Obesity

Physical activity has also been shown to:

- Help stress management
- Alleviate mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety
- Increase self-esteem
- Enhance mood
- Boost mental alertness

That's why I am encouraging all Queenslanders to take part in Walk to Work Day this year.

It is being held nationally for the eighth time on Friday, October 7.

The event is an initiative of the Pedestrian Council of Australia and aims to promote the health benefits of walking and physical activity in general.

I know some people have good reasons for not being able to walk to work, so I encourage those people to:

- walk and catch public transport
- walk in your lunch break
- walk home from work or
- walk before or after work.

It is not enough to just walk on Walk to Work Day.

The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommend at least 30 minutes of physical activity at moderate intensity level, on most, if not every day of the week to see a health benefit.

Walking to work is a good way to incorporate exercise into your lifestyle and make sure your body gets the exercise it needs.

Australia's Health 2004 says more than half of all Australian adults do not do enough exercise.

As well as improving your health, walking improves the health of the environment by reducing emissions from other forms of transport.

These are reason enough to take part in Walk to Work Day and to walk a little more.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Forster Report

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.34 am): On 26 April this year I announced that the Queensland government would arrange an independent review of Queensland Health's administrative, work force and performance management systems. The government appointed Peter Forster of The Consultancy Bureau, a man of great experience and reputation in reviewing government bureaucracy, to carry out the review. We also organised a commission of inquiry into matters arising from the appointment of Dr Jayant Patel. It was essential to take this action in order to ensure that we could provide Queenslanders with a health system in which they could have confidence and which would be the most efficient in Australia. This morning Peter Forster handed to me and to the health minister his 491-page final report on the Queensland health systems review containing 388 recommendations. We had set a completion date of 30 September and he complied with that, and I thank him for doing so.

It is worth noting that Mr Forster has found that the challenges facing Queensland Health are shared by other states and territories to varying degrees and by health systems across the Western world. But in Australia only the Queensland government has been prepared to hold such a wide-ranging examination of its system in order to build the best system possible to deal with emerging pressures. The official verdict by Mr Forster after a thorough five-month review involving about 1,300 submissions is that Queensland's health service, and in particular the public health system, is a good service. Mr Forster states—

Overall, based on all available information, it is performing as well as any other health service in Australia.

Mr Forster continues—

The service, which is supported by a large workforce of very dedicated personnel, is experiencing unprecedented demand pressures.

Mr Speaker, you would expect that in a growth state like Queensland, where we have an additional 1,500 people to support every week.

I want to thank all those very dedicated personnel for their hard work and for providing such a wonderful service for thousands of Queenslanders, especially over the last six months, when Queensland Health has suffered much criticism. It has been difficult for them, and I thank them today. Mr Forster goes on to state that Queensland Health is showing increasing signs of strain and in some cases is failing. The massive scope of the changes needed to deal with the problems that the report

identifies will require at least five to 10 years to implement in full. He also states that the recommended changes will take years to implement and preliminary costings—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham, please, keep your voice down.

Mr BEATTIE:—put the price of all the reforms, including new staff, salary increases and training programs, at more than \$1.5 billion a year extra, every year after the third year. But I have to caution that even with the massive change and level of spending, Mr Forster warns on page 49—

In all health systems where there are limited resources and unlimited demand for services, rationing and waiting lists are inevitable.

There are some changes we can make and will make immediately, but there are other areas in which I emphasise the report talks about eight-year and 10-year time frames. That is the report. We will start introducing the new, improved structure of Queensland Health now. Today is day one of the introduction of a new health system for Queensland. Restructuring Queensland Health, with its 53,000 employees, is a gigantic task, but it is something we can start immediately, and we will. We will act immediately by advertising eight senior executive positions to match the new structure. These jobs are being advertised -

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I would hope that those opposite would give Peter Forster the courtesy of actually having his recommendations considered seriously. They should not laugh at Peter Forster's recommendations.

We will act immediately by advertising eight senior executive positions to match the new structure as recommended by Peter Forster. Those jobs are being advertised nationally with advertisements going into major newspapers from tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I and the majority of people in this chamber today want to hear what the Premier is saying. I ask you to keep your voice down.

Mr BEATTIE: In other words, what I am saying is that we have endorsed the structure recommended by Peter Forster. The need for a new complaints process is obvious and we will start the process of introducing a new system immediately. I am sure there are many other improvements that we can start work on now.

The final report comes after a draft report, which the government has had an opportunity to consider. Clearly, we will need further time to fully analyse and respond to the comprehensive final report. However, I can say that the Deputy Premier, Anna Bligh, the health minister, Stephen Robertson, and I agree with the thrust of the final report, which we had an opportunity to quickly consider.

The report makes a number of recommendations, including more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals; better pay and conditions for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals; clinicians to have more say and more power through clinical networks which will become part of the formal structure; a range of measures to improve the safety and quality of care for patients; a leaner bureaucracy with more local decision making and resources moved to the local level; cultural problems within Queensland Health to be addressed through renewed leadership; better monitoring, reporting and complaint processes; a new funding formula; a national review of health services; and community debate about the future of the health system.

Today, I commit the government to employing more doctors, more nurses, more allied health professionals, more facilities, better training and better services. We will develop a five-year funding plan to do this. Indeed, I started a recruitment drive in London last week—a course of action recommended by Mr Forster—and already we have received 75 expressions of interest from people wanting to work for Queensland Health.

The overall numbers and the time frame are problems we will have to work out. My initial advice about costs is that the surplus will certainly not be sufficient to pay for the changes. At the time of the last budget our surplus for 2004-05 was estimated at \$2.7 billion. However, this includes high returns on our superannuation investments, which must be set aside to meet our obligations to our employees. This means that we cannot touch it for anything. The real or underlying surplus was around \$2 billion. Due to increased spending on infrastructure and services and tax cuts, this is expected to drop to \$934 million this year, around \$500 million for the following two years and as low as \$220 million by 2008-09. Clearly, this surplus cannot alone fund additional spending of \$1.5 billion a year. It is clear that we will have to face some difficult budgetary and revenue decisions, which we will do head-on.

How difficult will this be? The final report says on page 353, and I quote—

The cost of overall reform is likely to be quite significant and may be beyond the capacity of the Queensland government alone to fund.

The options identified by Mr Forster include increasing taxes and general community contributions and/or redistributing existing taxes—this may mean reallocating money from other public purposes; introducing means-tested copayments for public health services, with private health insurance or self-insurance for individuals with the capacity to make a contribution to their health care—

this includes for elective procedures; managing demand through encouraging greater personal effort to stay healthy and enhancing community care services to support healthier living outside of acute hospitals; and rationing or withdrawing from the delivery of certain health services altogether where these services can be provided through the non-government sectors. These are four issues that Peter Forster identified. Clearly, there are some tough decisions ahead of us, but I give a promise today that we will not scrap our fuel subsidy of 8.354c a litre in order to help pay for a better health system.

As we consider our budgetary position, we also have to recognise that we have other responsibilities to pay for with our revenue, such as child safety, people with disabilities, education, transport and infrastructure. As Mr Forster says on page 49—

The issue for Australia generally is to decide the appropriate level of health expenditure relative to other areas, including education, transport and other essential infrastructure. Spending more on health will not necessarily provide better health.

The report raises many policy issues for consideration. I have already given four examples raised by Mr Forster. There are many more of these issues raised by Mr Forster which are far from straightforward. These questions include: should we give up our aged care homes as discussed in the report? If there are alternative providers of home and community care services, should Queensland Health pull out of that area? Should fluoride be introduced in drinking water? At what cost and consequences? Do we review and increase patient fees and charges where possible, in the context of commitments under the Australian Health Care Agreement as recommended by Mr Forster? Should we provide specialist outpatient services privately, as is done in other states and territories? Should we introduce means testing and copayments for public health services to improve the safety and timeliness of services for those least able to afford care?

How do we deal with 841 jobs that Mr Forster says should disappear or be moved to regional Queensland—162 positions identified as surplus and 679 positions recommended for transfer to area health services? Whistleblowers should use parliament and not the media if they want protection under the Whistleblowers Protection Act. The reports says that options also include raising taxes and rationing some services. They are the issues that Mr Forster has raised and made recommendations on. Many more of the 388 recommendations will need consultation, debate and detailed consideration of their ramifications.

Mr Forster says that the decisions a government should make about how and for what purposes finite health resources are allocated would ideally be informed by robust community debate. I invite all Queenslanders to take part in such a debate. The report is being placed on the government web site even as I am speaking and can be accessed at www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/health.

However, reform of the health system is not a job for Queensland alone. Health is a partnership between the Commonwealth and state governments. The report says that the current system of mixed roles and responsibilities for funding and delivering health services between the Commonwealth and the states is a major barrier to health service improvements. The report says further on page 52—

Without significant changes to the way services are delivered and funded at both the State and Commonwealth level, rationing of public health services in the future is likely to get worse.

The question is: will the Commonwealth government pay its share and make the necessary changes? Mr Forster recommends that Queensland seek a national review of the future health care system in Australia, covering roles and responsibilities of Commonwealth and state governments. He also recommends that the Queensland government should work closely with the Commonwealth government to address immediate health care priorities, including a national system of registration for medical practitioners, the urgent examination of the feasibility of the Commonwealth becoming the sole funder of doctors to reduce the current Commonwealth financial incentives for doctors to leave the public sector; development, in conjunction with professional colleges, of a timetable for the establishment of all additional specialist medical training positions recommended by the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee, with the Commonwealth government to provide funding for the training positions; a review of the Medical Benefits Schedule to improve the alignment of the Commonwealth funded health sector and the public health system, including providing incentives to address particular areas of need such as rural health; and a trial of arrangements such as pooled funding and general practitioners working in public hospitals. They are Mr Forster's recommendations for us to examine in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Further, Mr Forster recommends that we work with the Commonwealth to develop the concept of universal service obligations for small rural communities of fewer than 5,000 and encourage the Commonwealth to explore alternative funding or service models to increase the access of rural and remote communities to federally funded health services.

Today, the health minister and I have written to the Prime Minister outlining the Forster recommendations and seeking a new partnership on health. I urge the Prime Minister to work with Queensland to bring about the most significant reform in a generation to health care and health services in Australia. My letter identifies those issues that Peter Forster believes need to be attacked by the Commonwealth government. I seek leave to incorporate the details of my letter to the Prime Minister in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland Government
Premier of Queensland and Treasurer
Please quote: SHIO/IGR

The Honourable John Howard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Howard

Today I received the report of the Queensland Health Systems Review, a copy of which I have attached for your information.

The Review found that the Queensland public health system "is performing as well as any other health service in the Australia". However it also found that it is experiencing unprecedented demand pressures, is showing increasing signs of strain and in some cases is failing. In this regard, the findings of the Review highlight the detrimental effect of some federal government policies on health provision to Queenslanders and the need for effective cooperation between the two levels of government.

The areas of federal government policy that are singled out for attention because of their negative impact on health care for Queenslanders include:

- The Commonwealth Government's reduction in medical student intakes at Australian universities resulting in shortage of doctors generally and an increasing reliance upon overseas trained practitioners.
- Current Commonwealth Government policy initiatives designed to encourage private health insurance have contributed to the growth in the number of services provided in Queensland's private hospitals, and a climate of heightened private demand which has seen the public sector losing increasing numbers of doctors to private practice.

This review calls upon the federal government to provide additional support in the following areas of federal responsibility

- an immediate increase in medical, nursing and allied health student places;
- support to increase the level of funding available to support the teaching and training of medical students on clinical placements within Queensland's public health system;
- financial contributions to ensure that sufficient funds are available to support the clinical placement of nursing students and allied health workers;
- access to Medicare billing for community based nurse practitioners, in recognition that these roles are taking on functions traditionally performed by doctors;
- reviewing the Medical Benefits Schedule to improve the alignment of the Commonwealth funded health sector and the public health system including providing incentives to address particular areas of need such as rural health and indigenous health; and
- increased funding for enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing and other certificate based health workers.

In addition, the Review proposes that the Queensland Government work closely with your Government regarding

- implementation of a national system of registration for medical practitioners;
- the development of the concept of a universal service obligation for small rural communities with a population of less than 5,000 people to outline a minimum level of health service access;
- the development of safe sustainable service models in partnership with rural and remote communities and other service providers.
- urgently examining the feasibility of the Commonwealth becoming the sole funder of doctors to reduce the current Commonwealth financial incentives for doctors to leave the public sector;
- urgently developing, in conjunction with professional colleges, a timetable for the establishment of all additional specialist medical training positions recommended by the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee, with the Commonwealth Government to provide funding for the training positions; and
- developing pilot sites in Queensland to trial arrangements such as pooled funding and general practitioners working in public hospitals.

Inevitably, the Review has focused on the problematic relationship between our two levels of government in the provision of health care. As you are aware, this has been a matter of shared concern for some time—albeit from our different perspectives. You will recall that we agreed at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in June this year to the development of a proposal by our Senior Officials to clarify roles and responsibilities and reduce duplication and gaps in the health system. The Productivity Commission's Health

Workforce Study which we commissioned earlier will shortly release its findings and will inform the work being undertaken by COAG Senior Officials. I remain optimistic that we can achieve substantial incremental reform through this process and look forward to COAG being able to present a shared commitment to substantial reform at its next meeting in February.

However this report calls upon the Queensland Government to seek a National Review. I believe that this provides us with an opportunity to go beyond the COAG reform agenda. It provides us with an opportunity to confront the fundamental problems for the future of our health system in the 21st century. We should invite the community's input on key issues including the scope of services to be provided in the public health system, what the community is willing to pay, and who should have priority access to public health services. Without significant dialogue with the Australian community, we will not be able to achieve the transformation of the system that is likely to be required.

I would appreciate your views on the findings of the Queensland Health Systems Review and your response to those recommendations on matters for which your Government has sole responsibility or shares responsibility with the Queensland Government.

Yours sincerely

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND TREASURER

Mr BEATTIE: The Forster final report is a weighty document and the government will further consider the details before making a more detailed response in the near future. On waiting lists, the report says at 2.1.6—

All states, in both the public and private sector, have waiting times between referral from a general practitioner and the date for an appointment with a specialist. These waiting times are not systematically measured but have been the subject of much reported criticism recently in Queensland as well as in some other states which have problems of the same scale as Queensland.

Mr Forster also confirms that patients needing elective surgery are more likely to receive it in Queensland than in the rest of Australia—the Queensland rate of surgery being 30 patients for every 1,000 people compared with the national average of only 26. The report also points out that Queensland Health has undertaken significant mental health reforms including: increased expenditure on mental health initiatives from \$240 million in 1997-98 to \$418.7 million in 2003-04—an increase of 74 per cent; more equitable distribution of in-patient mental health services across the state—by 2002, Queensland Health had completed a process of decentralising in-patient beds from large psychiatric institutions to 18 districts, enabling more treatment of patients closer to their home; development of community mental health services, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas where no services had previously existed—community staffing numbers increased by an estimated 350 per cent between 1993-94 and 2004-05; and an expanded range of adult community health services.

In rebuilding Queensland Health, we will draw on information and advice from the Forster final report, from the Davies inquiry and its final report when available, and the new Productivity Commission report. I should emphasise that the central document for reform will obviously be the Forster final report.

Our work begins in earnest today. I will provide to the parliament next week a document outlining our first response to this report. Over the next month we will dedicate ourselves to the development of a full implementation action plan and the funding arrangements to underpin it. This implementation action plan will be published along with the mini budget on 25 October. They will be done together.

There is no doubt that the review and inquiry process has been painful. It has been painful for those patients and families who gave evidence to and sat through the Morris and Davies inquiry hearings. It has been painful for Queensland Health staff who helped uncover the problems and issues in the system. It has also been painful for dedicated and professional Queensland Health staff to witness the fall in community confidence in the system. And it has been difficult for my government. I make no bones about that.

I accept the challenge of creating a strong public health system—this is my government's top priority. We will build a system that is focused on people and delivering quality health services—a system focused on patients. We will renew services, restore public confidence and respect the people who work in the system and the people who use it. We will run a major strategy not only to implement this report but also to restore public confidence in the system. Mr Forster says—

Queensland Health must restore its reputation with the community and with its staff or this may have dire consequences for its ability to continue to recruit staff and therefore provide services.

It is time for the media to stop misinforming Queenslanders about the state of our health system and to now deal with the facts identified in the Forster report. The independent verdict is that it is as good as any in Australia—and it is going to get a whole lot better. I repeat what Peter Forster has said. Peter Forster has said—and this is the independent verdict—that our health system is as good as any in Australia. I repeat that again: the independent verdict is that it is as good as any health system in Australia.

I want to let everyone in Queensland Health know that you are valued and there are thousands of Queenslanders who can tell their families, friends and neighbours about the magnificent service they received in one of our public hospitals. I give a commitment to Queensland Health that we, as a government, will do everything we can to help you restore your reputation.

This is a comprehensive review. It has never, ever been done in Queensland before. This is the first time that any government in the history of Queensland has had the guts to face up to the health issues head on. No other government anywhere in Australia—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: You see, Mr Speaker, our difficulty is that when we face up to problems head on we have those who are interested in cheap politics rather than patients. I say to opposition members today that now that we have the report they can either be part of the solution or part of the problem. I will say very clearly to Queenslanders that we are about to improve a system that is the equal of any in Australia. We are about to make it the best in Australia. Let me make it clear: I will not stand by and allow the opposition to try to undermine Peter Forster's report even before it has been tabled in the parliament. If Queenslanders want to know where the opposition stands on this, it simply stands for cheap politics; it does not stand for a solution.

Let me finish by saying this: we have a unique opportunity in Queensland—a very unique opportunity—to work with these recommendations to end up with the best health system in Australia. I would urge everyone in Queensland Health and anyone who is involved in health, I would urge Queenslanders and I would urge our political opponents to work with us in a bipartisan and constructive way to ensure that we have the best health system in Australia. I urge the opposition not to get involved in cheap politics but rather to work with us to put patients and Queenslanders first. That is what Queenslanders want. They are sick of the politics. They are sick of the problems. They want solutions. They want answers. Today I table those answers for the people of Queensland. The work of building the new Queensland Health starts today.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.56 am): Shortly after becoming the Minister for Health, it became apparent to me that Queensland Health's most valuable asset is its 53,000 strong work force. While Queensland Health will have a renewed focus and a reorganised structure to help drive reforms, it will be our staff in the districts, in our hospitals and in our community health facilities that will benefit most from this new beginning.

The new Queensland Health will focus squarely on providing quality care and advice to patients and other users of our public health system. It will focus on creating workplaces, where staff are valued, respected and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes. This means more decision making will happen at the local level where health services are actually delivered. This means clinicians will have a greater role in those processes. And this means values such as caring for people, leadership, respect, integrity and public service should be and will be the core of the new Queensland Health. There will be a simpler administrative structure for the organisation and a renewed emphasis on the traditional core functions of a corporate office. There will also be a new way of doing business in Queensland Health where openness, accountability and transparency are fundamental principles of how we operate on a daily basis.

The Forster review recommends a structure for Queensland Health that has a leaner, more streamlined departmental structure—a structure that comprises a slimmed-down and refocused central office, three area health services and retention of the current 37 health service districts. The new area health services will be based on the existing southern, central and northern zone boundaries. The need for a fourth area health service will be considered by 2010.

It is recommended that the boundaries of health service districts will align with local government area and statistical local area boundaries. So some minor changes are envisaged to improve efficiencies and better engage with local governments who are one of our major stakeholders and partners. Nineteen regional districts with a population of less than 60,000 will be called rural and regional districts to emphasise the unique challenges that exist in delivering health services outside of major population centres and over great distances.

Importantly, clinical networks will be established throughout the state to ensure that clinicians have a formal role in decision making. They will be adequately resourced and will have an active role in service planning and in the distribution of funding to areas of need and to improve clinical practice. We will provide clinicians with administrative support to ensure that they are not buried in paperwork and can get on with their work of helping patients. I am confident that these recommendations will be welcomed by the many doctors, specialists, nurses and allied health professionals who have spoken to me about the need to be part of Queensland Health's decision-making processes.

Each area health service will have a greater management, budget and planning powers, and will be led by a general manager who reports direct to the director-general. District managers will report to the general manager of their area health service. These will be much improved and streamlined reporting requirements that will ensure the voices of the districts are heard at the highest levels and not filtered through excessive layers of reviewers in corporate office, as is currently the case.

New area health councils will advise the area manager on the performance of area health services, planning and service improvement opportunities. The members of these new area health councils will be drawn from the existing district health councils. This will elevate community input into the way health services are planned and delivered to a new level, ensuring the voices of the community are not lost as decisions about how health services are planned and provided are discussed at higher levels.

There will be minimal changes to the existing district health councils. However, we will give greater recognition to their important role by remunerating members of councils for the time and the effort that they put in on behalf of their local communities. Major structural reforms will involve nearly 680 staff being transferred from central office to area health services, with 162 positions in central office identified as surplus under the new arrangements. The savings from this reduction in staff at head office will go to where it is needed most—the front line, as recommended by Peter Forster.

In central office, the senior executive positions are to be reshaped and, as the Premier has mentioned, will be advertised nationally to ensure we recruit the best that is available to help drive the necessary changes announced today. The new positions are: three positions for general managers of area health service positions; Executive Director—Policy Planning and Resources; Executive Director Performance; Chief Health Officer; Executive Director—Corporate Services; and Chief Operations Officer. The corporate office will retain core functions such as statewide health service plans and policies, statewide workforce planning, acquisition and allocation of funding to area health services and performance monitoring.

I recognise that these changes will cause heartache, uncertainty and disruption for some Queensland Health staff, but I can assure Queensland Health staff and this House that all structural reforms will be explained fully and will be carried out in accordance with principles of fairness. There will be regular consultative meetings with unions as reforms are being implemented. We will continue to work in the existing structure until senior staff are appointed when we can then move to the new structure, possibly by the end of November this year.

I take this opportunity to thank all patients and staff of Queensland Health for their contributions to, and patience with, the reform process to date. In particular, I would like to thank the many hundreds of staff who have contributed to this extensive review of Queensland's public health system. There are many, many challenges ahead for all of us, but, with a continuing commitment to the provision of the best health care possible for the people of Queensland while working in an environment that values staff and recognises the importance of their participation in the decision making process, I am confident that we will get there. As I said at the beginning of this statement, our work force is our greatest asset. It is the work force, more than anyone else, who will benefit from the new Queensland Health.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, I welcome to the public gallery former Deputy Premier Hon. Jim Elder.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

AusLink, Bilateral Agreement

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.03 am): Today I will sign the AusLink bilateral agreement. Queensland is one of the last states to sign the bilateral agreement and we are doing it with great reluctance. Since October 2004, the state and federal governments have been negotiating the five-year AusLink bilateral infrastructure funding agreement. This should be about the Commonwealth funding the most important strategic infrastructure around the country. Instead, it is about the Howard government's divisive, draconian industrial relations regime. If we do not sign, we do not get the money that Queensland taxpayers are rightly entitled to receive to fund road and rail infrastructure.

There is a lot at stake. Queensland's share from the Commonwealth amounts to more than \$1.8 billion for roads over the five-year period to 2008-09. That is about 22 per cent of Queensland's total road funding and far less than the \$6.6 billion—which, in fact, is more than AusLink for all of Australia—which the state government will spend over the same period on road construction, maintenance and support for local government infrastructure. In addition to the \$6.6 billion for roads, Queensland will spend around \$2.95 billion on rail and public transport over the same period—AusLink is \$7 million. The Queensland government has committed a total of \$9.6 billion to roads, rail and public transport infrastructure. For every million dollars spent on roads, we are providing 17 jobs in road construction and related industries. Around 27,000 jobs will be lost if we do not sign today. The federal government has a gun at the head of not only the state government but also Queensland motorists, workers and their families.

The industrial relations system introduced by the Beattie labor government in 1999 helped create one of the strongest and most dynamic economies in Australia. The average quarterly strike rate for the year to June 2005 stands at just 4.7 working days lost per thousand employees. Compare this with the national average of 7.2 working days. Victoria, which falls completely under the federal industrial relations system, stands at 9.1 working days lost per one thousand employees—almost twice the levels of Queensland. Gee we need their solution! Gee that will help; getting their solution!

The federal government insists that the national code of practice and the guidelines for the building and construction industry be applied by the states as a condition of receiving AusLink funding. The guidelines are a nonsense. They will not ensure that vital infrastructure is built more quickly or more efficiently. Indeed, the changes will lead to more disputes, escalating project costs and lengthy delays. The great shame is that we had no choice but to sign by 1 October 2005, as that is the condition of the deal that the federal government put on the table in front of us. A delay would have led to the imposition of more onerous guidelines which the federal government up until last night intended to introduce from 1 October—now, in its usual fashion, by 1 November.

The revised guidelines have been drawn up by the federal government in a sweetheart deal with favoured employer groups, with absolutely no consultation at all with the states. In the next six months, the federal government, with the total control of the Senate, will have laws in place that will have even tougher provisions. It will strip away rights at work, drive down wages and remove core conditions like penalty rates, overtime and the right to unfair dismissal protection.

Make no mistake: these laws will hurt Australian workers and their families. The Queensland government is powerless against this juggernaut. We have fought for and won the best deal we possibly can under the circumstances. It is unfair and unnecessary, but the federal government has announced that it will use its legislative powers and Senate majority to impose its industrial relations system on the states. We have no choice. NSW signed its agreement yesterday. I will reluctantly sign ours today.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Asbestos

Hon. TA BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.07 am): The health and safety issues we have today with asbestos trace back to the material's extensive use in workplaces and homes from the 1940s up until the 1980s. Queensland banned the use of chrysotile, or white asbestos, in December 2003 and all states have now legislated this ban. Unfortunately, the reality is that asbestos remains a component of thousands of different products including asbestos cement sheeting and as an insulator on pipes and in buildings.

Inhalation of asbestos fibres has been linked to three respiratory diseases—asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer. The Queensland government shares community concerns about the potential health dangers posed by asbestos, and we are now proposing new measures to reduce risks in its management and removal. Specifically, the government is looking at adopting two key national codes of practice and bringing in a new licensing scheme for the removal of asbestos. These measures will ensure that removal of asbestos containing material is undertaken using safer work practices. This will reduce the potential exposure to asbestos fibres. The codes we are looking to adopt are the national code of practice for the management and control of asbestos in workplaces and the national code of practice for the safe removal of asbestos. Adopting these strong national standards will also assist those businesses that work across state borders.

Currently a licence is needed for removing asbestos only where it involves friable, or loose asbestos, such as lagging. Under our new proposals there will be two classes of licences. The A-class licence will be the equivalent of the existing licence and a new B-class licence will be introduced in relation to bonded asbestos containing material. The B-class licence will be required for removal of this bonded material in quantities greater than 10 square metres.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is releasing a regulatory impact statement on these proposed reforms which it hopes members of the public will comment on.

As I said earlier, the widespread existence of asbestos building products throughout workplaces and homes provides a major challenge, but these new safety measures will provide a strong future framework for managing and removing this material.

I urge Queenslanders to have their say on the proposals after looking at the regulatory impact statement released today. The statement is available from the Department of Industrial Relations' web site at www.dir.qld.gov.au or by telephoning 1800 177 717.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Operation RBT Lockdown; Operation Padlock

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.10 am): This year there have been a number of initiatives introduced in nightclub and entertainment precincts across the state to curb drunken behaviour, violence and other public disorder offences. This government's Summary Offences Act, our 17-point plan, including drug dogs in nightclubs and 3 am lock-ins, are all recent examples of these initiatives. Many initiatives have been introduced at a local level in close cooperation with police.

Today I want to announce the results of a number of initiatives that have been run by police in Mooloolaba—Operation RBT Lockdown and Operation Padlock. Last month I did a walk-through of the Mooloolaba entertainment precinct after midnight with the police commissioner to see first-hand a number of issues that locals, hoteliers, apartment managers and the Maroochy Shire Council have been seeking solutions for.

Like many towns, car lapping is an issue in Mooloolaba. A fear of crime, as opposed to actual crime, is also high amongst locals and tourists. This has been put down to a number of factors such as streetscape and lighting issues, large gatherings of young people in the streets, and a high incidence of public drinking and drink-driving. As it is, police at the Sunshine Coast already meet regularly with the Maroochy Shire Council to discuss crime issues in Mooloolaba.

However, since my walk-through last month police have held further meetings with the council and a number of positive outcomes have been achieved. To reduce hooning, road diversions are now put in place every Friday and Saturday night from 8 pm to 4 am and on Sundays from noon until 7 pm. These diversions are part of a three-month trial. Already they have led to a reported decrease in hooning. At the end of the trial police will meet with the council, business and accommodation owners to discuss the viability of permanent diversions.

The speed bumps on Parkyn Parade have also been removed in order to reduce both speeding and lapping. I am also aware that the Maroochy Shire Council has voted to support making an application to me for 'move on' powers for police along the Mooloolaba Esplanade and the Spit. I am

also working with Mayor Joe Natoli, Mayor of Maroochy Shire Council, with a view to developing a memorandum of understanding on how we can better work with him and his council. Installing better public lighting at the end of Parkyn Parade is being progressed with Energex, while a trial of shorter car parking time at the end of Parkyn Parade has also started. In addition, police meet hoteliers at the Mooloolaba licensee monthly meetings and regularly attend meetings of the locally formed committee Mooloolaba Safe.

Operation RBT Lockdown was held in Mooloolaba on the last weekend in August and saw 822 random breath tests performed. Twenty-seven people were charged with drink-driving offences, five were caught for disqualified driving, four for unlicensed driving, 90 traffic infringement notices were issued and two vehicles were seized. Between Friday and Sunday last weekend, 3,280 random breath tests were performed.

Operation Padlock led to 46 people being charged with drink-driving offences, one for disqualified driving, 54 traffic infringement notices were issued and two people were caught in possession of a dangerous drug. This operation highlights the effectiveness of locally developed problem oriented policing, which is something this government and the Police Service strongly support. Sunshine Coast police worked with the Redcliffe Traffic Branch, State Traffic Task Force, CIB and Queensland Transport inspectors to conduct this successful operation.

Police will continue to monitor issues at Mooloolaba and work with business, council and accommodation owners. I thank the police for their hard work and for working with the Mooloolaba community. I would also like to thank Mayor Joe Natoli for his commitment to improving safety and security for locals and tourists alike in Mooloolaba and for having a very strong working partnership with the police.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mental Health Services

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (10.14 am): As someone who has been personally exposed to mental illness, I have always been a keen participant in the debate about mental health services. I make no apology for this, as I regard it to be one of my core roles—that is, to fight for those who need our support.

However, I want to correct a misinterpretation that appears in today's *Gold Coast Bulletin* in relation to my attendance at a Gold Coast mental health forum. While I do not resile from being forthright about my views on mental health and believe that we need to start from the bottom up, regrettably the report failed to include the positive statements I made, which included specific improvements in my area to mental health services on the Gold Coast.

I did not say that we should be sacked, nor do I believe that to be the case. This government, like no other government before it, has put mental health and disability on the agenda. We can, and we will, do better. That was the point I made at the meeting. At no stage have I ever suggested that I would quit over the issue. I know that only Labor governments will improve mental health services. I intend to be there to help make that happen.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Hon. KW HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's report No. 31, its annual report for 2004-05.

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (10.16 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 51 of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee entitled *Annual Report 2004-05*. I commend the report to the House.

MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.16 am): I table report No. 68 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee entitled *Report on a citizen's right of reply No. 17*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

I also table the 2004-05 annual report of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and the committee's audit of the discharge of its responsibilities for 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.

IMPACT OF PETROL PRICING SELECT COMMITTEE

Paper

Mr FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (10.16 am): I lay upon the table the committee's paper No. 1. This paper explains how people can participate in our inquiry into petrol pricing in Queensland. The paper provides guidelines on making written submissions and lists the committee's 14 public hearings across the state during October and November. On Monday morning we will hold our first public hearing in Rockhampton in conjunction with the regional sitting of parliament. We will use this hearing to look at some of the direct and indirect costs of high fuel prices to motorists, businesses and the wider community as well as the effects that sustained high petrol prices are having on that region's economy.

Our inquiry will find answers to questions about fuel prices that are 'top of mind' for consumers, business and governments across Australia. We are keen to assess what other governments are doing to control the effects of spiralling fuel prices as well as any changes they may be considering for the future.

The committee has advertised the inquiry widely in major newspapers across Queensland and will take submissions until 11 November. We invite all honourable members to inform their constituents of the inquiry and contribute their views on this issue. In particular, I invite those members who have raised concerns in this House about the administration of the bulk end user scheme, the viability of alternative fuels such as E10 ethanol blend petrol, the adequacy of road funding, current taxation and excise arrangements, and whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the government's 8.354c per litre fuel subsidy. These are all issues that the committee will examine. I commend the committee's paper to the House.

Mr SPEAKER: I welcome into the gallery members of the Christian Outreach Centre in the electorate of Mansfield.

PALM ISLAND SELECT COMMITTEE

Report

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (10.18 am): I move—
That the House note the report of the Palm Island Select Committee.

In April this year the all-party Palm Island Select Committee of this parliament was appointed to investigate and report on a wide range of critical issues facing Palm Island. The unanimous report, which I tabled in this House on 25 August, makes 65 recommendations about matters including ways to improve governance and the provision of municipal services on the island, reform to land tenure and housing delivery arrangements, and a range of issues that particularly relate to young people on the island such as education and training, employment, leadership development, sport and recreational activities, community and cultural enhancement, health, law and order, child safety, and alcohol and drug abuse.

The committee conducted an extensive consultation program. We visited Palm Island three times and held over 50 meetings, including meetings with the Palm Island council, community groups and residents, non-government organisations and government departments and agencies.

I particularly thank the other members of the committee: deputy chairman and member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson; Liberal leader and member for Robina, Bob Quinn; Independent member for Nanango, Dorothy Pratt; member for Springwood, Barbara Stone; member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine; and member for Kallangur, Ken Hayward.

Many other people assisted the committee throughout the course of what was a demanding and exhausting inquiry. On behalf of the committee I would also like to acknowledge the research director, Ms Kerry Newton, Ms Renee Giskes and Ms Jodie Martin for their hard work and efficient research and administrative assistance, especially given the limited time frames and the range of complex issues

under consideration; Mrs Karen O'Brien, principal Indigenous adviser from the Department of Public Works who was not a part of the committee secretariat but very ably assisted the committee in facilitating its meetings on Palm Island; the chief reporter and officers of Hansard for transcribing the committee's many meetings and providing editorial assistance, with special thanks to Jenny Martin, who accompanied the committee on its visits to Palm Island; various other parliamentary research officers, particularly Ms Deborah Jeffrey, Ms Meg Hoban, Ms Joanna Fear and Mr Michael Zeremes, for their assistance in researching various issues associated with the inquiry; and the parliamentary travel officers for their efficiency in organising the committee's travel.

All committee members approached the inquiry with a common purpose and that was to develop solutions in order to secure a better future for the Palm Island community. As I have mentioned previously, most of the deep-seated problems of Palm Island will not be solved overnight but we must make a start. It cannot be done by government departments, non-government and other organisations alone; it requires the goodwill and cooperation of the Palm Island community. I commend the report to the parliament.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.20 am): I rise to second the motion moved by the member for Southport. This reference to the Palm Island Select Committee was made by the parliament after certain events occurred on Palm Island. On the first visit to Palm Island the committee was made intensely aware of the range of issues that it faced at that stage. I was struck by the endemic nature of the problems and also what appeared at first glance to be the intractable nature of the problems. I think the committee has made some very good and sane recommendations in terms of how to tackle those issues.

There will be no overnight solutions to these problems; they are longstanding and deep-rooted. In my view, it will take a long time for the residents of Palm Island to put in place a cultural change in relation to the way in which they see themselves. That is the first issue. When I went to Palm Island for the first time I went there with an open mind, but one of the things that struck me most was an elderly gentleman that I met saying to me and the rest of the committee that the only sense of future that he had, the only thing that he could leave to his children, was his rented house. For a person in Queensland in this day and age to have that as their sole aspiration for the rest of their life I think says that we have not done the best by those people who live in that community. We ought to be able to put in place a better future for them. That is why one of the critical issues looked at by the committee was, in fact, the land tenure reform process. That was highlighted in the debate when the committee was first established, when the Premier mentioned the fact that even the state government could not access a definite piece of land on which to build state government buildings in a short time frame. That flowed right through the community on the island.

There is no doubt in my mind that many of the problems come back to a lack of leadership on the island, particularly by council. Those people have to bear some responsibility for that themselves. There is no short-term answer. They have to develop their own leadership skills and they have to take responsibility for their own future; governments cannot do that for them. That is a matter for the people on the island themselves.

The issue of housing was also found to be an intractable problem. There were multiple families living in the one house. I will not go through all the problems; I am sure the people involved with the issues know them only too well. Unemployment, transport, infrastructure, health, alcohol sales and law and order are all issues that needed urgent attention. Whilst the committee did its best to try to resolve some of those issues and make recommendations to the government, as I said, many of the solutions lie in the hands of the people of Palm Island themselves. Governments can only do so much; from that point of time it is over to the residents.

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (10.24 am): In March 2005 I flagged my intention on behalf of the government to create a Palm Island Select Committee. It was established by a resolution of this House on 19 April 2005. The committee examined local government arrangements and looked at barriers to the provision of council services. It explored measures to speed up infrastructure development such as housing and developed options to improve services for young people.

Following four months work the committee tabled its report in parliament on 25 August 2005. I advise the House that my government is now considering its 65 recommendations and I will table our response in November 2005. I confirm that I remain committed to improving conditions on Palm Island and was pleased to note that the report was largely supportive of the government's commitments to Palm Island through the five-point plan.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all seven members of the select committee, who put aside their political differences to work with the people of Palm Island to find a way forward. The committee was ably chaired by the member for Southport, Peter Lawlor, and comprised Liberal leader Bob Quinn; National Party member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson; member for Nanango, Dorothy Pratt, representing the Independents; and Labor members Barbara Stone, Springwood; Kerry Shine, Toowoomba North; and Ken Hayward, Kallangur. I would also like to thank Kerry Newton, who led the committee secretariat, for the hard work she and her team put into supporting the committee.

On a number of occasions I have had discussions with Mike Reynolds, who is not just a minister but also the local member. We share his passion to improve the living standards of the people of Palm Island. I urge the people on Palm Island to do three things: firstly, to work with the government to improve infrastructure and improve their conditions; and, secondly, to provide leadership on difficult issues. We have heard the Leader of the Liberal Party make some reference to the council and the report deals with that. I share his view. We need to ensure that the council actually rises above some of the very difficult issues on that island and provides leadership. I say to the chair of the council and all of the councillors: we are prepared to work with you. We are not interested in your internal machinations. We must work together; otherwise, those internal machinations have a life of their own and they do not allow for the appropriate advancement of Indigenous people on the island. The third thing is: we are not going to fix these things overnight. We must resolve to have a long-term commitment to work on them in a spirit of cooperation. As part of that, I would urge their supporters to ensure that they also work with us.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.27 am): It was a real experience to be part of the Palm Island Select Committee. I have worked with and known a lot of Aboriginal communities in the past and the one thing that was brought home to me again is that no two Aboriginal communities are the same. Palm Island is unique. It is just off the coast of Townsville. Although it is not so far from a major community, it needs to be classed as remote because there are such difficulties in getting services and commodities to the island.

Just classing Palm Island as remote will not solve the issues, because there are so many on the island, but one thing came home to me: the people themselves are in control of their living standards, they have to recognise their own cultural heritage and adopt it and embrace it, and they also need to recognise that leadership and good governance needs to come into play for the island to experience any sense of normalcy. I recognise that the current leadership does not lack the will, but I found at the time that it lacked a willingness to accept guidance and lacked an understanding of where its responsibilities as a council actually lie and where they actually end.

I will not repeat what Bob Quinn, the Leader of the Liberal Party, said about the old man, but that was one of the things that struck me. People on Palm Island want no more and no less than anyone else in this House, that is, to be able to own an asset, to have their own land and their own home. If honourable members look at Australian history, they will see that in aiming to protect Aboriginal land, we have made it very difficult to resolve some of the problems on Palm Island. That is one thing I would like to see addressed so that these people feel they have achieved something and the frustration does not go on and on. It is that frustration and the outbreak of violence on Palm Island that got the government's attention. When we arrived on Palm Island someone commented to the effect, 'At least we got you here.' It is very sad that violence had to erupt to get the government's attention.

There has to be recognition that both the government and Palm Island have equal responsibility in the island's state of affairs. Both have to recognise that and address the problems. They have to learn lessons from what has happened and not let it happen again.

I also want to thank the secretariat and the Hansard staff. I do not think anyone realised how difficult it would be. It was not an easy learning curve. It was not an easy job for anyone there. Everybody on the committee put in a lot of effort to try to come up with a solution. It is not going to be easy and it is going to take a long time.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Pratt, adjourned.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Forster Report

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 am): I refer the Premier to page 11 of the Queensland Health System's Review final report tabled in this parliament today. Dot point 3 under 'Queensland Future Health Care Issues' says—

In 2003-04, Queensland government expenditure on health services including public hospitals, mental health, public and community health and oral health was 14 percent lower than the national average—

I ask: was this 14 per cent underfunding of the Queensland Health system by his Labor government a Smart State policy?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have turned to page 11 and I have examined what the member has said, both previously and now. I am happy to advise the House that the expenditure on mental health initiatives increased from \$240 million in 1997-98 to \$430 million in 2004-05, which has been an increase of nearly 80 per cent. They are the latest figures. So under my government mental health funding has increased by 80 per cent.

I take this opportunity to say two things. Health is an incredibly expensive item for the whole community. In today's *Age* there is an article that is headed 'Health bill hits \$78bn and rising'. It states—Australia's health spending now consumes almost one in every \$10 of the nation's income.

Latest figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show this equated to \$3919 for every Australian in 2003-04, a rise of \$267 on the previous year.

The total is likely to grow considerably in the next few years as billions of dollars of Medicare spending dished out by the Government before last year's election flow into the system.

Senior Government figures, including Treasurer Peter Costello and Finance Minister Nick Minchin, are concerned by the future cost of health care, as the population ages and medical costs soar.

One could hardly say that Peter Costello and Nick Minchin are members of my government. That article identified accurately that this is worse for Queensland—and they were talking about Victoria—because we are the growth state. The reality is that every week we have an additional 1,500 people who are seeking services from the health system. Indeed, that continues to put pressure on not just the system but also the government. We have increased that level of expenditure, but it is not a perfect system.

I refer the Leader of the Opposition to page 145 of the report. Under 7.6 Mental health, it states—
Since the early 1990s, Queensland Health has undertaken significant mental health reforms including—

It then lists eight dot points. I refer every member of the House to that page. They will see exactly what we have done to tackle the problems of mental health. No other government in the history of the state has tried to do it.

Let me conclude by saying that it is not a perfect situation. We have a choice here. We can either work together—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Toowoomba South under stating order 253. I ask the member for Stafford to not conduct discussions across the chamber.

Mr BEATTIE: We have a choice to either work together or play politics. I urge the Leader of the Opposition to work with us.

Forster Report

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is to the Premier. We will certainly be working to keep him accountable. I also refer the Premier to the last dot point on the same page which states—

It has been estimated that Queensland Health would require an additional 170 beds per annum over the next two decades (a size equivalent to Mackay Hospital or Bundaberg Hospital per year) to meet future demand. In 2005-06, the recurrent cost of a Mackay sized hospital is approximately \$45 to \$50 million per year.

The Premier has consistently said that hospital beds are no proper measure of the effectiveness of hospitals in Queensland and has deliberately covered up the release of hospital bed figures in Queensland. I ask: will he now concede that hospital beds are a real indicator of the success and workability of the health system, will he now be open and accountable, and will he release the number of hospital beds per hospital around Queensland—those which are open and those which are closed and mothballed?

Mr BEATTIE: We have a choice here. We can either play silly politics or we can actually come up with solutions. If the Opposition Leader wants to talk about the history of this—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cunningham under standing order 253.

Mr BEATTIE: We can talk silly politics if the Leader of the Opposition wants to. He has to remember that it was his government—and Mike Horan was the minister—that initiated the cut in the number of beds at the Townsville Base Hospital. If he wants to play silly politics, I can simply say that the problem in Townsville relating to the number of beds was a direct responsibility of the government of which he was a part. The bottom line is: where does it take us? It does not take us anywhere.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition cannot deny it; it is a fact. I was the previous health minister who would not approve that plan because of the number of beds it was going to cut. So I know exactly what it is. If we want to play silly politics, we can certainly do that, but that does not advance in any manner, shape or form the issue of improving health services to Queensland, which is the government's priority. I have spelt out this morning that the government will embrace a long-term strategy—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nanango and the member for Tablelands, please concentrate on the proceedings of this parliament.

Mr BEATTIE: I would hope they would be interested in health issues. In that case, they might be interested in the debate that takes place here. I make this point: of course beds are very important. We will be having a lot more to say about the strategies involving beds. One of the reasons that we

commissioned this report is that we wanted to examine every one of the issues involving health, including beds.

When the health minister, Stephen Robertson and I attended a meeting with VMOs at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the issue about beds came up. The previous advice that the government had been given back in 1995—and the advice given to the National-Liberal government in 1996—was that, in fact, the number of beds in our hospitals needed to be less because of general practice changes involving anaesthetics. I have to say Peter Forster does not share that view. Peter Forster has re-evaluated and reassessed the advice given to government. That is one of the reasons we appointed him. As a result, we will be reappraising the number of beds in our hospitals.

The Leader of the Opposition should have the courtesy of listening to the answer to a question he asked—

Mr Springborg: I'm listening.

Mr BEATTIE: I am prepared to give him an answer. Are we prepared to reappraise the number of beds in our hospitals? The answer is yes.

Mr Springborg: Well, release it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under standing order 253.

Mr BEATTIE: If the Leader of the Opposition wants an answer, I will give him an answer. If he wants to play the village idiot then that is a different thing. The answer is that we are prepared—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: If he comes in here and asks a question he should at least have the courtesy of listening to the answers and not the idiot interjections. If he wants the commitment about extra beds, we are prepared to do that, and that is what I am saying.

Forster Report

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I refer to today's release of the Forster review of Queensland Health, and I ask what Queenslanders can expect in terms of improvement to mental health services in our state?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Burleigh for her question, because I know from previous advice that she is very firmly committed to improving the mental health system and I know how passionate she is about it. So let me deal with the answers. As a result of Peter Forster's blueprint, mental health is squarely in the government's reform sights. I refer the member to his report on mental health at point 7.6 on page 150 but ask the member to be cautious about what the Leader of the Opposition was saying today. The Leader of the Opposition did not quite understand his own question.

Peter Forster's most significant concerns pointed to a lack of access to and quality of mental health services. Between 1992-93 and 2001-02 Queensland significantly increased mental health funding. With regard to Queensland's per capita expenditure as compared to New South Wales, the ACT and the Northern Territory, in my answer to the Leader of the Opposition I actually updated the latest figures to the House that had been provided to me by Queensland Health. So the member should read that in conjunction with the report. But there is more work to be done. Peter Forster recommends that funding should be directed to Queensland Health to meet staffing targets for community mental health services. He also recommends a much closer relationship with the non-government sector to improve services, particularly at a community level. There is a need for improved housing and support for people with mental illness, including step-down facilities for patients released from acute care. These are all issues that the member has actually written to me and written to the health minister about.

We can reflect positively on the development of community mental health services, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas where no services had previously existed. While community staffing numbers increased by an estimated 350 per cent between 1993-94 and 2004-05, we will not stop there. Peter Forster highlights that there is more work to be done in rural and remote communities and for better services for children and young people. His report notes that Indigenous people are overrepresented in mental health services. Attention to mental health services in correctional facilities is also addressed in his recommendations.

While Peter Forster's report notes that Queensland has undertaken significant mental health reforms since the early 1990s, the job is far from over. Peter Forster has set out the challenges we face in delivering better mental health services, and we accept those challenges. Again, I refer the honourable member for Burleigh to his recommendation contained at point 7.6. He says—

... Queensland Health has undertaken significant mental health reforms including:
increased expenditure on mental health initiatives from \$240 million—

and I gave an update of those figures—

more equitable distribution of inpatient mental health services across the State ...
development of community mental health services ...
an expanded range of adult community health services ...

increased involvement of consumers and carers in the planning, operation and evaluation of services ...
implemented quality management systems including minimum service standards ...
improved intersectional links, particularly with housing and disability support agencies ...

I refer the member to page 150.

Forster Report

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the government currently has enough resources to properly and fully fund our health system but due to his mismanagement not enough frontline services are available in hospitals, I ask: will the Premier today rule out means-tested copayments as a method of raising funds to fix the mess he created?

Mr BEATTIE: Obviously the Leader of the Liberal Party did not listen to my ministerial statement earlier today. I have made it clear that we will examine all of the recommendations that Peter Forster has made. If you want to come in here and suggest that we start eliminating various aspects of it, next you will be in here saying that we should not increase the number of nurses. I want to make it really clear—

Mr Quinn interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: You cannot come in here and—

Mr Quinn interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party, you have asked the question. The Premier is answering it.

Mr BEATTIE: You know that the reason why successive governments have never had the guts to actually take on the reform of the health system directly is that at the end of it you end up with a report like this that says, 'Let's have some truth about the debate on health.'

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: You are not interested in the answer. You just want to be silly. The facts of life are these: the reason why successive governments have not had the guts to do what we did is that reports like this come back with recommendations that say that we have to increase the expenditure in health to something like \$1.5 billion a year. So do not come in here and play—

Mr Quinn interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party, I warn you under 253. You have asked your question and now the Premier is answering it.

Mr BEATTIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. You cannot come in here and pretend that while you were a minister in the Borbidge government you did wonderful things in health. You did not. You underfunded health dramatically and significantly. We have increased health expenditure by 60 per cent.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Well, health is not a laughing matter. Health is actually a serious matter, and we are prepared to tackle it head on. Peter Forster made these recommendations and we are prepared to examine what he said. We are not giving a commitment of what we will do, but we are prepared to tackle them head on. What he says is that options which may need to be considered include an increase in state taxes to expand the capacity of the existing public health system and a renewed current range of services through the state public health system. He raises all of those issues. With a comparatively lower tax base, Queensland government expenditure has also been lower on a range of government services on all sides of politics. If you look at this, Peter Forster talks about a lower range of services including health and education. The facts of life are that we have been a low-tax state, and in some areas that has meant low services. We have to find a way through all of this, and that is why there is going to be a mini budget on 25 October.

But do not suggest for one minute that when you were there you funded these bodies appropriately. You did not. Health is now being funded closer to the national average than it has ever been before, but it is not perfect. You either want to be part of the solution or part of the problem. If you want to come in and nitpick and try to knock out various recommendations, you have to ask: who is going to fund it? Your deputy knows that we have an agreement with the VMOs and with the in-house doctors that will cost \$700 million over four years to pay them close to the national standard. They are entitled to it, but that money does not grow on trees. If you pay your doctors properly, somebody has to pay for it, and it is not the man on the moon.

Forster Report

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Premier. Premier, how do the Forster recommendations address the question of the shortage of doctors in Australia, and what can be done to encourage more Australian trained doctors?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. The Queensland government accepts primary responsibility for delivering health services to the people of this state, but it is a shared responsibility with the Commonwealth. Under our federal system, responsibility is shared with the Commonwealth, and I want to make that clear. Peter Forster makes this point, saying in his foreword—

The first important set of initiatives would be for the State and Commonwealth Government to achieve more complementary and streamlined health funding arrangements.

The fact is that we waste billions of dollars every year in Australia because of the overlap between the Commonwealth and the states. The review is a call for action for the federal as well as the Queensland government. It calls on the Queensland government to seek a national review. It highlights the damage caused by federal policies to health services for Queenslanders, particularly in certain areas. I challenge the opposition—both the opposition leader and the Leader of the Liberal Party: if you are fair dinkum, you will get on the phone and urge the federal government to pick up these recommendations from Peter Forster. Let me make it very clear: we will have a report card not just on our performance but on the performance of the federal government and how and whether it responds to Peter Forster's recommendations. Peter Forster has identified exactly where the federal government is responsible. You want to come in here and play politics and you want to avoid your responsibility. Well, let me tell you: as a result of the Peter Forster report, there is no room for cowards. You have to face your responsibility, and you are in trouble.

Let me move on. The Commonwealth government's cuts in the 1990s to medical student placements caused doctor shortages and a heavier reliance on overseas trained practitioners. I would have thought, Dr Flegg, that you would have been part of identifying that and actually supporting a solution. The Commonwealth policy is designed to encourage private health insurance, which has contributed to the growth in Queensland private hospital services and heightened private demand, and increase the number of doctors that have been lost from the public sector into private practice. Peter Forster has called for specific federal action. He wants an immediate increase in nursing—

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn you, member for Moggill, under 253.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, in the last answer you allowed the Premier to use the word 'you' at least 20 times. You allowed the Leader of the House four interjections and not one reprimand at all. If you believe I am wrong, listen to the tapes.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: Peter Forster wants an immediate increase in medical nursing and allied health student places, increased funding for the teaching and training of medical students on clinical placements within Queensland's public health system, financial contributions to ensure that enough funds are available to support the clinical placements of nursing students and allied health workers, access to Medicare billing for community based nurse practitioners, a review of the Medical Benefits Schedule to improve the alignment of the Commonwealth funded health sector and the public health system, including incentives to address areas such as rural health and Indigenous health, and more funding for enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing and other certified health workers. I have to ask: do those opposite agree with that?

Forster Report

Dr FLEGG: I refer the Premier to his knee-jerk statement this morning that his government—and I think I have the quote right—'endorses the structure outlined in Peter Forster's final report'. Given that Forster has made recommendations for only minor structural change, why has the Premier immediately ruled out the major structural change that Queensland Health so obviously and so desperately needs?

Mr BEATTIE: I have to say that that question, at best, is puzzling. Peter Forster has made a recommendation about a structure for Health and we have endorsed it. One does not need to be a rocket scientist to understand why we actually asked him to have a look at the structure of Health, which is what the AMA asked us to do. We have accepted what the AMA has said. Peter Forster has come back with the structural recommendation and I have accepted his structural recommendation. Now suddenly the member says that it is wrong. Come on! That is just nonsense. What I have endorsed today is the structural recommendation that Peter Forster put to us. That is what I have done. The member's mates in the AMA—

Dr Flegg: There's no change. It's more of the same.

Mr BEATTIE: No, hang on. The member's mates in the AMA said to us, 'You should get an independent person to have a look at it.' They endorsed Peter Forster. They said, 'That's fine.' He has now come forward—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Do you mind? I have one question. There are enough idiots. Let us deal with them one at a time.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, withdraw the word 'idiots'.

Mr BEATTIE: I withdraw. Let me make it clear: if the member wants a serious answer to this, I will give him one. The AMA asked us to appoint an independent consultant, Peter Forster. Right? Peter Forster was—

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Moggill, you have been warned under standing order 253. The next interjection, you will be moving out.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me go through this really slowly so that the member can understand it. The AMA came to us and said, 'We want an independent assessment of the structure of Health.' Right? Does the member accept that? They did.

Mr Lingard: He can't even answer!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Beaudesert, you are warned under standing order 253.

Mr LINGARD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You allowed the Premier to ask the member a question and as soon as the member started to say something you reprimanded this side. You cannot allow this to happen.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Let me make it perfectly clear: I gave a ruling on day one that people are allowed to ask questions in silence and that ministers will be allowed to reply in silence. I am going to strictly enforce that rule. Once I have warned somebody, the next move for me is to invite them to leave the chamber.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. I ask: what is your ruling on speaking through the chair?

Mr SPEAKER: All speakers should speak directly through the chair.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me draw the honourable member's attention to page 71 of the Forster report, which sets out the structure. I repeat what I said before. I think every sensible member of the House can understand this. The AMA suggested to us that we have a structural review. We appointed Peter Forster. They supported Peter Forster's appointment. Peter Forster has come back with a recommended structure. We have endorsed that structure. Any suggestion that there is something wrong with that is nothing more than political drivel. The reality is that what we have seen this morning is simply a continual attempt to wreck any reform of Health. I am not going to stand by—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: If the opposition was sensible about this, it would endorse and support what Peter Forster is trying to do. What we have had this morning is simply an attempt by them to undermine it before they have even read it.

Forster Report

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: My question is also to the Premier. How do the Forster recommendations strengthen the complaints process within the Queensland health system?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Bundaberg for her question. As she knows, many people in her area have gone through a difficult time. I hope that the people of Bundaberg see the Peter Forster review, as we do, as a step forward, as the beginning of the reform of Queensland Health.

One of the issues that they were concerned about was the complaints system. They said that to the member and they said that to me. Peter Forster outlines a clear strategy for a combined system to promote and develop clinical excellence and to address health complaints. This will become a hallmark of Queensland's people-focused approach to health care. Peter Forster recommends the establishment of a new independent complaints body. His health commission would assume the role of the Health Rights Commission as well as oversee the development and the implementation of quality, safety and clinical practice standards. Peter Forster also recommends establishing a parliamentary committee to oversee the health commission.

At the heart of the commission is the local resolution of complaints, with escalation to the independent complaints body, the health commission, if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days. As well as establishing new reporting requirements, the review recommends establishing a new statewide complaints database. The new health commission will have access to the data and take over management of a complaint at any time. The system means better support for patients and other people making complaints.

In other words, I say to the member for Bundaberg that we will have a fresh complaints system. We will have a process to resolve complaints. Out of that, I hope we will have a more supportive and endorsing system of dealing with complaints in the health system. I hope that the people of Bundaberg, particularly those who have been through this agony, will welcome this as a very significant initiative.

In terms of the structure, earlier I made reference to page 71 of the report. The principles of the proposed organisational structure will be of interest to the member for Bundaberg. Peter Forster, in his report, makes the following recommendations—and this is why we have endorsed it—

- Increased community engagement and influence over policy development, local services planning and local decisions affecting the availability and standard of health services.
- Decision making regarding patient services and care is made by or strongly influenced by clinicians. Clinical decisions occur as close to the point of patient care as possible and in a timely and responsive manner conducive to good quality care.
- Decisions made at the most appropriate level (close to patients) with devolved budgets.

This is the new structure that we have endorsed. The report states further—

- Greater openness and transparency in key decision making throughout the organisation.
- Improved responsiveness to better meet the health needs of Queenslanders.
- Greater service integration of public health services.
- Greater coordination and collaboration between Queensland Health, other government departments and non-government providers of health services.
- Significantly increased focus on performance monitoring and performance management to ensure that the right services are provided at the right place, at the right time and at the right cost.

Is it any wonder that we have endorsed that new structure?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Gladstone, I welcome students and teachers from the Christian Outreach Centre Primary School in the electorate of Mansfield.

Forster Report

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Premier. On page 13 of the *Queensland health systems review* under 'Culture', the report acknowledges dysfunctional behaviour, including bullying, intimidation and a reluctance to share information. These concerns have been known for some time now. What has been done in tangible terms to remove these unacceptable practices?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Gladstone for her question. Some of the issues that I just referred to in answering the question asked by the member for Bundaberg are also part of the answer. We have a new complaints system. I think that will lead to a better culture. We have a recommendation to change the structure. I think that will lead to cultural change. Indeed, if the member looks at page 71 under the heading 'Features of the structure', she will see that that change will enhance the performance of the department. It will bring about cultural change. The report in that section states—

- Establish three Area Health Services largely based on the boundaries of the existing Zones which align with population aggregates of around one to two million.
- A General Manager will lead and manage each of the Area Health Services and report directly to the Director-General.
- Ensure the leadership, management, policy, planning and performance monitoring capacity of Area Health Services is such that it coincides with greater budget responsibility, accountability and decision making authority.
- Districts to have greater operational responsibility, authority, and budget discretion within the context of a performance agreement within their Area Health Service.

In other words, I say to the member for Gladstone that more local decisions will be made, which means that we do not have central office bullying anybody and we have a more decentralised decision-making process. Out of that the culture will change, because the decisions will be made on a local basis. Page 72 of the report, under the heading 'Independent Bodies' states—

- Establish an independent Health Commission to oversee the development and implementation of quality, safety and clinical practice standards ...

The other point, though, that specifically answers the member's question is that a new code of conduct for Queensland Health is being developed. It will be coming to cabinet very soon. The other point I want to make is that the report states on page 65—

The Review supports the recent decision by the Minister for Health to develop a new Code of Conduct for Queensland Health to set a high standard of behaviour for both managers and employees. However, it should be recognised that a commitment must be given to ensure that staff receive appropriate education on its purpose and application within Queensland Health along with a clear indication of their responsibilities as individuals towards acceptance of the code.

The new Code of Conduct must clearly be framed in a context of understanding the complex nature of healthcare.

There will also be extra training for staff. There will obviously be greater involvement of staff in the system. So there will be greater involvement, greater training and greater respect. In my ministerial statement this morning, I highlighted the fact that we are about valuing our work force, treating them appropriately and treating them properly. One of the most significant things that comes out of Peter

Forster's report is, in fact, the need for training, cultural change, better performance and better valuing of the people in the system. That is not going to change overnight. Some of these matters will take time, but the basic frameworks, the basic recommendations, are there and they will be implemented.

Queensland Motorways Ltd, Transport Initiatives

Mr CHOI: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister inform the House about recent initiatives involving Queensland Motorways Ltd and how those initiatives will affect the flow of traffic on some of our busiest roads?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for his question. He is acutely interested in our roads and infrastructure, particularly where the Commonwealth government has totally duded Queenslanders, as it does in so many places.

In mid-February the Queensland government announced a \$1.6 billion project to duplicate the Gateway Bridge and upgrade 20 kilometres of the Gateway Motorway. This week Main Roads is issuing tender documentation to the three consortia invited to tender for the project—that is, Leighton-Abigroup joint venture; Thiess-Baulderstone Hornibrook joint venture; and the Coastlink consortium, comprising Bouygues Travaux Publics of France and Macmahon Contractors. Construction begins next year, with completion by 2011. It will create between 5,000 and 6,000 jobs. Initially, we will ensure that as far as we can we will progressively open those sections of the motorway that are available to be opened, beginning with the Wynnum Road interchange, which the member for Chatsworth would be interested in, as are people on the bayside more generally.

Customers were telling us that they wanted it to be easier and cheaper to use transponder technology to go over the Gateway. Customers wanted change and we listened. Changes were announced in February, making E-toll transponders simpler and easier. The changes involved issuing transponders free of charge, removing a \$40 deposit, a reduction in the minimum top-up amount for prepaid toll accounts from \$100 to \$25 and a minimum usage charge of \$10 per quarter for each transponder—much less than comparable private sector operated tollways interstate.

When those changes were announced, there were approximately 120,000 transponders on our roads. Between then and the end of August, QML has provided an extra 38,000 transponders to Queensland motorists. That is an extra 1,600 every week. They are going out like hotcakes. It is great news for motorists. Using a transponder is simpler—there is no fishing around for loose change—and it is quicker. A manual tollgate can process approximately 400 vehicles every hour. Using E-toll, the tollgate can process approximately 1,200 vehicles every hour. As demand increases for E-toll, we can progressively roll out those E-toll lanes further, which will significantly improve the capacity of the bridge. This means traffic flows smoother and faster, with E-toll lanes putting three times the number of vehicles through. That is good news for all motorists using the Gateway and Logan motorways.

Also, in relation to the Gateway and Logan motorways, we are very disappointed that the toll has been imposed higher and longer because of the federal government's complete failure to fund those sections of National Highway. I will say it again: it is National Highway. But it does not stop there. We had to act. The federal government still has the ball in its court. We all know that the Gateway beyond Nudgee golf course is National Highway and that needs to be expanded, too. We want to see the colour of the federal government's money when it comes to doing this work.

Time expired.

Forster Report

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Given that the Premier has already been caught out politically sanitising one report, will the Premier today table the original draft version provided to him by Mr Forster as well as the draft version of the interim report so that Queenslanders can be certain that the version of the Forster report that the Premier tabled today has not been politically sanitised?

Mr BEATTIE: Let me say three things. First, the draft report is included in the final report that we see. If Peter Forster is quite happy to release the other draft report, I have no difficulty tabling it in here at all. That is a matter for him. It is his draft. If he says that is fine, I have no problem. The second point I want to make is that I think that is a very offensive attack on Peter Forster. The reality is that Peter Forster is an independent, respected person. Peter Forster would never allow anyone in my government, including me, to tamper with any recommendations he makes. I think, frankly, that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition owes him an apology. To suggest that Peter Forster would accept interference from me or my health minister or anyone in my government is offensive because that suggests that he would. I think, frankly, the deputy leader should apologise to him.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: He does not care. He is prepared to come in here and malign a person who, in the interests—

Mr Seeney: Oh, come on.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, he is. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is insinuating that Peter Forster was gettable. That is what he is insinuating. He is insinuating that we could in some way intimidate him and get him to change his report. He owes him an apology.

The third point I want to make is that what we have seen in this House today is cheap, crude politics to try to undermine the blueprint to reform the health system. I say to Queenslanders that if they seriously think the National Party and the Liberal Party were really interested in health reform, were really interested in patient care, then they will be sadly disappointed; they are not. They are only interested in politics. Why would anybody come in here and try to undermine Peter Forster? He has just worked his guts out to come up with a report to give us as a government and Queenslanders a direction forward.

I think what the deputy leader said was disgraceful and I think it is just typical of the sort of nonsense we have had in the questions from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party. All they want to do is be wreckers. They are not interested in solutions. All they are interested in doing is being wreckers for cheap political purposes. What they want to do is use the pain of Queenslanders to gain votes. Let me make it clear: yes, there has been a lot of pain for Queenslanders and we accept our share of responsibility for that, but we also accept our responsibility to get on and make the system better.

It is clear from today, unfortunately, that we will not be able to do that in a bipartisan way. It has been demonstrated to me and to the government clearly today that there is no bipartisan goodwill and no bipartisan commitment to implement Peter Forster's recommendations. So be it. If we do not have bipartisanship, we will go it alone. We will do it, but I give this undertaking to the people of Queensland: we will improve the system notwithstanding the nagging and the undermining from the opposition and the insidious nastiness that we have seen today. We will do it because we will honour our commitment to the people of Queensland.

North Queensland Drug Court

Dr LESLEY CLARK: My question is directed to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Could the Attorney-General inform me and the House about the results of the recent evaluation of the drug court in Cairns and Townsville?

Mrs LAVARCH: I thank the honourable member for her question, and I also thank her for her keen interest in the operation of the drug court. I can confirm to the House that a new Australian Institute of Criminology evaluation has found that the north Queensland drug court has been a success in breaking the cycle of drug related crime. The evaluation found that very few offenders who completed the program returned to a life of crime. It is confirmed that the drug court is helping to break the cycle of drug addiction and crime in Cairns and Townsville. Every successful rehabilitation means fewer homes are being broken into. It also means fewer cars are being stolen to support drug habits. This is great news for the community. It is also good news for the program participants and their families.

Last month the Beattie government announced that the drug court will be made permanent. This evaluation shows that this was the right decision to make. The Australian Institute of Criminology evaluation said that the level of reoffending is 'significantly reduced for those who successfully complete the drug court program'. It said, as of December 2004, 24 people had graduated from the program, 41 were still in the program, 45 had been removed as unsuitable and 10 had absconded. Currently 17 people from Cairns and 19 people from Townsville have graduated from the drug court.

Other findings of the evaluation were that all participants recorded reductions in offending after admission to the drug court program and the reductions were greatest amongst the graduates and that, of the graduates who do reoffend, the time taken to reoffend is significantly longer. The evaluation found that the north Queensland drug court program is achieving comparable results to the south-east Queensland drug court program; that graduates of the drug court reported significant improvements across a range of physical and mental health measures; and that graduates reported the drug court was a unique and worthwhile opportunity for dealing with drug use.

The drug court was established in Beenleigh, Ipswich and Southport in 2000 and Townsville and Cairns in 2002. Evaluations of both north and south drug courts highlight the enormous challenge in overcoming addictions to drugs such as heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. The drug court is not a soft option. For every offender who graduates, two other offenders fail and are sent back to court for sentencing. The Beattie government has already made a number of improvements to the north Queensland drug court and we will continue to monitor its success. We expect that there will be many more north Queenslanders participating in the program in coming years. We also expect many more success stories. I also take this opportunity to wish the Cowboys every success on Sunday.

Easson, Mrs M

Miss SIMPSON: My question is directed to the minister for state development. I table an invoice for the sum of \$17,000 issued on 25 June 2005 and for some reason reissued on 1 September 2005 by Labor mate, ALP presidential nominee and former federal Labor member for Lowe, Mary Easson, sent to the department of state development, and I ask: what exactly is it that Mrs Easson does in order to be paid \$5,000 a month by the department? Can the minister confirm that she has been receiving such payments from her department since 1999?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I, like other members of the House, am broadly aware that Mary Easson, having left politics, has formed or is part of a consultancy firm and offers consultancy services to both the public and private sector around the country. I am unaware of the details of this invoice. I am very happy to get back to the member when I have the details.

North Queensland Cowboys

Mr WALLACE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Child Safety. We all know about the outstanding work of the North Queensland Cowboys on the football field—indeed, I note that the member for Yeerongpilly's web site has 67 per cent of people backing the Cowboys on Sunday—but could the minister advise the House of the important work the team has undertaken in the community, particularly in relation to children in north Queensland?

Mr REYNOLDS: I thank the member for that very important and timely question. The care and support of Queensland's children rests not just on the shoulders of the government but on the whole community. I would like to take this opportunity to commend one sector of the north Queensland community who bring joy and inspiration to many children in the state—that is, the North Queensland Cowboys. The cowboys are known for their efforts in working with vulnerable children and young people from Rockhampton to the gulf and west to Mount Isa. The community work undertaken by players and staff, particularly with schools and children's groups, is well known and highly regarded. Just yesterday, Cowboys' forward Rod Jensen was a finalist for the NRL's Ken Stephen Medal, which is awarded to a player who is not only widely recognised for his dedication on the field but also for his contribution to the community. Rod was recognised for his work with children with reading difficulties in a number of schools.

In our society today it is acknowledged that family breakdown and many other social problems lead to a lack of good role models for our children. In north and central Queensland the Cowboys are providing strong role models and mentors for hundreds of children and young people through their community and charity work, their feeder club arrangements and of course their on-field successes. They are a credit to themselves and the whole north Queensland community, and we are immensely proud of the positive contribution they make to strengthening the fabric of our community.

Sadly, as many members would be aware, we have a serious overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the Queensland child protection system. The Cowboys are working with Indigenous schools and communities from Rocky to the gulf and on Palm Island to encourage higher attendance figures and scholastic achievements amongst Indigenous children. Those students who achieve set goals will be given the opportunity to work closely with the Cowboys' players in future, with a view to establishing an ongoing program that encompasses all facets of healthy living and healthy lifestyles by utilising Indigenous Cowboys players as mentors and role models.

Players such as Carl Webb, Ty Williams and Simon Boyes have promoted a number of clinics with Indigenous children to encourage them to fulfil their potential. I also know hundreds of children who look forward to the players visiting their school as part of the Adopt a School program. Every single Cowboy has adopted a school and visits regularly to work with local kids. For some children, these visits and inspiration may indeed lead to a career in Rugby League another sport or even give them the will to finish school and improve their self-esteem.

I know that the children of our state will be joining the rest of us in cheering on the Cowboys this Sunday, for they are not just sporting heroes but true community heroes, and the member for Thuringowa and I would say: go the Cowboys!

Maryborough Base Hospital

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. The recent 17-car tragic accident which completely cut off the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road, combined with smoke cutting off other major arterial roads, left Hervey Bay isolated and Maryborough residents without access to complex emergency care. As this has made crystal clear the need for both communities to have a reliable hospital service, I ask: what are the minister's short-, medium- and long-term plans for Maryborough Base Hospital?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. As the member is aware, I travelled recently to the Fraser Coast and had extensive discussions with my colleague the member for Hervey Bay about a range of issues on the Fraser Coast with respect to the sharing of health services. There are, of course, a number of challenges up there, brought about in no small part by some unfortunate circumstances arising from the orthopaedic section of the Hervey Bay Hospital. But it has brought to light a focus in terms of the provision of the best possible health care to the people of the Fraser Coast and the utilisation of both the Maryborough Hospital and the Hervey Bay Hospital, acknowledging, as we do, that Hervey Bay is the fastest growing part of the Fraser Coast compared to Maryborough.

As the member would be aware, we have engaged in a public consultation process in which I think Queensland Health has been fairly open about the range of challenges in that part of the world. As I understand it, that consultation report is now out for further discussion. That will provide us with the way forward, I think.

One of the things I did when I was up there—and I do apologise; there was an error in not alerting the member's office about my visit to Maryborough Hospital—was meet with the staff of Maryborough Hospital. I had a nice barbecue lunch with them. I also had a private meeting with some nurses up there who expressed a range of concerns. They wanted to meet with me privately, and I was more than happy to do so. That has informed me about their concerns.

I think it is fair to say—without going into the details about the short-, medium- and long-term strategies—that the Forster report, which has been tabled today, and as indicated by the Premier's statements, signifies a major investment in Queensland Health that all parts of Queensland will share in. So those challenges that we face on the Fraser Coast I am confident we will meet.

But what we need to do first of all, and we have unfortunately seen it here today, is start having a balanced debate about our health system in Queensland, about what is achievable and about where we should be going, because I noticed in the opening question of the Leader of the Opposition that he tried to go the negative, as he always does. He highlighted an issue about expenditure on mental health services but, as he does, he only gave us part of the paragraph. If he read the full paragraph, he would see that Mr Forster said—

... it would be wrong to conclude that an additional \$200 per person is justified for public health services. For many services Queensland Health provides a similar level of activity but with a lower level of expenditure.

Increasing health expenditure without considering the priority areas of health need or the capacity of the system to deliver additional services (eg. available workforce), could risk loss of efficiency gains which Queensland Health staff have achieved over a number of years.

Time expired.

Ticket Scalpers

Mr O'BRIEN: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development. The mass exodus has already started from north Queensland as Rugby League fans head to Sydney to cheer for the mighty North Queensland Cowboys in Sydney's NRL grand final.

An honourable member: Go them Tigers!

Mr O'BRIEN: I recall the minister's previous warnings about people buying scalped tickets for major events, and I ask: can the minister advise of the dangers people may face at the football final if they have bought tickets from sources other than the official supplier?

Ms KEECH: I thank the honourable member for the question and recognise him as one of the House's greatest Cowboys fans, along with many other north Queensland members. It certainly is true that Cowboys fans would do almost anything to see their heroes in action against the Wests Tigers on Sunday. But I do advise the fans to draw the line at buying tickets from scalpers or from internet auction sites. It is just too risky. Greedy scalpers are on-selling tickets at grossly inflated prices. If people buy scalped grand final tickets through unauthorised sellers via the internet, online auction sites or newspaper classifieds, they do run the risk of being left at the gates with a fake ticket.

Some sellers have legitimate reasons for wanting to sell their tickets. They offer their tickets for sale at a near normal sale price, but it is far more likely that fans will be paying an absolute premium. Many scalpers see big events as the opportunity to cash in big time. They are motivated by greed and the realisation that desperate fans will pay plenty to get into the game. A favoured scalping trick is to sell tickets to fans, then contact the ticketing agency to report the tickets as stolen and have a second set issued. Unfortunately, fans who are ripped off have a tough time getting their money back as the scalpers generally disappear once the deal is done.

The safest bet, therefore, is to purchase tickets from the official vendor. In the case of the NRL grand final the official vendor is Ticketek. If anyone has bought a ticket from another source they should check the conditions of sale because some tickets are not transferable. For example, ticket terms and conditions may particularly prohibit on-selling and may state that entry can be refused if tickets are not purchased from the authorised vendor or venue or other authorised point of sale. Anyone who has

bought scalped tickets should check the ticket's authenticity with the vendor. That way they will minimise the risk of paying big money for tickets but find themselves left at the front gate. All I can say is: go the Cowboys come Sunday!

Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins

Mr MESSENGER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women. I refer the minister to her bumbling effort to ban the feeding of a very rare species of dolphin, the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, at Tin Can Bay. Given the fact that this feeding has taken place since 1974, is it not true that at Tin Can Bay we have a unique opportunity to create a win-win situation for both the dolphins and the community instead of this government spending money on prohibition and forcing EPA officers to act like thugs? Is it not true that the minister's government could cooperatively work with the local community and spend money establishing a well-run, scientific, research based feeding program that protects the dolphins and also allows a controlled and strictly supervised interaction between humans and dolphins?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I congratulate him on being nominated as the shadow spokesperson for the environment. I say to the National Party in general, and to the member in particular, through the Speaker of course, that there is little credibility in the National Party holding the environment portfolio. There is little credibility because the very first thing that is noticed, if someone cares about the environment and they have a look at the newly released 19-page policy document by the coalition, is that the environment policy is on the second half of the 19th page. That demonstrates very clearly the kind of priority that will be given to the environment portfolio.

The other thing that people interested in the environment have already noticed is that the No. 1—

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to a point of order. The minister is not answering the question. The relevance of her answer is somewhat questionable.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have made my position clear on many occasions. You have the right as a member to ask the question, and the minister has the right to answer the question as she sees fit.

Ms BOYLE: There is another lack of comfort in the opposition's policy. The clearest policy that there is in the verbiage on the second half of page 19 of the 19-page policy document is that there will be no more national parks.

Now we have the first question from the shadow minister for the environment. It betrays his absolute lack of understanding of the Nature Conservation Act, the importance of wild dolphins and the importance of their health and safety.

When the honourable member got to his feet I had intended to reply in a more friendly frame, but I will not have him or any other member of this House getting up and calling the EPA officers, who are doing their duty, 'thugs'. I absolutely object on their behalf and warn him against such allegations in the future. I will take all the action I can on behalf of the EPA officers. The officers are behaving in the interests of these wild dolphins and within the provisions of the Nature Conservation Act agreement.

When the owner took over the lease and professed not to know that the dolphin feeding had to come to an end, I gave him a chance to put in a submission. It took him three months to put in the submission. In the submission he betrayed that he has no understanding of these amazing and wondrous creatures. He has increased the numbers of dolphins he is feeding. He has increased the quantity of feeding. In his submission he asked that the existing feeding hours be entirely abolished and that the agreement with him override the Nature Conservation Act. The dolphins are at risk in a boat harbour. They are at risk from boats. They are at risk from diesel, sewage, industry outfalls and fishing nets.

State Operations Coordination Centre

Mr McNAMARA: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. I was pleased to join the minister at the opening of the Emergency Services State Operations Coordination Centre recently. Can the minister please tell the House what this impressive new facility means for Queensland's response to disasters?

Mr PURCELL: I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question. I know that the member has an abiding interest in emergency services on behalf of his constituency. He has large forested and grassed areas in his electorate. He is very interested in the preparedness of emergency services units in his area.

The member joined me at Emergency Services headquarters at Kedron earlier this month for the unveiling of Queensland's latest tool in disaster preparedness and management. This new \$840,000 State Operations Coordination Centre boasts the latest in high-tech planning, resourcing and communication aids to support fire, ambulance and counterdisaster operations during a major incident.

The centre has the capacity to operate 24 hours a day during major incidents. It can provide a coordinated emergency response across the state, across government agencies and interstate.

The opening of the centre is timely in the lead-up to our bushfire season. The centre also has applications for all types of incidents from cyclones through to fires and multicase incidents to major structural damage incidents. The recent experience of Hurricane Katrina in the United States shows us just how vulnerable we can be, particularly during natural disasters. It demonstrates to us the importance of an early and coordinated emergency response and relief effort.

The technology built into the centre includes satellite video conferencing, web based video and audio link-ups, satellite mapping, media liaison and an electronic link-up to regional communication centres. We can receive immediate visual and verbal situation reports allowing us to plan and resource with a very clear view of what is happening on the ground as it is in liaison with the staff who are at the incident.

The centre has been designed to be activated only during major incidents. It employs the latest technology to ensure information from the ground through to the State Operations Coordination Centre is accurate and timely and that planning resourcing is appropriate and efficient.

The new centre had a test run with a large fire at Narangba recently and some small bugs were ironed out of the system. It is now ready to be fully operational in the event of a large-scale emergency.

Mr SPEAKER: The time allocated for questions has expired.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (DRUG DETECTION DOGS) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (11.30 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. I present the explanatory notes and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (11.30 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today, I introduce another bill into this House that significantly reforms the law with respect to community safety and public order. When I introduced the Summary Offences Bill into Parliament on 28 September last year I referred to Queensland as the 'safe state'. This has not changed. Legislation such as the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Drug Detection Dogs) Amendment Bill allows proactive action to be taken by our police officers to ensure that Queensland remains the safe state.

Members may recall that on 25 February 2005 the Premier hosted a summit to address violence in the Brisbane CBD. The summit was well attended by ministers and government, industry and community representatives. During the consultative process at the summit it was indicated that violence in the likes of nightclubs and malls is often fuelled by a dangerous cocktail of alcohol and drugs, especially amphetamines. As a result of the summit the Premier released the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan which details 17 measures to improve public order among nightclub patrons. Point 2a of the plan addresses the issue of using drug detection dogs to detect amphetamines in nightclubs and hot spots.

It became my task to investigate the feasibility of police assisted drug detection dogs being used to detect amphetamines in nightclubs and other hot spots. During my consideration of this problem it became apparent that the use of drug detection dogs needed to be extended beyond simply nightclubs and hot spots such as certain areas of the inner city. To best address public concern about violence there is a need to look at all places where members of the public may be subject to indiscriminate violence from persons affected by unlawful dangerous drugs. Clearly, it would not be feasible or fair to limit the operation of this bill to the Brisbane CBD when similar problems may occur in other areas of the state. The protection offered by this bill must apply equally to potential trouble spots no matter where they are located within the state. Also apparent was the need to look beyond amphetamines to other dangerous drugs that have a side effect of causing aggression on the part of the person using them.

Therefore, this bill provides authority to the Queensland Police Service to use drug detection dogs without warrant to detect unlawful dangerous drugs in or on places, persons or things at or in licensed premises; special events; sporting events; recreational events; entertainment events; and

public places. Licensed premises are not limited to nightclubs but extend to all hotels and other places that may sell liquor by virtue of a licence or permit, albeit temporarily. This may include the likes of bachelor and spinster balls which are held annually at various showgrounds. Special events have the same meaning as given to the term in chapter 9, part 2 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act—that is, major international events held in Queensland, for example, Expo 88.

Sporting events are self-explanatory and are not limited to those held at a major sports facility. Clearly, entertainment events cover a myriad of events which members of the public are entitled to attend. The list of potential events is not exhaustive but may include events such as the Big Day Out held on the Gold Coast. Again, the term 'recreational events' also covers a myriad of possibilities and thus does not contain an exhaustive list. Finally, public places have been included for the obvious reason that areas which members of the public regularly use in their day-to-day lives must be protected from persons who, in a drug induced state, are likely to commit acts of violence.

At this stage I wish to make it clear that the bill does not prevent a drug detection dog being used for the detection of dangerous drugs not listed in the bill or in any place not mentioned in the bill. For example, drug detection dogs are already used for the purposes of searching for dangerous drugs at a specific place such as a person's home for which a search warrant has been issued or cargo at an airport for which a search warrant is not required. They can and have also been used without a warrant in a public place. A search is conducted of people who are reasonably suspected of carrying drugs or where other indicia indicate that they may be in possession of drugs.

Before I turn to specific powers provided by the bill it is important that two definitions contained in it are addressed. First is the term 'drug detection'. Drug detection is an inclusive definition that describes how a drug detection dog would normally be used to detect the scent of an unlawful dangerous drug on a person or on or in a vehicle, place or thing. A drug detection dog is simply walked past or placed in the vicinity of a person, vehicle or thing—for example, a bag being carried by a person—to ascertain whether the dog can detect the scent of an unlawful dangerous drug on the person, in the vehicle or in or on the thing. A drug detection dog may give a positive indication of the presence of an unlawful dangerous drug in a number of ways, for example, by wagging its tail or sitting beside a person. The use of a drug detection dog in this manner will not constitute a search within the meaning of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. Therefore, normal safeguards such as entering the particulars of a search into an enforcement act register will not apply at this stage. Clearly, it is impractical to record the details of every person a drug detection dog walks past in the course of a shift as this might involve several thousand persons.

However, I do stress that should a drug detection dog give a positive indication of the presence of an unlawful dangerous drug on a person or in a vehicle or thing and a search is subsequently conducted by a police officer all of the safeguards and register requirements relating to searches under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act will apply. Therefore, a police officer conducting a search will need to fill in the appropriate enforcement act register and conduct the search in accordance with safeguards stipulated by the act. This means that the privacy of a person being searched will have to be respected.

Secondly, the definition of an 'unlawful dangerous drug' for the purposes of the bill means a dangerous drug mentioned in schedule 1 of the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987. Those drugs are amphetamines such as speed. Also included is cocaine; heroin; LSD; methylamphetamine, for example ice; and phencyclidine, commonly known as angel dust. Also included are gamma hydroxybutyric acid, known as GBH, and 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, MDMA, commonly called ecstasy, from schedule 2 of the regulation.

Members will note that cannabis sativa has not been included in the list of drugs to be detected by a drug detection dog. There is a very good reason for this. A discussion paper titled *Review of the Police Powers (Drugs Detection Dogs) Act* released by the New South Wales Ombudsman in June 2004 indicated a high proportion of false positive indications from New South Wales police drug dogs with respect to cannabis sativa. A reason offered for these false positive readings was that cannabis sativa leaves a lingering and strong odour on the clothes of persons who have smoked it or been in the presence of a person who has smoked it. While it is the intention of this government to crack down on dangerous drug possession and use, it is not reasonable to conduct unnecessary searches of large numbers of persons who may have only been standing near a person who was smoking cannabis, for instance in a nightclub. Therefore, drug detection dogs trained for the purpose of this bill will not be trained to detect cannabis sativa.

This does not mean that the Beattie government will let persons in possession of cannabis sativa slip through the criminal net. These persons may still be searched by a police officer using other existing powers contained within the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. Also, other drug dogs trained in the detection of cannabis will still be used for searches, such as the search of a house for the drug. Section 31F of the bill makes that abundantly clear. If cannabis is found in the possession of a person I would expect that person to be prosecuted with the full force of the law.

I will now turn to the specific powers contained in the bill. Section 31B of the bill provides authority for a handler, without warrant, to use a drug detection dog to carry out drug detection in relation to any of the following persons or things—

- a person who is about to enter, is in, or is leaving, licensed premises;
- a person who is in the immediate vicinity of, is about to enter, is in, or is leaving a place at which a special event, or a sports, recreational or entertainment event is being held. The term 'in the immediate vicinity of' would apply, for example, to persons not intending to enter an event but who mill around outside the event or on land adjacent to the event;
- a person who is in a public place; and
- a thing in a place I have just mentioned, whether it is in the physical possession of a person or not. A thing, for example, could be a carry bag left on a seat in a mall or a purse being carried by a nightclub patron.

For the purposes of the section, the term 'is leaving' is to be taken to include a person who has shortly before walked out of the doorway of licensed premises and in so doing is no longer on those premises. This will mean that a drug detection dog may be used outside the doorway of licensed premises, for example a nightclub, to detect drugs on persons who have walked out of those premises.

Subsection (2) provides that section 31B applies despite the provisions of any other act. Essentially, this will allow for drug detection in a place to which another act may prohibit the entry of a dog. Nevertheless, a drug detection dog would only ever be used in a food preparation area of a nightclub, for example, where exceptional circumstances exist.

By virtue of section 31C of the bill a drug detection dog, its handler and any other police officer will be entitled to enter, re-enter and remain on any of the places I have mentioned for the purpose of drug detection. A search warrant or any other authority will not be required for drug detection. Additionally, the officers involved will not be subject to the payment of any fee that another member of the public must pay to enter a place, for example, an entry fee to a sporting or entertainment event.

There is no need for a police officer to be in the company of a drug detection dog and its handler in order to enter a place mentioned. Indeed, it may be the case that a police officer enters licensed premises prior to the entry of the drug detection dog so that the officer can observe the conduct of persons as the drug detection dog enters. Clearly, patrons in possession of dangerous drugs in a nightclub would attempt to dispose of those drugs should they notice a drug detection dog enter the place. Should this be the case, a police officer who previously entered the nightclub can take action under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to seize the dangerous drugs and arrest the person attempting to dispose of the drugs.

Additionally, a police officer may also enter a place after the drug detection dog and its handler have entered for the purposes of detaining and searching those persons who a drug detection dog indicates are in possession of an unlawful dangerous drug or for providing assistance to any police officer who might be in the place for a purpose of the bill.

Subsection (2) allows for entry onto land associated with licensed premises or another place. Therefore, by way of example, a drug detection dog, its handler and any other police officer may enter a car park provided for patrons of a licensed premises even though the car park is under a different title to the licensed premises.

Subsection (3) provides that the section applies despite the provisions of any other act. This will allow for drug detection in a place to which another act may prohibit the entry of a dog, for example, onto licensed premises or into a national park or council park.

Section 31D of the bill provides that an indication from a drug detection dog that it has detected an unlawful dangerous drug on a person, in a vehicle, or in or on a thing shall be sufficient grounds for a police officer to form and hold a reasonable suspicion about the presence of an unlawful dangerous drug on the person, in the vehicle, or in or on the thing. A reasonable suspicion is a legal prerequisite to the conduct of a search. Therefore, a police officer may, without information or evidence, conduct a search in accordance with relevant provisions of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. For example, a search of a person may be conducted under section 27, or a search of a vehicle under section 29 of that act. As I have already said, any search conducted must be done in accordance with the safeguards contained in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. Therefore an officer will take into consideration the surroundings that the officer is in before they conduct a search of the person to ensure that police undertaking a search are cognisant of the individual's privacy and, as far as practical, undertake the search out of general public view.

A matter of importance to all members of this House will be the nature displayed by drug detection dogs. I am happy to assure members that the drug detection dogs to be used in accordance with this bill will be passive. Simply, that means that the dogs are not trained to attack a person. Under normal circumstances they will simply wag their tail or sit when they scent the presence of unlawful

dangerous drugs. This will probably be the only time that someone who is committing an offence will not be happy with a dog wagging its tail!

Nevertheless, any dog is capable of biting should it be abused. Clearly, if a person was to kick a drug dog there is a chance that it might bite the person. Consequently, the bill provides protection from liability should an instance of this nature occur. Section 31E of the bill provides circumstances in which a handler will be protected from civil or criminal liability while using a drug detection dog. Subsection (1) is an application provision relating to subsections (2), (3), (4) and (5). Section 31E applies if a handler of a drug detection dog is using the drug detection dog to carry out drug detection and the drug detection dog either physically intrudes onto a person or the clothing of a person or otherwise comes into contact with a person while the drug detection dog is carrying out the drug detection, or causes damage to a thing that has in it or on it an unlawful dangerous drug.

Subsection (2) provides that the handler does not incur civil liability for an act done, or omission made, honestly and without negligence in the circumstances to which this section applies. The circumstances to which the section applies are set out in subsection (1).

Subsection (3) is a general provision which provides that the state does not incur civil liability in the circumstances to which section 31E applies for an act done by the drug detection dog, or an act or omission of the handler. The circumstances to which the section applies are set out in subsection (1). Physical intrusion onto a person or the clothing of a person or other contact with a person by a dog may give rise to an argument that a civil tort, trespass or nuisance has been committed. Subsection (3) generally provides a bar to such an action.

Subsection (4) provides a specific exception to subsection (3) for civil liability in the case of bodily harm. If the act of the drug detection dog, or the act or omission of the handler causes bodily harm to a person and subsection (2) prevents civil liability attaching to the handler, the civil liability attaches instead to the state. This is only fair given that a handler acting in good faith should not be financially liable for the actions of a drug detection dog or those of a person who deliberately antagonises the dog.

Subsection (5) relates to the criminal liability of a handler. The handler is not criminally responsible for an act done by the drug detection dog in the circumstances to which section 31E applies. These circumstances are set out in subsection (1). Physical intrusion onto a person or the clothing of a person or other contact with a person by a dog may give rise to an argument that a minor assault has been committed. Subsection (5) provides general exemption to the handler in these circumstances from criminal liability.

Subsection (5) also provides specific exceptions to the general exemption of the handler from criminal liability. If there is an attack by the drug detection dog on a person intentionally caused by the handler or for which the handler is criminally responsible under the Criminal Code, section 289, the general exemption from criminal liability for the handler will not apply. This section is not to be interpreted as limiting other exculpatory provisions contained in the Criminal Code or any other act such as, for example, provisions relating to extraordinary emergency or self-defence.

Subsection (6) provides that this section does not prevent the state or the handler from relying on another provision of an act to limit civil liability or criminal responsibility. To clarify this, the subsection provides examples of acts that may limit civil liability or criminal responsibility. Finally, subsection (7) provides inclusive definitions for the purposes of section 31E. 'Bodily harm' includes physical injury, grievous bodily harm and death but does not include mental, psychological or emotional harm.

In summary, the bill allows for the entry to, and use of drug detection dogs in, those premises mentioned. The bill does not require a search warrant first be obtained to exercise the powers under the bill. However, in all instances, the places nominated in the bill are those to which the public has access, whether on payment of an entry fee or not. Those places may currently be entered by a police officer either as of right—for example, a mall—or because of the definition given to 'public place' within the meaning of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, or without warrant by virtue of provisions of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act—for example, section 17 or by entry powers provided by other acts.

Importantly, the use of a drug detection dog will minimise the need for what might otherwise amount to a lawful but fruitless search in that a drug detection dog has the ability to positively indicate the presence of unlawful dangerous drugs by scent. Consequently, it is considered that the bill balances the rights of an individual against the need to ensure that the provisions of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 are properly enforced and public safety is maintained. This bill has got it right in terms of a response to public needs against violence perpetrated by persons under the influence of dangerous drugs. As all members of this House will agree, the Beattie government is committed to ensuring public safety and committed to ensuring that Queensland remains the safe state. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McArdle, adjourned.

CROSS-BORDER LAW ENFORCEMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 7 June (see p. 1826).

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (11.51 am): Before starting to debate the bill, I indicate to the House that we will be supporting the bill though moving amendments, which I will detail later.

The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 originates as a result of a decision made on 5 April 2002 by the leaders summit on terrorism and multijurisdictional crime to develop model laws covering four areas. These areas are, firstly, controlled operations which authorise undercover law enforcement officers to engage in unlawful conduct under controlled conditions to investigate serious offences. During a controlled operation a covert or undercover police operative may be required to commit offences—for example, possessing dangerous drugs—but only under strict controlled conditions and only after the appropriate authorisation has been obtained.

Controlled operations legislation provides authority for law enforcement officers to be involved in conduct which would otherwise be unlawful and provides for evidence obtained in that way to be admissible, notwithstanding the potential illegality of the manner in which it is gathered. An important accountability measure unique to the proposed Queensland legislation is the requirement to obtain the recommendation of the Controlled Operations Committee before authorising a controlled operation. The Controlled Operations Committee consists of the Commissioner for Police, the chairman of the CMC and is chaired by an independent member who is a retired judge.

Secondly, with regard to surveillance devices which cover listening, optical and tracking devices to monitor suspects, a warrant is required when the use of a surveillance device is otherwise unlawful. The underlying policy is to prevent unwarranted intrusion into the privacy of individuals through the use of surveillance devices. Queensland's existing legislation enables a police officer to apply to a Supreme Court judge for a warrant to use a surveillance device. A warrant may also be obtained from a magistrate when the device sought is a tracking device. The Queensland legislation currently requires the Public Interest Monitor to be involved in applications for surveillance device warrants. The Public Interest Monitor then makes submissions to the judge or magistrate on whether a warrant should be issued. Under current practice, the warrant always requires the applicant to give the Public Interest Monitor an affidavit providing details of compliance with the legislation. This bill requires such a report to be provided to either the judge or the Public Interest Monitor.

Thirdly, the legislation regulates the acquisition and use of false identities for law enforcement purposes. Current Queensland legislation regulates the use of assumed identities for controlled operations. The model in this bill goes further and regulates the acquisition and use of assumed identities by law enforcement bodies generally whether or not as part of a controlled operation.

Fourthly, witness anonymity provides for the protection of law enforcement operatives and protecting witnesses' identities in court. This legislation provides for the protection of a law enforcement operative's true identity when giving evidence in court if revelation of the true identity might endanger the operative or another person or prejudice an ongoing investigation. The government claims the principles behind the national agreement are achieved through the bill substantially adopting the provisions of the model laws for a national set of powers for cross-border criminal investigations but is also seeking to incorporate a series of what it claims are unique Queensland features in the legislation.

We note, however, that it has taken since April 2002 for the Beattie government to prepare this legislation following consideration of the decision in principle by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and the Australasian Police Ministers Council which reported as to the form of proposed amendments in November 2003. Since that time, only Victoria of all other Australian jurisdictions has enacted the required model laws. One can only wonder at the willingness of this and other state Labor governments to attempt to confront the real threat of terrorism by action rather than rhetoric, which the Labor Party seems to be so good at producing.

Given the enhanced terrorism threat to which Australia is now exposed, the failure of Queensland and other state Labor governments to fast-track the preparation and enactment of this legislation stands open to justifiable criticism. The people of Queensland are already starting to see behind the rhetorical facade for which this government is renowned. However, the principle behind the legislation, which is designed to enhance the capacity of police services and other appropriate bodies to fight terrorism and organised crime across the jurisdictional boundaries of Australian states, should be supported by all right thinking Australians. The Liberals and Nationals certainly believe that this should be the case.

The Beattie government has sought to adopt the model legislation in such a way that it not only complies with the nationally agreed requirements for inspection, record keeping and reporting but also complies with peculiarly Queensland accountability mechanisms such as the Public Interest Monitor and Controlled Operations Committee currently provided for under the Crime and Misconduct Commission Act. It seeks to justify such an approach by seeking to characterise the model laws as minimum

standards. It argues that Queensland, in agreeing to the minimum standards in the model laws, would enable interstate law enforcement officers to operate in Queensland under a model law corresponding warrant or authority even though the interstate legislation does not contain Queensland's higher offence threshold and claimed additional levels of accountability. This would involve interstate law enforcement officers using these powers in Queensland, having satisfied in their home state lower procedural and accountability standards than their Queensland counterparts. Interstate law enforcement officers will also be able to use within Queensland, if they consider it an appropriate use of resources, surveillance and controlled operations powers to investigate offences less serious than could be investigated by their Queensland counterparts. This, it argues, represents the trade-off inherent in the mutual recognition of national powers for seamless cross-border investigations.

The bill goes on to confer power on the Queensland Police Service and Crime and Misconduct Commission for major crime function only and the Australian Crime Commission would enable them to obtain warrants and authorities that can operate in Queensland and interstate. The bill introduces legislation in terms of the model laws, including nationally agreed back-end accountability requirements such as inspection, record keeping and reporting requirements, while retaining the claimed additional protection of Queensland's existing front-end accountability requirements such as the Public Interest Monitor and the Controlled Operations Committee with respect to covert police powers.

Queensland will also retain a higher relevant offence threshold which must be under investigation to access these powers. The offence threshold will be offences punishable by seven years imprisonment or more—three years for certain tracking device warrants—and prescribed offences such as offences relating to child pornography and prostitution, as opposed to the model law relevant offence threshold of offences punishable by three years imprisonment. The result of this policy decision is that Queensland crime-fighting authorities will be limited in the types of offences that they can investigate outside Queensland's borders compared with the capacity of similar crime-fighting authorities from other jurisdictions investigating criminal activities outside the borders of their home jurisdictions.

The Beattie Labor government attempts to justify this approach on the basis that it is seeking to maintain the high standards of accountability that it has adopted in Queensland. However, the end result is that Queensland's crime-fighting authorities will possess less power to follow criminal activities across Queensland's borders than will the crime-fighting authorities in other jurisdictions when their criminals come to Queensland.

To be quite frank, it is a ridiculous approach in the fight against the real threat posed by organised crime and global terrorism. Given the risks posed by global terrorism and organised crime, the adoption of such an approach by the Beattie Labor government in refusing to follow the agreed national standard raises the question of whether the parliament should seek to amend this legislation to ensure compliance with the agreed national standard rather than attempt a Queensland frolic, which will denigrate a concerted effort by all Australian governments against the threat of terrorism.

Of course, it may be that the Beattie government is quite prepared, for its own political reasons, to refuse to support a concerted attack against the terrorists who have already taken the lives of Australians in places such as London and Bali. However, we are not prepared to do that. Accordingly, we have prepared amendments, which have been circulated, that will have the effect of amending the bill so that it will comply with the standards set in the model legislation—that is, applying to offences punishable by more than three years imprisonment. This will increase the capacity of Queensland crime-fighting authorities—the police and the CMC—to pursue a greater range of matters outside Queensland than they could under the Beattie government's bill.

Parliamentary counsel has pointed out that the amendments would widen the range of offence for which controlled operations—that is, those which authorise undercover law enforcement officers to engage in unlawful conduct under controlled conditions to investigate serious offences—would apply. However, if the accountability mechanisms in Queensland are as effective as the government claims them to be and the amendments lead to a greater chance of punishing criminal offenders, then this must be regarded as a small risk for Queensland to accept as it seeks to meet the real threat that terrorism poses to all Australians.

Accordingly, although we will support this legislation, at the appropriate stage of the proceedings of this parliament we will seek to strengthen the legislation to reflect what has been agreed by all Australian jurisdictions. The failure by the government to support these amendments will show the people of Queensland that this government is not serious about the threats of terrorism and interstate criminal activity.

Finally, may I say that in John Howard we have a Prime Minister who has acted promptly and effectively to deal with the issue of terrorism and has engaged all states and territories in this important debate. This Beattie Labor government should take a leaf out of his book and effect the same measures.

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.03 pm): It is my pleasure to stand and speak in support of the Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. This is indeed a fairly complex area, as acknowledged in the former Attorney-General's second reading speech, which sets out the

range of offences, the range of powers and the range of circumstances in which this legislation will operate.

Currently, the Queensland Police Service and the CMC are the two Queensland law bodies that have power with respect to law enforcement generally. In particular, under Queensland laws those two bodies have four special powers: firstly, in relation to controlled operations, for example undercover police officers being able to commit offences in strictly controlled circumstances in an effort to gain evidence against criminals; secondly, in relation to surveillance devices such as listening devices, tracking devices and optical devices to monitor people reasonably suspected of criminal activity; thirdly, in relation to assumed identities, that is, the use of false identities for law enforcement purposes; and, fourthly, in relation to witness anonymity protection to ensure that criminals or others who provide evidence can be protected. These powers are available only in relation to certain serious offences. That is appropriately the case and under Queensland law has been the case for some time.

In addition, under Queensland law civil liberties and accountability are ensured through the Public Interest Monitor and the Controlled Operations Committee. Someone may ask, 'What is the problem?' Essentially, it is that, although these powers are similar, and in some cases identical, to other state based powers such as those of the New South Wales police force and other state based organisations, there is a lack of uniformity across the country. That creates an obstacle in each state to effectively enforcing their laws and pursuing criminals. So there is a cross-border obstacle to the effective law enforcement of each state under their own state laws.

Accordingly, this bill adopts the model that has been agreed to by all states and the federal government. It gives Queensland a better crime-fighting capacity. Also, Queensland has retained the unique Public Interest Monitor and Controlled Operations Committee for the use of these Queensland powers. That is, those two bodies continue to provide what is loosely described as front-end protection of our privacy and civil liberties.

Additionally, under the model there is also back-end accountability with respect to the inspection of warrants, record keeping and reporting compliance. This accountability is to be delivered by our existing body, the Public Interest Monitor, and a new feature under this legislation, the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner in relation to the exercise by the CMC of one of the four powers that I have listed.

I congratulate the government on adopting the model and particularly being able to adopt the model to enhance the crime-fighting capacity of the Queensland law enforcement agencies whilst retaining the Queensland innovations of the Public Interest Monitor and the Controlled Operations Committee. No other state protects privacy and civil liberties in anything like the way in which Queensland does in this particular area. As I say, we are able to continue that protection without any loss of crime-fighting capacity.

The use of the Public Interest Monitor to provide front-end accountability for the exercise of covert, intrusive powers is the model that we have for some years urged upon the federal government that it adopt for its national telecommunications interception legislation. But the Howard government has consistently resisted building in that protection for privacy and civil liberties in the national TI legislation.

Mr McNamara: Shame!

Mr WILSON: I accept that interjection from the honourable member. It is extremely disappointing that the opportunity is not taken up by the federal government to enhance the protection of civil liberties and privacy throughout the rest of the country as well as enhance the capacity for crime prevention and detection in Queensland through telephone interception.

As I say, the Beattie government has urged upon the federal government the adoption of the Public Interest Monitor safeguard in the area of telephone interception. If it is okay for that protection to be built in through this cross-border legislation to the operation of the four covert powers that I have listed, including the power to use surveillance devices such as listening devices, why is it not similarly appropriate to adopt that Public Interest Monitor accountability for the exercise of telephone interception powers? We see no reason why it should not be adopted. The federal government continues to resist our request. I support the bill.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.09 pm): The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 amends the Evidence Act 1977 to provide for the protection of the true identity of operatives in court through the issuing of a witness identity protection certificate. The legislation also facilitates the recognition of witness identity protection certificates under corresponding laws.

The legislation provides that the chief executive officer of a law enforcement agency may give a witness identity protection certificate for an operative of the agency in relation to a proceeding if the operative is or may be required to give evidence in the proceeding and the chief executive officer is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the disclosure in the proceeding of the operative's true identity or where the operative lives is likely to endanger the safety of the operative or someone else or prejudice an investigation.

A decision to give a witness identity protection certificate is final and cannot be impeached for informality or want of form and cannot be appealed against, reviewed, called into question or invalidated in any court. However, this does not prevent a decision to give a witness identity protection certificate being called into question during proceedings of a disciplinary nature against the person who made the decision.

The certificate must include the assumed name used by the operative, if any; a general description of the reasons for giving the certificate; whether the operative has been convicted of an offence or has charges outstanding and, if so, particulars of the offence or charge; if the operative is, or was, a law enforcement officer; whether the operative has been found guilty of professional misconduct or whether any allegations of professional misconduct are outstanding and, if so, particulars of each finding of the allegation outstanding; and whether, to the knowledge of the person giving the certificate, a court has made an adverse comment about the operative's credibility or anything else that may affect the operative's credibility, including if the operative has made a false representation when the truth was required.

The certificate must be filed with the relevant court, and if the agency is the Police Service a copy is to be provided to the chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the CMC. Also, a copy must be provided to each party in the proceeding and any person the court orders it to be provided to.

The witness protection certificate allows the operative to give evidence under the assumed name or a court name and no question can be asked or statements made that may lead to the disclosure of the operative's true identity or where the operative lives. However, a party to the proceeding may apply to the court for leave to ask a question or have a person make a statement which may identify the operative's true identity or where the operative lives in circumstances where: there is evidence that, if accepted, would substantially call into question the operative's credibility; it would be impracticable to test properly the credibility of the operative without allowing the risk of disclosure; and it is in the interests of justice for the operative's credibility to be able to be tested.

Any such application must be made in the absence of a jury and, unless the court considers that the interests of justice require otherwise, the court must be closed when the application is made and, if leave is granted, when the evidence is given. The court must also make an order suppressing the publication of anything said during the application or any subsequent evidence which may be given. The legislation also creates a number of offences relating to the unlawful disclosure of information. The legislation also contains a number of back-end safeguards including the chair of the CMC reviewing each witness identity certificate issued by the Police Service and annual reporting requirements. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (12.14 pm): Recognising the world in which we live and the nature of crime, I am pleased to take part in this debate on the Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. I want to congratulate this government for recognising the urgency and the high need to bring about uniform legislation across the states and territories so that our law enforcement officers can do everything possible to protect this country and our community.

This new era in major organised crime—such as terrorism, international trafficking in drugs and weapons, child pornography and paedophilia, and the involvement of mafia style networks and outlaw motorcycle gangs here in Australia—requires new measures to combat and apprehend those who would put our safety and our very lifestyle at risk. This bill not only addresses how we tackle these crimes by enabling more extreme measures to be taken but also requires all jurisdictions to ensure that the mechanisms are there for our investigators to do their work unimpeded by state borders and the variety of legislative constraints which now exist.

These days there is much said about individual privacy and freedoms. However, we must ensure that our Federation of states and territories, with their individual laws, should not provide a refuge for criminals. All states and territories have agreed on these national laws, having been developed by a joint working group of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and the Australasian Police Ministers Council. What we have before us today is the result of much consultation and deliberation. It refers only to major serious crime, and Queensland is the second state to move on these recommendations, following Victoria.

At the present time, law enforcement officers in Queensland are required to seek warrants in other states. This bill will ensure borders are simply nonexistent when a serious operation is under way. It enables an investigator to seek a permit to operate undercover which may include, under certain circumstances, committing a crime such as drug possession to gather evidence and for that evidence to be admissible in court. The authorisation of this type of operation will be presented to a committee comprised of the Commissioner for Police, the chair of the CMC and a retired judge to safeguard the process.

The accountability process also continues with a review once the operation has been completed. This will be carried out by the Public Interest Monitor and the independent member of controlled operations. If there has been a CMC operation then the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee will conduct a review, and should the Australian Crime Commission be involved then the Commonwealth Ombudsman will undertake the inspection.

To gain a conviction and to protect the identity of an investigator during these controlled operations, it may be necessary that evidence is given in court under the acquired false identity. This will offer protection but also will ensure that the investigator is able to continue in his or her role for future undercover work. To obtain evidence, surveillance devices may be required. There are specific requirements and safeguards governing this, such as stipulating the room in which a device will be used and only for certain prescribed offences.

Terrorism is not new. Violent, drug related crime and the operation of outlaw bikie gangs and gangster style criminals have also been around for quite a while. However, it seems in recent years, with the advent of the internet and more sophisticated communication and very high stakes in the drug trade, that there are groups around who have no regard for law, property or the lives of innocent people. We have all heard tales of Melbourne's gangsters holidaying on our Gold Coast, drug cartels operating in the country and paedophiles preying on our youngsters through internet chat rooms.

Some 18 months ago I had the opportunity to assist a young woman in my electorate who was fleeing from her former husband, a violent member of a bikie gang. Her story was horrendous, and she and her young son lived in constant fear. I have the previous director-general of the department of families to thank for assisting them beyond what I would consider the call of duty. But this gave me a very frightening window into the world of serious crime.

This legislation is very timely. The bill amends a number of existing pieces of legislation such as the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Evidence Act 1977 and the Witness Protection Act 2000. It gives me great pleasure to support the bill.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (12.19 pm): I rise to contribute to the Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill. Members of this House would be justifiably proud of the excellent crime-fighting regime that we have in Queensland, including the Crime and Misconduct Commission, Queensland Police Service, State Crime Operations Command and our various tactical crime squads that combat regional and major crime activities.

As we seek to understand some of the nuances and subtleties of the bill, at the end of the day it could be summed up by a discussion that I had with Simon Tutt, one of the police minister's policy advisers, who said that it is like removing the Berlin Wall at Tweed Heads. That is effectively what we are doing when it comes to crime fighting. If we do not have a coordinated federal approach, there is the possibility of criminals maximising those windows of dark opportunity.

When we look at this particular bill, it is clear that the current Queensland legislation which deals with these areas is efficiently policing and watch-guarding only Queensland. Again, this coordinated approach is extremely valuable and highly necessary with the upsurge in organised crime. I was talking to a police friend of mine one day who said that it is only the honest people who fear the law. Often times criminals, especially organised criminals, simply go about their business; they ignore or skirt around the law and try to make opportunities for themselves.

Queensland, under this particular legislative change, will also retain a higher relevant offence threshold, which I think is very important. It is something which should make the civil libertarians happy. The offence threshold will be offences punishable by seven-years imprisonment and more than three-years imprisonment for certain tracking device warrants and prescribed offences such as offences relating to child pornography and child prostitution. I agree with all members in this House; I could not support any more strongly any moves against the heinous crime of child pornography.

The model law relevant to threshold of offences punishable by three-years imprisonment, which is often a feature of the other states, still allows for the cross-pollination of policing. So, if someone in another state is chasing or tracking a criminal to this state, they can still effectively use their own guidelines, but if a person is a resident of Queensland they have the added civil protection of those higher thresholds.

I turn now to law enforcement in Queensland and, in particular, some of the issues relating to major crime. The CMC was formed on 1 January 2002 as a merger of the old CJC and the Queensland Crime Commission and was established under the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. It states in its brief that the stated aims are to reduce the incidence of major crime, including organised crime and paedophilia, and also to reduce misconduct and promote high standards of integrity within the Queensland public sector.

This bill deals with the former rather than the latter, but in its fight against major crime, including organised crime and criminal paedophilia, the CMC conducts specialist, proactive investigations and has some projects and other law enforcement tasks. These include target identification and development, intelligence analysis, investigative hearings, research activities, the gathering of evidence for prosecution action and the confiscation of proceeds from organised criminal activity.

Clearly, we need to hit criminals in the pocket. If we can continue with those sorts of regimes, people will take the consequences of the crimes more seriously. The Queensland police force is the primary player in this regard, and what an incredible job it does. Queensland has an area of 1,732,700 square kilometres including its islands. That is an area equivalent to seven times the area of the United

Kingdom, three times the area of France or one-fifth of the area of the United States of America. Just looking at protecting our coastal borders against organised crime, there are 9,800 kilometres of coastline including our islands. So, whilst our police officers perform an incredible task along with their general duties in providing the service's initial response to incidents of crime, I salute the good folks of the tactical crime squad which services our Fraser Coast police district that is based in Maryborough. They do a brilliant job of proactive policing and trying to ferret out the networks of crime that exist and shut them down.

The types of criminal offences that we are talking about include murder, extortion, rape, drug trafficking, large-scale fraud, money laundering, armed robbery and paedophilia. During the financial year 2002-03, 24 per cent or \$226 million of the Queensland Police Service's resources were devoted to combating organised and major crime.

When we look at state crime and, in particular, the relationship between other state agencies and the synergies that are created by the desire to work together more strongly, we have state crime operations which command the crime operations branches and the CIB throughout Queensland. These crime operations branches conduct investigations which cross regional, interstate and even international boundaries into major and organised crime. With the advent of the technology we have available with the internet and broadband and satellite imaging, all of these skills are brought to bear to bring the crooks to justice.

The Bureau of Criminal Intelligence Queensland coordinates the intelligence function through identification of emerging crime trends and the formulation of appropriate responses. What we are talking about here is the ongoing need to create those synergies, to knock down the Berlin Walls of legislation so that we can work together to be entirely proactive in fighting crime. Because, unless we seek to sort out what the root of the problem is and ferret it out using combined intelligence approaches, so much of the manpower and effort that goes into policing will be lost and the effect of that is diminished.

Each of our eight police regions has dedicated specialist investigators deployed to respond to major and organised crime. Those officers are very ably supported by local intelligence officers, scenes of crime officers and general duty and traffic officers as required. Additionally, the northern and far-northern regions have dedicated drug investigation squads. The far-northern region conducted an operation some time ago that located 20 kilos of cannabis sativa—proceeds of crime valued at \$450,000—at the residence of one offender. This led to the charging of a further 10 offenders with over 100 offences involving the trafficking and possession of cannabis sativa. At Gympie, detectives in conjunction with state crime operations seized 1,600 cannabis sativa plants with a street value of \$38 million. What we are talking about here is big bikkies. Whenever there are big bikkies as a result of crime, there will be networks that further increase their sophistication and their own networking to achieve these ends.

The bill confers powers on the Queensland Police Service, Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Australian Crime Commission to enable them to obtain warrants and authorities that can operate in Queensland and interstate. I note that this bill achieves the objectives by amending the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, the Crime and Misconduct Act, the Evidence Act 1977 and the Witness Protection Act. I say: more power to the fighters of crime and let us never shirk from the task.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (12.28 pm): I rise to support the Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I congratulate my colleague Linda Lavarch on becoming Attorney-General, because this is the first time I have spoken on a bill that she has had carriage of.

In April 2002 the leaders summit on terrorism and multijurisdictional crime agreed to develop model laws for a national set of powers for cross-border criminal investigations covering the four areas of controlled operations, surveillance devices, assumed identities and witness anonymity.

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and the Australasian Police Ministers Council established the Joint Working Group on National Investigation Powers to examine the issues and develop detailed proposals. In November 2003 the JWG published its report *Cross border investigative powers for law enforcement*. The report contained a model law for each of the four areas. SCAG endorsed the legislation proposed in the JWG report, with changes, on 18 and 19 March 2004.

The objective of the model laws is to enable seamless cross-border investigation of serious offences. Under the model law, state or territory officers will be able to continue their investigations in another state or territory under a warrant or authorisation issued in their own jurisdiction. Jurisdictions' current laws on these areas differ markedly. As a result of the agreement on the model laws, each Australian jurisdiction is required to introduce legislation based on the model laws for which each jurisdiction will, in turn, provide mutual recognition. In implementing the model laws, Queensland will not be required to drop its higher standards in its existing legislation. The model laws propose minimum standards, above which jurisdictions may legislate as they draft their implementing legislation.

The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill honours Queensland's commitment to the national agreement. The bill will introduce legislation that reflects the model laws including nationally agreed back-end accountability requirements, such as inspection, record keeping

and reporting requirements, while retaining the additional protection of Queensland's existing front-end accountability requirements as currently contained within the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, such as the Public Interest Monitor and the Controlled Operations Committee with respect to covert police powers.

The bill also retains a higher threshold offence requirement for controlled operations, authorisations and surveillance device warrants. They are the types of offences for which these powers are available. The threshold will be indictable offences punishable by imprisonment for seven years or more or certain prescribed offences that will fall below the seven-year threshold—for example, it could be child pornography, weapons and prostitution offences—as opposed to the model law threshold of three years and other prescribed offences.

Queensland agreeing to the minimum standards in the model laws will enable interstate law enforcement officers to operate in Queensland under a model law corresponding warrant or authority, even though the interstate legislation does not contain Queensland's higher offence threshold and additional levels of accountability. This would involve interstate law enforcement officers using the powers, having satisfied in their own home state lower procedural and accountability standards than their Queensland counterparts. Interstate law enforcement officers will also be able to use within Queensland, if they consider it an appropriate use of resources, surveillance and controlled operations powers to investigate offences less serious than could be investigated by their Queensland counterparts. This represents the trade-off inherent in the mutual recognition of national powers for seamless cross-border investigations.

The bill confers powers on the Queensland Police Service, the Crime and Misconduct Commission—for the major crime function only—and the Australian Crime Commission. The bill will also provide law enforcement agencies with powers that are more effective and appropriate to fight organised and multijurisdictional crime while preserving Queensland's safeguards to ensure as far as possible that the law continues to protect the rights and legitimate privacy of Queenslanders.

Yesterday Logan held its first National Police Remembrance Day march. I congratulate all those police officers who were involved in this initiative for making that march and ceremony happen. I hope that we will continue to have that march and ceremony in future years.

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (12.33 pm): The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 gives law enforcement officers more power to target organised cross-border criminal networks. At a leaders summit in 2002 it was agreed that national model laws would be developed to fight cross-border crime and increase protection for Queenslanders against organised crime.

As a member representing the Gold Coast, I am aware of the problems posed by the Queensland-New South Wales border. Many times an investigation on the Queensland side of the border has been stymied by the inability to follow up investigations on the other side of the border because the warrant or authorisation did not extend interstate.

The model laws, however, do not cover corruption commissions. Accordingly, there have been no changes made to the Crime and Misconduct Commission's powers for its misconduct function—that is, investigating official misconduct and police misconduct. The bill therefore makes consequential amendments to the existing surveillance device provisions in the Crime and Misconduct Act to remove references to the CMC's major crime function and relocates the existing controlled operations and activities provisions regarding the CMC's misconduct function from the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to the Crime and Misconduct Act. This will enable the CMC to access covert powers for its misconduct function under the Crime and Misconduct Act without any expansion of current powers. These powers will continue to operate only in Queensland.

While the adoption of the model laws means that interstate law enforcement officers will be able to operate in Queensland under their own warrants and authorities, it also means that Queensland's laws will be recognised by other jurisdictions. Gold Coast officers will be able to follow through on their own investigations, even if that means crossing the border into New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (12.35 pm): Policing is a difficult occupation at the best of times. The Beattie state government recognises that as we progress with all the latest technology so, too, does the criminal element in society. Queensland is not isolated. This is a worldwide phenomenon, not just a national problem. Recently the states got together and formed a national body to authorise each state to conduct cross-border policing. The state governments have realised that crossing a border does not lessen an offence and that they, as a national force, must give the appropriate authority to our police services so they can continue out of their state's jurisdiction into another state.

This act enables an operator within the police service to be permitted, with the appropriate authorisation, to cross borders, but only for certain offences and certain reasons such as controlled operations, surveillance devices and assumed identities, usually linked to drug offences. I suppose that we must also bring terrorism into those categories now.

A controlled operation is an investigative method to identify suspects to support prosecutions. Surveillance device legislation makes it possible to track, monitor and record a reasonably suspected person, but this must be authorised by a warrant issued by a Supreme Court judge. Currently assumed identity legislation relates to an assumed name or false identity for controlled operations, but this legislation goes further and allows officers to assume an identity without being in a controlled operation or sting. It is like the member for Burleigh said: we on the Gold Coast are very familiar with the restrictions on members of our Police Service crossing into New South Wales, such as an officer being transported across the border between Queensland and New South Wales in a sting operation with drug suppliers or dealers. They could find themselves in another state, and any evidence gathered in another state will now be able to be used in a court of law. This is a great step forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (12.37 pm): I join with some of my colleagues in congratulating the Attorney-General on the wonderful work that she has done so far. I am looking forward to working with her and her team in the future. I am sure that Queensland is now a much safer place because of the appointment of the new Attorney-General.

The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 is a very vital key in enhancing our current national and state protective mechanisms. It will greatly enhance the fight against organised crime and terrorism. It is sad to say that these measures have become a necessity and reflect upon many real fears that face our society today.

As we are aware, contemporary policing requires law enforcement agencies to undertake covert investigations that extend way beyond the boundaries of any one jurisdiction. Organised criminal networks such as drug cartels, terrorists and motorcycle gangs operate with relative ease across state borders. This amendment bill addresses this increasing threat. It is critical that our law enforcement agencies adopt a nationally coordinated and cooperative approach to law enforcement.

Currently the law in each area differs significantly between jurisdictions, and there is no provision for recognition in one jurisdiction of authorisations or warrants issued in another jurisdiction. Where an investigation crosses a state border the need to obtain separate authorities in each jurisdiction can result in substantial delays, loss of evidence and other impediments to effective investigation. The creation of a national set of investigative powers is intended to facilitate seamless law enforcement across different jurisdictions. This clearly can only be good for law enforcement.

Each of the four areas covered by the proposed legislation is an aspect of criminal investigation which will often extend across jurisdictional borders. These four areas mentioned in the bill are interrelated and tend to be used in combination to investigate serious crime. This new legislation, for example, will directly impact upon vehicle thefts which are a lucrative source of income for organised criminals whose networks commonly operate across several jurisdictions across state boundaries and often involve other serious criminal activities including money laundering and drugs and firearms trafficking.

Currently Queensland's legislation dealing with these areas can operate within Queensland only. Under current legislation the investigative operation would not be able to continue across the border as the undercover officer may be criminally liable for offences committed. This bill will allow the undercover officer to continue the operation and enable the evidence obtained from across the border to be used in court.

The extensive involvement of sophisticated criminal networks simply highlights the need for a significant improvement in the coordination of intelligence information gathered in our nation. As a trade-off for the increases in Queensland's jurisdictional powers, interstate law enforcement officers will also be able to operate in Queensland under their own warrants and authorities.

Additionally, the four areas mentioned in the bill all relate to covert methods of investigation, sometimes involving deception. This covert element means that appropriate and consistent standards of regulations and accountability must be in place across these four interrelated areas. The government is committed to maintaining Queensland's existing high standard of front-end safeguards, as well as implementing the enhanced post-operational requirements, thereby achieving a new benchmark with regard to establishing realistic accountability mechanisms within this legislation.

It is certainly a very sad fact that crime is not confined within state borders. Queenslanders do not want us to sit around for the next few years and debate appropriate frameworks for attacking increasingly sophisticated criminals and terrorists. With this legislation Queensland has entered a new era in our reform. We are the second state to introduce these new laws. It is fair to say that our Queensland justice system parallels the very best legal systems anywhere in the world. It is for this reason I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (12.42 pm): I rise to join the debate this afternoon on the Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill. I congratulate the Premier, the Attorney-General and the police minister on bringing this legislation to the House. As many speakers before me have said, crime does not understand borders or boundaries. We experience criminal operations regularly transgressing state borders. As many other speakers have identified, in today's electronic age they

certainly cross international boundaries as well. This is a very, very broad-ranging bill which increases the ability of Queensland's law enforcement agencies to fight that type of crime. It also allows interstate agencies to continue investigations that may be focused on their patch but impinge on Queensland. It increases the ability of law enforcement agencies to cooperate and work together, with the central focus being to fight crime and not get too hung up on state borders and where things occur.

In relation to controlled operations, it is important to note that a controlled operation is an investigative method used by law enforcement agencies to identify suspects, gather intelligence and obtain evidence of criminal activity to support a prosecution. Instead of using a traditional law enforcement approach that immediately terminates criminal activity once it is detected, a controlled operation permits the criminal enterprise to continue to unfold under controlled conditions.

The legislation provides for the authorisation, conduct and monitoring of controlled operations, including operations crossing over into other jurisdictions. The legislation also facilitates the recognition of things done in relation to a controlled operation authorised under the corresponding law of another jurisdiction. During a controlled operation a participant—for example, an undercover police operative—may be required to commit offences such as possessing dangerous drugs. Controlled operations legislation provides authority for law enforcement officers to be involved in conduct which would otherwise be unlawful and this approved unlawful conduct is called controlled conduct and provides for evidence obtained in that way to be admissible notwithstanding any illegality.

I think we can all clearly understand the farce of a covert operation if a police officer who was playing the role of a drug user was actually committing a criminal offence himself if he went to a nightclub and successfully scored and obtained some drugs and it was then argued in court where and how he was authorised to possess that dangerous drug. What happens if he is investigating stolen vehicles or property and actually commits the offence of receiving stolen property as a result of the exercise of his powers in that investigation? We would not want to see police officers charged with receiving stolen property if it was part of their work. It is essential that the covert police operatives be protected in this way. It also extends to us. It is in our best interests that covert police operatives are protected in this way to allow them to catch the people that are breaking into our homes to support their drug habit. These police need the tools to effectively attack these types of offences.

To apply for an authority to conduct a controlled operation, the offence being investigated must be a relevant offence which is an offence punishable by at least seven years imprisonment or a prescribed indictable offence, for example, child pornography and weapons offences. An accountability measure in Queensland legislation is a requirement to obtain the recommendation of the Controlled Operations Committee prior to authorising the controlled operation. The Controlled Operations Committee consists of the Commissioner for Police, the chairperson of the CMC and is chaired by an independent member who is a retired judge.

The Controlled Operations Committee in determining the recommendation of the granting of authority to conduct a controlled operation must be satisfied, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the offence being investigated, that it is appropriate for persons to engage in controlled conduct for the purposes of gathering evidence that may lead to the conviction of a person for the offence. If the Controlled Operations Committee recommend the grant of authority to conduct the controlled operation, the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency may authorise the operation if satisfied on reasonable grounds of specified matters, including that a relevant offence has been, is being, or is likely to be committed; that the nature and extent of the suspected criminal activity justifies the conduct of a controlled operation; and that any unlawful conduct involved in conducting the operation will be limited to the maximum extent consistent with conducting an effective controlled operation. That means that whilst these police are indemnified against some criminal conduct, it is not a blank cheque to go out and run amok.

The Controlled Operations Committee must also be satisfied that the operation will be conducted in a way that will minimise the risk of more illicit goods being under the control of persons other than law enforcement officers at the end of the operation than are reasonably necessary to enable the officers to achieve the purpose of the controlled operation; that the proposed controlled conduct will be capable of being accounted for in a way that will enable the reporting requirements of the legislation to be complied with; that the operation will not be conducted in a way that makes it likely for a person to be induced to commit an offence that the person would not otherwise have intended to commit; that any proposed participant in the operation has received appropriate training for the purpose; that any role given to a civilian participant in the operation is not one that would be adequately performed by a law enforcement officer; and that any conduct involved in the operation will not seriously endanger the health or safety of any person, or cause the death of or serious injury to any person, or involve the commission of a sexual offence against any person, or result in serious loss or serious damage to property other than illicit goods.

The legislation contains a number of back-end safeguards including reporting and record keeping, an inspection process and the tabling in the Legislative Assembly of the annual report by the report entity for the relevant law enforcement agency. This includes details of the work and activities of the law enforcement agency under the controlled operations legislation and comments on the

comprehensiveness and adequacy of the reports provided by the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency.

An essential part of many of these operations is the ability of the CPO—the covert police operative—to use an assumed identity. On behalf of all members of the House, I put on record my thanks to the people who volunteer for the high-risk job of covert police operative or controller. It is a highly risky job to go in and interact with criminal enterprises. They give up not just their identity but also their social life. They must limit their contact with friends who know they are a police officer. This has an impact on both their safety and their lifestyle. I cannot begin to explain to the House the full impact of this dangerous and risky job on these members. We owe a great debt of gratitude to both the CPOs and their controllers for the work they volunteer to undertake.

The assumed identities legislation regulates the acquisition and use of false identities for law enforcement purposes. Current Queensland legislation regulates the use of assumed identities as part of a controlled operation. This bill goes further and regulates the acquisition and use of assumed identities by law enforcement bodies generally, whether or not the investigation forms part of a controlled operation, because there may be other reasons, apart from a controlled operation, that police officers wish to use an assumed identity.

The law enforcement officer may, by written application, apply to the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency for an authority for the law enforcement officer or other person to acquire and/or use an assumed identity. In deciding the application, the chief executive officer may require additional information. To grant the application, the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency must be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the assumed identity is necessary for the purpose of an investigation or intelligence gathering in relation to criminal activity; the risk of abuse of the assumed identity by the authorised person under the authority is minimal; and, if the application is for the authorisation of an assumed identity for a person who is not a law enforcement officer, it would be impossible or impractical in the circumstances for a law enforcement officer to acquire and use the assumed identity for the purpose sought.

If an authority is granted for an authorised civilian, the chief executive officer must appoint a law enforcement officer of the agency to supervise the acquisition or use of the assumed identity by the authorised civilian. The law enforcement officer appointed must be of or above the rank of sergeant in the case of the Police Service or an authorised commissioned officer in the case of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. An authority granted by the chief executive officer for an authorised officer remains in force until it is cancelled. An authority for an authorised civilian remains in force until the end of the period stated in the authority—not more than three months unless it is sooner cancelled.

The chief executive officer who grants an authority may ask the chief executive officer of an agency from which evidence of an assumed identity is sought to produce and supply the evidence of identity. Evidence of identity means a document or other thing including, for example, a drivers licence, credit card or identity card that evidences or could be used as evidence to indicate a person's identity or an aspect of a person's identity.

If the identity evidence is sought from a government agency, the chief executive officer of that agency must comply with the request. If the agency is a non-government agency, the chief executive officer may comply with the request. If the evidence of assumed identity is a birth certificate, the chief executive officer may apply to the independent member of the Controlled Operations Committee for authority to create a birth certificate for an assumed identity. The independent member may grant approval only if satisfied that granting the approval is justified having regard to the nature of the activities undertaken. Applications for the creation of a birth certificate for interstate law enforcement agencies under a corresponding law are made to the Supreme Court for the issue of an order for the creation of a birth certificate. The legislation provides for protection of the issuing agencies from criminal and civil liability in complying with the requirement, request or order to produce and provide evidence of identity.

The legislation also creates specific offences for the misuse of an assumed identity and the unlawful disclosure of information about an assumed identity. Obviously, the information about assumed identities will be highly classified and held extremely tightly. I think it is fair and reasonable that officers who are using these identities to conduct operations and put their lives at risk have protection so that if someone inside any organisation leaks this information, which could compromise the welfare, life and safety of a police officer or a civilian being used in an operation, they should have the book thrown at them and penalties applied to them.

The legislation also contains a number of additional safeguards through auditing, reporting and record-keeping requirements. This includes annual reporting by the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency, with a copy of the report required to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This report includes the number of authorities granted, a general description of the activities undertaken, the number of applications refused and if any fraud or other unlawful activity was identified as a result of the audit.

As members can see, this bill contains very strong front-end protection, as evidenced by a number of speakers who have spoken about the role of the PIM. In my contribution this afternoon I have

highlighted a number of back-end protections in relation to reporting mechanisms. I think it is important to have both. In relation to some of these applications for listening devices and tracking devices, people's interests need to be protected at the front end, and the PIM has that role of being the independent advocate of civil liberties, if you like, when these applications are heard.

The reporting requirements to parliament are the back-end protection as a result of the conduct of these operations. Queensland is unique in that it considers both front-end and back-end protection. That is what makes the Queensland proposal in relation to some of the terrorism laws quite unique. It shows that the Queensland government is working day in and day out to ensure that balance between increased powers to protect us and not stepping over the line into a totalitarian regime to defend free democracy. I think the Queensland government is extremely aware of that very delicate balancing act that it must perform—ensuring our safety and security and protecting our civil liberties. It is a difficult act in these changing times. I think it is something we continue to struggle with. I think so far we have got the balance right with both front-end and back-end protection.

Some other members have spoken about State Crime Operations Command. I will give a brief outline of the skills and expertise held within State Crime Operations Command. These are the specialist investigative squads within the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service has over 9,000 dedicated officers out there day in and day out risking their lives.

Ms Spence: There are 9,132 this week.

Mr ENGLISH: There are 9,132. Thank you, Minister. They are out there day in and day out, trying to protect our life and liberty at risk to themselves. They are all doing a fantastic job. At this point I would like to particularly acknowledge the operations conducted by State Crime Operations Command. State Crime Operations Command has the best of the best. These are the specialist squads: the child abuse unit, Task Force Argos, the homicide squad, the armed offenders squad, counterterrorism section, BCIQ, fraud squad and the drug squad. These are specialist detectives with high levels of skills in investigating the respective crimes. They bring specialist skills to bear on crime across the state. Just as detectives in other regions are limited by boundaries, the State Crime Operations Command has statewide responsibility. In presenting this bill to the House we acknowledge that, just as State Crime Operations Command is not limited by regional police boundaries, no longer is Queensland law enforcement limited by state boundaries. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (2.30 pm), in reply: I am pleased that the member for Caloundra on behalf of the opposition has given his support to the bill with the exception of increasing the threshold in Queensland to seven years. The government decided to apply a higher standard than the model laws by making controlled operations and surveillance devices available for offences punishable by seven years imprisonment or more. The effect of the amendment is to simply overturn that decision and to use the model law minimum standard of three years.

The model laws were agreed to on the basis that they were minimum standards and jurisdictions were always free to apply higher standards. Other jurisdictions have been consulted on Queensland's bill and all of them have indicated that the higher threshold will not affect their recognition of Queensland warrants being executed in their jurisdictions. The higher threshold of seven years was settled on because it was the line of best fit with the existing offences for which these powers are currently available under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. This means that Queensland laws will align with the model laws but with the minimum change in the offences for which the powers are available.

I am very pleased that the members for Ferny Grove, Woodridge, Springwood, Burleigh, Redlands and Maryborough also supported the bill. The Cross-Border Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 will introduce legislation that reflects Queensland's commitment to the national agreement. The bill will effectively place police on a level playing field for the investigation of serious and organised crime. No longer will these investigations be shackled by state boundaries. The bill will introduce agreed back-end accountability measures such as inspection, record keeping and reporting requirements while retaining the additional protection of Queensland's unique front-end safeguard requirements.

Controlled operations are an important investigative tool used by all law enforcement agencies to identify suspects, gather intelligence and obtain evidence of criminal activity to support a prosecution. Controlled operations allow a criminal enterprise to unfold under controlled conditions. Under these conditions, the bill will allow an undercover police officer and, in certain circumstances, civilian participants to commit approved offences to gather evidence—for example, purchasing dangerous drugs and stolen property. The bill clarifies that evidence obtained during these operations is admissible in court.

I was very pleased to hear the contribution from the member for Redlands. Obviously he has some first-hand experience in policing and indeed in conducting controlled operations. He, probably more than any other member of this parliament, knows what a tough ask it is when we ask police to take on these responsibilities as undercover operatives and to really give up part of their normal lives to take on these duties for all of us. So I do accept and appreciate his contribution to the debate today.

With respect to the Crime and Misconduct Commission, this bill permits the CMC to utilise the cross-border powers when investigating relevant offences. The cross-border powers do not apply when the CMC is investigating minor misconduct offences.

The bill recognises the dangers faced by undercover police officers. In order to assist these officers to protect their identity, the bill introduces specific provisions in relation to obtaining and using assumed identities and being able to give evidence under an assumed or code name.

In every jurisdiction, a warrant is required for the use of surveillance devices. The underlying policy of such laws is to prevent the unwarranted intrusion into the privacy of individuals through the use of surveillance devices. The bill creates a scheme for law enforcement agencies to obtain judicial approval for use of such devices. Current legislation only authorises the use of devices in the state where the authorisation was granted. This creates difficulties where offenders operate over state borders. For example, if police have a listening device installed in a suspect's vehicle and this person drives across the border, it would not be lawful for police to use the surveillance device or any evidence obtained.

We are now only the second state in Australia, along with Victoria, to formalise these laws. The bill will provide law enforcement agencies with powers that are more effective and appropriate to fight organised crime and multijurisdictional crime while also preserving Queensland's safeguards to ensure, as far as possible, that the law continues to protect the rights and legitimate privacy of Queenslanders.

While I am on my feet, I also wish to table a non-conforming petition from 175 employees at the Capricornia Correctional Centre drawing the attention of the House to the changes in work practices at state correctional facilities and the effect this will have on staff. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Mr McARDLE (2.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 **Clause 12—**

At page 26, line 23, 'seven year'—

omit, insert—

'three year'.

This bill came about as a consequence of the leaders summit on terrorism and multijurisdictional crime held in 2002. What that particular summit did was establish model laws in relation to the actions or future actions by police officers throughout Australia traversing what are common boundaries but also doing away with the requirement of obtaining authorisation in a different state, thus duplicating the procedure. The threshold figure under the model laws was three years imprisonment. This government has, for various reasons, put that bar much higher at seven years. If we are going to have model laws throughout this country, then it is imperative that they be uniform throughout all jurisdictions so that we are able to in fact have commonality throughout the various states. That is why we have moved the amendment as indicated.

Ms SPENCE: As I indicated in my speech when I replied to the debate, Queensland does not agree with the amendments put forward by the opposition. The opposition spokesperson makes the point that these are model laws and that all states around Australia have sat down with the Commonwealth to work on these laws for a number of years. When we went into discussions about these laws—and it was the then Attorney-General who did it, for the most part—it was always Queensland's position that seven years would be the threshold for introducing this legislation.

Just because we agree on model laws around this country does not mean that it all has to be uniform national legislation, and that is really the difference between a model law and uniform national legislation, which everyone agrees is going to look identical in every state in Australia. A model law is able to be flexible. When we went into discussions about this with our colleagues and counterparts in other states, they had no difficulty with Queensland being flexible and introducing the seven-year threshold rather than the three-year threshold advocated by other attorneys-general and ministers in other states. We have also, as I said, consulted with other jurisdictions and they think that our seven-year threshold is workable in terms of policing activity that is going to go on after this legislation is debated.

So from our point of view the government has made a decision that seven years is appropriate. That time frame would take into consideration penalties for offences that fit in with our Criminal Code and our Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. This is not a decision that we made lightly. A lot of thought has gone into the formulation of this bill and these laws over a long period. For those reasons I will not support the amendments moved by the opposition.

Mr McARDLE: I table the explanatory notes.

Amendment negated.

Mr McARDLE: I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 12—

At page 27, after line 2—

insert—

'three year imprisonment offence means an indictable offence for which the maximum penalty is at least 3 years imprisonment.'

This amendment defines the three-year imprisonment offence. It is another amendment that seeks to reduce the threshold of seven years to a period of three years.

Ms SPENCE: This will be the last time that I will participate in this debate. All of the amendments that will now be moved by the opposition are consequential amendments to the original amendment that was moved. Fundamentally, we are debating the same issue: do we want a seven-year threshold or do we want a three-year threshold? Obviously the government has taken the position that it wants a seven-year threshold for this legislation. I will oppose the remainder of these amendments.

Amendment negated.

Mr McARDLE: I move the following amendments—

3 Clause 12—

At page 91, line 20, 'seven year'—

omit, insert—

'three year'.

4 Clause 12—

At page 91, lines 22 to 28, and page 92, lines 1 to 6—

omit.

These amendments highlight the distinction between this bill and the model laws as outlined in the initial summit which was held in 2002. We believe it is important that, if the model laws are to be carried throughout the jurisdictional bases of the states, they should mirror each another. If the basis of those bills throughout the various states is going to be the model laws, then there should be uniformity across the various jurisdictional bases.

Amendments negated.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—

Mr McARDLE (2.43 pm): I move the following amendments—

5 Clause 29—

At page 149, lines 22 to 29, and page 150, lines 1 to 9—

omit, insert—

'An offence against the Classification of Computer Games and Images Act 1995, section 26(3) involving a child abuse computer game as defined under that Act.'

'2 Classification of Films Act 1991

'An offence against the Classification of Films Act 1991, section 41(3).'

6 Clause 29—

At page 150, lines 28 to 31, page 151, lines 1 and 2, 10 and 11, 14 to 26 and 28 to 31, and page 152, lines 1 to 13—

omit.

Again, these amendments are an attempt by the opposition to alter the bill so that it is in uniformity with the model rules under which this bill was formulated. Again, I stress that the need for this is based upon the uniformity required throughout the various jurisdictions in this country if we are going to have model laws, particularly if they are based upon a summit which all state jurisdictions attended.

Amendments negated.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 74, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (2.45 pm): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 to 11 be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

CENTENARY OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Resumed from 24 February (see p. 289).

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (2.45 pm): I have no doubt that all members know that it is 100 years since women were given the right to vote—the right to have their voices heard, the right to have a say in how this country should be run, the right to participate fully in the democratic process and, most importantly, the right to challenge the mind-set that women were inferior to men, to challenge the idea that women were incapable or lacked the social responsibility required for voting and that we were still little more than goods and chattels. I would like to say that that notion has disappeared completely from modern Australia, but the list of inequities prevents me from doing that.

What a step forward it was! I am not so naive to believe that, at that time, suddenly all women became politically aware or even wanted to become politically aware, but those women who cared deeply about the direction of their state and country could stand up and be counted. Make no mistake, although we still struggle with quotas and equal representation at the highest levels of government, politics is no longer the domain of men alone. Men have no mortgage or claim to sole ownership of political thinking. I say this because it is important to realise that granting voting rights to women was not an end, but a beginning. It was not a sop handed out to women as a prize that they had finally won; it was an open door, a first step on a seemingly long and arduous pathway to when this country is truly run by all of its people.

That journey continues. It was not until 1943 when the first women, Dorothy Tangney and Edith Lyons, were elected to the Senate and House of Representatives respectively. So we celebrate a mere 62 years since women were in the corridors of federal power. We celebrate less than 40 years since Annabelle Rankin became the first woman to hold a federal portfolio, barely 30 years since Margaret Guilfoyle became the first cabinet minister with a portfolio, only 19 years since Joan Childs became the first female Speaker and less than a decade since Margaret Reid became the first woman to be President of the Senate. And what of Indigenous women, who were forced to wait until 1965 before an amendment was passed and suffrage was finally extended to Indigenous Queenslanders?

So, although we celebrate 100 years of the vote for women—and rightly so—let us not merely consign this milestone to the box marked 'historical trivia' and dismiss it as a self-contained event of the past. Let us celebrate the consequence and effect of the granting of that right which we feel today. I am sure that 100 years ago there were some who felt that giving women the vote might 'shut them up and get them off our backs'. I am sure there were some who hoped that it would remain an act of tokenism. There were those who allowed us through the door but never welcomed us. If we are honest, we would say that there are reverberations of that attitude present today. I have heard it debated that the whole system of setting quotas for the number of women in parliament is actually an exercise in restriction, that what seems to be inclusion eventually will become a restraint, that we are allowed so much but no more. The women who today feature prominently in senior positions in government will tell people of their struggle to not only get there but also maintain their positions against deeply ingrained prejudice held in some quarters.

So what exactly are we celebrating? The right to vote. I ask members to note that it was a right that was finally given after centuries of denial and not a privilege that we should feel grateful to receive. We did not break new ground; we merely recovered lost ground. We came back to the starting line of what seems to be a marathon journey towards full and equitable representation and participation.

Therefore, let us not mark 100 years since an achievement; let us instead mark 100 years of slowly realising the potential that was unleashed. Let us not mark this as a centenary but as a way-point in ongoing progress. Let us all, parliamentarians of all political persuasions, acknowledge that we can participate in this celebration and count ourselves as those who hold the principle of true equality firmly in our hearts by thanking the lawmakers of 100 years ago for releasing the shackles.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (2.50 pm): Hillary Clinton coined the phrase, 'Women's rights are human rights.' Furthermore, a civilisation's capacity to give all its people, including its women, equal opportunity to grow and participate is one of the most meaningful measures of that civilisation's progress. In 2005 we celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage in Queensland. As MPs we would be letting all women down, however, if we used the opportunity to reflect only on how far women have come, without asking the harder question of why, in 2005, we have not come much further.

In his recently released book, John McCulloch outlines the arguments that were made 100 years ago by those who sought to deny women the right to vote. At the time, men argued that women were too irrational to vote or that granting them the vote would only double the total number of votes as women did what their husbands told them, and it was even claimed that suffrage would undermine the entire domestic structure of society. Frankly, if that was the case, I have to say it is a good thing.

Since 1905 there have been 51 members of the Queensland parliament. Three have been from Ipswich. I was the youngest woman ever elected here, and Jo-Ann Miller was the other woman from Ipswich. More significantly than either of us, however, the second woman ever elected to the state parliament was Labor woman Vi Jordan, who was the first Labor MP for Ipswich West. Vi Jordan was a member from 1966 to 1974. The daughter of an Ironworkers Union secretary, Vi Jordan was a pioneer in the Labor movement. A former teacher, she was the first woman to sit on the Ipswich City Council. She ran for preselection twice, being defeated in 1962 but winning a ballot against six men in 1964. I have to say, knowing the Labor Party as I have grown up in it in Ipswich, I cannot imagine how hard it would have been in that environment of railway workers and coalminers in the 1960s.

Vi Jordan's gender was consistently used as a weapon against her. In her first state election campaign, the longtime Ipswich mayor Jim Finnimore ran against her as an independent, using the slogan 'He's just your man, who will answer you man to man'. In the 1969 election, the perennial Liberal candidate Alan Wybird asked, 'Do we have to suffer another term of ineffectual prattle, or do you want a strong man in parliament?' Upon Vi Jordan's death in 1982, Tom Burns commented on Vi Jordan's strength, saying—

I saw Vi Jordan take on a male-dominated organisation in the toughest plebiscite I have ever seen in Ipswich. I ran it for the Labor Party. After the result had been thrown out, I was sent there to rerun it. She suffered abuse from people who came out of hotels but she stood her ground. She took on people such as Jack Edgerton and won.

Vi Jordan's contribution to Queensland politics was celebrated recently at the first ever Ipswich Women's Dinner, an event which was organised through the Ipswich Women's Development Fund, which is an organisation I co-founded along with the Ipswich Region Chamber of Commerce and which includes representatives from a number of Ipswich women's groups—that is, Quota, Zonta and the Australian Institute of Office Professionals. Councillor Cheryl Bromage, one of the few women who now sit on the Ipswich City Council, is also on that Ipswich Women's Development Fund. Our dinner was a huge success. We could have sold it out twice before we even sent out invitations. Dr Heather Beattie was the key speaker at the dinner and she spoke about women's roles in the modern world and in the political world.

Through the dinner we raised more than \$12,000 for the establishment of a Heather Bonner scholarship, which will enable a woman to study at the University of Queensland's Ipswich campus. It will be a perpetual scholarship for years to come. The Ipswich Women's Development Fund is the first time that Ipswich women from across a range of backgrounds have come together in some kind of peak organisation. There is a magnificent spirit and a magnificent sense of sisterhood, frankly, among the women who are involved in that group.

Having raised \$12,000 and established a scholarship out of our first event, we have now convinced the Ipswich Art Gallery to put on an art exhibition to celebrate 100 years of women's right to vote, and that will be opened on 3 November at the Ipswich Art Gallery. The exhibition will be in two parts. The first is a series of portraits of the four Ipswich women who have represented the region in the parliament. They are, as I said, Vi Jordan, Jo-Ann Miller, me, and Pauline Hanson—sadly, we cannot forget. The second part of the exhibition will be some outstanding work from Ipswich women artists, the leading one of whom is Davida Allen, a friend of mine who is most famous for being an Ipswich woman who won the Archibald Prize. I am very pleased to announce today that on 2 November that exhibition will be opened by one of Australia's most outstanding women, Betty Churcher. We hope through the exhibition to again raise more money for the Heather Bonner scholarship in order to collect a sufficient fund to make it a perpetual scholarship for years to come, but we also hope to continue spreading a strong, progressive feminist message in the Ipswich community.

I think there has been a terrific spirit come out of the Ipswich Women's Development Fund—certainly, among the women who sit on the organising committee which I co-founded—but we are also seeking to spread a strong message of modern feminism to the young women of Ipswich and make it something that extends beyond just us and our member organisations. We are well aware that if we do not stand up and talk about the sensational history of Ipswich women contributing to our community and making our community what it is, no-one else will. That is certainly what we intend to keep on doing. Despite 100 years of suffrage, however, and despite that really positive feeling in the Ipswich community there can be no doubt that, a century after women got the right to vote, women are by no means equal in our society.

I ask members to stop for a moment and think. If they look around, they will see that just three of the 17 ministers in the federal cabinet are women, as are just five of our ministers here. Only two of Australia's top 100 companies have female chairs. In this day and age, Queensland has never had a female premier nor Australia a woman prime minister. One in five Australian women is sexually assaulted or raped at some time in her life. I think that is the greatest measure of women's lack of

relative power in our modern society. The average Australian woman earns \$300 a week less than the average man. The world's biggest religious institution, the Catholic Church, forbids women priests. We all know men who pride themselves on helping out around the house—perhaps by standing around after dinner and wiping the dishes. Then they hang around waiting for thanks.

An honourable member: Mine doesn't—

An honourable member: I object.

Ms NOLAN: There are a number of interjections that I would like to take. Despite these black-and-white facts, however, the women's movement has lost control of the agenda. With the advent of the Sex Discrimination Act and a smattering of women in public life, there has emerged a view in our society that equality has already been achieved. The Prime Minister, Mr Howard, has publicly stated that we are in a post-feminist era, and he has led a public debate on women's issues which aims to make women feel relaxed and comfortable as they choose between work and family rather than simply expecting the support to do both.

When it comes to women's rights, the mountain has by no means been climbed. Women do not have equal rights in Australia. And, while we acknowledge legendary women like Emma Miller and Vi Jordan, who got us to this point, it is very much up to women in leadership positions right now to keep up the fight. I hate to be the one to burst John Howard's comfortable post-feminist bubble, but the women's movement is very much alive and well in Australia. There is a generation of women leaders who have moved beyond the idea that feminism and femininity are somehow incompatible and who understand that a woman's power, unlike a man's, is in the whole self.

These strong women expect the support to manage work and family well. We know that there are strengths to be found in the support of other women. We are competent and, unlike our mothers, we will not spend time apologising for ourselves. Just as no bloke is ever accused of being a lightweight for talking about the football, modern feminists switch comfortably between discussions of economic issues, families and the latest sensation in shoes. Modern feminists will not be pigeon-holed by a traditional view of women's issues. As long-time New South Wales upper house member Meredith Burgmann points out, commentators talk about abortion as the archetypal women's issue, but in her political experience the abortion debate divides on religious lines. Meredith Burgmann says that the issues on which in her long time in politics she has seen a real gender split are pool fencing and gun control, but of course no-one ever talks about gun control as a women's issue.

This new kind of feminism, this broad based, proud, independent feminism, is very much alive in this parliament, although I have to say only on this side. In politics there are two kinds of women—those who see other women as competitors and seek to tear them down and those who are sufficiently self-assured to know, as the EMILY's List motto goes, that 'when women support women, women win'. Most women here fall into the latter category. The Labor women's caucus is a group of women who are strong and supportive of one another. Together we have achieved changes in government including the establishment of a work and family unit, which was some wonderful work on Karen Struthers' part. We have achieved greater protections for vulnerable female outworkers, which was just sensational work from Bonny Barry. We were involved in the development of an excellent five-year government agenda for women, a process led by Wendy Edmond. We have seen the extension of domestic violence provisions to cover a broad range of vulnerable people, something which Judy Spence did. I co-convened the EMILY's List Partnership for Equity Network, which is supporting Indigenous women who aspire to public office and, with the Premier's leadership, the appointment of outstanding women to a number of key positions.

As voters, too, women have power. It is widely accepted among political analysts that disproportionate support from women led to the election of both Bob Hawke and John Howard as Prime Minister. On the other hand, the fact that 20 per cent more men than women supported Pauline Hanson—that is the biggest gender gap ever seen in Australian political polling—was a key factor leading to her political demise.

As politicians and as voters, women have clearly achieved their own kind of power, but in 2005 we are still not even close to achieving genuine gender equity in Australia. Australian women should refuse to accept the self-serving advice of men like John Howard that there is no more to be done. We should celebrate the centenary of women's right to vote, but we should also ask the question why we have not come further, and we should use the opportunity of the centenary of suffrage to again set the agenda and to take steps further. In the parliament, in the workplace and in the home, women need to support one another and to have a strong sense of their individuality, their intellect, their beauty and their power. As the words to a very old folk song go, 'Don't be too polite, girls.'

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (3.04 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Government members interjected.

Mr WILSON: Thank you for the warm reception just received from my colleagues. It is my great pleasure to speak in support of the motion celebrating women's suffrage here in Queensland. The centenary of women's suffrage in Queensland is not just a celebration of women achieving the right to

vote, vital though it was. It is a celebration of the emancipation through struggle of a significant section—indeed the majority now—of the community that was marginalised and disempowered in our community.

The struggle around women's rights started well before the fantastic success of 1905 and the broader struggle continued, impelled by the success of the right-to-vote campaign. For example, Aboriginal women did not achieve the right to vote until the 1960s. The centenary celebrations this year and this debate should acknowledge the many campaigns over the last hundred years for women's rights across the breadth of our political, social and economic history. I want to dedicate this brief contribution to the debate to the Union of Australian Women, the UAW.

The history of the UAW's rich contribution to the emancipation of women in Queensland is chronicled in the publication *Daring to Take a Stand* by Pam Young, published in 1998, a copy of which I have here. Through the voices and experiences of the UAW members set out in *Daring to Take a Stand*, there is highlighted the campaigns for women's rights, equal pay, right to work, right to choose, International Women's Day, children's needs, price and profit controls, increased wages and pensions, Aboriginal rights and protests against nuclear testing in the Vietnam War. Graphic details are given about the UAW members' frightening experiences and arrests during the 1970s right-to-march demonstrations.

Pam Young, a foundation member of the Union of Australian Women, was for many years Queensland editor of *Our Women*, the national magazine of UAW, and the assistant state secretary. She is the author of *Proud to be a Rebel: The Life and Times of Emma Miller*.

The foundation meeting of the Queensland branch of the UAW was held on Saturday, 28 October 1950 at Temperance Hall, Edward Street in Brisbane. The UAW has set out in its constitution, adopted that day, the following objectives—

To strive for a national and international co-operation of women to secure lasting peace built on foundations of friendship and mutual understanding among people.

To ensure equal rights for women in political, civic and social spheres.

To encourage women, particularly women workers, to strive for strict price control to support demands for equal pay and trade union demands for higher living standards.

To strive for the welfare of children.

The organisation's policy attracted women with a social conscience. Some were already committed to a political party or an organisation working for the advancement of society. Others joined through their interest in the craft classes and the companionship.

Setting up the UAW in Queensland struck a chord with many women. Within a year many branches were operating in Brisbane and regional Queensland including Cairns, Townsville and Collinsville. The UAW had a strong international focus, as I say, through its affiliation to the Women's International Democratic Federation.

I want to dedicate this speech to my mother-in-law, Loma Thompson, who was involved from the very early days of the Townsville branch and is now an active branch member of the ALP in the electorate of my colleague Lindy Nelson-Carr. To quote from *Daring to Take a Stand*, she says—

I welcomed the formation of the UAW—

that is in the Townsville branch area—

seeing it as an organisation that defined a different role for women through campaigns for equal pay, peace, child care centres, education and through women's involvement with union activities. I was involved with the lot—campaigns, official positions, catering, fete work, delegations, delegate to other organisations, conferences, organising IWD. It makes me tired to think of it all now and I wonder why and how we did it. Some suggest that we must have been addled or something, but we did it because we were committed and we saw it as important.

In many ways Loma typified the active rank and file member of the UAW and what they stood for. They were also activists in other community and political organisations over many years. In 2001 Loma was accorded the great honour of being represented in the Centenary of Federation Peoplescape project for 50 years dedication to the community. Loma is still actively involved in community work. Throughout all that time and continuing now, she has been strongly supported by her husband, Freddy Thompson, a former union organiser for the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union in north Queensland.

I have also had the privilege of knowing Eva Bacon, an activist in the Enoggera branch of the UAW. In her reflections of the early days of the branch she said—

It was a Housing Commission working class area—

referring to Enoggera—

made up of young pregnant women and small children. Our branch aimed to encourage the uncommitted working class women to take a stand on issues, not to passively accept things, to gain confidence by undertaking activities beyond the confines of the home. During this period, craft work appealed.

She went on to say—

I didn't enjoy craft ... I did appreciate the creative outlet it gave women and the resultant sense of achievement and well-being. The transformation in many of the women was phenomenal, they discovered their abilities, gained or regained their confidence and began to take an interest in political issues.

It is interesting how combining elementary craft activities gave rise to networking and unity amongst women and a growing confidence about the legitimacy of their views around political issues.

These are some of the many voices of the Queensland women who, through the UAW, campaigned for women's rights. Much of their work helped to build the foundations on which the women's movement later developed. Like many women from all walks of life and through countless different organisations over the century, we owe them, and especially we males, a great debt of gratitude. The society we have today is, I hope, the grateful beneficiary of their vision, wisdom, passion, courage and determination.

Members can learn more about the UAW in the copy of *Daring to Take a Stand* that I have placed in the Parliamentary Library. It is a breathtaking story. Members will be left with nothing but admiration.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.12 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on this motion regarding the centenary of women's right to vote. Whilst I have read parts of the history of the restrictive life that women were subjected to in the last hundred years and before that, I still find it very difficult to imagine as a woman being required to obey, for want of a better word, all of those directions and constraints and remain within the constraints that were placed on them.

As we read through the history, we find that there were women who refused to comply with the stereotype, who stepped outside this stereotyping and fought against it. As a result of their efforts and the efforts of some men at the time, we saw universal suffrage given to women.

As a woman I have been very blessed to have a father and brothers who have never, to my recollection, made any insulting or demeaning comments or taken any such actions because I am a woman—quite the opposite. They were very supportive and inclusive. Dad certainly was not a snag, that is for sure; he was a man of his time. But he had two daughters and two sons, and he recognised the value of each of us as individuals. I think that, in great measure, meant that we could achieve our aspirations as we define them.

I have also been blessed with a wonderful husband. He is not perfect, as blokes are not, and neither are women. However, he has been prepared to support me and my aspirations, and his three daughters in theirs. I certainly want to put on the public record my appreciation to him.

Mr Pearce: You can't help but love us.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Yes, warts and all. The reality is that as a councillor and mayor of Calliope shire I would go to functions at night. I can remember one gentleman coming up to me towards the end of an evening. He made reference to how I was getting home. I never thought anything of it. I said, 'I'm driving home.' He said, 'Did you come on your own?' I said, 'Of course.' He said, 'Oh, I wouldn't let my wife drive at night on her own.' I am sure he thought that he was being protective, but it would have driven me nuts to be married to someone who would stand at the door when twilight arrived and say, 'Give me the car keys; you're not going to drive.' That was only 15 years ago. As I said, I am sure his attitude was protective, but it would have been as frustrating as all get out to be involved in that sort of a situation.

As I said, we have three very wonderful daughters. They are all different and I believe they are all great contributors to the community. They are great contributors because they are individuals with skills and abilities that at times are something to wonder at. I think everybody here who has children—sons or daughters—would recognise the individual gifts that they have and the contribution that they make to the fabric of our community. To stifle any of those would be a travesty. The combined efforts of the young men and young women of our society give us hope for the future.

For the last hundred years, as women have been contributing more and more to society and to the decision-making process, I believe that it has added immeasurably to the quality of decision making and to the inclusiveness of that decision making.

The other group that I would like to recognise is the electorate in which I work. As mayor of Calliope shire from 1991, I recognised the bravery of that community in that there had only been male chairmen or mayors. The same applies in the state sphere. I commend the community for that decision, not because it is me who won the position but because those voters looked at the member's contribution, as they have of all female members here, their skills and abilities rather than gender issues. I think that is a wonderful insight into the communities that we represent. Because of our past experiences, but mainly because of who we are, women can contribute most strongly to the community that we represent.

There is still a long way to go in a number of areas. Previous speakers have referred to the lack of safety for women and girls. I think it is one of the longstanding indictments of our society that perpetrators—and they are overwhelmingly male—find the need to degrade women in various ways. I think the measure of the maturity of our community will be when women and children can enjoy recreation and just being out in the community with safety. I am not confident that that will ever be achieved, but it would be an insight into a community where there is genuine respect for one another.

Another area in which I think work still needs to be done relates to recognition of the value of the work done by women right across-the-board—genuinely recognising that work done in a workplace is as valuable as work done in the home and that those women who choose not to work but to raise a family or to stay at home and do a variety of jobs are as positive contributors to our community as anyone else. We have been through the phase—I would hope that we are coming out of it; I am not convinced that we are—where there was a mind-set that a woman who chooses to stay at home to work is a less valuable person in the community. That is incorrect. We are seeing a diminution in membership in many of our voluntary organisations because the dynamics of families have changed so markedly. We as a community will be the losers because of that.

The member for Ipswich talked about the contribution made by women in this parliament. She talked about feminism and the feminist values of women in the parliament and went on to acknowledge that it was an attribute of only the Labor women in this parliament. The member quoted EMILY's List when she said, 'When women support women, women win.' I would like to think that all of us in this parliament, elected as we were by our communities, irrespective of our party political philosophies, could respect one another because of our productivity and value.

I recognise in my contribution to this debate the strength of men and women of history who brought Queensland to the point of legislating for equality. I have read the *Hansard* where previous speakers have quoted various individuals who, in the debate leading up to and during the passing of the bill to give women suffrage, showed their attitudes towards women by the words that they said. Some were demeaning and paternal; some were just downright insulting. Then there were others who recognised that equal suffrage was not just a matter of a man deigning to give women the right to vote but also was a matter of social justice and a matter of immediacy and urgency.

Although there has been a rocky road since women were given the right to vote, I believe that since that time women of all political persuasions have shown that we value-add to the decision-making process. I do not mean that in a condescending way. We value-add because we do think differently to men, we do process information differently to men and we do value things differently to men. That is just as well; otherwise, we all might as well be men. But the fact is that because we contribute differently the end result, I would hope, is one that better reflects the dynamics within the community, it better reflects the needs and aspirations of everyone in the community and it better ensures that the future that we are creating for our children—our boys, our girls, our young men and young women—is wholesome and is an environment in which they can grow and blossom and they, in turn, will become men and women of vision, energy and enthusiasm. I support the motion.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.22 pm): It seems so long ago now, because of the deferred debate on this motion, but I would like to congratulate the minister, Anna Bligh, for inviting a number of high school students from the Brisbane area to a morning tea in Parliament House this year for International Women's Day. These students, I believe, are the women and leaders of the future. Every year International Women's Day offers an opportunity for women to come together to reflect on their gains, to reaffirm their goals and to work at a local and international level to improve the status of all women.

Throughout its 85-year history, International Women's Day has maintained a focus on its original issues of pay, conditions and political rights for women, while additionally involving contemporary issues such as the right of women workers during World War II, peace during the Cold War of the 1960s and environmental issues in the 1990s. The contemporary significance and relevance of International Women's Day is demonstrated by the increased involvement in IWD activities of a wide range of community and government agencies. It is an opportunity for both women and men to work in partnership for a better future.

International Women's Day marks an important occasion for the women of Queensland and women all around the world. International Women's Day allows us a chance to reflect on what has been achieved by women everywhere. It is a celebration of everyday women, of women who are mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, aunts, nieces and cousins who influence each other's lives and the lives of their loved ones enormously every day. It is a day when we can reflect on the achievements of women who lived before us and it is a day when we should consider where we want women to be in the future.

At lunch today I had the pleasure of the intellectual company of women from the Australian Federation of University Women and had the honour of meeting the Filipino ambassador and a number of members of the Filipino Chamber of Commerce. We stand here today in a parliament which has the largest number of women members in the country, a parliament which ranks third in the world only after Denmark and Sweden. Of this we can all be very proud.

I would like to pay tribute to a number of women who have made their mark in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. Adele Rice, principal of Milperra State School, was guest speaker at a morning tea organised at the Jindalee Bowls Club by the local Brisbane city councillor, Felicity Farmer. The next morning Adele organised an event at Milperra school to showcase the young women at her school who have come through difficult situations before arriving in Australia as refugees.

Another achiever is Margaret Smith, who coordinates the Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre. Margaret is proactive in continually identifying social needs in the local area and coordinates a number of programs and events to meet these needs on a daily basis. Patrea Walton is the principal of Corinda State High School and has proven a dynamic advocate for the young men and women being educated and nurtured at her great school. She is always looking for new ideas and any opportunities to enhance their learning and their development.

Shirley Gilkens, Carla Little and Trish Dakin are continually getting involved in projects and groups in the local community. Carla works part time as a child protection officer and volunteers as a mentor for children at the Corinda State School. Shirley plays her part in the activities of the University of the Third Age. Mary James and Anne Martin have headed Neighbourhood Watch groups in the Sherwood and Corinda area for many, many years. It seems that there is no-one willing to take on their job, which they do very, very well. All of these women have excelled in their chosen fields and have sent us the message that the road to success is started by taking control and surging forward. We wish them all well.

Earlier this year Queensland women joined women's minister Desley Boyle in King George Square in Brisbane, near the statue of suffragette Emma Miller, to officially launch celebrations marking 100 years of women having the right to vote in Queensland. It is only 40 years ago that Indigenous Queenslanders won the right to vote. There are still many women who suffer disadvantage and are poorly treated in our community, particularly those who have experienced domestic violence. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has estimated that as many as 23 per cent of Australian women may experience domestic violence during their lifetime. In the past, a few have sought medical treatment as a result of physical injury, although many have attended health care facilities for other reasons such as maternity care or emergency treatment. But it has been rare for these women to disclose domestic violence, either to the clinics or to their general practitioners, and they were rarely asked about it. This is unfortunate, because a number of studies have shown that women who have experienced violence appreciate being given the opportunity to discuss their problems with a trusted professional. The women apparently held back because of the stigma attached to domestic violence and also because there was a lack of awareness of the link between violence and general physical and mental health. Helping women to disclose their experiences is a good place to start, especially at the front-line services in our hospitals. Hopefully more and more women placed in those unfortunate situations in their home environment will become aware that there is help available.

There are still many work environments which do not fully appreciate and respect the value of women employees and where the word 'equality' is not recognised or understood. It is only recently that some Rotary clubs have introduced women membership, although others have always admitted women. It makes me think that, although we have come a long way, there is still a long journey ahead of us. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful women of this parliament for the contribution they have made to this debate and for making the Queensland parliament the progressive place in history that it is now. Thanks to their increasing numbers, it is a progressive place.

I support this motion and, in doing so, I would like to talk about women in the workplace. In the late 19th century, women accounted for some 20 per cent of the work force in Australia as a whole, rising to 30 per cent or 40 per cent in the main urban centres. Nearly half worked in domestic service and a sizeable proportion on farms. However, that still left a large number employed in the garment and boot trades, in shops, as nurses and as teachers. Although most of the jobs available, apart from domestic service, were confined to the cities and larger towns, the purely pastoral areas remained overwhelmingly male. Women's wages were one-third to one-half of men's, a difference due less to lower skill levels than to socially constructed gender roles and institutional barriers.

Within these broad outlines, however, the situation was steadily changing. The growth in female employment provided the material basis for both women's trade unionism and campaigns for equal rights. Having fewer children left more time and energy for organising and for politics. Where fertility remained higher, as in Queensland, women's rights groups were weaker. With greater access to the public sphere, more opportunities, better education and a sense of being in demand, women grew more assertive. These trends undermined the ideology relegating females to the private sphere. Thousands trudged daily to the factories with no collapse of civilisation apparent, though the more downtrodden among them aroused humanitarian concern in middle class reformers.

During the course of the eighties union membership declined from more than 2,000 in 1883 to 100 or so in 1890. The tailoress strike was a landmark in raising public awareness about working conditions. It gave a huge boost to the antisweating campaign and also to the struggle for the eight-hour day. Of course, it is also important as the first major industrial struggle by women, making it the subject of considerable debate.

In industry as well as in politics, class struggle and a strong labour movement were the keys to progress for women in late colonial Australia. Although New Zealand was the first country in the world to accord the vote to women in 1893, South Australia led the world in not only enfranchising women in 1894 but also making them eligible to sit in the parliament. By 1909 all Australian states and the

Commonwealth had enfranchised most women. Property qualifications applied initially for some upper houses. Federally, Aboriginal women and men were not accorded the vote until 1962 and even then enrolment provisions limited their electoral participation.

Although Australia was seen as a pioneer of women's political rights, it had the greatest timelag of all Western democratic countries between the eligibility of women to stand for the national legislature and their actual election to it—a total of 41 years. The Elections Acts Amendment Act 1905 gave women the right to vote in state elections. Women received the right to sit in parliament through the Elections Act 1915. The first woman was elected to the Queensland parliament in 1929. The Legislative Council was abolished in 1922 and had been an appointed, rather than a directly elected, chamber. No women ever sat in that council.

It is a great thing that today we have so many women members of parliament, and these numbers continue to grow. There is, however, still a lot that needs to be done in our community to provide women with opportunities to be competitive in the job market.

A few months ago I was asked to visit Womenspace, an organisation in Kedron in the electorate of Terry Sullivan MP, by a constituent living in my electorate called Penny Hayes. She is extremely passionate about this unique haven for women. I will tell honourable members about it. The property has two buildings on a site at 12-14 Homebush Road at Kedron. One building is a shop and a residence.

Mr Poole: Have you got a phone number?

Mrs ATTWOOD: I do not have a phone number for them, but I will get that for the honourable member. The other building is a former bakery which was later used as a residence. As it was a bakery, traditionally, it is an appropriate place for a women's centre. These buildings date back to the early part of the 20th century. The property is owned by the Presentation Sisters, and they have kindly loaned this space for the purpose of providing valuable activities for women of all ages. In the 'bakery', ongoing workshops, training, courses, meetings and classes are held. The 'shop', with a number of rooms, is used for literacy courses and workplace preparation for disadvantaged women and women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Womenspace is a not-for-profit incorporated association and employs a part-time coordinator three days a week and a bookkeeper half a day a week. A well-organised volunteer group is involved in the running of the centre. The committee comprises chairperson Jen Barrkman; secretary Anne McLay; and treasurer Joy Dougherty. Glenys McChesney-Clark is appointed as a coordinator of the centre and distributes a newsletter three times a year which outlines the activities that women can become involved in. There is one major issue that faces Womenspace: uncertainty of tenure at this place. There is absolutely no guarantee that the women will be able to continue here when the Presentation Sisters are forced to sell.

A government member interjected.

Mrs ATTWOOD: It is a big shame. The committee has invested a large amount of funding into making improvements to this centre so that women can feel comfortable when they undertake these activities. It is a wonderful environment. It is close to the city and handy to public transport. Womenspace is one of a kind in this city of Brisbane and in greater Brisbane is specifically designed for the development of women. Womenspace is looking for ways to obtain this site on a more permanent basis and is hoping for a capital source. I have already written to the minister for women about this issue, and I believe that she is looking into trying to get capital for these women. They have asked me to represent them to the government so that possible assistance can be obtained to keep them at that location.

This centre has helped women from all walks of life over many years and is well established in the local community and the local member, Terry Sullivan, supports what they do there and the great work they do in helping people with literacy problems and those disadvantaged women who come there for help. With places like this made available to women, we can be assured that progress is made in continuing to give women equal opportunities and a fair go. I look forward to celebrating women's achievements over the next few years. I reiterate that it makes me think that, although we have come a long way, there is still a long journey that is ahead of us. I again thank all of the women in this parliament for the wonderful contribution that they make to this organisation and the Labor Women's Organisation, which meets regularly every time parliament sits.

Ms Stone interjected.

Mrs ATTWOOD: And also the Girl Guides state council meeting, which I am chairing tonight, and I hope that the member for Springwood is coming.

Ms Stone: I will be there.

Mrs ATTWOOD: I hope that you will be there. The member for Springwood and I are members of the Queensland council of guides.

Ms Liddy Clark: And the member for Clayfield.

Mrs ATTWOOD: And the member for Clayfield. Is the member for Clayfield coming?

Ms Liddy Clark: No, the member for Clayfield has put in her apologies, but I note that you are chairing this evening.

Mrs ATTWOOD: I am chairing and the member chaired last time, I believe.

Ms Liddy Clark: Correct.

Mrs ATTWOOD: I should have a successful night tonight chairing the AGM for the guides, which will announce a new commissioner for the guides for Queensland. While I am on my feet, I also want to congratulate Lyn Price, who has been the commissioner for guides for over four years now and has done a marvellous job in promoting the guides in Queensland. I believe that there has been an increase in membership with guides in Queensland.

Ms Liddy Clark: Its identity is about women and leadership.

Mrs ATTWOOD: Yes, and mentoring women. The guides do a marvellous job, and I want to congratulate them. I am looking forward to chairing the meeting tonight and announcing to the world the new commissioner for guides in Queensland. I have had great pleasure today participating in this debate.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (3.42 pm): I rise to support the motion and celebration of the 100th anniversary of the right of women to vote in Queensland, and I must say that it is particularly significant to me as a female member of the Queensland parliament. This anniversary to me is not so much about the 100 years of the right to vote but about what we have done with our vote in those 100 years. The first opportunity for Queensland women to exercise their franchise was in 1907, yet it was still another eight years before the obvious occurred—women's right to stand for parliament, which occurred in 1915. In 1929, more than 24 years after the right to vote for women was achieved, the first woman, Irene Longman, was elected to this parliament and finally proved the efforts of all of those involved through the years in making this historic event occur. I believe that we must recognise and consider the tenacity of all involved. As any member now in this House can attest, a 24-year election campaign would just be unthinkable, if not intolerable.

I also want to acknowledge Emma Miller, who played a role in achieving the goal of the right to vote for women. When the goal was finally achieved, Emma did not sit down. She continued to fight for workers' and women's rights. When most people are slowing down in life, Emma Miller in her 70s led a contingent of women and marched to Brisbane's Parliament House in support of the general strike in 1912. They were met by police on horseback with a range of weapons, including rifles. But that did not deter any of these women. They defended themselves with their umbrellas and hat pins. Emma Miller is one example of the great women before us who paved the way for women to stand in this place, as well as ensuring that the concerns of women are voiced and taken notice of.

We are often given the impression that in the past women were busy looking after children, preparing meals for their man and doing needlework. This is the image that we mostly see portraying our pioneer women. I wonder just how many young women do have an image of a woman in the past fighting to achieve the benefits and rights that we have today. I think there would be not too many who have that image. Today I believe we do have a lot of opportunities that we have taken for granted and we forget that there were battles by women to achieve them. We do not highlight these historic achievements enough either through education or through celebrations or through other types of forums, so today it is appropriate that we salute and highlight and thank those courageous women for having the foresight and the commitment to take on that fight for us. Their fights were about making it right for the women of the future. In honouring them, we need to keep thinking forward and continuing to make gains and shape the future for women to keep achieving and having choices in all facets of their lives.

If we were to go around the chamber and ask the question as to what was the most significant achievement made by Queensland women over the 100 years, I am sure that we would all have a different opinion. So what is really important is that there have been many significant achievements made by women recently and in the past. This 100-year anniversary is recognition of continually enhancing the rite of passage and giving equal opportunity to all members of our society. The 100 years of Queensland women's voting rights and the 40 years of Indigenous Queenslanders' right to vote is recognition of the evolution of our society and what Queensland has become proud of—our cleverness and forward thinking as a Smart State. Testimony to this is the Queensland parliament, which has the highest representation of women members in any Australian parliament. So that is really making us truly a Smart State.

Many people today do take the right to vote for granted, yet those courageous women who continually fought for these equalities 100 years ago dealt with ingrained prejudice. As most prejudices go, in the fullness of time they are found to be ill informed and highly offensive, like the quote from one of the honourable members of this House in 1985 when they said—

Radical feminists have instilled into youth deviate lifestyles.

The year 1990 saw Queensland's first state government Women's Policy Unit. At the time memories of arrests at international women's days and a litany of offensive and patronising statements, just like those of the member in 1985, were embedded in the minds of Queensland women. In 1990 Queensland had no women judges, no women magistrates, no women heads of department and no state antidiscrimination legislation. In the year 2000, 10 years on, Queensland had eight women judges, 12 magistrates, three women heads of department and effective antidiscrimination legislation. I note that the Premier in his speech gave current statistics with regard to women in the judiciary and Queensland government departments.

In the year 2000 the then minister for women's policy was the Hon. Judy Spence, who is now our police minister. She shared a hope with many other people that one day it would be unnecessary to have an Office of Women, and I think that we all, too, can say that we share that hope. Today the profile of Queensland women in terms of a statistical snapshot on the current status of women highlights the areas in which progress has been achieved and it also highlights the many areas of disadvantage and inequality that still exist. That is evidence that we still share the hope that Minister Spence spoke of in the year 2000.

Women members in this House can all talk about the experiences that we have had as women that have helped to shape us. But the one that really comes to my mind is that in 1980 I bought a block of land at Springwood. Having worked lots and lots of overtime and weekends and afternoon shifts—because that is when one was paid penalty rates—I finally got to own the land in 1985-86. When I did, I thought, 'I'll go into a bank and get a home loan now because it's time to build on it.' I am talking about 1986, which really was not that long ago. I went to the Mount Gravatt Commonwealth Bank, because that is where I banked as a kid, and I was told by the bank manager that I did not need a house loan; I needed a husband! He then told me that his son was single and asked if I would like to meet him. Needless to say, I said no and walked out of that office. Going to Australia Post where I worked at the time—

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Ms STONE: He may have been good looking. I may have missed a chance, but never mind.

Mr Lingard: He didn't have a uniform.

Ms STONE: He did not have a uniform, no; that was it!

At that time I worked for Australia Post. I went back to my workplace very disillusioned and very upset. I was told to try some other banks and other financial institutions. One of my male colleagues of the day told me that I should try a financial institution from where he had just got a home loan. So I went to that financial institution and I told them about the block of land and so forth. They kindly told me that I could apply for half the amount that my male colleague had received. I could not really understand that, because I was my male colleague's supervisor, I was earning more than him and I also owned an asset. Yet I was still allowed to apply for only half the amount of money that he received. I was told that I should be very quiet and that I should be so grateful that I had been given a great deal, because as a woman I deserved to receive only 30 per cent of the amount of a home loan that would be given to a man. That occurred in 1986.

I again went back to work disillusioned. I was told that I should try another branch of the Commonwealth Bank. I did that. I found a nice young man down at the Springwood branch who had just got married and he was building a home. He had the same dreams that I had of building a home. He was very helpful. Today I am so grateful for that, because I was able to build my first home. I certainly did enjoy building it, but the tradesmen did not want to deal with the woman who was building the house. Every time some male friends came over to help me paint or do something else, the tradesmen would talk to them and not to me. They were very uncomfortable with talking to a woman who was building her own house by herself. That was a very interesting time.

Today, women are given more opportunities for financial security. However, they are still a long way off being as financially secure as men. I want to record my appreciation for the women who have been extremely supportive and who have given me a lot of assistance throughout my life. I am talking about strong women who worked very hard to ensure I that received many opportunities that were not afforded to them which allowed me to take on the role that I have today. The people who come to my mind are my grandmother, Gwen Dahl, and my mother, Gloria Bartlam. They are really inspirational women, because they fought some really hard battles against the prejudices of women. It is from them that I draw my strength. Today, I call on the members of this House from all sides of politics to continue working together to improve the status of Queensland women. I support the motion.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (3.51 pm): I rise to support the motion to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote in Queensland. I was born in the 1960s. I do not wish to bore members with the exact date; I would rather keep them guessing.

A government member interjected.

Mr REEVES: No, mid-sixties. When I was born, female barristers in Queensland were a rarity, married women were not allowed to be permanent employees in the Queensland Public Service and women were not permitted to drink in public bars. Thankfully, that is no longer the case. My sister-in-law Simone, who lives in Melbourne, is one of the growing number of outstanding female barristers. The public sector has benefited immensely from the talent of Queensland women and public bars are no longer the domain of the 19th century chauvinists.

This anniversary is also a time for reflection and commiseration. Although a significant proportion of Queensland women were granted their natural right to have their vote counted in 1905, many other women were not granted that right. Sadly, Queensland history will always regard 1905 as the year in which predominantly white women were given the vote. It would be another 60 years before Indigenous women would receive the right to vote.

Prior to 1965, Queensland Indigenous women were prevented from voting by the archaic and paternalistic Elections Act 1885 whereupon only Indigenous males who were determined to be of Australian Aboriginal, Indian, Chinese or South Sea Islander ethnicity were permitted to vote provided they were freeholders. One need only look at the language of part 11, section 4(b) of the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts Amendment Act 1934 to see the type of barriers Indigenous women faced. This section dealt with the definitions of Aboriginality. I found it particularly startling that subsection (c) defined 'Aboriginal' as being 'half-caste who in the opinion of the Minister has not significant intelligence to manage his own affairs.' This subsection is indicative of the stereotypes of the time when not only were women not directly mentioned in the text of the act but also Aboriginality was not about a sacred connection with the land, or the leading of a lifestyle that was completely alternative to then British standards; it was simply defined as not being white. If a person was not white, that person was Aboriginal and thus subject to any degree of indecent treatment that the government, as embodied by the minister, saw fit.

As was indicative of the black-white dichotomy that characterised cultural relations in the 1900s, there was no definitive Indigenous female suffrage movement. Rather, for Indigenous women the right to vote was one of a number of fundamental rights that they were seeking, including the right to have personal property, the right to freedom of movement and, as most people are now aware, the right to raise their own children. The treatment of Indigenous people is a pockmark on Australia's history.

Many people view Australia's history with a black armband, that is, they pay respect to the lives that were changed forever following the arrival of Europeans in 1788. Others view history with a white blindfold, which involves a blissful ignorance of the way in which our nation's Indigenous inhabitants were treated. Regardless of the view one chooses to take, the fact of the matter is that in 1905 only non-Indigenous women were granted the right to vote. So although it is great to celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage, it should always be pointed out that it is not 100 years of women being granted the right to vote; it is only 100 years of non-Indigenous women being granted the right. We should never forget that.

In 60 years there has been a significant and overdue shift in attitude towards Indigenous women. On 17 December 1965—some 40 years ago this year—the Elections Acts Amendment Act came into force after it was assented to by the Governor. So for the first time in the history of Queensland, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women could equally have an opportunity to determine who would lead them in the future. The year 2005 represents two unique landmarks in Queensland history: 100 years since non-Indigenous women were permitted to vote in Queensland and 40 years since Indigenous women were permitted to vote in Queensland. From my point of view, it is the latter of these two anniversaries that represents a true acknowledgement of the invaluable role that women play in our society. From 1965 onwards, every Queensland woman has had an opportunity to determine their destiny. I think that is something truly worth celebrating.

For several years there has been a continual debate about what date Australia's national day of celebration should be. A significant number of people believe that 26 January represents an invasion day, or the day on which Europeans effectively supplanted the traditional owners of the land. Alternatively, a significant number of people believe that accepting this argument is too politically correct. From my point of view there is only one day of the year on which we can truly say we became a nation—not another subject of the British Crown but a nation—and that day is 27 May. For on that date in 1967, Indigenous Australians were finally recognised as true citizens of Australia and were included in our census. Surely that is the day on which we became a nation for all. This suggestion is worthy of an entirely separate debate.

In 2005 we recognise the efforts and talents of Queensland women. As a proud father of two beautiful daughters, Brianna and Ashleigh, I am proud to be raising them in a community that has wonderful female role models in all areas of their lives. Obviously, their first and most prominent female role model is their mother and my wife, Megan, whose dedication to her work and family is a constant source of inspiration for Ashleigh, Brianna and me. There are other two prominent women, one being their grandmother and my mother-in-law, Rita, and the other one being their late grandmother, my mother, Terry.

Although much has been done by the women's movement, I do not even begin to think that the journey is over. I look forward to the day when equality between both genders is a reality and not an aspiration. I look forward to seeing Australia's first female Prime Minister and Queensland's first female Premier. I look forward to watching my young daughters grow up in a society free of the archaic and fraternal barriers that their great-great-grandmothers had to deal with 100 years ago.

The year 2005 is only just the beginning. I have no doubt that the next 100 years will have an equally profound effect on Queensland women and other women throughout the world. I would like to thank and congratulate my female parliamentary colleagues. I encourage them to continue being wonderful role models to young Queensland girls, including my two daughters. Before commending the motion to the House, I want to wish the Cowboys all the best.

Hon. AM BGLISH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (3.59 pm): During the last four state election campaigns, I have sat on the election strategy committee along with the Premier, the deputy premier of the day and senior party officials and party pollsters. I have no doubt that the suffragettes, could they be flies on the wall at these meetings, would simply marvel at the fine-grained distinctions that electoral polling can now make on the basis of gender, age and issue, and the serious attention that is given to the views of women voters in this process.

It is commonplace for discussions around the table to identify that women in certain age groups are more concerned than their male counterparts about an aspect of policy such as health funding or early childhood education and for this to play a role in election commitments and strategy. Similarly, the views of women about a leader's performance are regularly gleaned, and woe betide a political leader in Australia who is not as electorally appealing to women as they are to male voters. This is not to say that women's views have any more significance than those of male voters in the political and electoral processes, only that they are significant. Just as the suffragists had hoped, they cannot be ignored.

Ironically, it would seem that if the many vocal opponents of the women's vote could spend some time in the here and now they may well feel that their dire predictions have come to pass. Those who warned that giving women the vote would inevitably lead—God forbid!—to women taking seats in the parliament would no doubt be horrified by the sight of women arguing across the chamber with their male counterparts. There is also little doubt that many would feel vindicated by the evidence of escalating divorce rates and declining birth rates, as they predicted at the time. One of the more laughable arguments of the time was that contact with the sort of behaviour seen around polling booths would threaten female virtue. Indeed, upper house member Patrick Perkins argued in 1890—

Women will become unsexed by coming in contact with people at election times.

While I am a little unsure about what Mr Perkins meant by the notion of women unsexed, I smile to contemplate his reaction to the robust debates that I see women booth workers from all sides of politics engaging in on election day in my part of town.

Perhaps most of all, a reflection on the past 100 years is a reminder of how recent this seemingly quaint and long-gone past really is and how a century is not such a long time. For most suffrage supporters, the right to citizenship included the right to stand for election and to be part of parliamentary and democratic institutions. But this would, of course, prove to be a very slow process. For all the steps forward—for all the achievements secured by women exercising their votes and participating as a real force in the political arena—Australian grandmothers have lived most of their lives with parliaments with few or, often, no women sitting in their chambers.

In Queensland, women secured the right to stand for parliament in 1915—10 years after securing the vote. A total of 50 women have been elected to the Queensland parliament since 1915, but most of these have entered in the last 15 years. In the 75 years between 1915 and 1989, only 11 women entered the Queensland parliament. With the election of the Goss government in 1989 this changed dramatically, bringing the number of women to 10. So recent is the phenomenon that only two of the 50 women parliamentarians of Queensland have died. Forty-six per cent—or 22—of all women elected to the Queensland parliament are actually current members. As one of those 50 women, I am often aware of the fact that we can be seen as a novelty. In the 10 years that I have served here, however, I have also seen this effect diminish as more women have joined the ranks.

It is not unusual for me to be approached by women, in the community or in my own electorate, who introduce themselves, raise a particular issue or concern and then say with some enthusiasm how pleased they are to see a woman in there doing the job. Older women will often give my hand a squeeze while acknowledging, 'It's not easy for women in there, is it?' I know from discussions that these experiences are not unique to me or to my side of politics. Other members have told me of similar experiences—a sense of real satisfaction from some women constituents to see women in these roles that so recently were the exclusive preserve of men. I do not wish to overstate these experiences. Like everybody else here, I get plenty of criticism and free character assessment from the public, both male and female. I only mention them here because they are perhaps one of the most frequent and personal reminders of how recent this history really is and how far we have to go before we can really assess the effect of the move to equality of representation in the parliamentary process.

Finally, as I have listened to members speak on the centenary of women's suffrage, I have enjoyed imagining those women and their struggle and contemplating their assessment of their own legacy. I am acutely aware that my place in the parliament is part of that legacy and that my rights to vote and to stand for election are rights that were hard won and are not to be taken lightly. Most importantly, like others here, I know that I have a responsibility to exercise those rights to create a better world. In face of the history it would seem a daunting task, but the building blocks that these women laid are a formidable legacy and I feel very inspired by the challenge.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bligh, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Easson, Mrs M

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (4.05 pm), by leave: I can confirm, in answer to a question from the member for Maroochydore this morning, that Probitry International, the company of which Mary Easson is the chief executive, was first engaged as a consultant by this government in 1999. That initial engagement was in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympics, when Queensland was seeking to increase our profile while the world's business leaders were in the Olympic city. The contract was awarded through an open tender process. I can confirm that subsequent payments of \$5,000 a month plus reasonable out-of-pocket expenses have been paid.

Probitry International was retained when our State Development Olympic office closed down and returned to Brisbane in 2001. Probitry International has continued to be a hugely successful representative of our investment interests in Sydney, reporting to the DSDI investment division. Probitry International has been invaluable in connecting the Queensland government to major Australian companies with a view to attracting their investment here in Queensland. It has also assisted the state's biotech strategy, making connections for Queensland with key decision makers in Sydney.

It was through Probitry International that the introduction was made for Queensland government officials to meet with Patrick Corporation to ensure that it retained Virgin here in Queensland when it took a stake in Virgin. Other successes include being instrumental in attracting a large national customer contact centre for MBF, getting 160 jobs to Queensland; an arrangement with Westpac that brought 250 jobs to Queensland; and an arrangement with IAG Insurance which brought a 70-person call centre to Brisbane. If we had our own State Development office in Sydney it would cost much, much more. This is a highly cost-effective process.

Mary Easson is well connected to business in New South Wales. She has been a board member of a major Australian company, NRMA. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has attended the Harvard Business School. She has extensive business interests and contacts, including being the chair of Life Education New South Wales. She was a member of the Sydney Olympic community support bid, is a director of the national board of UNICEF Australia and was a member of the Anzac Foundation board. She is a former federal Labor MP and a Centenary Medal winner in 2003. This was awarded by the Prime Minister for her outstanding contributions to business and commerce. She has been involved in government and public relations roles with the likes of Coca-Cola Amatil, Avco finance, ANZ Bank, the University of New South Wales, Dairy Farmers, McDonald's, Microsoft, Coles Myer and Bovis Lend Lease as well as Ansett, ACI and the University of Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Forster Report, Draft

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (4.08 pm), by leave: I was asked this morning in question time whether Peter Forster would be prepared to release his draft report. Peter Forster has indicated that he does not want his draft report tabled in parliament. He regards the draft report as a working document which was not created for publication. Mr Forster, however, is offering to meet the leaders of the National Party and the Liberal Party to brief them personally. I put that offer on the public record. I would ask both the Leader of the National Party and the Leader of the Liberal Party to make direct contact with Mr Forster in that regard.

I also advise the House, for the sake of completeness, that the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has advised me that Peter Forster's costs are as follows. Costs invoiced to date include expert reference groups, \$260,000. The anticipated total cost is in the vicinity of \$400,000. These figures exclude the costs of public servants assigned to assist Peter Forster and associated costs. I provide that information to the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Four-year Parliamentary Terms

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (4.09 pm), by leave: I want to congratulate the federal coalition for proposing to hold a referendum on four-year terms. Local governments in Queensland have successfully switched from three-year terms to four-year terms. Every state government apart from Queensland has four-year terms, and today we are told that the federal coalition is preparing to hold a referendum asking voters to support an extension of federal government terms. It is ironic that Queenslanders now elect local government councillors for four-year terms but they elect state government members for only three-year terms.

Queensland is now the only state that lives in the past by having three-year parliamentary terms. Every other state has recognised the benefits that flow from having governments with more stability. Now that the coalition parties agree that four-year terms will lead to better government, I announce today that we will also hold a referendum on four-year terms. I am advised that the referendum could be held on the same day as the federal referendum if permission is granted by the Governor-General, and that is the day I would propose to hold the referendum.

I will be writing to Prime Minister John Howard for permission to approach the Governor-General in this regard. Holding two referenda on the same day will save an enormous amount of money and save voters having to go to polling stations twice on the same question. With all parties agreeing that four-year terms are desirable for good government, I hope voters will also agree so that government in Queensland has better continuity and stability. State governments of all persuasions—National, Liberal and ALP—would benefit from the stability that four-year terms bring.

Section 394 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act prohibits a state election or referendum on the same day as a Senate or House of Representatives general election without the authority of the Governor-General, which effectively means without the authority of the Commonwealth government. Therefore, if the Commonwealth has its referendum on the same day as a federal general election, the state cannot hold its referendum then unless the Commonwealth agrees. There seems to be nothing to prevent the state having its referendum at the same time as the Commonwealth referendum if there is no federal general election on the same day. It would make sense if it is the same issue. Why not? We have them at a federal level and a state level; same day, same issue. Even so, if the Commonwealth does not want the state to hold the referendum on the same day, it could include such a prohibition in the act which provided for the Commonwealth referendum if it chose to do so. In either case, it appears that the Commonwealth government would have to agree to the two referenda being held together.

I should point out that unfortunately under our Constitution it is not legally possible for us to hold a referendum for a four-year term at the same time as a state election. That is one of the idiosyncrasies of our state Constitution. The only way that that can be changed is by referendum. So, frankly, we are caught in a catch-22. Now that the Prime Minister has indicated that he supports four-year terms, and presumably that will be supported by the federal National Party, we would seek to have it on the same day.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I do not know if the Liberals and the Nationals here think the same way, Deputy Premier. I think you are causing trouble.

Anyway, it makes commonsense. I think only the divisive would argue against such a sensible reflection of the community's wishes.

Mr Springborg: You've mentioned it five times in the last four years.

Mr BEATTIE: Well, now I have a date and I would hope that the opposition leader would be out there supporting us. We have a date and the date will be the same as the one from the Prime Minister. It is very simple. The Leader of the Opposition did not listen to my referendum address and what I said in my ministerial statement.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (4.13 pm): I move—

That, in accordance with the constitutional instrument signed by the Governor on 26 July 2005, the House at its rising do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 4 October 2005 at the Pilbeam Theatre, Rockhampton.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (4.13 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Overseas Visits; Turner, Mr N

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.14 pm): Unfortunately, the Premier, in a desperate attempt to justify his actions in retrospectively approving the unauthorised use of taxpayer funds by the previous member for Redcliffe, chose to deliberately malign a previous well-respected Speaker of this parliament. I refer to Neil Turner, who was recognised by the media as the best Speaker of parliament for 25 years and whom the Premier on a number of occasions chose to recognise for his fairness. I now table a document—attachment A—showing the comment by the Premier and others.

The Premier thinks nothing of misleading this House about overseas travel taken by Mr Turner. On 8 June 2005 the Premier told this House that he would not have approved the trip taken by Mr Turner in 1997. Mr Turner accepted an invitation to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's seminar. The trip was organised and undertaken in total accord with the financial guidelines that applied, and I now table a copy of those guidelines.

Even though Mr Turner has now received formal advice that CPA travel of this nature has historically not required any approval by, or advice to, the Premier, he has advised me that he did in fact advise then Premier Borbidge, who approved the travel. I would be very interested to know of any examples where the Premier has actually refused to grant approval for a Speaker to attend a CPA seminar.

Secondly, on the same date that the Premier publicly criticised Mr Turner's report to the parliament, saying that he wrote only two paragraphs about it, Mr Turner submitted his report to parliament even though there was no requirement for him to do so, unlike the requirement that applied to, and was ignored by, the former member for Redcliffe. I now table a copy of the report tabled on 29 April 1997.

Leaving aside the rank hypocrisy of the Premier, who was defending a Speaker who had failed to present any report at all on his unauthorised travel, Mr Beattie has again chosen to deliberately mislead the parliament because, as the public record will show, Mr Turner's report consisted of nine pages including a summary of seven paragraphs in an hour-by-hour summary of the proceedings of the seminar. I understand that Mr Turner has communicated directly with the Premier on this matter, and I now call on the Premier at the earliest opportunity to withdraw his cowardly attack on the previous Speaker and to correct the public record.

While I am about it, can I just comment on the Premier's stunt on the four-year terms. This is the fifth time in the last four years that he has talked about four-year terms. He talked about it during the Shepherdson inquiry. He talked about it when the coalition was previously re-formed in 2003. He talks about it all the time. Prior to the 2001 election he said that, regardless of what the Nationals thought, he was going to have a referendum. He talks about this ad nauseam whenever he wants a diversion. We have said that we will support him on four-year terms if he adopts seven points of accountability for this parliament and its processes including FOI reforms, ministers answering questions in parliament and those sorts of things. When he does it, he will have our support.

Time expired.

Metro Arts

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (4.17 pm): Given that one of the key components of the Smart State is a vibrant and dynamic arts community, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the 30th birthday celebration of Metro Arts—one of the outstanding contributors to Queensland's arts industry. At a time when Queensland breaks the chains of the cultural cringe which hampered us in recent decades, Metro Arts gives immense support to local and emerging artists. Its acclaimed annual independents season is a series of predominantly new works by local playwrights performed by Queensland actors. They have established a partnership with the state's flagship company, QTC, in providing assistance and mentorship to these independent arts workers. They also provide gallery services to exhibitions by local visual artists and multimedia workers as well as studio space.

Added to this is the enormously valuable BizArts program, where artists are supported in developing business and financial skills, which is the business incubator—the first one in arts history. Already this program has seen many positive results in assisting with the notion of sustainability and the arts. Metro Arts also provides low-rent office space for several independent companies and artists, and assists with infrastructure needs. It is also available to outside hirers as studio and rehearsal spaces.

The heritage listed Metro Arts building is also home to the Queensland Writers Centre, and arts law services are also available on site. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the work of Sue Benner, whose leadership of Metro Arts in recent years has made it one of the cultural hubs of the Brisbane and Queensland arts industry. Sue is a true visionary whose passionate commitment to the industry and its growth has been inspirational to many local arts workers. With Sue's guidance, Metro Arts is not just a home for performance and exhibition but also a melting pot of creative thought and innovative ideas, helping to push our arts industry beyond the confines of traditional expectations.

The fact that Metro Arts celebrates 30 years of playing an enormously important role in the Queensland arts landscape is testament to the fact that it has continually evolved to meet the needs of the artists of these times.

I am pleased that this government is a proud supporter of the arts, as demonstrated by the Premier's drama and literary awards programs. I would encourage all members of the House to take the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of our state's arts industry by attending a performance or exhibition at Metro Arts. I wish it a very happy 30th birthday.

H and R Quarrying

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (4.19 pm): H and R Quarrying is a young business located in Yarwun. In order to maximise its business it applied for Ergon Energy network connection services. It needed the erection of approximately 735 metres of three-phase 11kV high-voltage overhead mains, the installation of approximately 20 metres of three phase, the installation of one three-phase padmount substation, the erection of a three-phase high-voltage regulator unit upstream on an 11kV distribution feeder, the erection of a three-phase high-voltage automatic circuit recloser upstream and the erection of an 11kV high-voltage air break switch upstream on the 11kV distribution feeder.

The company was given quite a significant list of conditions for this connection to occur, including a contribution for the connection of \$10,750, which it has paid. The company has also been asked, however, to provide a bank guarantee for \$214,500 in favour of Ergon Energy. The proprietor of the business came to me and expressed concern about that amount of money. In my local government days I understood that the guarantee was an instrument at the bank that did not actually tie up capital. However, the bank has given advice to the applicant that it will actually tie up his assets for the 10-year period that the bank guarantee is required. So the applicant, Graham Hill, came and asked if there was any other alternative to this. He currently employs 16 people. The business is growing. It is the only hard rock quarry in the Gladstone area. He was hoping to put on another couple of people very soon. He said that if the bank guarantee was \$50,000 or \$60,000 he would feel more comfortable about that level of asset being tied up for that period of time. However, he believes that because \$214,500 is required he would have little left to be able to invest in his business.

Graham Hill is an honest, hardworking fellow in the community. He contributes well in the area as an employer and is looking for alternatives with Ergon Energy in terms of being able to prove his bona fides in this business venture. He is not the only one being asked to provide a bank guarantee, but his is certainly the biggest one that is being sought in terms of financial commitment. More and more we are getting complaints from constituents who are being asked by Ergon Energy to pay quite considerable amounts of money for even single-phase connections for domestic houses, and it is pricing them out of the market.

I believe that Ergon has to have another look at this side of its business so that it can provide the service that it is required to provide but in an affordable way. Most people who connect to the grid do so in a very honest and reasonable way. They are intending to honour any financial commitments—bills et cetera—that they receive from Ergon. However, upfront costs can be an obstacle, and I ask the minister to review that policy.

Coalition Preselection Process

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (4.22 pm): Once again it is necessary for me and other members of the government to defend the rights of rank and file members of the Queensland Liberal Party living on the Gold Coast. The legalities of the bizarre joint preselection process have been addressed by the Premier and other members, but it is the morality, not the legality, of the process that concerns Gold Coast Liberals and, frankly, ought to concern all fair-minded Queenslanders.

Under the joint preselections there will be an equal number of National and Liberal members taking part in choosing a candidate for Broadwater, Gaven and Mudgeeraba on the coast. The gerrymander introduced by the Country Party more than 40 years ago has returned with a vengeance, but this time it targets the Liberal Party more than the Labor Party.

The National Party is close to extinction on the Gold Coast. Most of its branches are no longer constitutional, yet it will have the same voting rights as the Liberal Party, which holds all the Gold Coast based federal seats and three state seats to the National Party's zero. Rank and file Liberals on the coast have been shafted once again by their party leaders. The member for Robina has abandoned

them; it just got too hard. The member for Chatsworth has no interest in them unless they belong to his faction.

I would imagine that there are several hundred Liberal Party members in the Broadwater, Gaven and Mudgeeraba electorates. There are probably no more than a couple of dozen National Party members in these seats, but the Nationals have been given equal representation on the preselection process with the Liberals. That means every National Party branch member will get a vote and up to 90 per cent of the Liberal Party members will not. They have been robbed of their say in choosing candidates by an agreement and a process that is a 21st century gerrymander.

Why has the Liberal Party dumped from a great height on its own branch members? The answer is that the majority of the members of the branches of these electorates do not belong to the ruling Santoro-Caltabiano faction. One of the most important rights held by the members of any political party is the right to take part in selecting candidates for political office, yet several hundred Gold Coast Liberals are having that basic right taken away from them. The member for Robina, the member for Surfers Paradise and the member for Currumbin are too busy saving their own political careers to defend the rights of those branch members.

The member for Chatsworth told the House just yesterday why he signed up to the agreement with the National Party. 'Raw ambition' was his excuse and explanation. His ambition will be closer to being fulfilled if the candidates chosen in the six joint preselection seats belong to either his faction or the National Party and not the minority faction led by the members for Robina and Moggill. To achieve that, the rights of the rank and file Liberals have been trashed.

Of the 30 Liberal Party members who will take part in each preselection process up to half—yes, half—may be nominated by the Liberal Party state executive, leaving just 15 places for branch members. As a modest punter, I am prepared to have a wager now that if the Liberal side of the nomination process looks like being won by a Quinn faction member then the Liberal executives will ensure that the National Party nominee wins. That is why the member for Chatsworth agreed to a process that is a total sellout of the rights of Gold Coast rank and file Liberals. It is an effective way to block candidates from the rival faction. Even in seats where the rival faction has more members, raw ambition has triumphed over a fair and reasonable go for the rank and file. It is a sad day for the Liberal Party. As Senator Joyce said, it is not the Liberal Party; it is the Caltabiano party.

Out-of-School Care Program, Logan Village

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (4.25 pm): At 6.30 last night Channel 9 ran a documentary about an out-of-school care program operating within the Logan Village community hall grounds. This particular facility is actually in the electorate of Albert, but many of my own constituents access that facility, and there have been many criticisms about this out-of-school care program.

I would like to bring to the notice of the government one of the anomalies that has occurred. Within the Child Care Regulation 2003 and the Child Care Act 2002, these services that cater for schoolchildren before and after school, or before and after school and during school holidays, are required to be licensed. We accept that because there had to be a transitional period when we decided that there had to be a licence for all of those particular groups. However, the transitional provisions have been applied. From the date of commencement of the current child care legislation, and that was September 2003, school-age care services have two years to apply for a licence.

This particular group is run by Father Kelly. He has good intentions, but he gets into a lot of fights within the community and within the Anglican church. This group has two years to apply for a licence. So he can run a facility like he has out of a shipping container in the bare grounds with children doing exactly what Channel 9 described last night until he has to apply for that licence. He has five years to comply with the building standards for child-care centres, so a person like him might have seven years before that particular facility has to comply with the building standards for child-care as per the two pieces of legislation that we all introduced in September 2003. He also has five years before the staff are required to meet qualification requirements.

This man can run a facility, as he does, out of a container where he virtually sits all day. The kids run around the area, allegedly rocking windows, and he has a licence, as he tried to show last night. I have asked the Queensland government, through the minister for communities, about the licence and the minister agrees that the department is aware of the out-of-school program operating in the grounds of the Logan Village community hall and it can confirm that an application for a licence has been received. Authorised officers from the Department of Communities have visited the service and licensing discussions have commenced with the operators of this facility.

Of course, while Father Kelly has this period of time to get a licence, five years to implement the building standards and five years to meet the qualifications for staff, he can virtually run this facility. Knowing Father Kelly, he will run this facility. Knowing Father Kelly, he will get into a lot of fights with other people. He will certainly have a lot of fights with other child-care operators who are forced to face building requirements, who are forced to face staffing requirements and who are forced to face audit requirements. The difficulty is that he can virtually run into a brick wall and then clear out somewhere else.

Work and Family Balance

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (4.28 pm): One of the issues causing hardship and a lot of stress for families in my local area—and right around the state, I imagine—is their struggle or their inability to balance work and family. Many people often say to me that they would even forgo a pay rise if they could get flexibility and more opportunities to be with their family—to go to school sports days, to take sick kids to the doctor and that sort of thing. Sadly, I have bad news for many families in my area. The federal government's proposed changes to the industrial relations law will be hard on families. There is no doubt about that at all. There will be less flexibility for parents to actually take leave to take kids to doctors or to attend sports days and other important events and milestones in the lives of children.

An honourable member: It is particularly hard on single-parent families.

Ms STRUTHERS: That is right. It is particularly hard on single-parent families. The reduction in the number of minimum conditions proposed by John Howard means that people will lose a lot of leave provisions that were hard-fought for by the trade union movement and Labor governments around Australia. There will be less take-home pay. There is no doubt about that. The Prime Minister's little duck lips have really quivered on this issue when he has been asked if he can guarantee that no-one will be worse off under these changes. He cannot. It will be tough on families.

Workers will lose penalty rates and they will lose overtime. Many families who work in areas in my electorate say that the only reason they are prepared to do those extra hours and be away from their family is that they get extra money. If that right goes, there will be no incentive for them to do so. Loyalty and other commitment to an organisation is likely to be lost, too. So in terms of productivity, where is the sense in these proposed IR changes? There is certainly a lot of nonsense in them and a lot of harsh reality that families will have to face.

I am not speaking from self-interest here, in terms of balancing work and family. Our work environment allows us a number of opportunities to be flexible with time. I appreciate the support that I and the member for Mudgeeraba and other members of this House have been receiving from the Speaker, the Leader of the House and other members. That support is tremendous and we thank them for that.

However, it is certainly important that families understand—in stark contrast—that the Queensland government has cemented and enshrined a number of rights in legislation. We dealt with many of these in the legislation we passed several weeks ago in this House. The Beattie Labor government in Queensland has even given maternity leave to casual employees. That is unheard of in many parts of Australia and certainly something the federal government would not contemplate and, in fact, will seek to destroy. This government has put things like that into law in Queensland.

We are serious about affording people the opportunity to balance work and family, and we will continue to do more to make sure that happens. However, we are up against a very significant tidal wave of change that is coming from Canberra. I really want to alert the people in my area to this. I have already had a public forum and I will have another public forum on this issue in Forest Lake in a couple of weeks.

Local Roads

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochy—NPA) (4.32 pm): I rise to speak about some local road issues. As members know, in growth areas, roads and gridlock represent a great impact upon people's quality of life and their ability to do business in an efficient way. Now, as the cost of fuel increases, the gridlock on our roads becomes even more critical as people sit in traffic, burning up fuel and going nowhere.

I am grateful that this government has finally allocated some significant funding to my electorate. Some \$270 million is to be spent on the duplication of the Maroochy River bridge, the Pacific Paradise bypass and the Maroochy Road upgrade over the next four years. However, I am disappointed—and I wish to bring this to the transport minister's attention—that some of the design options that are being chosen are short-sighted in that they do not provide a 20-year design time horizon to cope with the traffic within their construction life. I believe that that is wrong.

It is unfortunate that funding has not been provided for the Maroochy Road upgrade at the intersection of Pike Street and Hobbs Road. The planning for an overpass has been done, but the funding has not been provided. Even though this section of Maroochy Road will have additional capacity for traffic after the upgrade, the fact that the overpass has not been included within this raft of works means that this intersection will potentially be redundant within about eight years, with significant congestion occurring only eight years after the reconstruction of this intersection. To me, that is dumb and that is bad planning. Additional funding would certainly deal with issues of redundant work, would certainly be more cost effective in the long run and would get it right the first time.

I also wish to again bring to the attention of the House the problem of the Pacific Paradise intersection at Menzies Drive, David Low Way and Mudjimba Beach Road, which is a dogleg intersection. People travel between a primary school, a shopping centre, a child-care facility and sporting facilities through a dogleg across a main road. It is dangerous and unsatisfactory.

I urge the transport minister to listen to the people and bring this work forward. The department has been doing the design work. It is in the Roads Implementation Plan for 2008-09, but it really needs to be brought forward into the next financial year. As it is now, I am fearful that the children who travel through this intersection will get hurt. To date, vehicles have been damaged and children have run the risk of being injured. However, the longer the delay and with an increase in traffic, that risk will grow.

National Bilby Day

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (4.35 pm): I have had a number of privileges in public life. I have opened a toilet block, been prayed for in tongues and had an orange canoe bear my name. However, one of the biggest privileges has been to have Australia's bilby brothers, Frank Manthey and Peter McCrea, name a bilby in my honour. Rachel the bilby is both smaller and cuter than me. She has beautiful, soft hair and translucent ears. As her natural habitat is seriously threatened by land clearing, foxes and cats, she is also under even greater threat than a Labor MP!

For months, I have worked as an ambassador for the preservation of bilbies. On 11 September, I spoke in Charleville at the first ever National Bilby Day, a day recently proclaimed by the federal government, after lobbying from the Beattie government and a number of members of this House, to raise awareness of all threatened species. National Bilby Day celebrated a great success.

Since Queensland National Parks zoologist Peter McCrea first found bilbies in their natural state in western Queensland in the 1990s, he and his Queensland Parks counterpart Frank Manthey have done more than anyone else to save these important mammals. They promoted Easter bilbies in conjunction with Darrell Lea and, through a nationwide fundraising campaign, they have attracted donations from people all over Australia. The Save the Bilby Fund has raised more than \$800,000. That money has been used to fence an area of 25 square kilometres in Currawinya National Park in south-western Queensland in which bilbies will be released to live in the wild without the threat of feral animals.

More importantly, the bilby brothers have captured the imagination of the Australian people in protecting this species and, by extension, protecting our magnificent natural environment. Frank and Peter have proven to Australians that a serious environmental issue can be addressed. I think far too often political leaders have trepidation about whether Australians are really willing to pay the price for environmental protection. The success of the Save the Bilby Fund should prove to us beyond any doubt that Australians want their environment protected and will support what seem to be difficult but innovative measures which make that happen.

Jones, Ms T

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (4.37 pm): I am proud and excited to announce some fantastic news for Bundaberg and the Burnett and, indeed, the whole of Queensland. I will direct my comments to the arts community.

Bundaberg artist Tessa Jones was notified yesterday by the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra that her entry in this year's Archibald art competition has been accepted for display there. It is entitled *Eagle Ross* and is a magnificent portrait of Aussie rock legend Ross Wilson. I believe it is in oil and graphite on canvas.

Ross Wilson, as all members know, is probably one of those Aussie icons who never had to make a comeback because he never really went away. I hear members opposite singing some of his famous works. At the 2001 ARIA music awards, his famous song *Eagle Rock* was voted the second-most significant Australian song in 75 years. Ross Wilson has issued over 45 singles and EPs, 17 of which have hit the top 40, and more than 25 albums. He is an Australian rock legend and he has earned his nickname of 'Ross the Boss'.

This indeed is a truly remarkable achievement for an artist—and of course I am referring to the artist Tessa Jones—because Tessa really only started painting about four years ago. Tessa is an artist who has a shopfront in Bundaberg's main street. She first started winning prizes in 2001 when she won the Brisbane City Council Art Force. She was painting traffic signal boxes—the Traffic Stoppers Award. She then went on to win the Matthew Flinders Art Competition on Bribie Island all the way through to the portrait section of the Bundaberg Arts Festival—highly commended—in 2003.

It is at this point that I should really declare an interest and let the House know that I first met Tessa when I was searching for an artist to paint a portrait of my mum. When I was in her studio I came across Tessa's magnificent painting of Ross Wilson. I then asked Tessa what she wanted to do with this painting after it won the Archibald, but unfortunately it did not win the Archibald. She said she would like to hang it in the National Portrait Gallery.

I happened to be in Sydney visiting Dr Brendan Nelson and I took the trip across to Canberra. I took Tessa's biography and a picture of this painting with me. I lobbied the art gallery and we have been lucky enough to be a part of a small success for Tessa, a Bundaberg artist. I urge all members of the House to support their local artists.

North Queensland Cowboys

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.41 pm): On 18 March last year I delivered my maiden speech in this place. As honourable members know, when members deliver their first speech in this House it is accepted that they be heard in silence. However, when I gave my speech I received some interjections and disruptions. My comments that the North Queensland Cowboys would make the NRL premiership drew some ire from some people in this chamber. The chickens have come home to roost.

Some 18 months later the Cowboys are in that very grand final. Yes, there are only two more sleeps until the Cowboys take the trophy home. And aren't we having some fun up home? The twin cities of Thuringowa and Townsville are decked out in Cowboys' colours. Jumbo jets have been chartered to fly from Townsville to Sydney to get fans to the game. Schoolkids have gone Cowboys crazy and the north is bracing itself for a marvellous week of celebration. The Cowboys have captured the hearts of most Queenslanders and I am told that a goodly following of the team from Sydney will be at that game.

I congratulate Thuringowa and Townsville councils and Townsville Enterprise, along with the Cowboys organisation, on the marketing of the north's day in the sunshine. Thuringowa and Townsville have been featured in numerous television and radio broadcasts and plenty of newspapers. Indeed, I have spoken to such outlets as the *Australian* and on air with Alan Jones. Radio stations across the state have been in contact with me about the groundswell of pride in the north.

In my conversation with all those media sources not a bad word has been said about our boys. Indeed, both teams deserve the Cinderella tag on Sunday. They have both battled hard in recent years to make it on Sunday. I hope that both the teams and the crowd will enjoy the spectacle and the game will be played in the spirit both sides have displayed in the lead-up to Sunday.

Indeed, I am proud to say that I will also be in the crowd, along with my beautiful wife, who is in the gallery today. It is Jennifer's birthday on Sunday and I am sure that will be a perfect birthday present.

Finally, I must inform the House that following the Cowboys' emphatic victory over the Eels last Sunday I spoke with Townsville Mayor Tony Mooney about a possible public holiday north of Sarina next Monday to celebrate our undoubted win on Sunday. I would like to personally thank the Premier and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations for having a close look at this request. Unfortunately, due to time and legal constraints this cannot happen.

Tom is a former Ayr boy and, as we know, the Premier hails from Atherton. I know that they are both backing the boys from the north. Also, on behalf of everyone up north, I would like to take up the Premier's offer of a state reception after we have the win on Sunday. Finally, I end today with those immortal words that are echoing across the north, even as we meet in this place—

The Cowboys are my Team and it's my Dream to see 'em at the top.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Copeland): Order! I will add my best wishes to the Cowboys for Sunday as well.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.44 pm.