



WEEKLY HANSARD

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51ST PARLIAMENT

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THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2005

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

PRIVILEGE

Eventide Nursing Home

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday the member for Rockhampton, the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, stated in a speech that the state of Eventide Nursing Home under the Nationals was a disgrace. The minister knows full well that there was nothing in the 1995-96 budget under the then health minister, Mr Beattie, but it was the Nationals who fixed up Eventide.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba South, that is not a matter of privilege.

Mr HORAN: But I want to correct the record.

Mr SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

Mr HORAN: We built Eventide.

PHOTOGRAPHS IN CHAMBER

Mr SPEAKER: I was very disappointed this morning to see an article in the QConfidential section of the *Courier-Mail* that implied some kind of wrongdoing by police officers by having their photographs taken in this chamber last night. It is now common practice for visitors to the parliament to have their photographs taken in the Assembly. Indeed, many visitors are invited by members to have photographs taken. Last night, before any photographs were taken, police sought the appropriate approval, which was granted. In short, to the best of my knowledge no officer did anything wrong. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the assistance that the police have given to this parliament at this sitting.

MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING AND RACING

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, there are many occasions in parliament when one pays tribute to the actions of former and current members of parliament. Much of the business of parliament is about precedents, and many members are concerned about taking certain actions which will create a precedent. The reality is that if we adopted that attitude nothing would happen. As honourable members are aware, it is my prerogative to establish rulings. Therefore, I rule that whenever the Queensland parliament sits in a city other than the state capital the local member will be obliged to provide hospitality on the occasion of his or her birthday. An old traditional custom is that on special occasions the recipient of an honour or an achievement would shout the bar. In this instance, honourable members, I do not mean, nor am I referring to, the bar of the House. Honourable members, I am sure that you will all join with me in wishing the honourable member, Robert Schwarten MP, member for Rockhampton, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, and Leader of the House, a happy birthday. We all look forward to celebrating with him in grand style at his expense.

REGIONAL SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT, ROCKHAMPTON

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, just for the information of the House, yesterday 1,848 members of the public attended the sitting of this parliament.

PETITION

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

2004 State Election, Petition

Mr Fouras from 1 petitioner requesting the House to investigate the administration of an election petition brought in respect of the 2004 State general election

PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Mrs Keech)—

- Response from the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Mrs Keech) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr McArdle from 42 petitioners requesting the House to reject any recommendations within the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report entitled "Regulating Adult Entertainment: A review of the live adult entertainment industry in Queensland" which expands the scope of this industry through legalisation of illegal activities and to endorse recommendations from the report which protect minors and the community through enhanced regulation, enforcement and penalties
- Response from the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Mrs Keech) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr McArdle from 5 petitioners requesting the House to reject any recommendations within the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report entitled "Regulating Adult Entertainment: A review of the live adult entertainment industry in Queensland" which expands the scope of this industry through legalisation of illegal activities and to endorse recommendations from the report which protect minors and the community through enhanced regulation, enforcement and penalties
- Response from the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Mrs Keech) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr McArdle from 1 petitioner requesting the House to reject any recommendations within the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report entitled "Regulating Adult Entertainment: A review of the live adult entertainment industry in Queensland" which expands the scope of this industry through legalisation of illegal activities and to endorse recommendations from the report which protect minors and the community through enhanced regulation, enforcement and penalties
- Response from the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Mrs Keech) to a paper petition sponsored by Mr Foley from 17,312 petitioners requesting the House to reject any recommendations within the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report entitled "Regulating Adult Entertainment: A review of the live adult entertainment industry in Queensland" which expands the scope of this industry through legalisation of illegal activities and to endorse recommendations from the report which protect minors and the community through enhanced regulation, enforcement and penalties

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Bridge Renewal Program

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.36 am): Today is a great day for the future of regional Queensland. I am going to make an announcement to the parliament which I had intended to include in the mini budget on 25 October, but because of its significance to regional Queensland I will outline it today. Today is the beginning of the end for timber road bridges in regional Queensland. The government is proud to announce funding for the first five years of the Regional Bridge Renewal Program for roads that will total \$350 million.

This Smart State program will replace all 459 timber road bridges and some older concrete and steel structures in Queensland over the next 15 years. This program will be a massive boost to the economic and transport future of Queensland's regions and to the safety of the residents and businesses who drive on our regional road network. This program includes \$170 million in extra money over and above existing Main Roads allocations and the additional funding announced earlier this year under the accelerated road renewal program.

It is also a significant down payment on this government's Blueprint for the Bush and a sign of our ongoing commitment to regional Queensland. I say to our colleagues who are working on the Blueprint for the Bush that I intend to include it in that document as well, but this is a down payment on the blueprint.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on. Those opposite want to come in here and complain. Let me tell them a story about this. My government is committed to ensuring that everybody gets a fair go. When the minister for transport and I sat down to discuss this—and I sat down with him as Treasurer—we realised that most of these bridges were in National Party electorates. They are not in Labor electorates. Sometimes those opposite just whinge about anything. The first 17 bridges announced today were in the following electorates: Lockyer gets two, Callide gets three, Mirani gets three, Nanango gets two and there is one in Nicklin, one on the border of the Noosa and Gympie electorates, and one each in Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Maryborough, Southern Downs and Hinchinbrook. There are not a great number of Labor electorates in there. The point about this is that we are a government for all Queenslanders. That is what we are. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* details of the first 17 bridges identified for replacement so that everyone clearly understands where they are.

Leave granted.

Wide Bay Creek Bridge, Bauple-Woolooga Rd, Brooyar, Southern Queensland;
 Oakey Creek Bridge, Inglewood-Texas Rd, 5km northeast of Texas, Southern Queensland;
 Barambah Creek Bridge, Byee Rd, Byee, Southern Queensland;
 Three Moon Creek Bridge, Burnett Hwy, 2km northwest of Monto, Southern Queensland;
 Gilbert River Bridge, Burke Developmental Rd, 100km north of Normanton, North Queensland;

Gentle Annie Creek, Halifax-Lucinda Rd, 3km northeast of Halifax, North Queensland;
 Running Creek Bridge, Sarina-Homebush Rd, 16km west of Sarina, Central Queensland;
 David Burgess Bridge, Mackay-Eungella Rd, 58km west of Mackay, Central Queensland;
 Rockhampton-Ridgeland Rd bridge, 20km northwest of Rockhampton;
 Sandy Creek Bridge, Homebush Rd, Homebush, Central Queensland;
 Kin Kin No. 3 Bridge, Kin Kin Rd, 5km south of Kin Kin, South East Queensland;
 Jiggera Creek Bridge, Kilcoy-Murgon Rd, 50km northwest of Kilcoy, South East Queensland;
 Caboolture Creek Bridge, Yandina-Bli Bli Rd, 3km south east of Yandina, South East Queensland;
 New Country Bridge, Esk-Kilcoy Rd, 10km southwest of Kilcoy, South East Queensland;
 Ma Ma Creek Bridge, Gatton-Clifton Road, 20km south of Gatton in Southern Queensland;
 McCord Creek, Burnett Highway north of Eidsvold; and
 Dry Creek Bridge, 13km southwest of Gatton in Southern Queensland.

Mr BEATTIE: Bridges designed 50 and 60 years ago were built to the conditions of the time. As the Queensland economy grows, these structures will not be able to meet Queensland's future needs. This Regional Bridge Renewal Program will encompass any necessary improvements to approaches, alignment and flood immunity to bring the network up to contemporary standards. The opportunity will be there for innovative solutions like fibre composites to be included in the roll-out of this program.

When the transport minister, the minister for finance and I worked on the decision to do this we were totally committed, as the Minister for Health knows because he was also on the Cabinet Budget Review Committee that made the decision to see fibre composites rolled out. I know the member for Toowoomba North will endorse that and, indeed, so will the member for Toowoomba South because he understands the importance of that to Toowoomba. It is a very good program—and very strongly supported by my government, as he would understand.

Queensland's 34,000-kilometre state controlled road network plays a crucial role in both driving the state and regional economies and connecting our urban and rural communities. The majority of the state's 2,794 road bridges are modern, well-maintained and sufficient to meet the current and future transport task. In August, my government announced the Regional Bridge Renewal Program, a plan for the replacement of up to 100 high-priority bridges on the state controlled road network. At that time, we also set aside \$5 million for planning and design work this financial year to get the program under way. We also said we would come back with a list of the first bridges that would be targeted under this program.

Those priority bridges have been identified, and the transport and main roads minister, Paul Lucas, will continue to monitor these 17 bridges to ensure that they get priority treatment. Given the importance of these bridges to Queensland and regional Queensland in particular, we are going to go significantly further than this. The expanded Regional Bridge Renewal Program we are announcing today means we are looking not only to the state's needs today but also to the needs of Queensland tomorrow.

As I said, I had intended to include that in my mini budget as a down payment on the Blueprint for the Bush, but I just say to the people in the bush: this is how fair dinkum we are about ensuring you get a fair go—\$350 million over that period—and that is about as strong a commitment any government can give to ensure the bush gets a fair go.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Royal Flying Doctor Service, Rockhampton

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.40 am): This afternoon I, along with the health minister, will be commissioning a new aircraft for use by the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Rockhampton. This is the third plane purchased by the flying doctors with the \$24 million which my government provided last year to upgrade their fleet. The support we provide to the flying doctors reflects my government's recognition that it takes many different programs to meet the complex health needs of a state as vast as Queensland.

About 1,500 patients in central Queensland were transported by Royal Flying Doctor Service in 2004-05 and a similar number will benefit from the service this year. It is expected that the new Beechcraft Super King Air B200 will travel around 720,000 kilometres this year, helping to meet the health needs of people throughout central Queensland. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This aircraft was purchased in Wichita, USA, last year and has been undergoing its specialised fit-out since arriving in Queensland in December.

The aircraft is specially equipped with some of the best medical tools available and boasts state-of-art aero-design and machinery. It can comfortably hold patients on two stretchers, three flying doctors staff and a passenger such as a family member or friend of a patient.

Earlier this year, I unveiled the two other new aircraft, one operating out of Brisbane and the other based at Townsville.

It is truly a smart service, utilising smart equipment and smart, dedicated staff who perform a tremendous job.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.41 am): The federal government is creating an infrastructure bottleneck in Queensland with its Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Recently the administration of this act by the Commonwealth has come under challenge in the courts. Of particular importance to this region is the decision of the full Federal Court in the Nathan Dam case that requires indirect downstream impacts of infrastructure projects to be analysed in full even if there are, as in this case, effective state processes in place to assist and manage the uses as they occur.

It also requires assessment of the impact of the dam on the Great Barrier Reef, 500 kilometres away. My question to the House on these things is: is it reasonable to expect a proponent to anticipate all possible impacts from uses of the dam's water and all possible inputs into the Fitzroy River between the dam and the reef, and to model all their possible interactions over an indefinite period of time? Or, to put it another way, is this the legislative form of the philosophical conundrum known as the butterfly effect, where tiny movements may have important consequences elsewhere?

The Commonwealth environment minister is again in the courts defending a challenge to his decision not to require assessment of two new Queensland coalmines. The applicants in this case are seeking to extend the application of the Nathan Dam decision to these projects. It is in everybody's interests that major projects are subject to rigorous assessment to ensure that environmental impacts are fully understood and that there are appropriate mitigation strategies in place, but the processes in the EPBC Act provide almost unlimited opportunities for those who are opposed to a project for any number of reasons, be they commercial or ideological, to frustrate decision making to the point where the commercial opportunity is lost.

The act as it is currently drafted also frustrates good planning by limiting the ability of the Commonwealth to sign off on infrastructure plans that are needed for the longer term, no matter how much work the state has done to find solutions that best address social and environmental objectives. The Commonwealth government has been very vocal about the imperative for this country to remove infrastructure bottlenecks that constrain our export performance.

In the spirit of this national objective, I have written to the Prime Minister today outlining the initiatives the state has taken in this respect and encouraging him to take action to address some of the restraints that are entirely within the Commonwealth's responsibility, particularly those in the EPBC Act. So far the state coalition has been totally negative in this parliament. I call on the state coalition to work positively for Queensland by pursuing its federal coalition partners to amend the act so that worthy projects can go ahead.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Christopher Tennant Aviation Centre

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.43 am): This evening I will be officially opening the new Hawker Pacific engineering and maintenance facility at Cairns airport. The Christopher Tennant Aviation Centre has been named in honour of the late Christopher Tennant, a former chairman of Hawker Pacific. The expanded facilities will help the Cairns service attract more heavy maintenance and avionics work from South-East Asia, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. Mr Speaker, as you know, under my government's Smart State strategy we have seen the creation of 6,000 new jobs in aviation in Queensland. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Hawker Pacific has established 16 facilities around the world and five of them are located in Queensland.

Other aviation companies that have moved to the Smart State or made significant expansions here include Boeing, Virgin Blue, Smiths Aerospace, Qantas, Sikorsky, EADS, Raytheon, Tasman Aviation, Pratt & Whitney and Asia Pacific Aerospace.

Recognising that to support a growing industry, we need to ensure there are skilled workers available my Government has also committed more than \$15 million to Aviation Australia.

This highly respected training centre has already provided training for more than 1,000 people from 50 organisations.

Aviation Australia has a strong presence in Cairns through the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre.

The Cairns Aviation Skills Centre is the premier training centre for aircraft engineers outside of Brisbane.

Of the current class of 16 students that began in January, eight have already found employment, before the course has finished and four of those are headed to Hawker Pacific and Australian Avionics.

Three weeks ago, another class of 21 students commenced the Certificate IV in Aeroskills (Mechanical) Course. Fourteen of them are Indigenous and they come from as far away as Sarina in the south, to Yam Island in the north.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Rockhampton

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.44 am): Some governments, as we know, operate behind closed doors in secret without fair elections and without the consent of the population. In Queensland we must do everything we can to ensure that our democracy blooms and blossoms and remains as healthy as possible. It means we have to do whatever we can to demonstrate that we have an open government, that the parliament is an open process and that all Queenslanders have equal access to the parliament. There are some cynics who view this week's parliamentary sitting in central Queensland as some sort of stunt. I draw their attention to the state of democracy in the United States, where only a minority of people vote because people believe they cannot make a difference and because many people are baffled by the horse trading that goes on in American politics. We have brought parliament to the people of central Queensland so that they can see for themselves how democracy works. If there are school students here today—which there are—if they can now have a better understanding of parliament than they had before last week then we will have succeeded.

There are many people I would like to thank for making a very valuable contribution to this democratic process. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you. I also want to thank all of the staff of Parliament House, from the Clerk to the attendants. None of this would have been possible without all of their work. I want to thank the Hansard staff. I want to thank all members of parliament. I want to thank the police. The police have been tremendously helpful and good natured in ensuring everybody's safety. I am delighted that they took some photos of the Speaker's chair. I just wish some of us had been here to participate in it. The police have done a magnificent job, and any criticism of the police is just a nonsense. We should just ignore it.

I am also delighted to see that we have had 1,848 people visit. I notice there was some comment made in the *Courier-Mail* this morning and a photograph of an empty gallery at that time. It would have been nice if the *Courier-Mail* had photographed the full gallery last night. I am told there were almost 500 people here and I think that was a good indication of the interest. The people of central Queensland have embraced the concept and they have given up their leisure time to come and see it. School principals and teachers have made it possible for thousands of young students to find out what parliament is, and hopefully this will be a lasting memory for many.

I do make this point, though: it is not just about the formal sitting of parliament. I would hope that the Leader of the Opposition has had a similar experience, because I know I have had an opportunity to talk to a wide range of people outside the parliament itself, and that is an important opportunity. I know that there is a protest on today. That is good. That gives people the chance to come along and express their view. That is what democracy is all about. We should never be concerned about people coming along and having their 55c worth. To the member who suggested it to me, Robert Schwarten—

Mr Schwarten: You've got the phantom ring on today.

Mr BEATTIE: I have got the phantom ring on. To local members Paul Hoolihan and Jim Pearce, who have all worked very hard for this, I say well done. It was a great idea and it has been a great success.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, I acknowledge to the gallery the students and staff of Emmaus College, St Mary's, North Rockhampton State High School, Rockhampton State High School and St Joseph's. Welcome to parliament.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Racing Industry

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (9.47 am): All within the electorate of Rockhampton, Mr Speaker. I am pleased to report to the House that racing is on track in Rockhampton at Callaghan Park, with the numbers of starters and wagering up. This month the Rockhampton Jockey Club announced an operating surplus of more than \$302,000—considerably higher than previous years. In fact, confidence is so good that the club's flagship Fourx Rockhampton Gold Cup—it is a 2,000-metre race—will be for the first time carrying a \$100,000 purse as part of the Winter Carnival at Callaghan Park next year. This will no doubt attract even more punters to the event next year.

This strong financial result is particularly good news as there have been numerous improvements to Callaghan Park during the past year including on-course training facilities. A lunging yard and a new 10-horse Ezywalker horse exercise machine have been installed. This will help trainers who have been experiencing difficulties with a shortage of track work riders. The club's chairman, Dr Peter Dunbar,

reported to the annual general meeting that the club is also considering installing an equine swimming pool at Callaghan Park racecourse. I am aware that Queensland Racing is looking closely at this proposal and other such capital works improvements to Callaghan Park.

Rockhampton produced 3,100 starters for the industry last financial year. In fact, Rockhampton had the highest average starters per race of the three regional TAB clubs at 10.4 starters per race during the last financial year. Today's meeting at Callaghan Park is no exception. There have been 97 acceptances received including 28 starters for the maiden handicap. This strong field has enabled Queensland Racing to split the race in two and run a nine-race card.

I am also pleased to inform the House that Rocky's racecourse manager Graeme Green recently won the 2005 Queensland outstanding achievement award at the annual national conference of the Australian Racecourse Managers Association. This award acknowledges Mr Green's contribution to running Callaghan Park, which is recognised as the most raced-on turf racecourse in Australia. These achievements show that confidence in the country racing industry is strong, despite the best efforts of some people to run down country racing with their constant doom-and-gloom rhetoric.

The Rockhampton Jockey Club Chairman, Dr Peter Dunbar, and the hardworking team at Callaghan Park deserve congratulations for the club's performance and for their contribution to racing in central Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yeppoon Hospital

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.50 am): I have great news for the people of the Keppel electorate. The Beattie government will honour its election commitment to go ahead with the new hospital at Yeppoon for Capricorn Coast communities. Since I became health minister I have learnt just how important this project is for the people of the Capricorn Coast. Paul Hoolihan has made himself an absolute pest, phoning me almost on a weekly basis with respect to delivering on this election commitment. Our government has been—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: The members opposite do not like it, do they? They do not like seeing projects delivered for rural and regional communities. They actually do not like to see us getting on with the job of delivering new health infrastructure. They absolutely hate it. I reflected, as Mr Horan came up with that pathetic excuse this morning about funding for Rockhampton and Eventide Nursing Home, because, truth be told, when he was health minister, what happened to the funding reduction for Rockhampton Hospital? Where did it go? It went into his electorate for the Toowoomba Hospital.

Miss Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore, I warn you under 253.

Mr ROBERTSON: It was an absolute disgrace. Our government has been working closely with the member for Keppel and Livingstone Shire Council to find the best possible site for the new hospital. There have been a lot of passionate and diverse views expressed regarding its location. As an open and consultative government, we have listened intently to those views.

Today I am pleased to inform the House that negotiations with the local council have now been resolved and we have reduced the number of potential sites for the new hospital from 11 down to our preferred site. The site is a vacant greenfield site just a few kilometres from the centre of Yeppoon and it has no demolition requirements. The government is currently negotiating with the landowner to acquire the site.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I warn you under 253.

Mr ROBERTSON: We have made a formal offer for the land. These dealings are proceeding so, as members would appreciate, it would be inappropriate to identify the site until such time as negotiations are completed.

Much has been said about the existing hospital site. It is a beachside location that may be prone to flooding in big storms and cyclones—something, as the former minister for natural resources, I am very well aware of. In fact, some of the studies that were completed that informed us about the inappropriateness of the current location in the longer term occurred during the time that I was minister for natural resources. It would have been inappropriate for me to have ignored those scientific studies. Clearly, a new hospital on that site would not have been an acceptable outcome in the long term for the people of Yeppoon. In a time of crisis or medical emergency, the last thing the region needs is a hospital that is cut off and unable to deal with urgent cases. Without exaggerating, surely we have understood and appreciated the learnings that have come from the recent disaster in New Orleans.

The existing site also does not have any potential for future expansion. Our preferred greenfield site would not present these problems. It is in a safe environment and, importantly, it can accommodate future growth. This is not a project for the next election; it is a key investment for the next 20, 30 and 40 years. Also as previously announced, the state is proposing to transfer the 72 nursing home places to a not-for-profit organisation but only after comprehensive community consultation.

Our government is fully committed to a hospital for Yeppoon and the Capricorn Coast communities. Sure, there has been some argy-bargy in the community on some aspects of the project which has caused some delays, but that will not weaken our resolve or determination to get the job done.

I want to thank the member for Keppel, who has lobbied hard to ensure that this project goes ahead. He has consulted widely to seek community views on the capabilities of the new hospital, and we believe this new site will be able to accommodate its requirements. Yeppoon will have a new hospital with better capabilities, and that can only mean better health services for the people of Yeppoon.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Business Environment, Central Queensland

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (9.54 am): Central Queensland boasts a dynamic business environment. Its companies are sharing in the region's successes. Over the past few days we have detailed as much as \$8 billion in potential projects and these central Queensland firms are set to be even greater winners from this investment. For example, John Holland SMP Structured Mechanical Process, which has its head office here in Rockhampton, has more than doubled its central Queensland work force in the past 12 months from 48 to 102. I met David Grenfell from John Holland yesterday when I launched the \$3 million Central Queensland Manufacturing Region Initiative. John Holland SMP works with 16 school based trainees and seven apprentices and is actively involved in promoting careers in manufacturing. It recently won a \$20 million contract to supply and install a conveyor system for the Hay Point Coal Terminal, and it also won the contract for the shiploader installation for the Central Queensland Port Authority at Gladstone.

I also met with Gary Teys of Teys Bros. Teys in Rockhampton is a major regional employer with 580 permanent employees. Teys Bros reopened its Lakes Creek meat processing plant in July last year and has invested over \$2 million in plant infrastructure upgrades to increase efficiency. This is a major exporter currently supplying all major meat markets throughout the world including Japan, Korea, North America and the European Union.

Hastings Deering, based in Rockhampton, also recently invested heavily in an expansion of its facilities. The company has completed a \$4 million expansion and plans to spend a further \$6 million on upgrades. Hastings Deering is the Caterpillar dealer and covers Queensland, the Northern Territory, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. With a work force of 346, Dave Hotham and his team are to be congratulated for employing an extra 50 workers in the past year.

The JM Kelly Group offers a regional success story that is hard to beat. It is the ninth largest commercial builder in the state and has an annual turnover of \$142 million—an increase of 30 per cent over last year. Currently JM Kelly employs 402 people—an increase of 17 per cent over the previous year.

Anyone who has met Geoff Murphy while they have been in town in the last week does not need to wonder why he has a constant smile on his face. These achievements come on top of the government's decision to provide an additional \$505,000 to his Beef Expo 2006. I think it is important for me to put on the record that one of the great achievements of JM Kelly's company is the construction of the Pilbeam Theatre, the site of this week's historic sitting of parliament.

QMAG's, Queensland Magnesia's, planned \$50 million expansion of its Parkhurst plant will mean 150 jobs during next year's construction phase and a further 50 permanent jobs. QMAG currently produces 200,000 tonnes of magnesia a year with the expansion set to see this double. QMAG has been working with the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation to introduce efficiencies to its Parkhurst plant. Results include \$100,000 of savings in operating costs and more jobs. QMAG now employs approximately 300 staff and contractors—200 at the Parkhurst plant and 100 at the mine site. The company is also investing \$7 million in its open-cut magnesite mining operation at Kunwarara, 70 kilometres north of Rockhampton.

Central Queensland is awash with hardworking companies that are creating jobs for local residents and central Queensland families and helping to build the economy of this important region and indeed the state and the nation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rockhampton Stock Squad

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.58 am): As we are in the beef capital and it is Brahman Week, it is timely that I acknowledge the achievements of the Rockhampton Stock Squad in cracking down on cattle duffing and stock related offences in central Queensland. I know this is a matter of importance to the member for Gregory who, on Tuesday night, made a point of praising the Rockhampton Stock Squad in parliament. It is also, of course, a matter of importance to all stock owners in central Queensland. That is why I want to announce some of the very significant work by this squad, which leads the country in terms of detecting and preventing stock related crime in rural communities.

In fact, with 33 plain-clothes officers policing an area of 1.7 million square kilometres we have the largest specialist Stock Squad in Australia. Over the past 18 months, the Rockhampton Stock Squad has conducted a number of successful operations. Targeting stock theft, permit breaches and animal protection offences, these operations have resulted in numerous charges and cautions. One such example is Operation Cutlass, which just last month resulted in the seizure of 33 cattle from the Gracemere saleyards and three Springsure properties. Operation Cutlass was initiated after Stock Squad officers seized three cattle, valued at \$3,600, at the Gracemere saleyards in mid-September.

A joint operation involving seven plain-clothes officers from the Brisbane and Rockhampton stock squads followed, and raids were conducted on three properties in the Springsure area. Over six days, the Stock Squad officers carried out full musters across the properties on horseback. The musters resulted in the seizure of a branding iron and a further 30 cattle, bringing the total value of stock seized to more than \$20,000. Police investigations into this matter are continuing.

In the coming months, the Stock Squad will conduct a series of random truck stop operations across central Queensland to target branding, permit and waybill breaches, cattle duffing and animal protection offences. These follow on from a successful random truck stop operation in Banana in September, which detected more than 100 offences under the Stock Act. In addition to random truck stop operations, Stock Squad officers are determined to continue their crackdown on stock theft.

While cattle duffing is an age-old crime, it is a modern-day menace that costs Queensland farmers millions of dollars each year. It is a low act that deprives farming families of their livelihood. Statewide, cattle duffing cost Queensland farmers \$3.3 million last financial year, with 186 reported incidents across the state involving 7,000 head of livestock. Between July 2004 and March this year there were 28 reported incidents of stock theft in central Queensland, with stock losses estimated at more than \$22,000.

The Rockhampton Stock Squad recently put the brakes on an alleged cattle duffing ring during Operation Bravo Ace. This resulted in the recovery of 233 head of stolen cattle valued at \$200,000. Detectives commenced Operation Bravo Ace in July 2003 after 63 head of stolen cattle were located at the Gracemere saleyards complex. Investigating officers mustered dozens of pastoral holdings, inspected thousands of cattle, conducted DNA tests for progeny traceback, obtained statements from more than 80 witnesses and examined numerous volumes of livestock, saleyard and financial records. As a result, police located a further 170 head of stolen cattle and have charged three people with a total of 53 offences relating to the theft, including stock stealing and fraud.

This is a tremendous outcome, not only for the Stock Squad but also for rural communities across central Queensland. A large part of the Rockhampton Stock Squad's success is the result of proactive partnerships with property owners and industry bodies. The officers not only play an important role in protecting people's livelihoods but also help to protect one of Queensland's largest primary industries.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Minister for Emergency Services, I recognise and welcome into the gallery the staff and students of St Joseph's School and also the staff and students of Emmaus College.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fire Season

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.02 am): From today we can expect fire weather conditions to reach extreme levels in southern Queensland. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is urgently warning Queenslanders that conditions throughout the south-east coastal areas and the Darling Downs will be extremely hot and dry, with mostly north-west to westerly winds. The temperature forecast for today is low to mid-30s. Humidity will be low at around 20 per cent. The weather bureau warns that wind gusts may be up to 40 per cent higher than predicted. These are perfect conditions for fire. The forecast for Saturday is even worse—extreme fire conditions for all areas south of Rockhampton, with very strong winds and temperatures in the mid-30s and less than 15 per cent relative humidity.

When high temperatures are mixed with low humidity and high winds, that produces an extremely dangerous climate for fire. With these conditions predicted, the Rural Fire Service has requested that all fire wardens in the Kilcoy, Kingaroy and Nanango shires not issue any permits to light fires in their areas. All existing permits to burn have been cancelled due to the predicted severe fire weather conditions.

As people in the Rockhampton district know, there is a lot of fuel in and around Rocky drying out fast as we come into summer. People in central Queensland also need to heed these warnings with regard to extreme fire danger. We have seen a significant number of bush, grass and house fires threaten people's lives and property throughout the state in recent weeks. It is only due to the excellent work of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Rural Fire Service crews that property damage has been minimal. I would like to again acknowledge and thank the firefighters and SES volunteers for their magnificent efforts in protecting people and their property. They have been out working in recent weeks. It is through their efforts that there has not been more stock and property lost.

With a hot summer predicted this year, there is likely to be little rest for our firefighters. We all need to take personal responsibility for keeping our homes and properties safe from fire. I ask members to warn their constituents to check their house insurance policies. Property costs have gone up and building costs have gone up, so they need to check their insurance. Having a fire is bad enough but not having enough insurance to cover the property is worse.

While the Department of Emergency Services is well prepared for the upcoming season, it is vital that people living in high-risk areas do not wait until a bushfire is on their doorstep before taking action. Queenslanders should prepare their homes by clearing gutters of leaf litter, removing rubbish and debris from their properties—and I ask people to not burn that rubbish, as some have been doing—keeping grass well maintained and storing flammable items and stockpiles of timber well away from their homes.

I will give a quick update that I received from Ian Mitchell, the acting commissioner, this morning. He tells me that conditions will continue to worsen from this afternoon into Saturday. The conditions are serious from Emerald to the border. There are two regions on level 2 fire alert. Level 3 is the highest level. If conditions continue to worsen we will go to a level 3 alert. In Brisbane and the south-east there are specialist strike teams on call. Staff are maintaining regional fire coordinating centres at Springwood and Southport. An extra helicopter has been brought on line at Archerfield to respond if needed. Air attack planes have been put on alert. Our staff will meet again this afternoon. Our state operation centre is on low alert at the moment. We will go to full alert if needs be.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Student Bricklayers

Hon. TA BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.06 am): I have previously informed honourable members of the exciting progress being made in the government's \$1 billion three-year SmartVET skilling strategy. Today I have news of an outstanding program just beginning in Rockhampton involving industry, local high school students and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. It is called Building Better Skills Bricklaying and was established to attract students in years 11 and 12 into the bricklaying trade.

A statewide project, it has overall funding of some \$2 million, of which \$612,000 was provided by the SmartVET Accelerated Apprenticeships Program. The driving force behind the program is the Clay Brick and Paver Association of Queensland, which has the support of Construction Training Queensland. Because Central Queensland TAFE has such close industry ties, Rockhampton students are among the first of some 500 young Queenslanders who will participate.

The program fits neatly with the philosophy of the state government's Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiative, to increase access to training and employment pathway options for 15- to 17-year olds. Under the bricklaying initiative, around 50 local students will attend three-day workshops at TAFE to gain basic skills and get a feel for the industry. From this group, the most promising will be offered further training leading to a pre-apprenticeship bricklaying qualification.

The chosen group will gain practical experience through vocational placements in local industry for one day a week, and spend the remaining three days at school. Eventually they will have skills that could help shorten their apprenticeship by up to a year. I would like to congratulate industry and TAFE on their collaborative and forward-thinking approach to creating pathways into apprenticeships for young Queenslanders. I wish the young people good luck in their hands-on work this week. With a booming building industry their job prospects are second to none!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Child Protection, Indigenous Children

Hon. MF REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.09 am): Addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and young people in the child protection system is one of my highest priorities, but this is an issue that neither I nor my department can deal with alone. We rely on successful partnerships with many Indigenous communities and organisations. I am happy to say that the relationship we have with Central Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Association, CQAICCA, is an excellent example of this. I want to commend the CEO, Donna Klein, her staff, the chair and the board of CQAICCA who have been tireless advocates for children here in central Queensland.

CQAICCA is an example of an Indigenous child protection agency that is productively engaged in the reforms and has been working closely with us to ensure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable Indigenous children and young people. CQAICCA has been at the centre of many success stories, working closely with Indigenous communities, families and children to ensure the best possible outcomes. The work of CQAICCA in the local community is invaluable in ensuring that all children and young people live in safe environments where they are able to achieve their full potential. Again, I commend Donna Klein and her team for the fantastic work they do for children in this region and for working so closely and productively with my department during this important era of reform.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Steggall, Mr P

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (10.10 am): I advise the House that I approached the Minister for Emergency Services on Wednesday the 28th in his office—A13—at 6.15 about an air ambulance for Peter Steggall. He advised me that he would look into the issue. Our offices communicated the next day. At 5 pm on the 29th the minister rang me and advised me that Dr FitzGerald and another doctor had contacted the Canberra Hospital and there was no clinical reason for Peter's air ambulance to the PA. I said to the minister that that is not what I had been told about Peter and that I would look into it. I then spoke to the minister in the House at 6 pm on the 29th and advised him that Peter Steggall had been in intensive care for 20 days and that the PA was ready to accept him to acute care and rehabilitation.

Dr Damian McMahon from the Canberra Hospital had advised me that it would be idiocy not to have Peter returned by air ambulance. I told this to the minister. The minister has a well-resourced ministerial office and I supplied his ministerial office with all of the information and emails I had. I could find out and confirm that Mr Peter Steggall was in need of an air ambulance. I told the minister this, yet this minister could not confirm what I had told him. Mrs Steggall had to guarantee the \$5,000 for the air ambulance. This is mismanagement by this underperforming, second-rate government.

TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (10.11 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Travelsafe Committee's report No. 43, *Driving on empty: fatigue driving in Queensland*. I also table a separate document that is the summary of conclusions and table of recommendations from this report.

In this report the committee examines the contribution of driver fatigue to road crashes in Queensland and makes recommendations that aim to reduce these types of crashes. As a point of interest, during the year 2004 on the Peak Downs Highway, which is west of Mackay, between Clermont and Mackay itself there were 43 crashes and 20 of those crashes were identified as being fatigue related. On the Dingo-Mount Flora Road north of Middlemount there were 14 crashes and eight of those crashes were identified as being fatigue related. This says that we have a real problem on our roads.

Fatigue driving is a serious problem. Fatigue was a factor in at least 13 per cent of fatal crashes in Queensland during 2003. I say 'at least', because we do not know the exact number of crashes that are caused by fatigue each year. Current statistics almost certainly underrepresent the problem. This is because fatigue is much more difficult to measure than blood alcohol levels and the effect of other drugs. It is time that we had a standard national definition of fatigue to develop a clearer picture of how serious this problem really is. The committee believes that more needs to be done to tackle fatigue related crashes.

After a careful examination of the issues, the committee is making 31 recommendations to reduce these crashes. In particular, the committee has strong concerns about the impact of fatigue on people who work long hours and travel long distances. A person who stays awake for over 17 hours—say, getting up at 6 am for work and then driving home at 12 midnight—has the same crash risk as someone

with a blood alcohol content of 0.05. The benefits of sleep cannot be underestimated. Sleep is the only adequate method of reducing fatigue. The recommendations in this report are aimed at promoting the overall health benefits of sleep and raising awareness in the community about the dangers of driving fatigued. I commend the committee's report to the House, and I thank committee members and the committee secretariat for their commitment to the task.

PALM ISLAND SELECT COMMITTEE

Report

Resumed from 30 September (see p. 3069).

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (10.14 am): I was privileged to be asked to be a part of the Palm Island Select Committee chaired by the member for Southport. The membership of that committee consisted of the members for Robina, Kallangur, Springwood, Toowoomba North and Nanango. This report is about making a difference to the tragic lives of many people on Palm Island. The 65 recommendations that this committee arrived at were not arrived at easily. The issues of governance, service provision, housing, land title, youth, police, child safety, alcohol, drug abuse and transport were just some of the many issues that were canvassed by this committee in the short time available to it.

I say to the chair, Peter Lawlor, the member for Southport: thank you for the very open and very good way that you managed this committee and gave the committee the opportunity of pursuing these issues to make a difference to the people of Palm Island. I also recognise today the work of Kerryn Newton, Karen O'Brien and Jodie Martin on that committee.

This report is not about a blank cheque to the people of Palm Island; this is a responsible document to get the lives of these people to a standard conforming with Australian standards that the majority of us on the mainland enjoy on a day-to-day basis. The committee has identified many areas of dysfunction. Sometimes the truth hurts, but it is paramount that government agencies play a more prominent role in the resurgence of a quality of life on Palm Island. Hopefully this report will be a template for other Indigenous communities in Queensland.

One of the most important recommendations of this report—and I trust that every member of parliament will read this report—is recommendation 65, that the government report back to the parliament 12 months after the tabling of this report on progress that has been made. The issues on Palm Island have been in a mode of dysfunction over a long period of time. Whilst we evaluated and analysed many aspects of Palm Island, it was not an easy task. The alcohol management program has to be implemented. We have to see that those management strategies are put in place. At the same time, child safety and housing are some aspects that this committee identified as priorities. On Palm Island up to 16 or 18 people live in a house. I know that the minister and all ministers will be showing cooperation and understanding of this report. I recommend that everybody in this parliament read this report. I am very privileged to have been part of this committee.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.17 am): It is a great pleasure to support the tabling of this report. I join with the member for Gregory in acknowledging the great contribution made by the chair, Peter Lawlor. I also acknowledge the member for Gregory's own contribution. It was a great bipartisan effort from him and other members, including the member for Robina. I will not go through the names of the members and the support staff, but I certainly support what he said in relation to those people. However, I do want to acknowledge the cooperation given and effort made by all witnesses who appeared before the committee and the worth of the many submissions that were lodged with the committee during the time of its meeting. With regard to the report itself, its content and its value will speak for itself, and I certainly urge members and those outside this parliament who are interested in this aspect of social justice dealing with Indigenous people to read the report.

Palm Island is a beautiful place populated by beautiful people. But it was an eye-opener to visit there on occasions to see the conditions in which many are living and to highlight the problems—problems in relation to child safety, housing, health, education, alcohol, employment, development, governance, transport and, of course, land tenure. They are immense and varied problems that will take a lot of effort to solve.

In many ways Palm Island's condition has been a blight on the reputation of this grand state. I congratulate the Premier on addressing this issue finally. I know that there is tremendous goodwill among the ministers that we have spoken to to rectify these problems. This has been a very memorable and worthwhile experience as a member of parliament. I think when my time in this place comes to an end I will look back with a great deal of pride on being involved in that committee. As I said, I commend the report to all members. I commend it to the Premier. I look forward to receiving the government's response in a few months time.

Debate, on motion of Mr Shine, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Rockhampton Hospital

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.20 am): Last night in this parliament in a debate on providing the people of Rockhampton and 10 other areas around Queensland with an opportunity to tell their story about their concerns with the health system in this state, we saw a typical hunky-dory approach from this state government. That is what the people of Bundaberg heard when concerns were raised by patients, their families and staff of Queensland Health over the past couple of years. Those people heard from members of this government that everything is hunky-dory. They heard from the member for Bundaberg that everything is hunky-dory, that the people who were raising the complaints were whingers and that everything was fine.

Last night in state parliament we heard exactly the same thing from the member for Rockhampton. He said that everything is hunky-dory. We have a hunky-dory government with a hunky-dory approach to helping Queensland. Last night the member for Rockhampton said that everything was hunky-dory at the Rockhampton Base Hospital. I can tell members that this morning our phones have been running hot from current and former staff of that hospital who have been wanting to tell their story and who need the protection of a royal commission. Those people have some quite serious and horrific stories to tell, particularly about workplace bullying and some of the issues at that hospital. An opportunity has been denied to those people to tell their story by this government with its hunky-dory approach.

Those people have been saying that they do not have the opportunity to tell their story before the Davies commission because the terms of reference are not broad enough. Commissioner Davies himself has confirmed that. Members should read his letter of 21 September to the Premier in which he said that those people do not have an opportunity to do that.

What we have from this government is typical. It lies and denies problems. It lies and denies. So the lying and the denials—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, withdraw the word 'lie'.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw the word. The denial—

Mr SPEAKER: Withdraw the word 'lie'.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I said I withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: You withdraw the word 'lie'.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw the word 'lie'. I thought I had said that. For the 10th time, I will say it.

Nambour Hospital

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (10.23 am): There are thousands of good-news outcomes happening every day in hospitals, nursing homes, community health centres and private nursing homes in Queensland as a result of the expertise and the commitment of doctors, nurses and allied health workers. For the information of members, I table a letter from a new constituent of mine who expresses her appreciation of the treatment that she experienced recently at Nambour Hospital. The letter is sincere, from the heart and a more realistic reflection of the good work being done in our hospitals than that being afforded to us by members of the opposition.

I do not have the time to read all of the letter so I will just quote a few pieces of it. The letter is there for all members to see. It states—

This letter is to praise all staff who were involved with me at Nambour Hospital.

...

The staff were excellent... Their professionalism and people skills were above and beyond my expectations.

The calming nature of these people put faith and trust in me as the patient. I was completely trusting of the staff.

My constituent had the following to say of her surgeon—

...you are truly a wonderful surgeon.

I truly believe that we hear only about the bad things that go wrong. If all the people that had good things to say about our public hospital system stepped forward and put pen to paper to say thank you, we would all be pleasantly surprised at the ratio of bad to good.

We all hear too often about things going wrong. Let's hear about the great things that happen in our public health system too. It's time Australians spoke up and took the time to say thank you!

Thank you—I have every faith in our public health system.

Housing, Gladstone Electorate

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.24 am): Residents and businesses alike in my electorate welcome the announcements made this week by the Premier. Although these projects were already known to the community, their elevation to projects of state significance afforded additional impetus to development. The port of Gladstone expansion of itself does not impact on the residents in the same way as would a new project with airborne or waterborne pollutants. However, any project will heighten the infrastructure needs and housing costs of residents.

During the last construction boom housing rentals rose beyond affordability for many residents. Sadly, more families than I would like to list were forced to leave the district to find more affordable places in which to live. That is a sad dislocation for families who have invested in their home and in their city. Although the costs of rentals have settled somewhat, with a new round of projects on the horizon rent rises will start from an already inflated base. Therefore, it is critical that the government ensures that steps are taken in the lead time to the commencement of construction for this infrastructure to be provided.

During the last construction boom, 20 houses were eventually relocated to Gladstone and refurbished. Those were welcome but were available towards the end of demand and not at the peak of the stress that was felt by residents. A number of new estates have also been opened up. However, the homes in those estates are often beyond the means of families on fixed incomes who are competing in the market with those who are on construction money.

The full construction of roads such as Kirkwood Road will also be essential to ensure the safe transfer of residents across the city. New developments at the back of Clinton and Trees Estate will need alternative accesses to emergency services as a single access point is potentially dangerous in an emergency situation.

In tandem with these announcements then must come a commitment by the government to fund this infrastructure to ensure that there is a seamless transition from the current situation to one of construction pressure and stress. I commend the government for the announcements but look forward to its support.

Yeppoon Hospital

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (10.26 am): This week in this parliament the issue of the Yeppoon Hospital has been aired by many. It had been made a political football by many people. I say to them today that it has stopped. Stopped is the word. We heard the Minister for Health announce that a new site for the promised Capricorn Coast health facility had been determined. The minister's announcement has scored a try for the people of the Capricorn Coast. I believe they will be very supportive of the final proposals. The site was identified by me with the minister and Queensland Health staff. I have been called a pest by the minister. If that is what I am, then that is what I have to be and I will keep that up.

Mr Barton: You're a likeable pest.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I take that interjection from the minister. The exact site is unable to be outlined, but the minister has indicated that he is hopeful of turning the sod before Christmas, and I will be there with him.

The people of Keppel placed their faith in the Beattie Labor government by electing me to be a member of that government. Today's announcement, along with the many other benefits that have been brought to the Keppel electorate, has returned the faith of those people. I thank particularly the health minister and the minister for public works and housing and also the many other ministers and their staff members for showing that the Beattie government makes commitments to Queensland communities and keeps those commitments.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Evans, Mr D

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the case of the late Doug Evans from Rockhampton and his family, some of whom are here today and have given consent for this matter to be raised in parliament. Doug Evans died more than a year ago from a form of cancer that had spread to his brain. Because it was thought that it was genetic, the family, fearing for their own health, agreed to have brain matter removed for tests beyond the normal autopsy process. These test results were promised 48 weeks ago. Why is the family still waiting for these results? Why has the family been charged a freedom of information application fee for tests they own? Why was the bill sent to the dead man instead of his living next of kin on 28 September of this year in this letter? Will the minister apologise to this family for the shabby way that it has been treated by his government? Will he immediately release those test results and provide the assurance that that family needs to have peace of mind?

Mr ROBERTSON: I would like to thank the honourable member for that question. Despite him suggesting that the family is in the audience here today and despite what he said that he has authority to raise this matter—and I do not suggest for one moment that that is not otherwise the case—it would not be appropriate for me to discuss in such a forum as this the particulars of that case. Nor would he expect me to be aware of this particular matter out of the many thousands of people of Queensland with whom the Queensland Health system deals on a daily basis. Nevertheless, accepting what he says at face value, I make this offer: to meet with him and the family immediately at the completion of question time. Along with staff from my office we will sit down with those people and we will work through these issues. I am disturbed by what he has said, and if I can be of assistance to these people then I am more than happy to. I make the offer to the Leader of the Opposition that at the conclusion of question time we meet with this family and discuss these issues.

Queensland Health

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is to the Premier. Last night the Premier rejected an attempt to have Commissioner Davies' suggested options for concern about the Rockhampton Base Hospital to be heard before a royal commission—a similar plea to that which he made in relation to 10 other hospitals and mental health units. The local member for Rockhampton, Robert Schwarten, has refused to admit those problems, but our phones, as I said before, have been running hot with former and current staff wishing to tell their stories before the protection of a royal commission—staff like the manager for medical office recruitment—

Mr SPEAKER: What is the question, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Staff like the Manager for Medical Officer Recruitment, Fiona Bridges, bullied out of the Rocky hospital; staff like Dr Don Kane, attacked by Minister Schwarten—

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, what is the question?

Mr SPRINGBORG: We have—

Mr SPEAKER: Ask the question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Speaker, to understand the issue you have to know the people who have contacted us. We have Fiona Bridges bullied out of Rocky hospital; staff like Dr Don Kane—

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I have asked you for the last time to please ask the question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I ask the Premier: given his shoot the messenger approach and the 'they are just whingers' approach in relation to anyone who raises concerns about the Queensland health system, what do these people have to do and what options do they have open to have their issues properly addressed with the protection of a royal commission?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The answer is simple. Peter Forster has conducted a detailed assessment of the health system, and the administrative issues that were raised in relation to the Rockhampton Base Hospital were considered as part of that review. Indeed, the matters raised involving Commissioner Davies—the complaint that came in relation to that hospital—were sent to Peter Forster, and I did that. In other words, they were considered. In the past they were considered as part of the Peter Forster review, and that is something that is now on the parliamentary record. I will not deal with the Leader of the Opposition's misrepresentation of Commissioner Davies. We dealt with that yesterday and that is on the record, so I will not waste time on it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order. That is simply untrue. These matters were not dealt with because this commissioner does not have the power to deal with them.

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

Mr BEATTIE: As I was saying, those issues that were raised in relation to administrative issues were properly within the domain of Peter Forster and he has reported on them. The second thing is that the Leader of the Opposition asked a question in relation to what happens from here. Out of the Forster review there have been a number of recommendations. One is a new code of conduct. The health minister has made reference to the new code of conduct and on Tuesday tabled the draft code of conduct. There is also a new complaints process. That complaints process will deal with people within the health system in addition to patients. So anyone at Rockhampton Base Hospital or any other hospital in the state will have an opportunity to raise those issues when the new complaints system is established.

So the position is, as I said before, that Peter Forster was dealing with the future—that is, what happened in the system and how to improve it. He has reported on that and we will implement those recommendations. Commissioner Davies is dealing with what happened in the past, and he will report at an appropriate time. Let me make it absolutely clear to the parliament: this government is going to get on with the job. We are going to improve those areas of the health system that need to be improved.

I refer the Leader of the Opposition to an opinion piece by Hedley Thomas in today's *Courier-Mail*. Let me make this point: Hedley Thomas has been one of the strongest critics of this government on health. No-one could say that Hedley Thomas is in the government's pocket. Rather, he has been one of our strongest critics. I think it would be appropriate if those opposite listen to him. He says—

There comes a time when even the Opposition should admit enough is enough ... and start joining in a constructive process to restore the faith of staff and the general public.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to continue to try to wreck Queensland Health, then so be it. He has got to be part of the rebuilding.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunnginham.

Mr BEATTIE: All of his attempts in parliament this week—and we saw it this morning—have been to continue to drag through the negativity rather than be part of the solution to improve the system. He is part of the problem; he is not part of the solution.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham, I warn you under standing order 253.

Mr BEATTIE: Even the independent commentators are now saying enough is enough. If he will not listen to me, he should listen to one of our strongest critics, Hedley Thomas.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Mansfield, I welcome to and acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of the staff and students of the North Rockhampton State High School, Central Queensland University, Emmaus College year 9, Jody and Taylor-Amy Galdal from home school, and the Woorabinda State School.

Forster Review

Mr REEVES: My question without notice is to the Premier. With regard to the Forster review, is the Premier aware of what independent commentators are further saying?

Mr BEATTIE: I am. I heard this morning ABC Radio on which Peter Forster indicated that he was disgusted with the opposition for the suggestions it has been making. This is what Mr Forster said on ABC Radio—

If the Opposition were interested in really fixing the problem—

I repeat that—

If the Opposition were interested in really fixing the problem then they'd look at those parts of the report that give us some clues about what we need to do as a society to fix our health system. And that's what they ought to be doing, together with the government.

In other words, he is suggesting some bipartisan effort to work on those areas of Queensland Health that need to be improved. He goes on—and this is what Peter Forster said, a well-regarded independent person—

To play politics with this just indicates to me that they've got little interest in fixing healthcare—they're only interested in politics and I'm disgusted with the lot of them.

I agree with Peter Forster. Peter Forster has accurately identified what the opposition agenda is. Shoot the messenger? It wants to shoot Peter Forster. It wants to shoot Hedley Thomas. It wants to shoot all the independent people. It wants to shoot the messenger. That is what it wants to do whenever there is any criticism—shoot the messenger. Let us go back to what Hedley Thomas says—

The staff of Queensland Health want to look ahead to a new funding regime to better serve patients.

I say: give them a go. Every day that the opposition gets in the gutter it undermines the health professionals who are trying to save lives—give them a go. Hedley Thomas goes on to say—

But even after the work of Peter Forster, who handed in his review on a sick system last week, the 50 days of public hearings run by Tony Morris, QC, and 18 days (so far) by his successor Geoff Davies, QC, the Opposition was yesterday urging wider terms of reference.

So even after all that. The opposition will never be satisfied because its agenda is not about fixing health; its agenda is about trying to use health to win an election. That is what this is about. It is not interested in patients. Mr Forster I think summed it up. He said that he is disgusted. He said—

To play politics with this just indicates to me that they've got little interest in fixing healthcare—they're only interested in politics and I'm disgusted with the lot of them.

Mr Speaker, I think you will find an increasing number of Queenslanders will share that view. I say again to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and those opposite: give those good people in our health system a go. Yesterday the health minister and I visited the Rockhampton Base Hospital with Robert Schwarten. We went to Bundaberg Base Hospital with Nita Cunningham. The health workers are good people. If the opposition continues to undermine them, we will lose these staff from the system and we will find it difficult to recruit others.

Davies Inquiry

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's statement in the House last night when, in relation to the letter from Commissioner Davies, he indicated that he supported option 1 by stating—

He—

Davies—

said that there were four options to choose from. This is the first. We did that.

The Premier further stated—

Let me be clear about this. There are four options. Point 1 we accepted.

Since the Premier's letter to Commissioner Davies quite clearly indicated that he accepted none of the options suggested by Mr Davies but supported a fifth option—one that he came up with himself—I ask: if he is confused about the truth in this House, why should people trust him to fix our health system?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have to say that this question defies logic, commonsense and intelligence. If the Leader of the Liberal Party looks at the first option, it says—

That this Commission continue—

in other words, it is in existence—

in accordance with its existing Terms of Reference—

so it exists now—

subject to the additions suggested in my earlier letter to you ...

They were the extended terms of reference to specifically define waiting lists. So, in other words, that is what exists now. Of course we accepted that, because the inquiry exists now and it is continuing. For heaven's sake—

Mr Quinn: Read your own letter!

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

Mr BEATTIE: My own letter meant that in addition to the existing commission. The Leader of the Liberal Party does not want to listen because he knows that he has just made a fool of himself. The reality is that my letter also went to the next step. He is right; I went to the next step and I referred the material from Rockhampton to Peter Forster. He is absolutely right. It was in addition to one of those recommendations. He is dead right. I referred it to Peter Forster.

But just think about this. If option 1 says that we will continue the existing inquiry with the terms of reference slightly amended as we had agreed to, that is the status quo. If we continue the status quo on the one hand, then how could we possibly not accept that? Of course we have accepted that, but we went one step further and also sent it to Peter Forster. That is black-and-white logic.

Mr Quinn: Good try.

Mr BEATTIE: Oh, come on, Bob.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Robina, this is your final warning.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We cannot breathe on this side of the House without getting a warning and the Premier is referring to us in the first person.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Take your seat, member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, as I was saying, this is absolutely ridiculous. This has got to the stage of being a farcical position put by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I just repeat what Hedley Thomas said today, and I repeat this to the Leader of the Liberal Party: there comes a time when even the opposition should admit enough is enough. I say to the Liberal Party leader: enough is enough. We have had enough of the cheap politics; we have had enough of the nonsense. Yes, there were issues that needed to be addressed in health, and we have addressed them and we will continue to address them. There is a lot more work to be done. If he wants to come in here and deliberately, in my view, try to distort and misrepresent—the sort of dishonest nonsense we had yesterday—he has no credibility. He might con some of the media some of the time, but he is not conning us on it and we are not moved by this political nonsense from the member. We are going to ensure that the reform process continues and we are going to get on with the job. We are going to stand by those people in Health who are saving lives every day. The reform of Queensland Health has started. We are going to finish it with or without the support of those opposite. It looks like it will be without it.

Economy, Central Queensland

Mr PEARCE: My question is directed to the Premier. This week the Premier has said on numerous occasions that the economy is booming in central Queensland. Can he advise what effect this has had on unemployment in the region?

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to take this question from Jim Pearce, the member for Fitzroy, who has worked very hard on these things. A few years ago I set a challenge for my government. Under the last National-Liberal Party government, the Borbidge government, the unemployment rate in Queensland had been as high as 9½ per cent. This simply was not good enough. When I set the goal of reducing it to five per cent, I was ridiculed by the National-Liberal Party. The opposition laughed and said that it could not be done. Queensland now has the lowest unemployment rate in a generation.

According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force survey, employment in Queensland increased by approximately 100,000 persons in the 12 months to August 2005. More than 28,800 new jobs were created in the construction industry, 22,300 in the retail industry, 16,200 in property and business services, 12,400 in education and 7,000 in tourism and related accommodation. Let us have a look at what it means for the regions. Further analysis shows that unemployment in the Mackay-Fitzroy-central west region fell by 1,800 persons over the year to August 2005. The Mackay-Fitzroy-central west unemployment rate is five per cent—the target I set—down 1.2 per cent over the year to August 2005. So what it does is prove that our investment in this region is delivering real benefits for central Queensland residents.

This week in Rockhampton we have also announced that the Coordinator-General has declared stage 1 of Gladstone Pacific Nickel's proposed \$1.3 billion refinery at the Gladstone state development area of Yarwun to be a significant project. Development of the mine and construction of stage 1 of the nickel and cobalt metal refinery has the potential to create 700 direct jobs during construction and 350 direct jobs when it is fully operational. We announced the Wiggins Island coal terminal and we announced other projects which I will not go through again.

I would like to share with everyone a letter I received from the chairman of the executive funding task force for the Centre for Glaucomics on the Gold Coast. This institute is dedicated to finding cures for a range of afflictions like influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and potentially Asian bird flu. The chairman said this—

Your leadership has generated tremendous reaction from our supporters who can now see that the vision we had articulated for the institute will, because of your support, become a reality.

I want to thank Rob Borbidge for his letter. Our job strategies are working, and as a result Queensland is the engine room of Australia. If it were not for Queensland, the national unemployment rate would be higher. John Howard owes the Queensland government and Queensland a great debt. These economic figures look good because of us. We are the engine room of Australia. That is why I was delighted to see more than 500 people here last night. That is why central Queensland is the engine room of Australia.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Forster Report

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Despite your claims that enough is enough, you are going to answer a few more yet, old son. I refer to the draft copy of the Forster report that the Premier tabled in this House earlier this week and the considerable differences between that draft and the final report as released by Mr Forster. The Premier received the draft report a week before the final report was released. After he read the draft report, how many changes did the Premier suggest to ensure that the final report was sexed up before it was released?

Mr BEATTIE: That is a very interesting question. The answer is none.

An honourable member: Nil!

Mr BEATTIE: Nil. None. None means zero—none, nil, zero. Based on how much trouble they had yesterday looking at four options involving Commissioner Davies—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Zero means none; it means nil.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide, this is your final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: I was in the fortunate position that I was involved in a QDC travel promotion of Queensland—as members know, I never miss an opportunity—but let me come back to the other part of the question because I am not going to waste too much time on the first bit of nonsense. This information is from the ABC, which is independent. An ABC newsreader said this—

Peter Forster says he's disgusted with the Opposition for suggesting his draft report into Queensland Health was sanitised before its final release.

The opposition leader Lawrence Springborg says he's compared the draft and final copies and some damning parts were toned down in the finished document.

But Mr Forster says the differences are a result of new information that he received.

Mr Forster said this on ABC Radio—

If the Opposition were interested in really fixing the problem then they'd look at those parts of the report that give us some clues about what we need to do as a society to fix our health system.

And that's what they ought to be doing, together with the government.

To play politics with this just indicates to me that they've got little interest in fixing healthcare—they're only interested in politics and I'm disgusted with the lot of them.

Sooner or later governments have to govern and they have to ensure that they look after their constituencies—and that means all Queenslanders—when it comes to health care. Look, it is tough in a growth state. We know why this happened; it happened because Queensland is a growth state. We went through growing pains. We have an extra 1,500 people coming to Queensland every week. It puts huge demands on a range of our hospitals. It does not matter whether the hospitals are in Rocky, the Gold Coast or Cairns, where the minister for health and I are heading tomorrow. There will be significant demand on all of these hospitals.

However, we now have a blueprint for the future. And what have we seen? Peter Forster came down with a report, so what did the members opposite do? They tried to character assassinate him; that is what they have tried to do. Commissioner Davies is doing his bit, so they are trying to misrepresent him. What they are doing is trying to assassinate the reform of the health system, and I am not going to let them do it. It is very simple; I am not going to let them do it, nor will the minister and nor will my government. I just say to the members opposite: go back to Hedley Thomas. Hedley Thomas has been the strongest critic of my government of any commentator or any journalist in this state—the strongest critic of all, and there have been quite a few. I repeat what he says—

There comes a time when even the Opposition should admit enough is enough.

I say to all the members of the opposition: enough is enough. Let us put Queensland first.

Queensland Health

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's wonderful news for the people of the Capricorn Coast regarding the new hospital, and I ask: can the minister inform the House of how the Beattie government is investing in excellent health services for all the people of central Queensland?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question because it has been a great week for central Queensland, particularly with respect to the provision of health services for this incredibly important part of the state.

This morning we heard the announcement of the final location of the new Yeppoon Hospital. It is something that we committed the government to as an election commitment, and we are delivering on that. Later today we will see the delivery of a new aircraft for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to be based at Rockhampton. It is one of three that the Queensland government has funded. Around about \$8 million of aircraft is to be located here at Rockhampton. As I said, it is one of three aircraft that we are providing the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Two days ago we saw \$200,000 extra provided to the Rockhampton Hospital for elective surgery.

These are three very concrete examples of a government getting on with the job. While the opposition whinges, while it knocks and while it character assassinate good people like Peter Forster, those on this side get on with the job of rebuilding our public hospital system not just in central Queensland but right throughout the state.

On top of the three announcements that we have announced so far for central Queensland, I have another one. Rockhampton doctors are now only a remote control away from Emerald patients. With the click of a button, hundreds of Emerald patients will be able to consult with specialists without having to make long trips to Rockhampton or even Brisbane with the recent installation of videoconferencing at Emerald. Many patients in the central highlands region who would have had to travel long distances to see a specialist for consultation or review now only need go as far as the Emerald Hospital, where regular telehealth outpatient clinics have been established.

These telehealth clinics are great news for the people of the central highlands communities as they will save patients a great deal of time, inconvenience and discomfort without any loss in quality of care. The service has just got off the ground this month, but already Emerald Hospital has completed some 20 outpatient clinics while operating just two days a week. We will continue to deliver new, improved services for the people of central Queensland.

I am ably assisted by three people—the member for Keppel, the member for Rockhampton and the member for Fitzroy. They are three very, very good advocates for central Queensland who day in, day out contact my office with ideas on how to improve public health services in central Queensland. I expect them to continue to do so and suspect that the people of central Queensland expect them to do little else.

Queensland Ambulance Service

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Emergency Services. A constituent of mine who lives about 20 minutes from Maryborough suffered a stroke that completely immobilised him. As he was lying helpless on the floor, his wife called 000. She was told that no ambulances would be available for at least two hours and that they would have to find their own way to the hospital. Fortunately at that time of night several of his neighbours were home from work and they managed to get him down a flight of stairs, into a vehicle and into Maryborough Hospital. What will the minister do to ensure that this does not happen again to people in my electorate?

Mr PURCELL: I thank the member for the question. I do not know the details of this matter, but will certainly find out. It would be distressing for anybody to have a loved one or a person they knew suffer a heart attack or have some other need for emergency services and not have those emergency services available to them.

We have a very large paramedic team that operates in Queensland. It continues to look after people in an excellent way. I will certainly look into this matter and find out what did happen. Thanks to commitments made by the previous emergency services minister and the Premier, our resources have increased recently by over 350 paramedics throughout Queensland, and more are coming on line. Sadly, having an increasingly ageing population and having more and more people coming to Queensland does put pressure on our paramedics. They are working harder than they ever have.

I will endeavour to find out the details of this matter and I will get back to the member about it.

Ethanol

Ms JARRATT: My question is to the Deputy Premier and minister for state development and finance. This state Labor government and its members have an impressive record in doing what we can to develop an ethanol industry in Queensland. I ask: is this being matched by our conservative counterparts in Canberra?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank her for her ongoing advocacy for the sugar industry in this state, and I particularly thank her for her support for the development of an ethanol industry. She, in common with many others here, must have been very surprised this morning to read the comments of the federal industry development minister, Mr Ian Macfarlane, in today's *Courier-Mail* where he says that the ethanol industry cannot rely on the government for its marketing.

This is an extraordinary comment from a Queensland Liberal cabinet minister, a former Queensland agripolitical leader and a former grain growers' boss. Why would successive federal and state governments of all political persuasions spend hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars bailing out a sugar industry when a logical position would be to build up a local industry that provides alternative markets for this industry? Why would a federal minister with responsibility for industry development not want to at least give it a chance when it is clear that it is the best option for Queensland farmers and for governments?

In the same article, Mr Macfarlane said that the ethanol industry 'has to start at the beginning'. A good start would be a federal industry development minister who is interested in developing an industry. The industry that he could apply himself to developing is the ethanol industry. In Queensland we have advocated support for an E10 mandate but not its instant introduction. We understand that we have to work hard to develop a developing industry. But our approach stands in stark contrast to the hands-off approach of Mr Macfarlane and his colleagues. Our government has a \$7.3 million Queensland Ethanol Industry Action Plan that we are in the business of implementing. Mr Macfarlane and his Liberal mates might want to be hands-off the ethanol industry, but we want to be hands-on. We want our hands all over the development of this industry because we are committed to giving our sugar growers alternative markets.

This week I was very pleased to announce the first grant under the new Queensland ethanol conversion initiative. I am sure, Mr Speaker, that you will be interested in this because it is an initiative that was developed during your time as state development minister. \$317,000 will be going to Freedom Fuels, which will convert all of its 24 service stations so that it can provide E10 to its customers and consumers. This government will do everything in its power to create an ethanol industry that will give the sugar growers and the grain growers of Queensland alternative markets. But would it not be something if we had a federal industry minister who wanted to develop an industry? We know what the Liberals think. What do the Nationals think?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Deputy Leader of Liberal Party, I welcome to the gallery teachers and students of year 8, year 10 and year 11 of Glenmore State High School and teachers and students of the Wowan State School and the Mount Morgan State High School. Welcome to parliament.

Forster Report, Draft

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to recommendation 7.2 of the draft Forster report, where Mr Forster recommended the setting up of an information system that would report all elective and emergency surgery waiting lists as well as specialist outpatient waiting lists and make all these waiting lists available on the internet. This is in stark contrast to the report that the Premier presented to the people of Queensland from which all reference to publishing lists on the net had been removed. Will the Premier accept Mr Forster's initial recommendation and publish the waiting lists on the internet?

Mr BEATTIE: I was just consulting the Minister for Health because we had made a decision that they would be put on the internet by the end of the year. We thought we had announced that. The Minister for Health has confirmed that he has already announced that. The reality is that we are quite happy to put that information on the net. I have written to Commissioner Davies—

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, all of it.

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am trying not to embarrass the member any further. Bearing in mind that he had not seen this statement I am trying to be nice to him. The member should give me a break; he should not interject when I am trying to be nice. The member has just made a goose of himself and I am trying to be helpful.

The reality is that I have given a commitment that we will have a state of Health report and it will be tabled in the parliament every year. Of course we are going to put it on the net. If there is any doubt about it, I have now put that on the parliamentary record. It will be done.

I turn to another matter. I am pleased for the opportunity to say a few things. I know that the deputy leader will be one who will be delighted to leave Rockhampton, bearing in mind his comments that we should not come here and the help he gave Mike Horan earlier about what they had done about hospital funding here. I have to say, we are looking forward to this new coalition with some degree of relish. I will resist the temptation.

I thank the deputy leader for this opportunity. I do want to make a point about our latest numbers in terms of recruitment. In terms of expressions of interest by the health care disciplines in the most recent 24 hours, I point out that we have had expressions of interest from another 10 doctors, two nurses, one midwife, one scientist, one administration officer and two allied health workers. That is total of 17. If we look at the total expressions of interest by health discipline—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is one thing the member cannot do. There have been expressions of interest from doctors totalling 113; nurses, 27; midwives, two; allied health, 28; dental health, seven; scientists, seven; and pharmacists, one. It goes on. The total is 205. I table that for the information of the House. The breakdown of web site visits by origin is outlined. We have a large number of those. It is a very impressive figure.

I will not go through it other than to highlight that that campaign, which was one of Peter Forster's recommendations, is working. How are we going to fix the health system? There will be a mini budget on 25 October dealing with funding. We have reached an agreement with the VMOs, as members know, which will mean \$100 million in funding over the next four years. We have reached an agreement with our in-house doctors. They have to put that to ballot. We have the Peter Forster report. We are going to get on with it.

Everyone needs to understand that we are going to get on with it. The waiting is over. The reform has begun. It began last Friday when Peter Forster's document was tabled. It does not matter how much character assassination of individuals there is, it does not matter how many attempts to discredit parts of it there are, we are going to do what we said we would do. I gave a commitment that we would reform the health system and, by heavens, that is exactly what we are going to do.

Q-Build, Central Queensland

Mr MULHERIN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. In many regional and rural towns across Queensland Q-Build employees play a vital role in their local community. Can the minister inform members of some of the great work Q-Build is doing here in central Queensland?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. He is well known as a great supporter of Q-Build in his region. He speaks for everybody on this side of the House when he says that we very much value the contribution that Q-Build makes in Queensland. In this region Q-Build employs around 200 people in various trades. They can be found scattered right around the region at any one time. We can find a Q-Build tradesperson at Aramac, Bauhinia Downs, Gladstone or anywhere in this part of the state where something needs to be done in terms of maintenance.

We also have 1,000 subcontractors. This is a little-known fact about Q-Build. Some 64 per cent of the outsourced trade goes to local tradespeople in places like Barcaldine, Emerald and so on. That part of Q-Build's role is very much understated. A lot of tradespeople in the electorate of Gregory simply would not have work if it were not subcontracted to them by Q-Build.

The other thing that I am very proud of is that since I have been the minister there have been over 80 tradespeople trained by Q-Build in central Queensland. If it were not for Q-Build those 80 people would not have trades, and we all know the work of tradespeople now. The majority of them have found their way into private enterprise. We have very much tried to fill the gap that exists in private enterprise. I again say that private enterprise should follow our lead in that regard.

There are 21 apprentices on our books at the moment. At the end of the year we will be announcing another intake of apprentices here. There are a number of projects that Q-Build gets involved in, whether it be the prep year at Allenstown school or the quirky one that the member for Keppel raised with me. There is a lady in that area who cares for wildlife, especially wedge-tailed eagles. Ms Lascus came to us with a particular problem. We were able to get our apprentices and a hardware shop to work together. We will build large cages to help the recovery of those large and endangered species. I know the member has passed that on to her. That is the sort of work that Q-Build gets involved in in regional areas.

I would like to congratulate the people of Rockhampton for turning out in such great volume. A member opposite last night suggested that the only people we can get along here are branch members of the Labor Party. That is clearly not the case. I wish we had that many branch members in central Queensland. That shows that a couple of people around the place who have knocked this as a great opportunity for people—including talkback radio caller Mr Diamond, who does not want to see parliament in Rockhampton—can eat their words.

Tilt Train Derailment

Mr CALTABIANO: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The release yesterday of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau report into the derailment of the *City of Townsville* on 15 November 2004 highlighted key failings in the management of this passenger rail service with 157 Queenslanders on board. Can the minister advise this chamber and the people of Queensland how a two-driver operation with built-in redundancy could have the circumstance where no-one was in charge of the passenger train immediately prior to its derailing?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member would be well advised to read this report prior to actually asking questions in parliament. If he had actually read the report he would realise that the report indicates that there was someone at the helm of the train at the time of the accident. Indeed, if we look at the report it will indicate that about a second prior to the accident taking place the emergency brakes were applied. That is in it.

The premise upon which with he asked this question is dead wrong. Read the report first before asking questions. The honourable member would also know had he read the report that trains have vigilant systems operating in them that require them to be depressed periodically. Having said that, the fact is that the accident happened.

When the accident happened, we did not muck around. We did not muck around in terms of investigating this issue. Not only did we ask the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to chair and conduct a joint investigation—and if one actually looks at the cover page of the report they will see that it was published by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau—but people would also note that it conducted an incredibly rigorous examination, and indeed parliament urgently considered changes to the law to give it the maximum possible powers—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, that is your final warning.

Mr LUCAS: The member never thought of changing it when he was transport minister. He did nothing about it. We gave it the maximum possible powers that it needed to get the job done.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. That was a legitimate interjection I levelled there, and that is about protecting unions.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Take your seat.

Mr Johnson: He knows it, too.

Mr SPEAKER: Take your seat, otherwise you will be taking a walk!

Mr LUCAS: Clearly the member for Gregory does not understand anything about international accident—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, one more comment and you will be taking a walk, and I am serious!

Mr LUCAS: Clearly the member for Gregory understands nothing about international safety investigations and best practice in relation to it. If he wants to suggest that the ATSB would be party to anything other than a full and rigorous investigation—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: The member for Chatsworth reckons he has the combination keys to the Lodge. I would not have thought that the ATSB was inclined to help the Queensland government out particularly in relation to an investigation, and we did not want it to do that. We wanted a rigorous investigation, and that is what we got. The simple fact of the matter is that, despite there being two drivers rostered on in relation to that train, one of the drivers was not in the cabin. He was entitled to do that in accordance with the practices that were operating at the time.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr LUCAS: The member for Warrego would be the last person to lecture anyone on transport safety when he landed an aeroplane with its wheels up! He would be the last person to do that!

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Warrego, I warn you under 253.

Cooler Schools Program, Teacher Accommodation

Dr LESLEY CLARK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts. I refer the minister to his announcement earlier this week that another 520 classrooms in the Cooler Schools zone will be airconditioned in the next round of the program, and I ask: are there any plans to aircondition the homes of teachers who are living in the hottest and most humid parts of Queensland, in particular those living in northern and central Queensland?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the member for Barron River for her question and her keen interest in the issue of the Cooler Schools program. I am pleased to inform the House today that our government will be airconditioning more than 500 homes used as accommodation by teachers in our Cooler Schools zone. We will be committing \$10 million over the next four years for this work and it will be in addition to, as the honourable member mentioned, the 520 classrooms in the Cooler Schools zone which will be airconditioned in the next round of the program. This initiative with regard to teacher housing recognises the quality of working life for our state school teachers and our Cooler Schools zone should extend beyond the workplace. It will help us attract more and better teachers wanting to work in regional centres, and obviously that will improve the overall quality of teaching around our state.

This year we will set aside \$1 million to commence the installation of airconditioning. In fact, I can advise the member that there are 48 homes in this region—that is, in central Queensland—that will be airconditioned this financial year. They include teacher housing at Anakie, Capella, Comet and Rolleston and other centres in central Queensland will also be airconditioned in due course at Blackwater, Dysart, Gladstone, Middlemount and Moura. Over the entire program homes will be airconditioned in other centres as well as we move throughout the northern part of the state to Bowen, Ayr, Charters Towers, Home Hill, Hughenden, Ingham and Proserpine.

As I mentioned earlier this week, students in the hottest and most humid parts of Queensland are already benefiting from our government's extended Cooler Schools program. Since 1998 we have airconditioned more than 3,000 state school classrooms at a cost of nearly \$140 million under this program. I particularly want to thank the member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce, the local member for Rockhampton, Robert Schwarten, and of course the member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan, all three of whom have made strenuous representations to me for teachers to have their accommodation airconditioned in this way.

We are in the process of building a world-class education system in Queensland. We have a number of important initiatives on track already such as the introduction of information and communication technologies to our schools, a refinement of the curriculum, assessment and reporting processes leading to a new Queensland Certificate of Education, and a renewed focus on professional development of our dedicated teachers. I want to restore the status and prestige of teaching as a profession in our state. It is our teachers who will make our education system world class.

Infrastructure, Gladstone Electorate

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Premier. Residents in my electorate have welcomed the movement on previously announced projects to projects of state significance. In conjunction with this, will the Premier give an undertaking to councils, community leaders and residents that increased demand for infrastructure such as affordable housing, roads like Kirkwood Road and other necessary works will receive state government funding support prior to the community experiencing the stresses previously felt?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Gladstone for her question, and it is a good question. It is one of the issues that we grapple with as a government on a day-to-day basis because we have responsibility for driving the engine room of government—that is, the Queensland state—in major infrastructure projects, and I think we have demonstrated this week that we have achieved quite a lot in that regard. In particular in communities like the member's, which is one of the major beneficiaries of a number of announcements made this week, there are those additional issues like, for example, affordable housing and road funding. I do not know the details of the particular road that the member referred to, but I am quite happy for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to follow that up to see what the position is and no doubt he will talk to the member either today or on a future occasion—at least communicate with the member in some way. In terms of the road, we will do that.

In terms of the issue of affordable housing, we have spent a great deal of time talking about affordable housing in these communities and we have come forward with a number of plans and strategies over time. As the member knows, Gladstone in particular has suffered in the past if one goes through the history of Gladstone—which the member would know very well of course—in that it has gone through a period where there has been, if I can use a general term, overheating in terms of demand. I can recall, as would Tom Barton when we were involved in other activities, going to Gladstone where a lot of people living in caravan parks were finding it very difficult. We are trying to manage with industry a comprehensive strategy that deals with things like skills and housing. The days of simply agreeing and supporting a project without looking at associated issues are gone.

I am not going to suggest to the member for Gladstone that we get this perfectly right. We do not, but we are certainly trying our best to get it right. As we have done, for example, with Comalco, when that project was coming online we entered into a program with TAFE to ensure that we built up the work force and skilled the work force to ensure that it was available. We are doing something similar, and the member would be aware that the Minister for Finance and I, in conjunction with Tom Barton, released a program recently about encouraging a number of students to go into engineering so that we can build the infrastructure projects not just in the member's area but in the south-east corner and in the north.

So we do have long-term strategies about skilling. We have a green paper out at the moment that is looking at the issue of skilling, and that will be dealt with either later this year or early next year. The issue of affordable housing is in the same category. So our strategy is to look at it from a comprehensive point of view. We will work with the industries concerned, the companies concerned and the local councils. I think the member asked the question in relation to councils. Yes, we will work with councils. Whether we agree on every occasion remains to be seen. But I want to give the member the clear understanding that we look at this as a total concept now. We do not simply look at the project in isolation. We look at the consequences of that project in terms of skills and housing. There have always been some issues about roads, and the member who asked the question is a former mayor and would understand that. There is a little bit of argy-bargy between state governments and federal governments and councils about roads. We will always pay for what we should pay for.

Dolphin Feeding

Mr WILSON: My question without notice is to the minister for the environment. Minister, dolphins are beautiful and amazing creatures. Can the minister provide an update on the situation with dolphin feeding in Queensland?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for the question. I do not know what is happening with the dolphins at Tin Can Bay. Members would be aware that in recent days there has been widespread media coverage. I have to say that some of this has been one-sided. In fact, in some media the lessee who has encouraged the feeding of increasing numbers of dolphins and who has expanded the operations in that area has been painted as a hero. I am sorry to say that he is not a hero.

This issue is not about his tourism or commercial interests; it is about the safety of these amazing and very rare animals. These dolphins are of the indo-Pacific humpback kind and they are rare. They are not safe in Tin Can Bay or in any other boat harbour. This is not some fantasy or a bureaucrat's imagination, as the lessee has alleged. In fact, the two dolphins that had been fed there over some years under the previous lessee had each suffered from that practice. Scarry was the name of one dolphin that was handfed for some years. She was called Scarry for fairly obvious reasons. It is believed that many of those scars came from boat strikes by her being lured into the boat harbour.

Scarry disappeared, and our best information is that she disappeared because she ingested fuel from a diesel spill in the harbour at that time. She has not been seen since and is believed to have died. Mystique has also suffered. At one stage he was discovered to have a fishing line wrapped around his tail. It required emergency treatment. We were assisted by a vet, an expert—

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Take your seat.

Mr MESSENGER: The Indo-Pacific dolphin is an estuarine dolphin—

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat.

Mr MESSENGER:—which naturally inhabits—

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat!

Mr MESSENGER:—river and estuarine areas.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask you to leave the chamber. You defied me three times. I ask you to leave the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member withdrew from the chamber.

Ms BOYLE: Mystique was netted, treated by expert vets and released.

I have to say that I am very disappointed that this lessee is using children, who are as amazed and delighted by dolphins as are many adults. He has to stop this practice. He puts the dolphins at risk. Therefore, we have taken action, through proper observation and based on facts as to what is happening at Tin Can Bay—the increase in the number of new dolphins being lured in and the overfeeding, the inappropriate feeding and the risk to their safety. We are taking enforcement action that is appropriate under laws passed by the Queensland parliament—the Nature Conservation Act—for the protection of these very special animals.

Tilt Train Derailment

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I refer to the report tabled yesterday regarding the derailment of the Cairns tilt train and ask: why is it that the driver of the train was not tested for drugs and alcohol until seven hours after the accident, in which time any alcohol may have been eliminated? Will the minister also tell the people of Queensland why the co-driver, who was supposed to be supervising the driver's operations, was never tested at all? Will the minister tell us why, three years after the 2002 safety audit of Queensland Rail recommended random breath tests for Queensland Rail employees engaged in safety-critical work, the minister has failed to implement the recommendations of this safety audit?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for her question. When she was shadow minister for health she was into smears. She wants to smear the operators of the train on the night in question. I will give the honourable member a lesson in geography. The accident occurred at Berajondo, outside of Bundaberg. The rail safety investigators from Queensland Transport and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau do not happen to live in Berajondo. Typically in these accident situations the police administer the relevant tests. So, if the honourable member has a question about what tests were administered and when, I suggest she raise that matter with the minister for police or indeed the police commissioner. In relation to the driver, this report indicates clearly that there was no suggestion of alcohol on the evening in question.

I want to talk about what the report said about our rail system in Queensland—remembering, of course, that we have the second lowest rate of passenger fatalities of any rail system in Australia next to Tasmania, whose rail service carries only tourist passengers. Queensland's fatality rate is one-quarter that of Victoria and New South Wales—that is, 0.053 per 100,000. The last time Queensland had a collision involving any fatalities—and this one, of course, did not—was the Trinder Park disaster in 1985, off the top of my head.

This report made a number of very important conclusions. First of all, we all know that the cause was excessive speed. We also know that the purpose of transport safety reports is to find out what went wrong and make recommendations for the future. For the member to imply that alcohol was involved just shows how she is prepared to trash people's reputations without a skerrick of evidence. That is absolutely disgraceful. The report says that a number of factors could have contributed to the excessive speed, including possible driver disorientation in relation to exactly what section of the track the train was on. It has made a number of recommendations.

Queensland's is the only long-haul rail system in Australia that has ATP in relation to any of its locomotives. The Hammersley has one as well. Queensland is the only one. ATP is operational in relation to a number of our locomotive services on the north coast line. It is now operational in relation to the Rockhampton tilt train. I was on it the other day. It was operational when I was in the cab. It will be operational in relation to the Cairns tilt train by early next year and will be rolled out in terms of higher speed limits later next year.

We make no apology for taking every possible step. Two drivers were in the locomotive as a safety precaution. Two drivers were assigned. Clearly, that failed. That is not good enough. That is why we are going to go further.

Magistrates Court

Mrs REILLY: My question is to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Could the Attorney-General inform the House how Rockhampton will benefit from a recent restructuring of Queensland's Magistrates Court?

Mrs LAVARCH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Before I advise the House of the benefits of this recent restructure, I take the opportunity to put on record my appreciation of the hospitality of the people of Rockhampton over the past week. I have taken the opportunity to visit some of the regional offices of agencies that come within my portfolio responsibility. I also want to put on record how impressed I am with the operation of offices such as Legal Aid, the Public Trust Office and the Dispute Resolution Centre. I will also be visiting the Anti-Discrimination Commission office today.

I also want to take the opportunity to advise members that whilst here in Rockhampton this week I had the very pleasant duty of presenting some long-service awards to seven local people. I did that yesterday at the Rockhampton courthouse. Between them, these seven people have provided over 200 years of service to the local justice system as both public servants and justices of the peace. They include Raymond Bignell—who I believe is known locally as David—who has been a JP for an amazing 50 years. For 50 years he has volunteered his service to the administration of justice and the people of Queensland. I commend him for that. I also had the very pleasant duty of presenting a JP certificate of service for over 25 years to our own member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan.

In answer to the honourable member's question, I am pleased to announce that Rockhampton will be a prominent part of a new regional structure of Queensland's Magistrates Court. Indeed, it will be the headquarters of one of six new regions, in this case the central Queensland region. The regional structure will improve services at 84 local courthouses throughout the state. The other Magistrates Court regions are south-east Queensland, based in Brisbane; south-west Queensland, based in Toowoomba; Wide Bay-Sunshine Coast, based on the Sunshine Coast; north Queensland, based in Townsville; and far-north Queensland, based in Cairns.

Six new service delivery managers will also be appointed to the six regions to ensure quality services. The new managers, including one at Rockhampton, will be responsible for mentoring and supervision of court registrars, reviewing work practices and allocating human and financial resources, identifying minor capital works needs, providing feedback on individual and courthouse performance, and liaising with police, magistrates, correctional officers and other court users. The managers will oversee all duties undertaken within local court registries, including the administration of Magistrates Court proceedings, the coordination of coronial investigations and the processing of court ordered fines. The new positions will improve career paths within the court system. This is very exciting news for the operation of our busiest courts.

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

PHOTOGRAPHS IN CHAMBER

Mr SPEAKER: I have received a number of requests from honourable members for permission to take photographs in the chamber. Permission is granted.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 5 October (see p. 3263).

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (11.30 am): It is a pleasure to rise to join in the debate on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. There have been a number of honourable members in the House who would expect me to talk about the rehabilitation of mines given my background in the coal industry, but I do not have time to deal with that issue today. I would rather concentrate on that part of the legislation which refers to the transfer of south-east Queensland forest lands.

Mr Reeves: Are you an old miner, mate?

Mr PEARCE: I am an old miner. These lands are identified under the South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement. I refer to these lands with an existing authority to graze cattle which exists under the Forestry Act 1959 and the Land Act 1994 and which is managed under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. While existing authorities to graze are covered under section 36 of the Nature Conservation Act, the same authorities cannot be renewed or replaced once an area has been gazetted as a national park or national park recovery. So, because of the legislative change in the status of certain areas, graziers will lose the right to graze.

This outcome has the potential to cause many grazing businesses to become unviable, thereby causing financial hardship. So it was very clear to government and to grazing industry representatives that the limited time allowed for graziers to adjust to the loss of grazing lands would lead to financial hardship. It was clear that if forest grazing leases were to cease being renewed the grazing industry would need more time to adjust and make informed decisions about the financial management of their business. So the government determined that existing grazing leases and permits could be renewed prior to the dedication of an area if a case was made for demonstrated hardship.

In the interest of natural justice, the government supported a process by which those graziers who will potentially experience economic hardship as a consequence of losing all or part of the grazing business could seek an extension to the term of the lease or permit. This assessment of their financial dependence on the retention of their existing grazing entitlements is carried out under a process agreed to by a joint working group comprising the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The process is this: the EPA advises graziers of the government's intention to dedicate a nominated forest reserve; holders of grazing leases or permits for that area have a period of up to 60 days to submit an application for an extension of existing grazing entitlements; and an independent panel will assess any hardship claims. I will talk a little more about that later.

Chaired by the director of Forest Policy Group, the independent panel will be administered by State Development and supported by the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. The panel will also include an AgForce representative and an independent legal expert. The panel will report to the minister for state development, who will refer advice to the chief executive of the EPA for a decision. This whole process must be completed before gazettal of the protected area tenure and is consistent with subsection 361(b) of the Nature Conservation Act.

So, keeping all of this in mind, I can advise that the Premier announced the South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement grazing program on 21 May this year. Affected entitlement holders were notified by mail on 1 June. Applications closed on 31 July with extensions in time to 31 August and, for exceptional circumstances, longer extensions were allowed. So there has been a lot of fairness here and understanding of the problems that the graziers have. The government has been prepared to make concessions in understanding the problems that graziers can have in doing the paperwork and getting it in on time. Around 40 of the 135 reserves were affected where an application was made for an extension of grazing access. These applications are now being processed.

The independent assessment panel makes recommendations concerning eligibility where an extension to a grazing entitlement is necessary to allow sufficient time for business adjustment. That means that a lot of these grazing leases might run out in two, three or four years time. If a grazier has not been aware of that happening and he has made a lot of commitments for his business—he might have contracts with banks and other companies—he will need more time to adjust so that he can make good business decisions to resolve the situation over a longer period of time. The independent assessment panel also makes recommendations concerning the actual period of time from 1 January 2004 necessary for the business adjustment plan to take place.

To be eligible for an extension of their grazing entitlement lease or permit, holders must establish that their enterprise will suffer loss in annual gross income of 25 per cent or more from all sources of income as a direct result of their grazing entitlements. Annual gross income includes all sources of income, including income from grazing. Each extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the particular circumstances of each enterprise. The extension will be final. There will be no more extensions after the extensions are authorised. So it has to be sorted out. The homework has to be done and they must get it right because there will not be any further extension.

The legislation has to be changed to cater for terms greater than the seven years currently enshrined in the Forestry Act. As I said, some of these leases will be running out over the next couple of years. They do not have time to adjust but, because the act says at the moment that they can only extend for seven years, rather than have them keep coming back for extensions over the next 15 years, this amending legislation will allow for extensions up to 2025. So they will get one agreement to take them out to any period of time between now and the end of 2025.

On explaining the process, the independence of the process and the flexibility on offer, honourable members and the public might say that the process is fair and reasonable. That is the way I see it. But I have to be honest: I do not know how that is impacting on the graziers affected by the loss of grazing rights. I do not know how they are coping. I would certainly be interested to know because graziers living in the Fitzroy electorate will be affected by the second phase of the South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement. That is what is referred to, and it has been spoken about quite a few times by members opposite as the western hardwoods.

There is still a long way to go in advancing the next phase of the SEQRFA. No decision has been made about the forest areas south of Dingo or Duaringa. As an elected representative of a large rural area, I have an obligation to bring to this House issues which my constituents bring to my attention. I have been working with some people south of Duaringa for a number of years. I have visited a number of properties out there to look at what they are concerned about and to see how the western hardwoods might impact on their properties.

So it is a concern to me as a local member, listening to what they are saying, taking their issues to the different ministers in the government and bringing their issues to the House. I need people to understand that as an elected member that is my responsibility. The people out on the land talk to me on a regular basis. Coming off the land in New South Wales, I have a lot of background. I have a good understanding of what is happening out there. They are my constituents, and I will take every opportunity I can to make representations on their behalf, whether it is in the House, in the minister's office or in the Premier's office.

When the second phase comes into play, I expect that there will be strong resistance from graziers and local communities potentially affected by that move. I will support the graziers because I believe them to be good at what they do. They are genuine, down-to-earth people doing what they do best as primary producers, producing cattle or grain or whatever it might be. They are genuine people doing a great job in producing food for this nation. My belief is that they do not deserve to lose forever access to grazing lands which are so important to the appropriate management of their lands and their business.

I do not have much time left today, but here is a brief run-down on what the South East Queensland Forest Agreement means for families living in the cattle grazing areas, as I said before, south of Duaringa and Dingo. The following are some results of a telephone survey undertaken in January 2004 of 40 properties from the 55 to 60 properties in the Fitzroy electorate which have a grazing lease over state forest or part of their holdings. For people who do not understand, eventually we are moving down the track of protecting these grazing leases that currently exist in a state forest and turning them into national parks. It is not a bad thing. It is a good thing that we are doing as much as we can to protect important areas of Queensland, but what I worry about is the impact that it has on people whom I represent. I hope by the representations that I have made over the years that people will get a good understanding as to what the issues are. Before any final decision is made, all of those concerns will be taken into consideration.

As I said, a survey was done of 55 to 60 properties in the area. Some 20 families—75 to 80 people—are adversely affected in the school catchment areas of Bauhinia, Duaringa and Dingo. Those things do not get taken into consideration a lot of times. The survey collected stats on 346,000 hectares of state forest with total holdings of 520,000 hectares. From the collection of information, 16 of the 40 holdings covering 180,000 hectares will be unviable. My people are telling me that I have to get this message through.

These holdings vary from total state forest to 75 per cent of total and include loss of things like access to water. If people do not have access to water, it means the rest of their property is in trouble. Ten holdings will have a significant loss of current land resource while a number of holdings will lose more than 25 per cent. The graziers I talked to say that the proposals to change the state forest into unmanaged national parks will potentially affect up to 60 properties in the Fitzroy electorate, many of which will become non-viable, as I have said.

The change will also reduce feral and exotic animal control. We have heard all these arguments before. It will reduce exotic weed control and put up to 360,000 hectares at risk of wild fires, causing significant long-term damage to the forest and the habitat of animals and plants. This problem would be enhanced by the limited access to much of the state forest. Exotic disease, particularly in feral cattle, is a serious issue for the future. They are all issues that we have to look at very seriously and very closely before any final decisions are made.

I am thankful that, as a member of the government, I have ministers whom I can sit down with and talk to at any time about these issues—issues that affect the people I represent. It is so much easier to walk into a minister's office and sit down and talk through the issues. I may not always get the answer that I want but at least I have done what I am elected to do, and that is to put the views of the people whom I represent to the people who make the decisions.

The issues that I have raised are genuine concerns because these people know the land. They know the local environment. They know the strengths and the weaknesses of the land. They know what it takes to be efficient and effective land managers. Over the last few years we have talked about these issues in great detail. I have gone out to these properties, I have sat down with people and enjoyed their hospitality, looked at their land, and I have a good understanding of where they are coming from. We have talked about all of these issues. I have said, 'It is okay to present me with these issues, but how do we deal with them?' We have to deal with what we are facing. I might suggest to the minister that we could talk in the future about joint management strategies between the land-holder and the government. I think that is one way that we can solve the issues not only for us—for the people who want to do the right thing to protect the lands—but also for the graziers and those people who have made their life on the land. I would hope that the minister, when making these decisions, might look at a joint management approach.

Ms Boyle: I absolutely support that. There are some great land-holders out there doing wonderful things, and they should be working with us to give us their expertise.

Mr PEARCE: That is correct. The people I know would certainly be prepared to sit down and talk to the minister about how we can do it together. I thank the minister for that interjection. It is very comforting to hear her say that.

I know myself, from my experience in talking to these people, that graziers want best practice for sustainability of land. They must do that. It is about their whole future. The government wants state owned lands to be managed in such a way that there is no degradation. That is good. That is what the people of Queensland want us to do as a government. As I said before, I believe the joint management practice is sound—government and community working together to get it right. If the land-holder fails, if he does not hold up his responsibilities, the government, after monitoring the process, can then come in and either advise them to get help to do things better or it might come to a time when the government might say, 'We have given you a fair go. You don't deserve to keep the land because you are allowing it to get into a degraded state, so we are going to take it back and turn it into a protected area.'

I have said before that we can work in partnership to address these issues or we can engage in a process to have land returned to the state. I feel as though today the minister has given me the opportunity to put forward the views of the people I represent. I have worked with the minister on a couple of issues, and I know that she is a minister who will listen and I know that she is a minister who will do her very best to get the best outcome for the community and for the state.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Before calling the honourable member for Maroochydore, I welcome to the public gallery teachers and students from Frenchville State School and Lakes Creek State School.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (11.47 am): This is an omnibus bill. It covers a number of provisions. However, I wish to address one particular environmental issue. As a horse rider, I have to declare an interest in this parliament in ensuring that the voice of those who responsibly use forest trails is heard. They are requesting that this Beattie Labor government's extreme approach to locking out recreational users is overturned. These horse riders have been offered crumbs from the table of government as an alternative, but the deadline to get out has not been removed; just delayed in some areas.

The government's heavy-handed approach to banning horse riders and beekeepers from lands which have traditionally been forestry reserves and which now have been converted to national park status is draconian and unreasonable. It is a move which is based on a wrong premise: that these activities are not compatible with conservation in our national parks. Meanwhile real environmental threats from feral animals and weed infestations are left virtually unchecked in national parks throughout Queensland. Why have feral pest and weed infestations been left unchecked? Because that would require some on-the-ground management and funds from a government which could not manage a chook raffle. Labor governments are good at creating new laws and red tape but not terribly good at practical management issues.

The member for Toowoomba South and other coalition MPs outlined the importance of sustainable forestry practices with selective logging in well-managed forestry areas and proper fire management. They also spoke about the risk of extreme fires ripping through these areas as they are progressively shut down. However, the ears of government members are closed. They do not want to listen to those who have voiced well-reasoned fears, but the fires will come and, tragically, beautiful forestry land and fauna will be destroyed and human lives will be put at risk.

Labor is not practical. It has forgotten about commonsense. I raise the issue of the importance for recreational users to gain access to national parks. That access has really been put into a very small box by this government. A number of Labor MPs have said how hard they are negotiating with a number of these recreational users who now face their current access to the trails being denied. I note how hard it has been for those who have engaged in this practice for over 100 years in some cases—they have responsibly used these trails—to suddenly be treated like vermin. They have been told that they are environmental vandals by riding those trails.

I am not advocating for horse riders to go off trails and through sensitive areas. We are talking about access to trails that have been available for well over 100 years. Now these people have to negotiate for the crumbs in terms of access. They are being caught up in this process, desperate for access to existing trails. They are being made to feel like they have to fight for access to something they have passionately looked after for well over 100 years.

Ms Molloy interjected.

Miss SIMPSON: I heard the member for Noosa say 'no'. These people have been passionately looking after these areas. I think the member should realise that they are responsible when they access these trails. They resent being painted as environmental vandals. I think that is unfortunate, naive and insulting.

Labor is not practical. Already during this parliamentary sittings we have heard about the mismanagement of the Fire Ant Eradication Program by the Beattie government. These disastrous pests have spread beyond the areas to which they were allegedly contained. The issue is currently being investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission. We have also heard about the tragic and

criminal mismanagement of the Queensland health system that has potentially seen more people killed or maimed than at Port Arthur by a mad gunman. However, more is going to be heard about the environmental failures of this government, which is making decisions based not upon scientific advice and evidence but upon backroom political deals.

The Beattie government has claimed that horses and beekeepers are environmental vandals. The government has talked about providing alternative trails. Thus far, some of the alternative trails are a pathetic example of how little this government understands about safe horse riding. Trails suggested by the government have included lands which are underwater and beside busy roads. I would suggest to government members that trail riding underwater is not a very viable option and riding beside busy roads is extremely dangerous. Even when riding horses that are relatively used to traffic there are significant risks. However, those risks are unacceptable when it comes to children riding horses in those circumstances. Yet this has been part of the alternatives suggested by the government.

During a community cabinet, I remember riding through the heart of Caboolture with horse riders who were protesting the government's moves to shut their forest from trail riding. We had marshals to ensure some distance between horses and traffic. The horses we were on were pretty good. However, well-meaning drivers of passing cars kept beeping their horns and yelling out their support. The drivers meant well, but this can make even a calm horse very skittish. It highlights that cars and horses do not mix.

But what of the forests that are being locked up? We are not asking that horses be allowed to roam free through sensitive areas; we are asking for existing defined trails to be available for horse riders. Not only are these trails of benefit to those who passionately love their forest and enjoy them on horseback; they are also access points which are often fire breaks. It is absolutely magical to ride through the Australian bush. It sure beats riding around and around a paddock. Even a horse would die of boredom. Is that what government members expect horse riders to do? Problems with access to the alternatives mean that some riders will have great difficulty getting beyond the paddock.

Balanced environmentalism means getting the balance right between conserving our environment and using our natural resources in a sustainable way. That includes recreational users as well as economic users. I restate the National Party's position: we believe it is an extreme approach to lock out recreational users who have been responsible. It is an extreme approach of this government to force these good people, who have passionately looked after these areas for over 100 years, into a situation where they have to negotiate over the finite detail of alternatives which to date have been far less than what they have traditionally had access to. I believe it is totally unacceptable that they have been treated not like second-rate citizens but like third-rate citizens and have been basically accused of wrecking what has obviously been determined to be good enough to become national parks.

We are asking for access to those trails. The government should not lock these people out. I believe it is against the principles of ensuring sustainable environmentalism—where recreational users are able to enjoy our beautiful outdoors in a way that is safe, in a way that is accessible and in a way that ensures the ongoing education about the beauty of these areas is not limited to an elite minority.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (11.56 am): I rise to speak to the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. I am pleased to be able to make a short contribution to the debate. The first part of this legislation proposes to amend the Integrated Planning Act 1997 to improve the safety requirements for emergency coastal works in tidal areas and amend the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 to strengthen safety obligations for structures requiring development permits in tidal areas.

Following the unexpected collapse of a rock wall at Flying Fish Point near Innisfail in 2001 which resulted in the tragic death of a child, in his findings the coroner recommended that action be taken to prevent a repeat occurrence and to ensure ongoing safety for the public in beach areas.

Our coastal and beach areas, particularly here in Queensland, are continually subjected to the effects of adverse tides and weather as well as ongoing development, which is very important. The amendments contained within this bill to deal with planned and emergency beach works should still allow that balance to occur. Beach life and life on the beach is an intrinsic part of the lifestyle of many Queenslanders. I am sure members who come from further south would appreciate that.

People have every right to feel safe and be safe on our beaches. I realise that no person or authority would knowingly and willingly place anyone in danger, but it is necessary to make certain that another tragedy does not occur through inadequate attention to safety. The proposed amendments make clear the obligations of those involved in emergency or planned works and outline the necessary safety requirements when carrying out these works.

The next part of the legislation refers to the mining industry. The mining sector should be able to gain from the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 which will allow certification for progressive rehabilitation completed as part of a mining project. Previously a company was forced to wait until the very end of the rehabilitation process for the works to be approved. This has led to confusion and extra costs being incurred as well as delays in the final rehabilitation when final works have been found to be non-compliant.

Very early in the previous century there was a lot of degradation by mining companies. There is certainly a great difference now. I know that mining companies put a great deal of effort into rehabilitating the ground and bringing it back to the pristine condition in which they found it. This is being enforced. I commend the mining companies for the effort they put into this.

The Queensland Resources Council has been lobbying for some years for these changes to be introduced. I am very pleased to see them finally included in this legislation. It shows goodwill on both sides and will prevent much of the previous confusion over different standards and regulations. Potentially this should result in more satisfactory and timely mine site rehabilitation as well as reducing potentially expensive remedial works.

The next part of this omnibus bill, as it has been described earlier, deals with stock grazing permits. I am pleased to see that specific holders of stock grazing permits will be allowed to continue to graze stock on identified forest reserves until the end of 2024. I am a little bewildered why a time line has to be put on these regulations.

This amendment to the Forestry Act will allow a long-held practice to continue while allowing adequate time for those permit holders to make alternative arrangements post 2024. It is common knowledge that controlled grazing and forestry are complementary uses in our state forest reserves and that no damage is caused by this practice. It is also common knowledge that grazing helps to reduce fuel loads in forest areas. That is often the cause of some of our very worst fires. As we know, forest fires are a real danger. This continued symbiotic use would be of benefit to both the graziers and our forests and it is welcomed. I am still intrigued why we have to have this time limit of 2024.

From the perspective of protecting our environment it is very important to keep the balance with our native wildlife in our marine environment and also in freshwater waterways. Much was said yesterday about the crocodile, which is one of our very well known species of native wildlife, and its importance to the ecosystem of, particularly, our freshwater waterways.

Mr Palaszczuk: Do you wear crocodile skin shoes?

Mrs MENKENS: No, but I did grow up looking at crocodiles through the kitchen window.

Mr Palaszczuk: All right. Did you never smile at a crocodile?

Mrs MENKENS: No, I have not smiled at a crocodile.

Ms Boyle: That is a good practice.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you. On a much more serious note, our native fish are very important in keeping the balance of our freshwater waterways. I take this opportunity to commend and congratulate the Freshwater Fishing and Stocking Association of Queensland which, through its tremendous community effort and hard work, keeps our waterways restocked with fish. They are wonderful community groups. I was privileged to be able to attend a meeting of the various groups in the Burdekin some months ago. The Burdekin has a very strong fish restocking group under the leadership of Scott Abrahams.

I share their major concern that \$100,000 has been cut from the stocking program. I will quote the comments of Les Kowitz, their executive officer. He said—

I do not believe that the government's response will be at all acceptable to our affiliated stocking groups across the state now numbering around 60. I am sure that they will all be totally bewildered by this government's consideration and attitude towards the future of the enhancement program. There is little doubt that the community will see your response as having no commitment in the future for freshwater fishing and for keeping the environment as well.

I certainly share their bewilderment as to why this is not to be attended to. This is also part of keeping our environment.

Lastly, the continuation of horse riding in our national park recovery areas and the ability to enter state forests without the necessity of first obtaining a permit is a triumph of commonsense. Horse riding is a significant recreational pastime. I guess those of us who have been privileged enough to grow up in rural areas have taken it to be a part of normal life. However, it is a real pleasure for city people to access this marvellous pastime.

I also share the member for Maroochy's view. I am intrigued to know why it is only allowed to continue until 24 November 2013. The amendment will allow an ongoing complementary use of the state public assets. Some of our most scenic areas are often inaccessible or closed to the majority of the general public. It is only fair that those who have the means to access these areas continue to do so. Horse riding can hardly be called a destructive or polluting activity. I am sure that those who have pushed for this activity to continue will at least welcome this decision, but only until 2013.

While not catering for every want and need, I believe this bill does reach a reasonably fair compromise for most of those concerned. It will make our beaches and coastal areas safer for Queensland families. It will allow traditional users of our forests and parks to at least, in the short term, continue their traditional practices. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the member for Nicklin, I acknowledge in the public gallery students from the Frenchville State School and students from St Ursula's.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.06 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. I note that other members have commented in their contributions to this bill that it impacts on a number of existing acts of parliament in Queensland—in total 13. In the explanatory notes the minister refers to this as a portfolio bill which makes amendments to allow a number of miscellaneous amendments to be made to 13 existing acts of parliament.

I will mention some of those. We have amendments to the Brisbane Forest Park Act, the Coastal Protection and Management Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Forestry Act, the Integrated Planning Act, the Marine Parks Act, the Mineral Resources Act, the Nature Conservation Act, the Petroleum Act, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act, the Queensland Heritage Act, the Statutory Instruments Act and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act.

I refer to them because in the explanatory notes the minister refers to miscellaneous amendments being made to these various laws in Queensland. When I referred to the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, its definition of miscellaneous is 'a varied and often haphazard combination'. I suppose when we see those first words 'portfolio bill' it triggers warning signs to me about what is really contained in this catch-all bill. It triggers a requirement for all members to more than ever scrutinise not just an amendment to one bill but proposed amendments to 13 existing laws in Queensland.

There is no guarantee that they are simply miscellaneous, minor technical amendments. Some of the amendments certainly are minor and technical in nature, and it is quite appropriate—and I believe Queenslanders would believe this—that, for the purposes of efficiency of the operation of parliament, when there are minor and technical amendments to be made to a range of existing acts of parliament in Queensland those amendments should be introduced into what we call an omnibus bill for speed and efficiency, because there are no significant changes. But in this bill in a number of instances we are seeing significant changes to our current laws in Queensland.

That places a lot of pressure on all members, because we have to decide when this bill finally comes to a vote how we are going to vote to these many amendments to not just one act but in this instance 13 existing acts of parliament. We only have one chance. When the vote is taken, in this instance we will be asked to vote for or against this bill in its entirety. We do not have the chance, the way it has been presented to us here at the Rockhampton sittings, to say, 'I will vote in favour of one part of the bill and then I'm going to vote against another part of the bill.' The only chance that we have to indicate our concerns and our views on some of these matters is in the consideration in detail stage.

In relation to support for or opposition to the bill, we have one chance to vote in favour or against the totality of this bill. My concern is that we really need to review the policy of this government with regard to including significant changes to existing acts of parliament with other minor technical amendments in a bill like this which is called a portfolio bill. I simply flag that to the minister, other ministers and this the 51st Parliament. We can do better, and these omnibus bills should be limited and restricted to simple amendments which cover minor technical or machinery provisions. When it comes to making major changes to existing acts, they should be stand-alone bills for debate and for voting on.

I turn now to parts of the minister's explanatory notes and second reading speech. She referred to how amendments are being proposed to the Nature Conservation Act. She said—

This is a bill to deliver on the government's promises to recreational horse riders to minimise impacts while alternative trails are identified and developed.

I go back a few years when the government first introduced the proposed changes to our access to many of our existing forests in Queensland. At that time the government was not talking about minimising impacts to recreational users; the government and the ministers—repeated ministers—were reassuring all Queenslanders that there would be no net loss for recreational users in Queensland. They said, 'Don't worry. There will be no net loss for recreational users.' Nowhere in the minister's second reading speech have we seen the combination of those words—'no net loss to recreational users'. Instead, we are talking in a totally different context about minimising the impact while alternative trails are being identified.

What we are seeing here is a significant change in the focus and the reassurances that were provided by a previous state Labor government to recreational users throughout this state when it said, 'Trust us. We will do the right thing.' It was recorded in the *Hansard*, the official record of what happens in parliament. We were told that there would be no net loss for recreational users such as horse riders and other recreational users. No doubt there was minor debate as to whether 'no net loss' referred to a specific area or a larger area, but that was the focus of those comments to reassure Queenslanders. So we have seen change.

I also reflect on a meeting that we organised with the Premier and the minister almost 12 months ago in Brisbane. Although the minister and the Premier and I need to agree to disagree on some of these issues involving horse riders—and I respect the minister's position, and I certainly respect the Premier's position—I put on the record my appreciation of the minister and the Premier for agreeing to that meeting and for bringing their senior departmental staff into an all-government committee to look at fast-tracking the proposed alternative horse riding trails. Almost 12 months on, we are still consulting and still talking. Without being too critical, Minister, one of the first areas that the government flagged to look at was the Noosa-Tewantin area, and I think we are still looking at the Noosa-Tewantin area. At that meeting an assurance was provided that the government would fast-track looking into these alternative trails, and it is great to see that we have been looking into these alternative trails. I hope that we can continue to look at the alternative trails for the other areas which are impacted on by this legislation as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. I also hope that we can continue to see a genuine partnership between the government and the horse riders in resolving some of these differences.

At the moment we have progressed a long way in relation to resolving the differences with the government over the Noosa-Tewantin area, but there is still some way to go, because while the government in my view and many horse riders' views has compromised by allowing horse riders to ride around the perimeters of some of these proposed future forest areas, one of the real issues of contention that I have been informed of that is still of concern—and the Noosa-Tewantin area is the pioneering area that the government started with—as recently as yesterday by the horse riders who have been actively involved in the negotiations and consultation process is the opportunity for horse riders, young children and families to have small loops and access and not just simply ride around the perimeters and not simply ride in road corridors.

The commitment that the government made to all Queenslanders that there would be no net loss for recreational users does not just apply to horse riders, beekeepers, bushwalkers and mountain bike riders but to another important group in my electorate—recreational dog walkers. The town of Mapleton is surrounded on many sides by the Mapleton forest. Unfortunately, the proposal is going to exclude them immediately from continuing to have access to many of the existing trails that they have walked their dogs on ever since Mapleton was first settled. It is a disappointment that, at this stage of debating this bill, there has been no genuine attempt as I understand it—unless the minister can clarify this issue in her response or later through the consideration in detail stage; and there is currently a petition on the *Notice Paper* waiting for an official response from the government—by the government to consult with the dog walkers apart from standard responses saying that it is not part of its agenda. That is a disappointment when we were led to believe that part of the forest area could have been set aside for a conservation park to allay their concerns.

I put on the record that my position is still that I believe that would have been a reasonable compromise. I do not believe that all of Mapleton forest needs to be locked up as a future national park, especially when we see a glaring inconsistency with trail bike riders having major access to the forest from the Mapleton end all the way through to the Gheerulla end. On one hand we have the government and the departments saying to dog walkers who want to have minor access to part of the forest around the Mapleton town, 'No, you can't go there because it's in conflict with our intent to protect and preserve a future national park. But we're able and we're more than happy to continue to allow unfettered access in the identified areas of Mapleton forest'—from the top of the forest to the bottom; from the end of Mapleton right through to Gheerulla—'for the trail bike riders.' I put on the public record here at Rockhampton that most people whom I have contacted in my electorate have said that the issue of greater concern to them is not the horses; it is the jolly noisy trail bikes. Yet in this instance the government is saying, 'We're happy to allow and to lock in the future access for all of these noisy trail bikes to continue riding through the Mapleton forest. But as for the dog walkers and the horse riders, sorry, but your days are limited,' and may be very limited very quickly.

The minister also referred to delivering on a promise to reduce red tape by removing a need for a permit. I will comment further on this issue in the consideration in detail stage. Many horse riders have said that they have known for 30 years that they had to get a permit, but effectively they have never done that. This amendment is simply removing an anomaly. As I understand it, there has not been any real policing of the requirement for horse riders on the Sunshine Coast—and I restrict these comments to that area—to apply for these permits. I understand that in recent years since this matter has been raised many horse riders have been applying for permits.

Early in the piece the government gave a commitment that there would be no net loss to recreational users. I asked people, 'Where have you been riding? How many kilometres have you been riding?' They said, 'Well, we have never actually applied.' So in actual fact, when the government gave a commitment to Queensland, it really did not know how much access the horse riders had to the forest. I think that is reflected in what is happening at the moment.

Still in terms of the amendments to the Nature Conservation Act, I believe that we are seeing a lost opportunity by this government to work in genuine partnership with many people in our community. Many of these people are passionate horse riders who live in close proximity to our forests. These are the very people who want to play an active part as honorary forest rangers. They know the forest better

than many public servants. Unfortunately, often we see public servants come and go. I know in my patch on the Sunshine Coast I have seen more changes in staff, be it through promotion or whatever. I do not blame the staff for wanting to take a promotion and move on, but that corporate knowledge is being lost. I believe that some members of my community have a greater knowledge of our forests than some of the paid staff. I believe that we are seeing a lost opportunity to work in genuine partnership with many members of the community who know the forests, who want to work with the government, who want to be honorary park rangers, who want to ride around the perimeters, who want to ride on some internal loops, and who want to report to the local fire ranger on what they see. Many of them do already, but I believe that this legislation is sending the wrong message to them. Again I put on the record my invitation to the minister to genuinely consider the introduction of an honorary park ranger system where many of our horse riders could be involved in helping the government in terms of being its eyes and ears.

In terms of the horse step-through barriers, which have been promised and have been located in the Noosa-Tewantin area, when we had the last committee inspection in that area some time ago we spoke about the dangerous nature of these horse step-through barriers. We received commitments from the minister's officers that they would look into them. The horse step-through barriers are too dangerous. They are too difficult for children to walk the horses over owing to the way in which they are positioned, their height and their location. The wheels seem to move so slowly. We still have not seen any significant change. Hopefully, the department staff will have another look at that matter. They should talk to the horse riders. I believe that the government can do this better.

The proposal for the alternative trails is going to cost the government a lot of money. That certainly came through during some of the inspections that I was able to attend. The government is proposing to construct new trails in some of the forests. That prompts me to ask the question: where is the money going to come from? I note in the minister's explanatory notes under the heading of 'Estimated cost for Implementation' it states—

The amendments are to be implemented within current budget allocations.

With respect, when we were on site raising our concerns about the cost of many of these alternative trails, the advice was, 'No, we are going to come up with the timing of the construction of these trails. Some we can do tomorrow, some we can do now, but some will be some years away.' Could the minister clarify that issue in her response?

I also put on the record my genuine concern that we are seeing a significant change here, especially in relation to the operation of our forests. I really hope that we never see the stage where we have to undertake a royal commission or an expensive inquiry into why we had wildfire storms in our forest, which saw the loss of life and property and serious injury to many people. This legislation is limiting the genuine partnership that can occur in the management of our state resources. The government has made a decision that some of our forests are to be locked up and, basically, the keys thrown away.

I again refer to the Mapleton forest area. At the last inspection that we had on site with some of the minister's departmental staff at which we presented our proposal for the proposed perimeter horse riding trails we identified a section on the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road between the Belli Park rest area and Buckby Road. We identified that as an ideal location—and it is actually state government land—for many people, with state government support and approval, to float their horses and then ride off into the Mapleton forest. When submissions are made to the minister, sometimes I worry that they may not actually reach her because of her workload. I realise that the minister has a big portfolio that involves certainly some contentious matters relating to her responsibility as minister for local government. So I just put on the record that there is a lot of support in my electorate for this parcel of land on the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road to be identified as a proposed site where horse riders could float their horses and then ride off into the Mapleton forest.

Although the minister and I agree to disagree on how this issue is going, my constituents and I are prepared to work with her to try to come up with the best outcome to ensure that the horse riders can continue to have access to our forests within the constraints that the minister's government has laid down. I reiterate that I believe that perimeter trails are only one part of the opportunity. I believe there is a wonderful opportunity to engage with the people who know our forests so well—the families, the children and the grandparents. I refer to the rallies that have been held on the Sunshine Coast and the rally that was held outside Parliament House. These people have been riding horses for generations. They want to work with the minister. All they are asking for is perhaps some incentive or some opportunity to work in partnership with the government. The government could relax the requirement that we are able to consider only perimeter trails. If we could have some minor loop trails for children and families to ride on, I believe that the minister may receive support from the horse riders of Queensland.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (12.27 pm): This is an extremely wide-ranging bill and I know that many members of the House are enthusiastic to speak to it. I intend to speak in detail on one aspect of it and make some general observations. As a member who represents an electorate that backs on to

beautiful Moreton Bay, I understand the importance of works in tidal areas such as boat ramps and jetties. They are important in terms of the recreational facilities of my electorate as well the public transport system of my electorate. Ferries are used to get to Coochiemudlo Island, Lamb Island, Karragarra Island, Russell Island and McLeay Island. Without these important tidal structures, the people of my electorate would be severely limited in their access to public transport and their recreational options.

I support this bill as it provides for improved safety obligations for all tidal work structures as well as providing improved safety requirements for tidal works development undertaken in coastal emergencies. There was a tragic death of a child at Flying Fish Point, near Cardwell, when a seawall collapsed. The amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 and the Integrated Planning Act 1997 will reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring again and reduce the risk to public safety from structurally inadequate and unsafe tidal works.

Currently, under the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 there is a requirement on an owner of freehold land or a lessee of land leased from the state to ensure that a tidal work structure is maintained in a safe condition if the structure received a development permit for the operational works, the structure is connected to the freehold or leased land, or provides a benefit to the land-holder. This bill will make the safety obligation much more comprehensive.

A person who is responsible under any law or contract or other agreement to ensure the tidal works are in a safe condition, or responsible for any wrong arising out of a failure to ensure that tidal works are in a safe condition, will have a statutory obligation to ensure that the structure is maintained in a safe condition. The requirement will also extend to a structure if a development permit is required or there is a sanction or authorisation that is taken to be a development approval for the operational works. If there is a failure to maintain the tidal works structure in a safe condition and it requires repair, the chief executive of the Environmental Protection Agency may issue a tidal works notice requiring it to be repaired. It is an offence to comply with a tidal works notice and a maximum penalty of 3,000 penalty units, equating to \$225,000, applies.

The Integrated Planning Act 1997 will be amended to make provision for emergency tidal works development to be carried out where a coastal emergency endangers the structural safety of an existing structure for which there is a development permit, or the life or health of a person, or the structural safety of a building, and to specify the safety requirements that will apply to such emergency tidal works. Such development would normally require a development permit prior to the commencement of the development.

The amendments will require that a person takes reasonable precaution and exercises diligence to ensure that the structure and/or any emergency works are in a safe condition, including commissioning audits by a registered professional engineer; implements a safety plan, having regard to the safety of the public and where practicable the advice of a registered professional engineer; provides written notice of the development and the safety plan to the assessing authority; and makes an application as soon as reasonably practicable for any necessary development permit for the tidal works.

In the event that the application is refused, the above exemption ceases to apply and the emergency works will be required to be removed as soon as reasonably practicable. It is an offence to fail to remove these works and a maximum penalty of 1,665 penalty units, equating to \$124,875, applies.

I would like to comment that during the SEQRFA process there has been wide-ranging negotiation and discussion. I am a keen dirt bike rider and I have used public space for that purpose. My partner, Michelle, is a keen horse rider and has ridden her horses through these public areas. Michelle and I both enjoy bushwalking and mountain bike riding through our state forests and parks. I am keen to see that our areas remain open to these uses. However, there are still ongoing discussions about what uses go where.

I am keen that the lobbying from me as well as the member for Springwood and others has seen the Daisy Hill reserve stay open for both horse riding and mountain bike riding. I know there are ongoing discussions on the broader issues, and I am sure the minister will turn her attention to these to ensure a balanced outcome for the recreational users as well as protecting our great environment. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.33 pm): I rise to speak on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and several of the sections that the amendments address. In the minister's second reading speech, she stated that the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 will assure mining companies that rehabilitation requirements will not change for those areas where rehabilitation has been completed early in the life of a mining project. These changes to mining regulations have been undertaken in response to requests from the mining industry for legislative certainty on rehabilitation, and this is being delivered. The reforms will provide greater certainty to the industry and encourage mining companies to speed up their rehabilitation schedules so more sites can become conservational farming areas sooner.

Each year more than \$500 million is spent on mine rehabilitation in Queensland and more spending on progressive rehabilitation will create job opportunities in regional, rural and remote Queensland. I commend the minister for that. Many of the companies that we have in our region are very responsible companies and they want to see rehabilitation occur as early as possible. It is critical for that to occur in terms of stabilisation of land and erosion control. The added layer of certainty that the level of assessment of that rehabilitation will not change in the future so the work will not have to be redone will ensure that companies will, as early as possible, re-establish and stabilise the areas that have been disturbed. That will ensure that areas not only are available for conservational farming sooner but also remain in a stable condition for future generations for other uses. I am sure that the mining sector has welcome those changes with open arms. I also thank the minister for the briefing that her staff provided to me and to others who made themselves available—to Paul, Claire and Ross. I valued the time that they made available and their openness with the information.

Changes in this bill also relate to, as other speakers have alluded, horse riding in national parks. I would again like to raise some concerns in relation to the complete removal of horse riding over a period of time from our conservation areas. I am yet to be convinced that they have a significant impact on the natural environment. I am interested in how that was measured and against what figures the measurements were taken. I know that we have a number of very ardent horse riding groups in my electorate who ride the national trail. They do it with a very conservationist heart at the centre of their attention and interest. Over the years they have become the eyes and ears of the Parks and Wildlife Service.

I went to Kroombit Tops a month or so ago. At the national park camping area there is information about Kroombit Tops. It gives some statistical information and it also lists some of the activities that are and are not allowed, including things like camp fires, camping and what sorts of vehicles are allowed in what areas. There was a little gap on this signature board where someone had copied the other signs by drawing a circle around a little Parks and Wildlife Service ranger and then put a big line through him because the rangers have gone as well. Rangers were going up to national park areas and were closely scrutinising those areas, but many of those positions have been removed. So these regular horse riders, who are, by nature, lovers of the national parks areas and lovers of forestry areas, come back and regularly report things like bushfire risk, the build-up of fuel and areas where people are camping illegally and creating problems not only in terms of rubbish and that sort of thing but also in terms of wear and tear on the environment. So they have been an asset to the Parks and Wildlife Service as much as the minister's documents allude to their being a liability. I am yet to be convinced that horse riding in the national parks is the problem that is spoken about.

I also have to endorse the comments of the member for Nicklin in relation to dog walking. I sent on to the minister a number of pieces of communication from one couple in the south-east corner who regularly walked their dogs in the Caloundra-Noosa area. I know that the minister has responded to them. They were ardent in their desire to see dog walking allowed and reinforced the fact they have been walking their dogs for a number of years. I ask the minister to consider allowing that as a particular use, albeit with some constraints in terms of leashing and picking up after their dogs, which people are used to in a lot of public areas that allow walking of dogs on leashes.

The changes to the Queensland Heritage Act are to allow local government, which is the trustee for heritage property, to undertake minor maintenance work without a permit. I put on the record that a great deal of positives are achieved by the Queensland Heritage Act. But, as with all legislation, there are those who are caught in the gap. There is an older gentleman in my electorate, Mr Keith Upton, who ran the theatre in Gladstone for quite a number of years. Past the time when it was probably profitable for him to do so, he continued to run the theatre, although I have to be honest and say that many young people travelled to Rocky because they got the first runs up here in the newer theatres. But Keith kept the theatre going. The theatre has been heritage listed. The Gladstone City Council requested that it be heritage listed, and it has been for some time. Mr Upton is in his eighties. This theatre is heritage listed, which creates a significant impost in terms of future development of the building and the site. He has found it very difficult—in fact, impossible to date—to sell.

There have been a number of approaches to the Heritage Council for reconsideration of that building in terms of its listing, and the latest response was that it felt not enough effort was being made by Mr Upton to identify alternative uses. He is 80. The cost of upgrading the facility would be in the six or seven figures. It is an old building in a part of town that has been struggling in terms of its development potential. The site has high development potential, but the sorts of things that the Heritage Council suggested—things like a coffee house, a market and a number of other things—would take an impressive amount of marketing to make them successful. Mr Upton just wants to let the building go. He cannot get it insured and it has white ants through it. He is constantly under pressure and constantly under stress because of this facility that he is required to retain.

I would seek an undertaking, or at least consideration, from the minister that the circumstances in which buildings are listed are reviewed to allow for the potential future of these buildings. We do have some wonderful landmarks. We have lost some in Gladstone. Some have been rehabilitated and rebuilt, particularly by the port authority, and we welcome those landmarks. But in this particular instance it is

causing nothing but grief for the old gentleman, and he has paid service to the community for many years.

The bill also deals with beekeeping in national parks. I know that there have been questions on notice in relation to the south-east corner, the Wet Tropics and the western hardwood areas. I put a question on notice today about central Queensland, but beekeepers have asked me what research was done to validate claims that the European bees are removing pollen to the level that is causing problems to native bees, given that permit numbers for beekeepers are already controlled. The other question that I would like to ask is how our honey industry is going to survive and what areas of land beekeepers are going to have in order to continue on that enterprise. Many of the beekeepers do not own land—at least not significant tracts of land—on which they could put their hive. Therefore, this could be placing at risk an industry that is quite important to our community.

In closing, I want to comment on some statements that were made by the member for Indooroopilly in relation to nuclear energy. When I first came into parliament I had the privilege of working very closely for a short period of time with Molly Robson. She is a lady for whom I have a great deal of respect. She was working on toxic waste disposal, and I went to a number of meetings and conferences in relation to effective waste disposal—reducing its long-term pollutant load. A sector of her department was looking closely at alternatives, including mobile units that could go to areas that generate waste and dispose of it, with the result being a benign residue.

My area is one that does produce goods that have toxic possibilities—things like cyanide. Therefore, we as a community have had to come to terms with a responsible approach to pollutants—their disposal and treatment. It is not fair for a community, irrespective of where it lies within Australia and particularly in Queensland, to generate waste and expect another community to bear the cost and the impost of that waste. It is the responsibility of a community that generates a product which has to be disposed of to dispose of it responsibly and take responsibility for that waste now and into the future.

If we process and use nuclear material, whether it is for X-rays or for any other purpose, it is appropriate that we take responsibility for the material that we generate. We are a nation; we are not a sewer for the world. I do not believe it is our role to accept nuclear waste from overseas to be absorbed and placed in our area, whether it is in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia or anywhere. To accept that type of pollutant with a half-life that is certainly beyond any of ours is irresponsible for future generations. As a community we have had to look at accepting responsibility for waste generated by us, but to accept waste of this level from the globe is irresponsible and is putting at risk our future generations. To that extent I certainly support the comments of the member for Indooroopilly, and I look forward to the minister's response.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Before calling the member for Charters Towers, I would ask all honourable members to welcome students and staff from Sarina State High School and Cathedral College.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (12.45 pm): One of the key objectives of this legislation is to provide a certification process for progressive rehabilitation that has been completed for parts of a mining project. This will provide a standardised rehabilitation process, give more assurances to mining companies and provide greater incentives to rehabilitate along the way.

My one concern is for residents living close to a mining lease. It was great to see the restricted area placed around the greater Springfield area, and it shows that the government, while recognising the importance of mining expansion, also recognises the need for residential development and the need to respect the quality of life of residents. I commend the minister on granting this restricted area. I hope the same courtesy will be extended to the residents of Moranbah. No community wants a mine at their doorstep. Rehabilitation of a mine site is relatively easy compared to the rehabilitation of families whose health has been impaired by the distance between their homes and an open-cut mine or to the rehabilitation of a community which no longer has families living in the town because of the closeness of an open-cut mine.

No rehabilitation process is going to completely give back what has been lost. A line needs to be drawn between protection and expansion. What is vitally important is that residents of these areas are not disadvantaged by expansion. Rehabilitation is important because the goal is to return the environment to close to what it was. The community of Moranbah will become a ghost town if no consideration is given to the rights of residents, regardless of how much is spent on rehabilitation or the standardisation of the rehabilitation process. I urge the minister to keep this in mind when decisions about the future of the Moranbah community are made.

I note the comments of the member for Keppel that the Beattie government cares for all Queenslanders. I believe he was sincere when he made those remarks, but I would like to invite the member to Charters Towers, because what has been going on there in the last five years is a disgrace. We have had flying foxes living amongst residents for five years. It has come to the point where we have had enough. The town is stressing out and continues to stress out.

These bats are a non-threatened species under the federal government's biodiversity act. They are also in plague proportions. They carry a lyssavirus, a Hendra virus, other lethal viruses and parasites. One lady who brought her new baby home had a thousand bats above her home. She has lived with that situation for almost five years now. I went and visited that home and I could see all the parasites from those flying foxes pouring over her home. People cannot operate their airconditioners because of the stench. It is a disturbance of the peace. The sick, the frail and the elderly are breaking out in rashes not just because of the flying foxes but also because of the stress.

The biggest issue here is the permits. The problem is that we cannot harass the bats after 7 o'clock in the morning. I have spoken to the minister about this. We can harass the bats at 5 o'clock in the afternoon when they are about to fly away. That is a time when everybody is home from work and the children are home. Everyone is about to have tea, and we have to listen to the booms and bangs of frightened birds. This is when we are all settled and ready to have tea and should be enjoying quality time at home. We cannot harass the bats after 7 o'clock in the morning because of fears that the bats will become stressed. We can harass them at 5 o'clock in the morning, but that is when everybody is asleep in bed.

An honourable member: That's the time when they're trying to land; that's the best time.

Mr KNUTH: That is the time when they are trying to land, that is right; that is a point. But if the bats are harassed at 5 o'clock in the morning, while everybody is asleep in bed, the residents are the ones who become stressed. The bats cannot be harassed after 7 o'clock in the morning because of the fear that they will become stressed.

This issue could have been solved years ago. We have spent over a quarter of a million dollars chasing bats from one tree to the other. The council workers get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to make a noise to chase these bats from one tree to another. We need to harass the bats in the middle of the day when they are asleep and when everybody is at work, not at 5 o'clock in the morning. It would be a simple process to harass the bats in the middle of day. Any stress to the community could be avoided if we could harass the bats when they are sleeping, not when we are sleeping.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! Member for Charters Towers, I have allowed some fairly wide-ranging discussion on this matter, but I would ask you to return to the bill before the House.

Mr KNUTH: Okay, Mr Deputy Speaker. We have one of the biggest river systems in north Queensland. The bat problem could be solved with a simple process. We have a petition going. The town wants the bats culled. Another simple solution is to put the quality of life of the people of Charters Towers first and allow us to harass those bats in the middle of day rather than at 5 o'clock in the morning, when everybody is asleep in bed. If we do that, I will never again have to raise this issue in parliament.

Mr ROGERS (Redcliffe—Lib) (12.52 pm): I rise to speak to the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. The electorate of Redcliffe is our jewel by the sea. The people of Redcliffe have a great appreciation of these surrounds. They are boaties. I am pleased to advise that just last weekend I was a guest of the Moreton Bay Boat Club for the blessing of the fleet. The people of Redcliffe are fishermen, four-wheel drivers, bushwalkers and the like. On the whole, the people of Redcliffe are desperately determined to maintain their surrounds. The residents of Moreton Island are the caretakers of this island. I often talk to some of these people, and I know how proud they are of the island and its natural beauty.

I will speak particularly to clause 101, which amends section 73. It states in part—

... to allow the traversing of State forests or any part of the area with vehicles, teams, horses, or other animals without the need to obtain a traverse permit, as long as the activity is carried out in accordance with a regulatory notice.

As members would be aware, this notice is a sign at the entrance of a state forest stipulating what access is permitted. To date, a permit to traverse must be obtained from the relevant Forestry office. These permit applications require a lot of information and are restrictive as to the operator of the vehicle. Quite simply, the process is time consuming for the user and the issuer. Most people care about state forests and parks and are responsible in their use. I applaud the drafting of this bill with regard to clause 101. I see it as sensible in the simplicity of its application.

This amendment will make it easier for the people of Redcliffe—and in fact all people—to access and enjoy state forests. I see this as increasing the ability of people to develop in their attitude to the environment and, hopefully, fostering future preservation of these areas. Preserving the areas for no-one to appreciate is ridiculous. Controlled access is the correct answer. The resources used in issuing the permits should be applied to supervising the use of these areas and providing education about them.

In the light of this omnibus bill which affects our marine parks, I now ask this parliament to purchase Little Goat Island. I read in the *Courier-Mail* of 15 September that this island is within both the Moreton Bay conservation zone and a fish habitat area, meaning that mangrove vegetation surrounding the island cannot be disturbed without a permit. If the government is serious about the environment it will step forward and obtain this island of some seven hectares and 59 hectares of mangrove flats and include it in the Moreton Bay Marine Park. This purchase would be a step forward in protecting Pumicestone Passage. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (12.55 pm): I am delighted to rise to speak to the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will address a couple of the comments made by members in their contributions to this bill. I refer particularly to the comments of my friend the member for Callide, who, unfortunately, is not in the chamber. But I do not hold that against him; he is busy. Yesterday he said 'we are all conservationists now'. My response to that is: would that it were so. I think he is borrowing from Bill Clinton—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: I think Bill Clinton observed, 'We're all environmentalists now,' paraphrasing JK Galbraith.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): The member for Lockyer will cease interjecting.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: We want to keep you here.

It takes more than a glib phrase; it has to be backed up. The voting records of this place show that those opposite are somewhat inconsistent with that line of thinking. Even if members opposite voted for every bill that the environment minister had brought to this place, I do not think that would qualify them to say 'we're all environmentalists'.

What we are really talking about here is a much broader concept. It is a sustainability paradigm which involves looking across a range of issues. It certainly involves the environment, but it also involves local government, transport and energy. Members have to start considering everything that group of ministers bring in as part of this sustainability paradigm. If we start looking at each bill and saying, 'How does this fit?', then I think we can start saying that we might be able to call ourselves environmentalists. I think that is what we on this side of the House are trying to do.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: Indeed. My friend the member for Ferny Grove points out that opposition numbers have been substantially boosted throughout this week by the addition of 12 or 15 Labor members who are sitting on that side of the House. Perhaps we should have arranged for red flowers or something to make it clear to the members of the gallery what the respective numbers are.

It is important to recognise that interconnection of policy across portfolios. We face issues of water sustainability, security, energy diversity and renewability, and transport reliability and availability. We need to recognise the carrying capacity of land and the potential risks in declining production if there is no resource security. Most importantly, there is a need for smart urban design to change the way we put demands on the environment.

Regretfully, looking at the contributions of opposition members, principally National Party members, that broad commitment is not there. Simply saying 'we're all environmentalists' but then over the years not supporting the tree-clearing legislation and taking every opportunity to oppose everything that looks to support the environment shows that for the—dare I use the word?—hypocrisy that it is.

If people look into the speeches that have been made by members of the opposition they will see a bizarre mishmash. It is like they are saying, 'Yes, we're happy to support this omnibus bill. Thank God we've got an omnibus environment bill that we can support, beat our chests over and say, "See! We are environmentalists!"' But it is not true. Then we hear these weird, convoluted speeches in which the shadow minister for the environment says he is an environmentalist because he is wearing a green tie. People might dress him that way at the hospital for all we know. Then the member says that he does not drink his toilet water. He is on record as saying he does not drink his toilet water. I am pleased about that, but I do not think that makes him an environmentalist.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: Indeed.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr McNAMARA: Before lunch I made the point that there is considerably more to being able to claim that one supports the environment than merely saying that one is an environmentalist and supporting the odd environment omnibus bill. It is pleasing to see that the opposition supports this bill. There is a lot more to it than that.

I will wrap up this part of my contribution in this way. If a person wants to claim to support the environment then they have to get their head around the fundamental incompatibility of introduced species and the Australian environment. That is effectively where this debate goes around and around. The member for Darling Downs in his contribution spoke at length about caring for the environment. Then he filled his speech with calls for shooting flying foxes, which are native species, but allowing horses to keep going into forests.

The trend from those on the other side of the House, barring my friends, is to constantly look for ways to allow introduced species like European bees to interact with our natural environment while at the same time failing to protect local species like dolphins in their natural environment.

Ms Nolan interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: I take the interjection from the member for Ipswich. There was a theme that ran through a number of contributions which was, 'I really support the environment, but there are large bits of it that I want to shoot or bait,' to take the member's point.

Ms Boyle: Very well said, excellent.

Mr McNAMARA: That was the case. The member for Callide in his contribution called for more shooting action than we see in a Schwarzenegger film. There has to be more than rhetoric.

Mr Wallace: And the Liberals support it.

Mr McNAMARA: There are plenty of opportunities for the Liberals to show just how disunited the coalition is as they stick to their guns in the days ahead.

I turn briefly to that part of the bill that deals with the amendments to the Marine Parks Act which is of great concern in my part of the world. The Beattie government put in place a modern Marine Parks Act in 2004 to provide a basis for a system of marine park management and to protect and enhance our use of the marine environment. This legislation will enable the finalisation of the zoning plan for the proposed Great Sandy Strait Marine Park and the management plan for marine park areas surrounding Hinchinbrook Island and the Family Islands.

The draft zoning plan for the proposed Great Sandy Strait Marine Park was released for public consultation in January 2005. I understand that the minister has received nearly 1,100 submissions on that park plan from interested parties. The Great Sandy Strait Marine Park will include Queensland waters from Baffle Creek near the southern limit of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to Double Island Point in the south.

The area includes internationally significant wetlands, migratory birds, humpback whales, marine turtles and dugongs. It is also adjacent to the Fraser Island World Heritage area. I understand from discussions with the minister that the new marine park and zoning plan are expected to be finalised later this year. This was obviously a very hot issue in my electorate. There is a lot of interest in it. I was very pleased that so many people took the opportunity to have their say during that consultation process.

Ms Boyle: Recreational fishers really, really care about that whole area of the park.

Mr McNAMARA: They do. There are legitimate interests from recreational fishers, pro fishers and environmental groups. The tourism industry is vitally interested as well. I hope that when we reach a decision, when the minister brings the plan out that everyone recognises how genuine and how broad that consultation was. The standard response we get when things do not go a certain way is that there was not genuine consultation. I say to all those parties who are interested that I am absolutely of the belief that all points of view have very much been heard and have very much made it all the way to the minister's desk and have been taken into consideration.

While the final plan undoubtedly cannot, by definition, meet everybody's objectives, it will still be the result of genuine consultation to come up with the best and most sustainable environmental plan for management of the Great Sandy Strait Marine Park. I commend that process. I have had people come to me since. There is still a lot of interest in that final outcome. I am sure that the plan that is finally released will be worth while. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (2.35 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in the debate on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so I endorse the shadow environment minister's comments on this legislation. Briefly dealing with the first three parts of the bill, I commend the minister on bringing forward the amendments to the Integrated Planning Act 1997, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 and the Environmental Protection Act 1994. These are all good and necessary amendments to these acts.

The point of contention, I suppose, is the amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the way they affect horse riders throughout the state. At present, recreational horse riding can occur in certain areas of state forests around the state. Indeed, there are many Queenslanders who enjoy and use these existing trails on a weekend or at their own leisure. At present this kind of horse riding can occur under regulatory notice. This horse riding occurs in conservation parks, resources reserves and national park recovery areas. Recreational horse riding is prohibited in national parks with a handful of exceptions.

This legislation will by 2013 make some of the national park recovery areas into national parks and, as such, those areas currently available for recreational horse riding will become national parks and recreational horse riding will be prohibited. Herein lies the issue: how is there a balance between safe and enjoyable horse riding trails and the preserved need to protect the environment. In a press

release issued on 1 December last year, the ironically named Barry Trill from the Wilderness Society said—

The primary purpose of national parks is for the conservation of nature. It is simply not appropriate to have horse riding in our most sensitive areas of bushland. Our bushland has not evolved to cope with large hard hooved (sic) animals such as horses.

He went on to say—

Horse riders need to recognise that the environment movement is not opposed to them. We are simply opposed to horse riding in national parks and keen to see riders secure alternative trails outside the national park estate as soon as possible.

The problem is that the horse riding public does feel as though environmental groups are opposed to them. This time they have enlisted the government as their body to protect them. The government has announced—and I do recognise this fact—a 236 kilometre horse trail in the Noosa-Tewantin region as well as a 208 kilometre trail in the Gold Coast hinterland stretching to Beaudesert. This seems particularly wonderful as it connects the pony clubs around the western Gold Coast, including Cedar Lakes and Tamborine.

However, the problem is that these new trails outside of national parks are seen by some as death traps. Many of the horse riding associations and others in public life who have horse riding experience have labelled the horse trails as dangerous, death traps and incomprehensible—so much so that some horse riders have gone to great lengths, including trying to have trails heritage listed, to save the trails that are currently being used.

I hope that the minister realises that one cannot just blaze away a trail and then once all is said and done classify it as challenging or recreational for the purpose of a press release. There have been stiff objections to the safety level of these trails. I can tell members that this is coming from people who enjoy trails week in and week out. I also find it tough to fathom that we are looking at areas that are going from national park recovery areas to national parks. All in all it is a classification change, yet all of a sudden the hard hoofs are causing erosion and the spread of infectious weeds and becomes so much of a problem that the land can no longer be ridden on. It seems almost illogical that a piece of land suddenly changes like that. It is a fair indication that this bill is over-restrictive and that perhaps there is a slight element of politics to it all.

I also note the concerns of the member for Nicklin about recreational dog walkers who have been in these areas for years and years. I would hate to have the job of the wildlife official filming people yesterday feeding the dolphins at Tin Can Bay. There was a photo in yesterday's *Courier-Mail*. We would hate to be the poor wildlife official who had to say to his wife, 'I have got to go out and film people today who are doing the wrong thing.' When they go to work these officials are going to have to penalise people for walking dogs or riding horses. Yet if people are not being penalised for doing these things wrongly, it leads to great frustration that laws are not being enforced. Laws that are not enforced are worse than no laws at all.

As a friend of mine said to me recently—he is a serving police officer—about the smoking laws, 'If you're asked by a health inspector for your name, tell them it's Mickey Mouse. What are they going to do? Arrest you?' The inspectors whom we saw in that case were out in force for a week or two and now there is no-one enforcing those smoking laws, and that leads to great frustration. I also remember reading about a journalist who came out for an Ashes cricket tour some years ago and said that the country had changed so much from the country that he knew when it was frontier country because we have laws telling people to do the most obvious things yet there is no-one to enforce them. With those few comments, I commend the bill to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Ipswich, I welcome to the public gallery today students and teachers from Swayneville State School, Cathedral College and Stanwell State School. Welcome.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (2.40 pm): The National Party seems to have developed a new environmental mantra perhaps best summed up by what the member for Callide has said over a number of weeks—that is, the line, 'We're all conservationists now.' So with this in mind when I walked outside at lunchtime and saw a number of National Party members leading a Property Rights Australia protest—and one of them was the member for Darling Downs—it struck me as a little ironic. Members cannot have been in here yesterday claiming to all be conservationists now and be out there today leading a mob of rednecks calling for the right to chop down every tree and shoot every native animal. It just does not work that way.

Even if the National Party had moved a little bit forward—and I am not entirely convinced that it has—it seems to have moved forward to catch up with the environmental debate as it was in the 1980s. It has moved forward to the extent that it accepts that we should not shoot all the native wildlife and it is not really okay to put radioactive waste in all the rivers. It has taken off its white shoes. I hate to disappoint the National Party just as it has caught up with the environmental debate of the 1980s. I hate to tell it that the wagon has rolled on. It is not enough for someone to call themselves an environmentalist because they suddenly think that bilbies are cute.

A government member: Or you wear a green tie.

Ms NOLAN: It is not enough to say that someone is an environmentalist because they wear a green tie. The modern environmental agenda is about much more than that. The project that has sustained Australian economic reform since about the Whitlam era—1975—with a 25 per cent tariff cut, the project of economic rationalism, is now coming to its conclusion and sustainability will be the next great social and economic reform that will take this country forward.

Where are we now? Let us look at our society. Australian society is much richer than it has ever been. Indeed, we are three times richer than we were in the 1950s. But are we happier? Most of us agree that many of our constituents would say that they quite simply are not. There is a substantive body of evidence that as Western societies have become richer they have reached a certain point and after that point that extra wealth has simply not made them happier. In the last 10 years in Australia the use of antidepressant medication has tripled. Homelessness has increased. Some 45 per cent of Australians who earn more than \$70,000 a year say that they cannot afford to buy everything that they really need. As Hugh Mackay says, Australians feel like they are on a runaway train that is speeding out of control and they cannot get off. We are caught in a wave of consumerism so that, while we are getting richer, we are not getting happier. That is where we are on the social front.

Where is our economy? We are at the end of a long boom. We are currently 23 years into a period of sustained economic growth that started in 1982. The last two booms before this one both occurred in the 20th century. They were 1904 to 1929 and 1947 to 1974. In both of those booms, after about 25 years the forces of technology which drove them and the macroeconomic conditions which sustained them gave way to less defined and uncertain periods when no coordinated world growth was evident. That decline may just be beginning to hit Queensland. In the June quarter of 2005, which are the figures that have just been released, state final demand increased by 0.8 of a per cent. Treasury equates this to an average annual growth figure of 3.8 per cent a year, which is very respectable but significantly down on the 9.3 per cent which was recorded in the June quarter of 2004. The petrol price in recent years has increased from \$US25 a barrel two years ago to \$US66 now.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Ms NOLAN: This is relevant to the bill. Trust me. What this means is that there is significant pressure on households. What this means is that, with households carrying a very high level of debt—much more than they were in 1996—consumer confidence is decreasing under the weight of petrol prices and our economy quite realistically is probably coming to the end of the sustained long boom. So we know we have serious social problems and it would be silly for us not to plan for where our economy will go beyond the long boom.

What about our environment? We know—even the National Party has become more aware of it—that the state of our environment is in fact continuing to decline. We have not yet arrested the decline, let alone turned it around. Our rivers generally are becoming more polluted. We are still chopping down more trees and therefore salinity is still increasing over our rural lands. We have a serious process to arrest that decline, but we have not yet reached the point where the decline has been turned around.

These things cannot be treated as isolated issues which bear no relationship to one another. Rather, our economy is in decline because we failed and we missed the opportunity to make it sustainable. People are unhappy because we work too hard and we have lost any sense, particularly urban people, of connection with our environment. I firmly believe that this period in our history will be looked back upon as one in which we all pretty much went to sleep. We enjoyed the growth. We loved the party. We enjoyed the consumer binge. We were having a ball, but we missed the chance to genuinely make our economy and our society sustainable.

The way forward on these issues is to see them holistically, to put those things together—to say that we have real social problems about the loss of community, we are coming to the end of a long boom and our environment is in real trouble. These are not separate issues. These are all part of the same thing. The people who are here, particularly the schoolchildren who are a bit more hooked into this than are some of us, know that to be true. In fact, I think everyone in this room bar the members of the National Party know that to be true. The way forward on these environmental issues and these social and economic issues is to view them holistically. The next major round of economic and social reform in Australia is not the sale of Telstra—although the National Party thinks it is—it is not industrial relations; it is sustainability.

We need to develop a whole project of economic and social reform around sustainability. I cannot stand here and tell members that I know what every element of that project will be. I do not think that at the beginning of the economic rationalist reforms any person could have said, 'These will be all the elements.' But I want to talk about what a few of those elements will be. I have spoken in the House before about better urban design, and that will be a really central part of it. For instance, there is evidence that for every 10 kilometres people commute their level of connection to the community begins to decline and they begin to become less happy. So one of those elements will be better urban design around public transport and shorter commutes. I think congestion is the biggest environmental issue that we have in Australia.

We need a rural planning process which, with their consent, gets farmers out of agriculturally marginal lands. We cannot have people flogging themselves and doing enormous environmental damage for very little economic gain. It is up to the federal government to address that issue and have a major structural adjustment package to get farmers out of the most agriculturally marginal lands.

We need to get serious about water reform. That includes reform to pricing in terms of rural water use and industrial pricing. We cannot continue to have this ridiculous situation where industrial users pay less for water by using more. We need to get serious about demand management in the area of energy, because we just cannot keep digging up more and more coal and producing more power for, a lot of the time, things that we do not actually need.

We need to address our attitude to work. I think lots of people know in themselves that they work longer and longer hours but they are not entirely convinced that they get more out of it. They are not entirely convinced that they work more productively. These things need to be part of a holistic approach to sustainable economics, to the environment and to sustainable living. We know that we are on this runaway train. We feel disconnected from our environment. We know that the long boom is ending. It would be mad of us to not plan for what we are going to do when it ends. The National Party keeps arguing for it to happen, but we know that we are continuing to do more and more damage to our environment. It is obvious what the next round of economic and social reform in Australia should be. It simply must be a broad—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! I say to opposition members that they have a chance to be part of this debate by joining the speaking list. Can you please let the speaker give her point of view—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you please stop interjecting on the member who is speaking.

Ms NOLAN: So this Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill forms one element of that. In this debate National Party members have stood up and said, 'We are all environmentalists. We are all conservationists—except for those flying foxes that we want to shoot, those animals that we want to bait, those dolphins that we want to get crashed into by boats, those trees that we want to chop down, and the crocodiles we want to shoot. Except for those things, we are deadset environmentalists. We think possums, bilbies and wallabies are just so cute. We are really environmentalists.' That is why this speech is absolutely relevant to everything the members opposite have said. The environmental movement wagon has rolled on. The issues are about sustainability in all elements of our economy, our lives and our environmental policies. These are not separate issues. This is the next great round of economic and social reform that will take this country forward. I think the National Party only marks itself out with its great irrelevance to that agenda.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (2.54 pm): I rise to make a reasonably brief contribution on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2005—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COPELAND: With that many interjections, I might go for a bit longer. This is a very wide-ranging bill. I have sat and listened to the debate over a day and a half, or thereabouts. The range of issues canvassed within this legislation has been reflected by the number and variety of responses from various members of parliament. Each member of parliament has issues in relation to this legislation that are relevant to them in their own parts of Queensland.

I will not touch on all of the policy objectives of the legislation. Obviously coastal works do not dramatically affect my seat, which is based in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs, although some people jest that, owing to global warming, we may have great water views from Toowoomba and then we will have great property values. Certainly, that will not happen.

I think the provisions in the bill that relate to providing progressive rehabilitation for mining projects are very worth while. I think over the past few decades the process of rehabilitation of mining projects has been improved. Of course, there are still some problems. The member for Callide referred to this and, having grown up in Taroom and, having some exposure to coalmines, he identified a number of issues in his own electorate. Members would not believe the job that a lot of large coalmining companies undertake in rehabilitating the areas that they have mined. I think those provisions are very worth while.

The final policy objective of the legislation is to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Forestry Act 1959 to provide for transitional arrangements for horse riding and stock grazing as part of the tenure transfer process under the South East Queensland Forest Agreement and for transitional arrangements in extending the use of forest reserve tenure as part of the statewide forest process resolving native forest logging on land outside south-east Queensland and progressively transferring these lands to protected areas of state as logging is completed. I would like to go into this area in some detail, because it is of direct relevance to my own electorate and certainly to many of my constituents.

At the outset, I would like to say that the sort of intellectual snobbery that we have seen exposed in some of the contributions by Labor members is absolutely breathtaking. They will completely dismiss out of hand anyone who does not agree with the things that they expound. I hope that everyone standing outside this place and all of those people reading this debate know that the member for Ipswich thinks the people outside are a mob of rednecks wanting to chop down every tree. I hope they remember that and spread those comments throughout Queensland. Those people who were outside this place at lunchtime are good people—

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I take that interjection. The minister is trying to say that this is about our environmental credentials. The issue is about good people having a problem with government legislation because it is killing their livelihoods. It is killing their communities. Then people such as the member for Ipswich stand up in this place and say that they are a mob of rednecks wanting to chop down every tree. That is intellectual snobbery of the worst kind. I hope that those words will come back to haunt the member for Ipswich. I know that they will. There are a lot of good people out there—people I have known all my life. I certainly know of the pain that a lot of legislation introduced by this government has caused them.

Mr Shine: Are you a member?

Mr COPELAND: No, I am not a member, but I know the pain they have had to endure and the problems they have experienced under this government. For them to be treated in the way they were treated by the member for Ipswich is just unforgivable.

One of the issues I want to raise is access to state forests and other areas by horse riders. This issue has been addressed in great detail by many members. I hope that influences the minister, as she has the capacity to change this policy. It is a very important issue that affects an awful lot of people. A number of people in my electorate partake in horse-riding activities and they go into the areas that will be locked up. For example, a large number of competitive endurance riders will be affected. Dean Stephen, who lives in my electorate, is a nationally ranked endurance rider who has competed internationally. He has been lobbying me on this issue. I would like to thank him. I did a lot of work with Dean before I was elected a member of parliament. I was involved with the Royal Agricultural Society at the Toowoomba showgrounds when we staged the Queensland Festival of the Horse. Dean ran the endurance event that we had and did a fantastic job.

They are sorts of things that will be affected by this change in policy. I would like to back up the member for Toowoomba South and the issues he raised with regard to the national bridle trail, which goes from the tip to the tip—from far-north Queensland to Victoria. My house in Toowoomba borders on the bridle trail. The easement goes right beside our garden fence and then it goes down the escarpment.

Ms Boyle: The bicentennial.

Mr COPELAND: There is a bridle trail that goes past us and it can be used as part of the bicentennial trail. They use the trail to traverse Toowoomba. It also goes along the eastern side of the Toowoomba City Council. I certainly hope that that will not be affected either in the short or in the long term because it is a very important part of what our country is about and what the bicentennial was about in 1988.

The beekeepers are another issue. It is nonsensical to try to restrict the bees. I again refer to the comments of the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Ipswich, treating with disdain some of the issues that have been raised by my colleagues with regard to the need for control of feral animals and noxious weeds in national parks and state forests. It is so typical of some members of the government that they simply do not recognise that that is a problem that needs to be managed. We need to manage feral dogs, feral pigs, feral horses, feral donkeys, feral goats—all of those feral animals. We need to manage noxious weeds—whether it is lantana, rubber vine, prickly acacia. The list is endless. The problem is that they are not being controlled under this government. They are not being controlled in national parks. They are not being controlled in state forests, and they need to be.

For members of this Labor government to treat with disdain those members who have raised this as an issue treats with disdain all of those people who try to make a living in those areas because they are affected as well. Not only is this government overseeing the degradation of national parks and areas that we all agree should be preserved—that is the consequence of not looking after them; the government is not protecting the environmental areas that it is saying it is—but the neighbours who have properties bordering those areas will also be affected. It is simply illogical and it is absolutely irresponsible for the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Ipswich to come in here and treat us in the way that they did. It got me stirred up, as you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I think quite rightly.

I would like to move on to the issue of logging in the western hardwoods area. A lot of my colleagues have raised this issue because it will affect businesses, families, workers and communities in their electorates. I think that is a great shame because, as a lot of speakers from this side have said, the former primary industries minister is promoting the fact that the DPIF has been given a world's best

practice management award for the work it is doing, yet another minister is coming in here saying that we are going to lock up one million hectares of land that is the very epitome of sustainable development. It is what we can do and are doing very, very well in this country. We are leading the world. What the government is saying is, no, we are not going to allow good people in Queensland to make a living from that land and doing it environmentally sustainably; we are going to lock it up so that we export those industries to different countries that do not manage the environment like we do and do not produce any of their agricultural products like we do. I think that is a real shame.

The last point I want to make is about the cypress industry, which is a very big industry in my electorate. It is not covered by this bill, but I would like to put on the record that I hope the minister and the government treats the cypress industry as a sustainable industry because it is. I had a discussion with a very senior DNR public servant in Toowoomba just a couple of months ago. We were talking about the cypress industry, because in my electorate, particularly in the Cecil Plains area, it is a very big industry. There are a number of mills and that industry really underpins the community of Cecil Plains. There are large areas of cypress pine state forest that they do harvest from in the western area of my electorate. This senior DNR officer—and I will not name him for his own protection—said to me that we should really be looking at listing it as a weed; that is how renewable it is. Anyone who has seen cypress pine wherever it is cleared or harvested will know that it does grow back very thickly, and it is an industry that I think could continue very well.

I see the member for Toowoomba North nodding in agreement because he would have seen the area I am talking about. That is an industry that we need to preserve. It is a very good industry. It is very well managed. The people in that industry need certainty to be able to invest, to go to a bank and say, 'I'm not going to be kicked out of this area in five years time or 10 years time.' They need to have a long-term future so that they can invest and develop their own businesses and keep employing people. From conversations with some of the millers in Cecil Plains I know that they are worried. They are very concerned. All of their equipment is very task specific and it would be virtually worthless should they be locked out of those areas and have to close down their businesses. We need to have a long-term future for those people. They are doing it well. If the minister ever wants to come and have a look at the cypress pine at Cecil Plains, she is quite welcome.

Ms Boyle: I went to Injune recently and I saw the mill there.

Mr COPELAND: Injune is another very good example, as are the areas between Injune and Taroom, which I know very well. They have very similar issues regarding the cypress pine industry. These people are doing a great job exporting cypress pine to South America, North America and Asia in pallet loads for flooring. It is a very good timber and one that we can manage.

I have taken the opportunity to place on record a number of these issues because they are important issues in my electorate. I certainly think that the people in my electorate who are concerned about these issues would be absolutely horrified by some of the comments that have been made by members opposite in this debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lee): Order! Before calling the member for Mansfield, I would like to welcome to the gallery students, teachers, parents and friends of Kepnock State High School in the electorate of Bundaberg.

Debate, on motion of Mr Reeves, adjourned.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 August (p. 2582).

Mr CALTABIANO (Chatsworth—Lib) (3.08 pm): The purpose of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 is to amend seven transportation acts governed by Queensland Transport and Main Roads. Consequential to this, three other acts are also amended. The acts to which amendments are proposed are the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994, and Transport (South Bank Corporation Area Land) Act 1999. The minor consequential amendments are to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, the Integrated Planning Act 1997 and the South Bank Corporation Act 1989. Broadly speaking, the amendments made to these acts are intended to improve transportation safety both on our roads and at sea, to reduce water pollution throughout Queensland, to protect our schoolchildren at school crossings and refine current legislative provisions.

Objectives relevant to the amendment to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 include clarifying existing legislation relating to port authorities, differential tolling, and busway safety officer appointments and powers. Amendments to this act have also had an effect on declared busway and non-rail corridor land—issues that will be dealt with in more detail in a moment.

The proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 are concerned with the minimisation and prevention of water pollution and improvement of safety for vessels through powers for declaring exclusion zones around damaged vessels and closure of specified ports in the interests of safety.

The intention of the proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 is to protect public safety and clarify service contracts in the TransLink area. Amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act are also concerned with public safety, specifically the safety of children, through developing more stringent legislative provisions for the appointment of crossing supervisors.

The underlying position for amendments to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act and the Transport (South Bank Corporation Area Land) Act is to clarify, simplify and resolve inconsistencies in the current legislation that have been outstanding for some time.

The proposed amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act are broadly related to tolling on busways, non-rail corridors and port authorities. The amendments have been designed to clarify existing legislation relating to toll setting, clarify legislative provisions relating to government owned corporations declared to be a port authority and clarify the definition of 'miscellaneous transport infrastructure'. There are other amendments relating to busways and non-rail corridors.

The tolling issue arose predominantly as a result of the Brisbane urban corridor. The Brisbane urban corridor activities are an example of the wider problem that south-east Queensland is facing with a worsening traffic congestion nightmare. This is a result of probably the last 20 years of transport strategy neglect in this state. Put simply, Brisbane has not yet received the planning it has needed for new corridors for more than a decade. This government has not provided the solutions to the problems, particularly in that Brisbane urban corridor area. We know that growth in the Brisbane urban corridor and in housing is enormous and we know that the industry links from the west to the east and the north need to use the Logan-Gateway link on Brisbane's southern outskirts. This is a toll road. Other roads, like Mains Road, McCullough Street and Kessels Road, are choked with trucks and cars as they try to avoid the tolls.

The tolling proposal in this bill seeks to ensure that a maximum toll only is applied and that the good work of the Australian government under the AusLink proposal—to better utilise the Logan-Gateway link for heavy interstate trucks and return Kessels Road to state authorities—is supported through reducing the toll for specific periods of time.

Mr Reeves: They went kicking and screaming to do the report. Get your facts right.

Mr CALTABIANO: The member for Mansfield, whose area is traversed by some of the Brisbane urban corridor, simply does not understand the complexities involved in getting this matter right. Without the support of the federal government in providing \$1.1 million—

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr CALTABIANO: Wait and see, Minister. \$1.1 million has been allocated in this process to provide relief for heavy vehicles from tolls in this Brisbane urban corridor. It has a long history dating back over several years now. Minister Lucas and Minister Lloyd have come to an arrangement to go through a 12-month tolling experiment to see if tolls can work.

Mr Lucas: Wait to see the results.

Mr CALTABIANO: We look forward to those, Minister, because if they do not work we need to come up with some pretty creative solutions to get those trucks out of the eastern suburbs of Brisbane.

Mr Reeves: Seventy-five per cent of them have to use that route.

Mr CALTABIANO: We will see, member for Mansfield. All in good time.

Clauses 6 to 11 deal with the abolition and establishment of port authorities including, as the case may be, amalgamation. The issue with port authorities in the state of Queensland is a matter of just getting on with the job of building the infrastructure. These amendments allow that to happen in a much smoother way.

Clauses 12 to 30 and clause 33 relate to the operation of busways. Clause 12 relates to the declaration of busway land including land already held by the state but acquired for purposes other than busways.

Mr Lawlor: We agree with you, Bob.

Mr CALTABIANO: You agree?

Mr Lawlor: With Bob Quinn; he just left.

Mr CALTABIANO: Clauses 13 to 30 and 33 are designed to ensure consistency between the existing Transport Infrastructure (Busway) Regulation and the Transport Infrastructure Act.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr CALTABIANO: I will take the advice of the minister when it comes to his backbench colleagues who are never likely to go anywhere.

Government members interjected.

Mr CALTABIANO: I was only repeating the words of the minister about his colleagues.

Clause 12—the declaration of land as busway land—will amend section 302(4) of the act to clarify that state land which has busway transport infrastructure on it may be declared busway land, even though it was acquired for a purpose other than a busway. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that the land intended for busway purposes, rather than only land acquired for busway purposes, may be declared busway land. It is important as part of this process that existing public open space does not get sucked into the declaration of busways without the necessary public input.

Clauses 13 to 28 are very general and address consistency between the acts. They clarify the act with regard to busway service providers and busway safety officers. It would be good to have a report back to parliament, either on an annual basis or on the basis of the performance of those safety officers either in Main Roads or Transport.

Clauses 29 and 30 deal with light rail. I would be interested if the minister could indicate where these might be for the future and how the potential conflicts with the South East Busway, which is designed for light rail, might well be resolved given that it serves both purposes.

Clause 31 clarifies the definition of ‘miscellaneous transport infrastructure’ to be included in section 416(1)(a) of the act. Not only is this amendment required because of the expiration of the Transport Infrastructure Regulation 1995; it is also a very practical amendment.

Paragraph (a) of the existing definition of ‘non-rail corridor land’ encompasses discussed Queensland railways land transferred to Queensland Transport and is considered to be part of a state transport corridor. Paragraph (b) extends the definition of ‘non-rail corridor land’ to include former rail corridor land where the railway manager has surrendered the lease of that land.

The basis for this amendment is supported if it enables the chief executive to retain the land in a perpetual lease or ownership for use as part of a transport corridor of the future. It will have the same status as the existing non-rail corridor land. It is important that this land is not being sold off for private sector use—not like the former lord mayor of Brisbane did in the city of Brisbane, selling off critical bushland for housing and other purposes.

Proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 are intended to prevent pollution from ships and protect Queensland’s water and coastline environments. The objective of the amendments is, as Minister Lucas said in his second reading speech, to minimise deliberate and negligent discharges of ship sourced pollutants in coastal waters. The marine and coastal areas of Queensland are critical to the state’s economy, the tourist industry, our environment and the water based recreational pursuits of many Queenslanders. This legislation is designed to protect these areas, which are fundamental to the lives of so many Queenslanders.

There have been four major amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act. These amendments are to shipboard waste management plans, the monitoring of transfer operations, the position of marine pollution control officers and the powers of Marine Safety Queensland to deal with potential, as opposed to imminent, dangers.

In relation to shipboard waste management plans, clause 36 amends section 55A of the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act and changes the legislative requirements for ships required to have a waste management plan. Currently, section 55A reads that ships over 400 gross tonnes must have a waste management plan. The amendment will change that measure to at least 35 metres in overall length. This amendment will bring the measurement guidelines into line with those required for the registration of the vessel—a measurement that all shipowners have knowledge of. Subsequently, these amendments create consistency between measures, minimising any ambiguity associated with the understanding or interpretation of the legislative requirements.

With regard to the monitoring of transfer operations, this clause inserts a new section 60A and imposes an obligation on a ship’s owner and master to ensure that all transfer operations are monitored by a member of the ship’s crew. This includes the transfer of oil, effluent and other potential pollutants. The purpose of the amendment is to reduce the incidence of waste spills in Queensland waters. In the second reading speech, Minister Lucas referred to the incidents that were the catalysts for the amendment, saying that substantial waste spills in the Brisbane River in 2000 and at Thursday Island in 2003 would not have happened if the fittings had been regularly maintained and a crew member had been actively monitoring the couplings for overfilling and leaks.

Nowhere in the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act or in any other related legislation is there a statutory obligation imposed on a ship’s owners to ensure that the transfer apparatus used in transfer operations is mechanically sound. Without proper maintenance of the transfer apparatus, the purpose of this amendment—obliging crews to actively monitor the transfer operations to minimise and reduce waste spills—could be of concern.

I raised this with the minister a couple of days ago. I should read into *Hansard* the reply that addresses exactly that issue.

Mr Lucas: Why don't you just table it?

Mr CALTABIANO: I table the response, which satisfies me that the matters have been dealt with quite satisfactorily.

With regard to the marine pollution controller, clauses 38, 39 and 41 combine to establish in statute the position of a marine pollution controller. This position is already in existence, having been established under the national plan. It will help prevent the pollution of the sea by oil and other noxious and hazardous substances and is tacitly acknowledged across marine safety agencies. By defining the role, responsibilities and functions of this position in legislation, in a crisis situation or when a response to a major marine pollution situation is required, direction and certainty of command will be provided.

Clause 39 raises some concerns regarding the powers that are conferred upon a marine pollution controller and persons acting under his or her direction. These persons are granted immunity from civil liability, which is broader than is usually inserted in contemporary Queensland statutes. I would like to hear some assurances from the minister about the appropriateness of this immunity. It is acknowledged in the explanatory notes that a lack of protection from immunity could give rise to uncertainty and undue hesitation in making vital decisions with potentially serious, negative consequences.

Mr Lucas: What clause is that?

Mr CALTABIANO: It is clause 39, which relates to the immunity given for the pollution control officers.

Next I will mention the powers of Maritime Safety Queensland to deal with potential dangers. Currently section 98 of the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act provides for Maritime Safety Queensland to intervene after a marine incident when there is a grave and imminent danger to the Queensland coast or other Queensland interests. The proposed amendment in clause 40 would see the phrase 'grave and imminent' being substituted with 'potentially serious'. This amendment would have the effect of allowing Maritime Safety Queensland in the face of a potential threat to take preventive actions rather than reactive measures. This is more likely to achieve a reduction in the incidence of severe pollution within Queensland waters and is more likely to achieve the objectives of the amendments and the Transfer Operations (Marine Pollution) Act generally. However, when granting wider powers, it is important to ensure that they are monitored and the act is working in the way in which it is intended.

Amendments proposed to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act are designed to achieve marine safety in Queensland waters and develop the effectiveness and efficiency of the state maritime industry. A number of changes have been made to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act, including identifying a ship's legal owner, allowing cost recovery by the state in any salvage operations, allowing temporary closure of pilotage areas for safety purposes, creating exclusion zones around ships, sharing of fishing vessel data for tracking purposes and allowing criminal history checks for marine licence examiners and trainers.

It is interesting that there have been several marine incidents in Queensland waters over recent years. I refer to a report of the board of inquiry into the collision between *Sun Paradise* and *Pride of Airlie* a couple of years ago. I seek the minister's advice on some of the recommendations made in the board of inquiry into this incident. It is very clear from the recommendations that guidance has been sought from the department. I seek to have the minister inform me in his reply whether these recommendations have been adopted as part of this bill.

The regulator and TOMSA have provided a number of ways in which the regulator, now known as MSQ, or Maritime Safety Queensland, is required to discharge the obligations imposed. The board of inquiry notes that—

- To the date of this report there appears to be no published coordination plan in relation to marine safety designed to give effect to the marine safety objectives of TOMSA;
- To the date of this report no Marine Safety Strategies have been developed for consideration by industry and approval by the Minister;
- The 2001-02 Annual Report of Queensland Transport did not include a report on the way in which effect has been given to the TOMSA section 23 obligations about marine safety;
- The 2001-02 Annual Report of Queensland Transport did not include a report on the operation of the marine safety implementation programs during the financial year to which the annual report relates; and
- To the date of this report—

which is 2003-04—

no Marine Safety Standards have been developed dealing with the operation of commercial vessels other than for limited specific applications.

It goes on and finally says—

It is open to speculation as to why these mandatory aspects of the legislation have not been complied with. This concept is well known to government.

Mr Lawlor: Read the whole thing.

Mr CALTABIANO: That is the whole thing. Does the member want me to continue on? I am more than happy to continue on.

Mr Lucas: That is what Santo used to say.

Mr CALTABIANO: I am more than happy to continue on. I will let the honourable member know that there are 118 pages. I have read half of one of those pages. If the member would like me to continue on—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lee): Can the member address his comments through the chair, please?

Mr CALTABIANO: If you would like me to continue on, Mr Deputy Speaker, on the other 118 pages, I am more than happy to. I will give the minister a copy of that page if he wishes to have it.

I turn now to identifying a ship's owner. In response to the *MV Karma* incident at Agnes Water in late 2003, clause 43 inserts new section 87A into the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act. This clause unequivocally establishes that the registered shipowner, prior to loss, abandonment or stranding of a ship, is the legal owner of, and is legally responsible for, the ship. This clause allows for recovery from the ship's owners for costs incurred by the state or harbour master in conducting a salvage operation.

Clause 47 inserts new section 199A into the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act. In addition to clause 43 this clause allows recovery of costs by the state of its expenses when a criminal offence is proven. This is another clause that perhaps should have some sort of sunset provision to ensure a review is undertaken to test the actual performance because it is a new provision of the act and one that does not apply in other motor vehicle type incidents.

With regard to the temporary closure of pilotage areas, under the amendments to section 95, the harbour master will have the power to temporarily and totally or partially close pilotage areas for a limited period to ensure safety. This amendment builds on the existing section 95, which assigns this power of closure but only in the case of emergencies.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr CALTABIANO: If the member for Mansfield is not interested in the very important marine safety issues of Queensland Transport and would like a demonstration of juggling or other things, perhaps he should wait until after 7 pm this evening.

A direct effect of this amendment will be, for example, the planning of the annual Riverfire festival on the Brisbane River. The closure of the river during this event will result in the public and those involved in the event being better protected. I raised with the minister the issue of the need for these closures. Again, I table the advice I received, and I am happy to do so.

Mr Lucas: Can we have that now?

Mr CALTABIANO: You can have that now, Minister.

With regard to the creation of exclusion zones around ships, the implementation of clause 45 will create two new sections, 125A and 125B within the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act. These sections both relate to exclusion zones around ships involved in a marine incident. Section 125A allows for the declaration of a temporary exclusion zone around a ship outside of a pilotage area for up to 28 days. This power would be exercised by the general manager of Maritime Safety Queensland if he or she is reasonably satisfied that the closing of the area is required for a limited time to ensure safety. Proposed new section 125B looks specifically at the penalties involved for breaching a declared exclusion zone. Without the general manager's permission, any person causing a ship to enter, anchor, berth or moor within an enclosed area without reasonable excuse is liable to a penalty of 200 units.

Clauses 45 and 44 have the effect of increasing the safety of persons and ships involved in potentially dangerous situations, thus allowing the safety measures to be planned and implemented and thereby minimise the likelihood of a dangerous situation arising. Clause 45 has the practical effect of shutting the waters in an emergency situation to protect the safety of persons and ships involved. Coupled with the penalty for breaching the exclusion zone borders this clause also has the effect of being a deterrent and protecting ships not directly involved in such a maritime incident.

Queries have been raised as to whether under these provisions the authority of Maritime Safety Queensland may impinge on the powers of other agencies such as the Queensland Police Service. However, it is my understanding that the powers of Maritime Safety Queensland will operate in parallel with the powers of other agencies concerned with public protection. The sharing of the fishing vessel data—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr CALTABIANO: The member for Southport is trying to be a sit-down comic and is a miserable failure. Currently the Queensland fisheries service monitors fishing vessels throughout the state via a vessel monitoring system using GPS data. The proposed amendment would allow for data that is collected under the Fisheries Act via the vessel monitoring system to be provided to the chief executive

of Transport on request for the purpose of enhancing navigational safety and minimising marine incident risks.

It is understood that the consultation has been carried out with the relevant industry bodies, and support has been given by them to these amendments. Initially there was apprehension from the industry about this clause as there was a general misunderstanding that the new equipment would be required for this amendment to be enforced. However, this amendment will only apply to vessels already being monitored by the vessel monitoring system. There will be no additional expense to either the government or the shipowners. Moreover, it does not extend beyond ships monitored under this system and, as such, if a ship is not required to be monitored for the purposes of the Fisheries Act and using the vessel monitoring system, no data will be collected on that ship.

A clause on compensation inserts a new section 199A into the act. This section states that if it is found that the defendant has contravened a direction of the harbour master against the requirements of the act, the court may order the defendant to pay the state's expenses. This will be enforceable in situations where a criminal offence is proven and will only allow for compensation of the state's expenses for carrying out that direction on the owner's behalf.

In this sense identification of the ship's owner as described in clause 43 is absolutely necessary as, without it, there is no-one from whom the state can claim compensation. Hence both of those clauses are linked. Clauses 43 and 47 are indeed complementary. However, this clause does not allow for the state to seek recovery of legal costs, merely compensation for the expense relating to actions taken in the execution of a harbour master's order. Again, there has to be accountability for one's ship and the cost associated with its operations.

I turn to criminal history checks for marine examiners and trainers. A new section is inserted into the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act. This section will allow criminal history checks to be undertaken with regard to marine examiners and trainers. By allowing for criminal history checks it can be determined whether training providers are fit and proper persons to have contact with students, most notably school students undertaking marine studies at school. This provision is in line with the provisions of drivers licence trainers and examiners under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act and will increase the protection of the more vulnerable persons undertaking marine studies.

I look at disqualifying offences under the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act. Clause 50 inserts section 22B into the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act regarding the disclosure of disqualifying offences for drivers. Clause 56 clarifies what offences are classed as disqualifying offences and the category of the offence in which they fall. This section under clause 50 will require accredited transport operators to report to the chief executive if he or she reasonably believes that an authorised driver for the company has been charged or convicted with a disqualifying offence. In providing this information the operator cannot be held liable civilly, criminally or in breach of privacy requirements. They are very important measures.

The onus falls on these transport operators to report these matters. I would offer support to this amendment if the minister clearly outlines that the business owners will not be hounded through this process. It is a requirement that they do this. The liabilities that they have are merely to protect the civil, criminal and privacy requirements.

The Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act is being amended to clarify penalties for driving offences, the testing of speed detection devices and the strengthening of the provisions for the crossing supervisor scheme. The other amendments being made include the clarification of offences pertaining to unlawful interference with car identification numbers and the adoption of some definitions from the Australian Road Rules.

The majority of the amendments made to this section are clarifications of the existing law or technical amendments. However, some are more complex and significant, inserting new provisions or changing substantive content. Technical amendments and clarifications relate predominantly to clauses 57 through 60, 62, 63, 65, 68, 71 and 72.

In approximately 17 per cent of fatal crashes in Queensland each year excessive speed is indicated as being a major factor contributing to the accidents. The amendments in clauses 61 and 65 have the purpose of sending a very clear message to Queenslanders that speeding is dangerous and life-threatening behaviour. Moreover, through the harshness of the penalties these amendments aim to act as a deterrent and reduce speed related accidents throughout the state.

Both clauses 61 and 65 are concerned with driver disqualification for dangerous driving offences. Section 90 of the act as it exists now allows a person convicted of racing or speed trials on roads to be disqualified from driving by the courts. The clause 61 amendment will bring the minimum period of disqualification in line with the sanctions applied for high-risk speed offences and bring some consistency in the penalising of dangerous driving. This amendment will not take away the court's power to impose sanctions for longer periods if necessary and appropriate.

Clause 65 relates to high-speed offences and clarifies that the minimum period for disqualification for those convicted of driving in excess of 40 kilometres an hour over the speed limit will be six months. Again, consistency between the existing legislation is the key issue and the reason behind the amendment, and I strongly support it.

Clause 63 pertains to crossing supervisors and establishes legislation to ensure the safety of our children and the people with whom they associate. This clause establishes new part 7A in chapter 5 of the act. There are numerous elements to this new section which I will discuss briefly.

The amendments clearly identify the situation in which an application to become a crossing supervisor can be refused. These situations include where a person has been convicted of a disqualifying offence or is in the process of having a charge for a disqualifying offence determined. Such disqualifying offences include drug offences and child related sex offences. Other amendments allow for criminal history checks to be done and to ensure that all relevant criminal offences can be considered when deciding who is appropriate to be a crossing supervisor as well as who is appropriate to continue to be a crossing supervisor.

Disciplinary provisions for crossing supervisors have been reinforced so that immediate suspension of a crossing supervisor can be undertaken. This would be where the chief executive believes on reasonable grounds that public safety, particularly the safety of children, has been endangered or is likely to be endangered if suspension does not occur. Moreover, for general public safety a crossing supervisor can be suspended. Provisions to appeal suspension are also provided for in the new amendments. The importance of the safety of our children cannot be underestimated. This clause supports this assertion.

This clause extends the testing time for speed detection devices from 60 days as it currently is under section 124 to six months—a significant change. The speed detection devices include stopwatches, speedometers and vehicle speedometer accuracy indicators, to bring Queensland testing requirements in line with that of the national standards required by the National Association of Testing Authorities, NATA. These changes will continue to maintain the accuracy of the devices at a national standard for the first time in Queensland.

In relation to the suspension of drivers licences, clause 66 repeals section 132 of the act and creates a new section 150 which applies to the appeal of drivers licence suspensions. Clause 66 specifies that a regulation may provide that a court may make an order on the basis of special hardship for persons whose licences have been suspended for drink-driving and/or dangerous offences and the like. Clause 69 is a subsequent amendment to clause 66. Clause 69 will specify eligibility for the order restrictions and conditions relating to this order. The new special hardship order provisions included in the new section 150 following a suspension will be similar to the restricted licence provisions for drink-driving offences, a commendable amendment to bring both parts of the act into line.

With regard to identifying numbers, section 134 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act is concerned with interference with identifying numbers recorded on a vehicle's engine or chassis. Since the end of August 1989 the identity number for a vehicle has been known as a VIN number—vehicle identification number. This amendment to section 134 will incorporate engine, chassis and vehicle identification numbers into one broad category of identifying number. This will allow for consistency between legislation and the modern practice relating to identifying a vehicle. This section also increases the penalty for interfering with an identifying number and recognises the seriousness of the offences of vehicle theft and vehicle rebirthing. The current maximum penalty is \$3,000 or six months imprisonment. This is being increased to \$7,500 and one year's imprisonment, an amendment that is being strongly supported.

With regard to drivers licence information, a new section 150A inserted into the act will specify that a regulation may allow for information relating to licences held under other acts to be included on a licence issued under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. Thus, if an individual holds a marine licence in addition to their drivers licence, the details of the marine licence can be included on the actual drivers licence card. This will not become the actual licence for the licence held under the alternative act but merely provide the information and identify the holder of the licence to hold another licence. This amendment will allow for a marine licence holder to more easily demonstrate to others that the additional licence is actually held.

With regard to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994, all of the amendments shown in this act are technical in nature. With regard to the Transport (South Bank Corporation Area Land) Act 1999, clauses 80 to 88 clarify the ownership and land use issues for the busway land at South Bank. These clauses will establish consistency between all legislation relevant to busway land at South Bank. This amendment follows the completion of land surveys of the busway corridor and completion of the busway infrastructure on that land. The boundaries of land to be excluded from the South Bank Corporation area are clarified. I support the bill and look forward to those areas of clarification from the minister as the debate progresses.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (3.41 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. Before doing so, I want to congratulate everyone involved in the central Queensland sitting of parliament, particularly the local members—the minister for public works

and housing, the member for Keppel and my good mate the member for Fitzroy. It was a great pleasure to have his son here for the first time to see his dad in parliament, and I refer to his son Michael, his daughter-in-law Danielle and, more importantly, his six-and-a-half-month-old grandson Brody. It was terrific that he could see his Pop Jimmy in the regional parliament.

I rise to support the transport amendment bill. Before getting to the parts of the bill that I want to speak to, I have to refer to some of the comments made by the member for Chatsworth. It is terrific that the consideration in detail stage will be so quick because he has gone through the bill clause by clause. It is interesting to note that he is once again following a broken record—that is, following the federal member for Moreton's broken record containing plenty of untruths about the Brisbane urban corridor study.

To put the facts on the record so he gets it right next time he gets up to speak about the Brisbane urban corridor—one would think that he would have known after being a local councillor in the area—the federal government went kicking and screaming but finally agreed to a study. I made representations to the former transport minister, Steve Bredhauer, and he made representations to the federal government time after time after time to do a study on the Brisbane urban corridor and it eventually did the study. I thanked it at the time for doing that study, and it was a great study. It was a study that involved plenty of community consultation. I congratulated Jan Taylor and Associates, one of the lead consultants involved in conducting the study, and it was an excellent study.

Once again, the federal government went silent for a while on the recommendations. It was only when the federal government was worried about the seat of Moreton at the last federal election for Mr Hardgrave that it finally started implementing some of the recommendations of the study. As a result, one of those recommendations was the toll trial, which commenced in February this year and is ongoing. At the time the minister, Paul Lucas, and I congratulated the federal government for putting its money where its mouth was.

However, the member for Chatsworth should think about the facts. Fact No. 1 about the Brisbane urban corridor: it is part of the National Highway. Fact No. 2: 75 per cent of the trucks that use this route need to. They are what is called local traffic because they go through the area to get to local destinations, particularly the Brisbane Markets, the Archerfield Airport and all of the transport companies around there. I refer the member back to fact No. 1: it is part of the National Highway. Fact No. 3: it has been found in two studies that 25 per cent of the trucks that use this route that could use another route such as the Logan Motorway have identified that the tolls are the reason they use this route. Probably about eight per cent of trucks have identified that the tolls are the major problem. I refer once again back to fact No. 1: it is part of the National Highway. Fact No. 4: if we take all of the trucks off the road, there is still a major problem with Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Kessels Road. I refer again to fact No. 1: it is part of the National Highway. Fact No. 5: the buck for BUC stops with the federal government because it is part of the National Highway.

Mr Seeney: What?

Mr REEVES: The buck for BUC starts and stops with the federal government. But I am not holding my breath. I am not holding my breath to see the recommendations from the toll or recommendations from the Mains Road or Kessels Road intersection study. I am not holding my breath that the federal government will be putting in the money. Where is the federal government's funding for the \$1.1 billion Gateway Arterial which is part of the National Highway? Where is the money? Where is the money for the Ipswich Motorway? Where is the money?

Mr Caltabiano interjected.

Mr REEVES: Let us see how effective the member for Chatsworth is. Let us see if he can get a delivery for some funding for the Gateway Arterial road for his constituents, my constituents and anyone else in the southern suburbs. Let us see—

Mr Lucas: \$540 million! \$1.6 billion and \$1.1 billion for the Gateway is their share, let alone the Ipswich Motorway.

Mr REEVES: Let us see the member put his money where his mouth is. The federal member for Moreton is always saying that this is what should happen, but there is no money ever spent. I refer the member opposite to fact No. 1 again: it is part of the National Highway. The buck for BUC stops with the federal government. Let us see if he can deliver better than the federal member for Moreton and deliver that money. The member opposite spoke in his first speech about infrastructure and road infrastructure. Here is his opportunity to actually deliver that as the member for Chatsworth. I will not be holding my breath, but we will remind the residents of the Chatsworth electorate time after time after time that it is the member opposite who can get on to his federal colleagues. He has all of that power that he keeps telling people about. Let us see him deliver that money to the people on the south side of Brisbane. It is about time he put his money where his mouth is.

Turning to the bill, this bill makes amendments to a range of transport legislation. However, I wish to draw the attention of the House—and it probably will not surprise too many people—to this bill, which helps to improve the operation of the busways. As the No. 1 ticket holder on the South East Busway, I wholeheartedly support these measures.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr REEVES: The National Party does not care about public transport. It does not care about the busways. Since its opening on 30 April 2001, the South East Busway has gone from strength to strength and continues to be a shining example of south-east Queensland's world-class public transportation network. It is quite funny hearing the member for Chatsworth talk about busways, because I remember him and the other Liberal councillor in that area—the councillor for Wishart, Graham Quirk—attacking the busways before they even started. They were not supportive of them.

Graham, with due respect, is coming around and is starting to support the busways. I even think Campbell Newman would be regretting the day that he pulled out the transit lanes throughout the city, because public transport use in Brisbane is going through the roof. It is going through the roof because we have an effective infrastructure. That effective infrastructure is due both to the South East Busway and the great work of TransLink. That is why the use of public transport in Brisbane is going through the roof. I think that Campbell Newman is finally coming around and, hopefully, he might even reconsider putting back those transit lanes. That is the only way we can get people out of their cars. With the price of petrol rising, we will find that those transit lanes will be used more often, just like the use of the busways has increased.

This bill confirms the Beattie government's commitment to ensuring that busway passengers travel in a safe and timely manner. This bill provides for the appointment of busway safety officers, who will be key figures in preserving the safety of the millions of passengers who use the busways each year. We are living in a world where public safety is the concern of all citizens. This bill will assure passengers that when they are travelling on the South East Busway there are staff members who are empowered to preserve their safety. I am proud to be part of a Labor state government that is putting the safety of Queenslanders first. This bill will empower busway safety officers to direct passengers to ensure the orderly movement of people, to direct a person off a busway to ensure passenger safety, and to seize an object that poses a threat to passenger safety.

At the Upper Mount Gravatt busway station a Brisbane transport bus will arrive nearly every two to three minutes. With such an immense amount of traffic, it is vital to ensure that the bus drivers who operate these services know that there are busway safety officers dedicated to ensuring safety at the busway stations. An incident involving the injury or death of a busway passenger would be a dreadful tragedy. Thankfully, such a tragedy can be avoided by the introduction of this bill.

I believe that this bill will make busways safer during peak hour periods when hundreds of passengers are at the busway stations. One such time is between 3 pm and 4 pm every weekday. At this time every weekday afternoon the Upper Mount Gravatt busway station at Garden City is packed with hundreds of school students making their way home. The overwhelming majority of these students are not taking part in any activity that would threaten the safety of other students or other busway passengers, but I have noticed a small number of students who may engage in such behaviour. This bill will empower busway safety officers to prevent a tragedy from occurring and ensure that school students can make their way home in a safe and timely manner.

The effect that this bill will have on passengers is not limited to children and young people; its effects will be more far reaching. While I am talking about passenger safety, I would like to congratulate the minister on the introduction of 24-hour bus travel on Friday and Saturday evenings. I want to put on record that I think TransLink and other transport authorities need to work with Garden City and the taxi council to consider creating a new taxi rank at the Upper Mount Gravatt busway station so that if people get off the bus, particularly late at night, they do not have to walk long distances, including past the town square. There should be a way in which we can have a taxi service that can be accessed a lot closer to the busway than it is currently. I have spoken to Councillor Graham Quirk, who is the chair of the transport committee, about this matter. Maybe there can be a system devised so that, at night-time, if passengers on the bus need a taxi when they get off, the bus driver could send a radio message that, say, six cabs are required to be at the busway in 10, 15 or 20 minutes.

This legislation introduces a great service. However, I think that we could extend it to ensure that people are safe when they arrive at their destination. In fact, it will advantage the taxi service as cabs could be available to pick up those people when they get off the bus, take them to where they want to go, and then be back at the busway in time to pick up more passengers alighting from the next bus. It is more effective for them.

I am proud to be a member of the Beattie Labor government, which is providing a world-class public transport system for Queenslanders. Any and every world-class public transport system has exceptional safety features. This bill provides exactly these features for Queensland's busways.

Last Sunday a number of people on the south side of Brisbane used the bus service to go to Ballymore to watch the Rugby Union grand final. On behalf of the member for Mount Gravatt, the member for Stretton and myself, I would like to congratulate Sunnybank Rugby Union Club on winning the Queensland Rugby Union premiership. That team was up against the Gold Coast team. I say sorry to the members who represent the Gold Coast, but it was about time Sunnybank won.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr REEVES: Yes, I was just about to say that. It was the first time that team had won. This club has a reasonably short history. I remember when I was eight or nine and playing for Brothers Mount Gravatt against the Sunnybank team.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr REEVES: No, Brothers Mount Gravatt. I congratulate the Sunnybank club. That club has a very exciting future. The department of sport has just granted that club funding for a new dressing room complex. Hopefully, the club's effort last Sunday of winning its first grand final will be repeated time and time again. I commend the bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.54 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to this legislation, which amends a number of acts. I am particularly keen to speak to those amendments that relate to hooning. There has been bipartisan support for a tougher monitoring of the laws for those who breach their duty of care and responsibilities as drivers in our community. It may be only the minority of people who take to the streets, hoon around, drive dangerously and destroy the amenity of our local communities, but in recent years this has been an increasing problem.

The opposition supported the legislation that enabled vehicles to be taken off those people who engage in those very antisocial activities. However, there are other provisions that are required to curb that bad behaviour. That is why this legislation contains amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. These amendments will introduce a minimum period of disqualification of six months for racing and speed trials on roads. They will also clarify the penalty for high-speed offences. The court could apply a longer period of disqualification. However, it cannot impose a period shorter than six months. That is consistent with the disqualification period for high-speed offences. I support that.

This legislation also produces special hardship licence provisions for suspended drivers. This will allow the court to award a conditional licence to a suspended driver. At the moment, the court's only option is to give a person their licence back or deny the request. I received a briefing from the department on this matter. I was concerned as to whether this amendment was going soft on those who were breaking the law and whether conditional licences would be abused by these people who had been driving recklessly. I was assured by departmental officers that the reason for this provision is that there was some concern, as I understand it, that the courts may opt not to take the licence off somebody if there was a genuine case of hardship. Therefore, there was really no in-between ground—

Mr Lucas: They used to get their licence back absolutely, without any work licence provision or any real penalty. That is why we decided to change the law.

Miss SIMPSON: I take the minister's interjection. That is why I am satisfied that the intention of this legislation is to impose conditions upon those drivers.

I think it is important that we continue to monitor how the courts apply the provisions of this legislation. Certainly, if we find that these drivers abuse their conditional licences in the belief that they will get their full licences back, I would not be happy. But I understand that this amendment is about striking a balance, with a concern for the fact that courts may have given people their licence back in full rather than taken their licences off them with conditions for work purposes.

I ask the minister to consider a further amendment in the future in regard to those who are abusing our roads by hooning. One of the concerns that local police have raised with me is that sometimes they have difficulty identifying the drivers. They have seen an offence committed and they have pulled over the vehicle. But whether the person who claims to have been driving is the person who was driving at the time the offence was committed can be debated. However, in terms of offences that are detected through the use of red-light cameras, there is the reversal of the onus of proof in that the registered owner is deemed to have been the person who has committed the offence unless the owner divulges who the driver was at the time.

While I do not normally support reverse onus provisions in law, I believe there is a balanced argument that it is in the public interests of safety to have reverse onus provisions, similar to those for red-light cameras, apply to those who are committing these types of hooning offences. If the police pull somebody over and they have difficulty identifying who the driver was and who was in control of the vehicle at the time, they should still have the ability to at least go to the registered owner of the vehicle to try to apply the penalty through those means. Unfortunately, the issue of hoons is ongoing. It is a bit like mowing grass. As sure as it is dealt with it one day it will reoccur another day. It does require constant monitoring. Unfortunately, it is very resource intensive for police and also transport officers.

I take the opportunity to raise another related issue—that is, the noise of these vehicles. There has been criticism that these vehicles are able to be suped up so that there is significant noise in the community which is destroying the amenity of the local community, but the ability to test that noise and take action in a timely way is limited to people being forced to go to the transport department and have their vehicles tested. The alternative is to use some of the mobile equipment that I understand the

department does have. However, my concern is that we have not seen how widespread the use of this mobile equipment is. I am very keen to see the use of any resources that can be used in a timely way to hit people who are abusing our streets and disturbing the peace and quiet.

I know that this is something that the police minister also has within her portfolio, but it does require cooperation across portfolios. I would like to see this equipment used more on the Sunshine Coast so that the message goes out about noise on our streets. It is not just about the safety issue but also about the amenity. Unfortunately, the amenity is such that when noisy vehicles are upsetting not only our tourist operators but also the people who live in an area it has a huge impact on our economy. It requires constant vigilance and constant monitoring, and additional resources would be welcome. I would like to see more of that applied in my own area of the Sunshine Coast, particularly around Mooloolaba, where this has been an ongoing issue.

I want to go to the other provisions of this legislation that address marine pollution. As the member for Chatsworth, our shadow transport minister, has extensively outlined, there are a number of provisions that we support with regard to the amendments to the marine pollution act. I have raised concerns in the parliament previously about marine pollution. The problem that we have as the population booms is that we have a boom not only in the number of vehicles on our roads but also in the number of vessels in our waterways. So the effective monitoring and policing of marine pollution provisions is extremely important. I remember a few years ago a figure was quoted that there would be a doubling of the number of registered vessels in our waterways within the next 10 years. I was advised of that only about five years ago.

Mr Lucas: Our rate of boat ownership is growing faster than that of our population, and that is booming ahead of the rest of Australia. So it is a big issue.

Miss SIMPSON: It is a big issue. I thank the minister. That is why I believe it is necessary that we have more monitoring and more policing of our waterways with regard to safe boating and also with regard to marine pollution. I am most concerned that people are abusing the laws that are already in place with regard to marine pollution. It is difficult, though, to find the people who are dumping sewage and effluent into our rivers. I get complaints from people who love the river and who find things in the river that should not be there. Without going into more detail, we want to see our waterways protected.

A small sector of the boating population brings the greater population into disrepute which is unfair to those who love our waterways and look after them. It is also unfair on the environment. The waterways already have a lot of pressure on them from urban development, from stormwater run-off and from erosion along the banks. But they have the additional pressure on them of pollution from those boat owners who are not responsible. It concerns me that we have not really seen an increase in adequate monitoring and policing of existing provisions. I support the additional provisions that this legislation brings forth as they apply to larger ships, but I put on the record that we need to really tighten up on how the existing laws are applied for all vessels.

The other issue I would like to bring to the minister's attention and seek his feedback on is the issue of pump-out facilities. I know that, to date, the response has mainly been to rely on private enterprise to put in place pump-out facilities to cater for the safe removal of effluent from boats. My concern is that, while the legislation is there to provide the framework for effluent disposal in many areas, the physical infrastructure is not necessarily there. This is something that concerns me.

I know there are difficulties with regard to pump-out that a lot of local governments struggle with because we cannot mix marine effluent with normal sewerage systems. It is not compatible with a lot of local government areas. They require different things in order to make sure that they do not compromise the land based systems, but I would like the minister's response on whether an audit has been done of the accessibility of pump-out facilities within these different ports to ensure that, where people morally and legally are obliged to do the right thing with effluent disposal from their vessels, there is in fact practical accessibility to these facilities. It is one thing to have a law that says what we are supposed to do; it is another thing if there is difficulty in accessing these facilities in a timely and practical way. That is something of concern to me. I would welcome the minister's feedback on that provision.

There has been mention made of public transport. I will take the liberty of addressing the issue of CAMCOS. I welcome the increase in the number of bus services on the Sunshine Coast. I urge the minister's support for the continued increase of these and also as we look for a transit centre for Maroochydoore—

Mr Lucas: Do you welcome our Caboolture to Landsborough \$480 million upgrade of straightening and duplication? Do you welcome that?

Miss SIMPSON: I welcome the upgrade and investment. I do have some concerns about the consultation process that I will be raising further with the minister. I do understand that we need infrastructure and that we need investment. I also understand what it is like to deal with people who find that they are property affected. With respect, while I have supported the upgrade of some roads, I also believe that we as members of parliament have to be very compassionate and understanding. One of the most distressing things people can go through is finding out that, for the public good, they are property affected. What may seem like a mere property transaction for the property officers within government departments can be a very distressing issue for the people who are affected.

I have known people who have literally had heart attacks and died once they have found out that they were property affected. For those who have not been through it it may be hard to imagine, but we need to have compassion and we need to make sure that they are properly consulted. While there is no alternative in some circumstances, we need to ensure that the acquisition process is not just fair but more than fair. I have been critical in the past of how these processes have operated, because sometimes it is very easy for people to lose sight of the human impact. As members of parliament we have to ensure that, if it is for the public good and there is no alternative, they are given every assistance. But there are concerns about consultation in that area, and I will be raising them further with the minister.

With regard to CAMCOS and increases in services on the Sunshine Coast, I am very keen to see these brought forward as much as possible. I am also very keen to see the integrated planning capacity of the transport department really beefed up to deal in a timely way with potentially compatible development around our transport corridors. We need to have appropriate development around our transport corridors because this, in turn, will make them more viable. I think there is a lot more we can do with regard to transport oriented development—not only retrospectively fitting it in existing areas or in identified transport oriented development but also looking at new infrastructure not yet been brought online and how that can be brought forward by the appropriate use of planning.

I do have concerns that the department needs additional capacity to do that in a timely way. In the past I have raised the problem where a corridor is identified but the development is built long before the corridor is under way—for example, rail into Maroochydore—and we potentially end up with a corridor with development beside it that may have otherwise been able to occupy the airspace over the corridor and provide some continuity between both sides of the track so that we have best use planning.

They are practical issues. They are real things that I believe the department has struggled to deal with to date, but they are the challenges that we face with a rapidly urbanising south-east corner and other parts of regional Queensland. If we are going to have appropriate and timely development around those transport hubs, they are the issues that will have to be grasped with practical expertise in a far quicker way. I support the legislation before the House.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.11 pm): It is my pleasure to stand here today in support of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. Before I turn to the bill, I would like to talk about our trip here to Rockhampton. This is the first opportunity that I have had to thank the people of Rockhampton for hosting us. I have had a fantastic time. Many members know that I have an affiliation with the outback, and I have had the wonderful opportunity of catching up with many of my family here. My half-brother Roger and niece Brooke came from Cloncurry for the bull sales. My niece Krista is a hairdresser here in Rockhampton. I have also met my nephew Mark, who is a cowboy. He was riding a bucking bronco the other night. I understand that a number of the members who accompanied me were very interested to see how that is done. This morning I also visited my niece Alana, who is at boarding school here, so it was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with her.

I would also like to place on the record my sincere thanks to John Croaker, the Manager of the Brahman Breeders Association, who extended an invitation to all members to visit the Gracemere sales, and many of the members did. I took up that offer and had a fantastic time watching the sales out there. I had to laugh a little bit because I had to remind myself not to put my hands up because I did not want to go back to the Gold Coast with a \$10,000 bull, but it was a fantastic opportunity.

Mr Lucas: One pet per householder.

Ms CROFT: One pet per householder.

Ms Keech: What a great tourist attraction for the Japanese tourists.

Ms CROFT: That is right. I did have a talk with the minister about getting more tourists out to Gracemere. I think it would be a great opportunity for visitors to Queensland to head out to Gracemere to see how things are done.

I would like to congratulate the minister on introducing this bill to the House. The bill offers opportunities to improve safety on our roads but in particular at sea. It will go a long way to reducing the pollution of our Queensland waterways. I will return to the pollution issue, but I first want to touch on the amendments in the bill that address the crossing supervisors. As many in the House know, we have about 1,700 Queenslanders employed to help our children cross what we know are increasingly busy streets. I would like to thank those people for the wonderful work they do. I know that the crossing supervisors who work around the schools in my electorate are highly regarded, highly respected and well known by the children who attend those schools. I would like to place on the record my sincere thanks for the work that they do. This legislation will provide guidance to those who are appropriate to act as crossing supervisors and set out clearly the procedures that need to be followed. This legislation will ensure that the scheme continues around Queensland, and I thank the minister for that.

The bill also includes amendments to allow information that does not relate to a motor vehicle drivers licence to be recorded on a drivers licence. Initially this will be used to record information regarding licences granted under the marine safety legislation. As members of the House know, the

Broadwater electorate is the recreational boating capital of Queensland and the Gold Coast is the boat-building capital of Australia. Many residents in my electorate raise marine related issues with me, and this request from the residents has been raised with me a lot in the past, and I thank the minister for now making this available. If people want to hire a motor boat, they will be able to produce their licence on demand and that will show that they do have their required marine licences as well.

As I mentioned, on the Gold Coast we have boat-building factories and I notice that the minister for tourism mentioned to me, and I would like to place on the record, the wonderful work that the Riviera Boat Building Co. does.

Ms Keech: The whole precinct there does a good job.

Ms CROFT: The whole precinct; that is exactly right. Because of that industry that has developed—

Mr Lawlor: Mustang.

Ms CROFT: I hear the member for Southport yelling out 'Mustang', which is a very fine company indeed. Because of this industry that has been generated on the Gold Coast, and because we are a recreational area for boating, many people raise with me their concern about how the government effectively and efficiently manages the issue of pollution in our waterways. Boating and non-boating people want to make sure that our waterways are kept clean. We want to ensure that we have the legislative requirements that protect our waterways from pollution.

In recent times with the talk of the proposed cruise ship terminal for the Gold Coast, I have noticed that quite a number of ill-informed comments have been made in the community that have led astray people's understanding of how the government deals with pollution. I want to mention that current legislation addresses pollution. The discharge of any oil, noxious liquid substances in bulk, packaged harmful substances and garbage—and this includes plastics—in any quantity is prohibited in Queensland coastal waters. MSQ vigorously prosecutes such offences and there are large maximum penalties. A penalty for a corporation is \$1.3 million. I think that is quite significant. That would be consistent with community expectations. If a ship were to be found discharging such a pollutant in Queensland coastal waters, it would be investigated and, if appropriate, prosecuted. If pollution is discharged beyond coastal waters but still enters coastal waters, the discharge is taken to be in coastal waters and is prosecutable. Otherwise, beyond coastal waters the Commonwealth has jurisdiction and operates similar MARPOL based legislation to Queensland.

I understand that discharges of untreated sewage from ships that have more than 16 people on board are however prohibited within 1,852 metres of the mainland. Therefore, if the Gold Coast does get a cruise ship terminal I can assure residents that the government has in place legislation that will deal with those kinds of issues. So the talk about cruise ships dumping sewage and pollution into the Gold Coast Broadwater is really not applicable in relation to whether we should get a cruise ship terminal or not for the Gold Coast. I want to make sure that residents know what is available now through legislation to combat those types of problems. I would again like to thank the minister and MSQ officers for the work that they do in ensuring that this legislation minimises deliberate and negligent discharges of ship sourced pollutants into our coastal waters. Of course, Queensland has already developed world's best practice in this area. The amendments in this bill further strengthen the Queensland government's commitment.

Existing legislation requires shipboard waste management plans be carried out on all ships with a measurement of at least 400 gross tonnes. A lot of people have difficulty with that because they do not know the gross tonnage of their ship. Therefore, this legislation amends the requirements to refer to a ship's overall length rather than the gross tonnage. This will be much easier to enforce.

In relation to monitoring transfer options, currently ship crews are not required to monitor transfer options. This includes the transfer of the ship's tank of fuel. This has obviously resulted in a number of spills in Queensland coastal waters from overfilled tanks. The new requirement for that to be monitored will address those kinds of issues.

The legislation creates the position of marine pollution controller. Maritime Safety Queensland is, of course, the lead agency for response to oil spills from ships. The position of marine pollution controller is recognised and acknowledged tactically across agencies. This position is to be established under the national plan for the prevention of the pollution of the sea by oil and other noxious and hazardous substances. This will certainly improve the department's enforcement role in addressing pollution issues.

Finally, I refer to the powers of MSQ to deal with potential, as opposed to imminent, dangers. I think the community does have an expectation that MSQ will have the powers to act where it sees that is necessary. Up until now it has only been able to respond to what has been seen to be a grave and imminent threat. The changes in this legislation will ensure that the department can respond as soon as a potential serious threat is presented.

The bill addresses quite a number of issues about which members have gone into great detail. From speaking with residents in my electorate I know that they are very keen to know what the government is doing to keep up to date with the issues of pollution. I can assure residents that this minister and the department regard deliberate dumping of any kind and pollution as serious matters. This legislation allows the relevant officers to carry out inspections and follow through with prosecution if necessary. I am pleased to see that the minister remains committed to developing further legislation to allow this to be done. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (4.23 pm): It is nice to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, which covers a lot of aspects of transport. Coming from Toowoomba as I do, I will not be speaking much about the provisions relating to maritime issues.

The previous speaker thanked the people of Rockhampton for their hospitality. I thought that was a very nice gesture. I think all of us have had some wonderful hospitality from different people in the city. Yesterday I had the opportunity, with some of my National Party colleagues, to visit Paradise Lagoons. Earlier in the week we had been to the Brahman sale at Gracemere. It is wonderful to see such a good facility for events such as bull sales developing in rural and regional Queensland. It is a first-class facility.

I note that the tourism minister is in the chamber. If people have not seen it before, it is worth looking at Paradise Lagoons. It is probably one of the best campdrafting facilities anywhere. Normally people who watch campdrafts at showgrounds have to look through rails. This facility has been specifically designed for the sport, with mounds around the camp and catering facilities. It is a world-class facility. It is the sort of thing that would bring people here. If people have visitors from Asia and they want to show them something that is dinky-di Australian, they should take them out there to see a draft, a futurity or a challenge.

Last night I had a meeting with a fellow I had not seen for years. In 1968 he and his wife and my wife and I were put up in a hotel at Parramatta by Parramatta Rugby League. We had gone down to play for Parramatta. We had about two weeks in the old hotel in Parramatta until other accommodation was found for us. He now has a pub in town. It was nice to catch up with him.

There are a number of issues I want to talk about in relation to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. First, I mention to the minister the innovative bus system that the department has endeavoured to put into the eastern suburbs of Toowoomba, particularly the run out through Rangeville to the south-east. I know that there are always teething problems when new systems like this are introduced. In our regional city, people are generally not public transport orientated because it has been a big country city. People are used to getting into their car and parking close to the front door of where they want to go, but more and more we will have to develop transport systems. People will use the systems if they are reliable, if they are on time and if they are convenient. When I say 'on time', the bus is never early. If a change is made to the timetable it has to be to a later time because if the bus comes early people could miss it.

This system is quite innovative. It has taken a little while for people to come to understand it. Basically, the bus runs on a set route for approximately the first half of its route from the city out past St Vincent's Hospital. But as the bus gets out into the south-eastern suburbs it works on a system whereby people can phone up and book. It is done in association with a call centre system, through GPS satellites and so forth. People are actually able to say that they want to get on at such-and-such a place, and it is programmed into a little computer. The bus driver then knows that he has to go and pick up someone at this corner or that corner.

I know that there have been some teething problems, but I think it is a very good system—a straightforward route past the hospitals, schools and so forth and then, as it gets out to the more diverse suburbs, a route with some flexibility. It is innovative. It is well worth while persevering with the system.

I am very grateful for the briefings that those of us who represent electorates in the Toowoomba area have been given by staff from the department of transport. They have kept us abreast of developments and they have asked us whether there have been any particular problems. We have been able to pass on a couple of things.

I have brought up some other issues in parliament. One related to the size of containers that are able to go on the trains to Fisherman Islands, particularly for people involved in the export of grain and people who are prepacking grain, particularly with smaller seeds such as canary seed. The limitation on the size of these containers has caused some real problems in terms of the efficiency of transporting grain to Fisherman Islands for export. It has threatened the business of prepacking in Toowoomba as the products taken down to Fisherman Islands were being broken up and packed down there.

Recently there were negotiations on new freight rates for grain trains. QR virtually went on strike and would not cart the grain for some three weeks. At the same time there was a big order from Tollwood. I think about 15,000 tonnes of grain had to go to Fisherman Islands. I understand that the grain had to be transported to Fisherman Islands by B-doubles, putting more trucks on the roads and so forth. Trains are ideal for the transportation of bulk commodities such as grain. That issue has been resolved, but it has meant a 10 per cent increase in the cost of the cartage of grain.

There is a real squeeze on in the grain industry. We have problems due to the drought. The grain industry is affected by the cost of diesel and fuel. There is a lot of cartage, transport and cultivation involved. The costs are being increased. It is a shame that the cartage of grain was ceased whilst the negotiations took place. It was virtually blackmail to do it that way. Surely a mature organisation that is owned by the government could undertake negotiations in a far better way than by blackmailing the people whom the railways have always served.

I know that it is a commercial operation of the government now, but it has always been the tradition to cart these products by rail. The minister is a shareholder and the government is a shareholder. It is time to do the negotiations in a far better way than just simply saying, 'We will not cart your grain until we complete our negotiations.'

There is another matter that I will discuss with the departmental staff in my area. That is the way we work up there. I could not speak highly enough of the staff. Whenever my electorate staff or I want something we are always given courteous and prompt attention.

I will be seeing them about the Gore Highway that runs out to Westbrook in my electorate. Westbrook is becoming increasingly more urbanised. This stretch of road has 28 properties along it. All those properties have wheelie bins, school buses pull up at the properties and people enter and exit them. My constituents have said that we need to consider reducing the speed limit from 100 kilometres an hour to 80 kilometres an hour because the highway has bends and so forth. That is an issue that I will discuss with the department locally. I know that it will give it every consideration and look at it carefully.

I have brought up the issue of TransLink before. There are not many ways for those who do not have vehicles to get to Brisbane. Basically the only way they can do it, particularly pensioners, is on the bus. We had McCaffertys bus service for years and years. It has been taken over in recent years by Greyhound—that is another story.

I remember being told that the TransLink ticket actually operates from Helidon. Once people get the TransLink ticket it is great because they can go from Helidon all through south-east Queensland.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr HORAN: That is right. People go down to Brisbane to see specialists. If they get this ticket they can get on the train and go to where they want to go and then get on a bus to the specialists. If people could get the bus right from Toowoomba that would be a great help. It would be of particular help to those who go to visit their family in south-east Queensland.

One of the people who spoke to me is an elderly widow who likes to go and see her family. That TransLink system suits her ideally because she gets the train to a certain station and changes to a bus. She thinks it is beaut, but if TransLink could be extended to our city it would be great. We have a population of 100,000 in Toowoomba and another 30,000 in the surrounding shires. This would make a lot of sense.

I have mentioned before in this parliament the need to give serious consideration to airport services between Toowoomba and Brisbane and Sydney. Maybe if we were another half an hour further west it might be a bit more logical to do this. We can get in a car on the eastern side of Toowoomba and be in the CBD of Brisbane in an hour and a half. But there are a lot of people who want the convenience of going to the Brisbane Airport to connect with other cities. There is a minibus service. In the past we have had an air service and it was well used.

I have heard that people from Sydney are looking at establishing businesses in Toowoomba. They say, 'If we fly up to Brisbane, how do we connect to Toowoomba?' They do not particularly want to get a hire car and drive two hours from the Brisbane Airport. This is becoming important to us. It would be good to be able to link to Brisbane or Sydney. Hopefully then we could bring Sydney people up to Toowoomba. They could then experience the tourism of our city.

I have spoken on the issue of the second range crossing something like 26 times in this parliament. It is so important. Off the top of my head, since 1992 there have been 12 deaths, approximately 153 injuries and 150-odd closures of the range crossing. This is our lifeline to south-east Queensland. It is a very steep range of almost 2,000 feet.

The traffic load is continually increasing. Some 20,000 or more cars use that range crossing every day. Somewhere in the order of 3,500 or 4,000 trucks use it. Almost all those trucks are B-doubles. They crawl up the range slowly and they crawl down the range slowly because they have to be in the lowest of gears to come down the range safely. Once they get to the top of the range they go through the main east-west road of Toowoomba—the Warrego Highway, or James Street, as it is called—and they traverse 16 sets of traffic lights.

If people stand at any one of those intersections, particularly in the afternoon when the bulk of the trucks are going through, they will see three, four or five trucks on both sides. If they go to the next set they will see the same thing. The whole social amenity of our city is affected. It affects people travelling east to west, taking kids to school and doing their business. If a person were in a Morris Cooper or a Volkswagen and in between six B-doubles at the lights it would be a bit daunting. It does make it difficult for some people to use that main road.

It is noisy, there is pollution and it is very costly. It used to cost \$75 an hour to run a B-double. I presume with the price of fuel now that it is \$100 an hour. The second range crossing, which would go just to the north of Toowoomba, would probably save in the order of 40 minutes and a lot of money.

Mr Lucas: And a marvellous economic boom for Charlton.

Mr HORAN: Yes. The window of opportunity is having that second range crossing linked to proposed new industrial states of Charlton and Wellcamp and the proposed Australian inland railway that would come right up from Melbourne, through the western side of Toowoomba to Emerald and maybe eventually onto Darwin. All of that makes a lot of sense.

Add in the proposal for which we have been fighting for so long—a recycled water pipeline to bring irrigation water from Brisbane to the Darling Downs—and we would suddenly add massive value to the products that can be produced. We have the transport interchange opportunities, the industrial estates and the roads. This is the highest freight-carrying road in Australia. They are going to either Melbourne or Darwin. There are massive loads.

In many ways, the western side of Toowoomba could become the Singapore of Australia in terms of exchange freight loading and logistics. The distribution could be done in Toowoomba for Ipswich, the Gold Coast, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. This could be done in a very sensible way. It is so important to my electorate.

I know that I have spoken to the minister before about trying to get the funds for a business case. I have mentioned the facts and figures on the B-double. It makes a lot of sense. We could bring the whole project forward in a public-private partnership. We could charge those trucks a toll and there would still be very significant savings of time and money and fuel. That make sense for them. That would provide the income for the private enterprise concerned. The other part could go to government.

This would help alleviate the ever-ballooning costs. This road was going to cost \$350 million when I first started talking about it in parliament in 1996 or 1998. I guess the cost now is probably in the order of \$700 million. Certainly, the corridor has been purchased. The money has been provided. There was a lot of work done in identifying the corridor. The detailed planning has been done. It will go through a tunnel below the top of the range and that tunnel will also be suitable for the recycled water pipeline to go through. That will reduce the head that has to be pumped up to go through the range and it will still be high enough to provide the gravity for it to run to the irrigation areas on the downs.

It is just so important that we keep working together to try to make this happen. I would think that it is one of the most important things for Toowoomba. It would make a massive difference to our beautiful city of Toowoomba. No other city of our size in Australia would have the same number of trucks running through it and stopping at 16 sets of lights. It will do a great thing for the transport industry of Australia. Between Brisbane and Melbourne it is the only hill they have to go over. They could virtually drive in top gear or second top gear all of the way to Melbourne with this range crossing, because it will enable them to cross the range at about 80 kilometres an hour. It is pretty important that we keep working on that. I know—

Mr Lucas: You forgot to mention it's a federal responsibility.

Mr HORAN: I know that it is a federal responsibility, but the other thing that is important on your side of things is to put it on top of your list.

Mr Copeland: It's got to be on top of the list.

Mr HORAN: It has to be on top of the list, Minister.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr HORAN: You have to put it there. Every time we get close, you do something else—another eight-lane highway or six-lane somewhere down around Brisbane and you forget the importance of the second range crossing. It is important. Every chance you get, Minister, put it on the list at No. 1. Just remember that. Put it on the list at No. 1. Once you get that fixed, then you can fix all of the other things that you want to fix. That is the most important.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr HORAN: The member for Toowoomba North agrees with me. It is unanimous. So away you go.

The final thing I want to do is make a comment about the report into the train smash. I thought it was very pertinent this morning that the minister carefully selected his words to say that at the moment of the crash the driver was there when milliseconds before they were not there, and the public of Queensland—

Mr Lucas: That's not true.

Mr HORAN: You read the report. That train was driverless before the crash. You tell us how many seconds before the crash it was driverless. There was no driver or codriver, and the public deserves to know the answer. You tell us—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Will the member for Toowoomba South please direct his comments through the chair and refer to the minister by his correct title.

Mr HORAN: Yes, I would be very happy to do that. I think he—sorry, the honourable minister—has got the point. I hope that in his reply he can tell us exactly how many seconds or milliseconds before the crash it was driverless. The public needs to know that. The minister should tell the parliament. With that small contribution, I hope that the minister can take note of all of those other good things that we asked for.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (4.43 pm): I am pleased to speak on this bill as it does have a number of positive implications for constituents in the electorate of Springwood. Road and boating safety concerns are often spoken about in our communities, and it is important to recognise that this bill will improve safety on roads and at sea. The other community concern that the bill addresses is pollution in our state waterways.

But firstly I want to speak about the changes in the tolling provisions. I have had a number of representations made to me in relation to the number of vehicles travelling daily over the Gateway Bridge. The Gateway Bridge is convenient for residents living in the electorate of Springwood to use, especially when travelling to the airport or for those who work in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. There has been an increase in the volume of traffic using the bridge and this can sometimes cause some delays. I know that during peak hours this is definitely a concern to my constituents, so the announcement of the duplication of the Gateway Bridge is certainly good news for them.

I am also pleased that I will be able to tell the people of Springwood that this bill will allow for the flexibility of tolls. The amendment will not allow for toll operators to increase tolls above the gazetted amount. What it will allow for is the flexibility of tolls and therefore the opportunity for toll operators to collect tolls below the gazetted toll amount. This is also good news for them and also for the residents in Logan City who use the Logan Motorway regularly.

Another part of this bill that is important to Springwood constituents is the amendments relating to busways. Since the busway has been built, the trip into Brisbane city takes less time from the suburbs of Logan, which of course is great news for our Springwood commuters. The large increase in bus patronage which has happened in a short amount of time means that there is a need for more buses, and this is especially the case in my electorate of Springwood with regard to the bus routes through those suburbs. I have made representations to the minister and today while he is here in the chamber I want to once again remind him of the need for more buses for our area.

So with the busway being such a huge success, it is no surprise that the constituents of Springwood want dedicated bus lanes extended to Springwood Bus Station and also to the Logan Hyperdome. I am pleased that the planning is under way to have the bus lanes to Springwood done in conjunction with the planning for the upgrade of the M1 from Eight Mile Plains to the Logan River, and this bill will clarify the various types of land held by the state that may be declared to be used as busway land. So this will broaden the range of land the state already has for other purposes to now be included for busway purposes. I realise that the upgrade of the M1 and the dedicated bus lanes that will be included in that planning and upgrade are an expensive and large project. I am pleased that this project has started and planning has commenced. However, I do hope that in the near future we will be announcing extensions of bus lanes to the Logan Hyperdome. Once again, the people of Springwood certainly have raised this with me on a number of occasions. I do hope that we will be able to look at that in the near future for them.

Protection of the environment is of high concern to Queenslanders, and the speakers on the previous bill before the House, the environment bill, certainly spoke on many issues important to us. The protection of our waterways is of paramount importance to our state, recreation, tourism and our economy, and this bill will deal with issues such as shipboard waste management plans to ensure our maritime pollution legislation is developing and that our legislation is world's best practice. In respect of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, there are a number of changes to clarify provisions on driver disqualification offences. In the Criminal Code there has been renaming or category changes to some child related sexual offences. This amendment will now remove any doubt that any person convicted of one of those offences will remain ineligible to hold a driver authorisation.

At the beginning of this speech I said that this bill improves road safety, and I am often hearing from constituents that drivers caught doing excessive speeds are not given consistent penalties and therefore the message to change that behaviour is lost. I will be very happy to inform the Springwood electorate that this bill will bring about greater consistency in the penalties for high-speed offences. When a court elects to impose a disqualification for a speeding offence of 40 kilometres per hour or more over the speed limit, it must be for a period of at least six months. The key words here are 'at least six months', giving the opportunity for courts to impose a longer period. Hooning and drag racing on roads are complaints that many members in this—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms STONE: Excuse me, but I listened to you in silence and I expect the same, thank you very much. Hooning and drag racing on roads are complaints that many members in this House receive regularly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! I do agree with the member on her feet that there is far too much audible conversation in the chamber. Will members please keep their voices down.

Ms STONE: While the hooning legislation that this government introduced has certainly assisted in reducing this problem, there are still some drivers who have not got the message, and that message is that these practices are dangerous and can lead to innocent people losing their lives and consequently families are wrecked through senseless and reckless driving behaviour. This bill will introduce a minimum six-month disqualification period for those convicted of conducting or participating in racing or speed trials on roads. Once again, the courts will have the discretion to impose longer periods. I know that the constituents of Springwood will be very pleased to see this legislation implemented.

I want to place on record my thanks to the school crossing supervisors in my electorate. They do a great job in keeping kids safe in our area. They have a close relationship with these children, so it is important that we do have legislation to ensure that the person doing this job is appropriate to work with and around children, and this bill will ensure this.

As I go around my electorate I often see boats and jet skis—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! I have just reminded members about audible conversations. Please keep your voices down. There is a member on her feet. I wish to hear what she has to say.

Ms STONE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I go around my electorate I see a number of boats and jet skis. So allowing information relating to recreational boat and jet ski licences to be recorded on a person's motor vehicle drivers licence is practical and convenient. This bill provides many benefits and improvements for Queenslanders. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would like to acknowledge in the audience this afternoon the Mayor of Rockhampton, Margaret Strelow.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. This omnibus bill amends many acts that fall within the Transport portfolio. I would like to congratulate the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Toowoomba South on referring in their contributions to the second range crossing. The actual range part of that road falls within my electorate. I fully support their call for a toll road up the range to speed up the process. That would definitely make some real sense.

In relation to the amendments the bill makes to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, I want to refer to Trinity Inlet. There are a lot of abandoned ships in that inlet. Hopefully, the amendments that this bill makes to that legislation will rectify that situation. It is definitely needed.

I refer to the amendments that relate to the criminal history checks on licence examiners for boat operators. I ask the minister whether the Q-Ride motorbike licence testing centre would fall within those provisions. It would seem logical to extend those provisions to the Q-Ride process.

Mr Lucas: I will check that for you. You mean the educators?

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, the educators.

Mr Lucas: I will check that for you.

Mr RICKUSS: I noticed that it was not referred to in this bill. It seemed obvious to include that in this bill.

I refer to the safe driving programs that are being trialled by the federal government. Hopefully, when they come into place we will end up with a safe driving program in Queensland. I believe that that is totally warranted, particularly for the 17- to 24-year-olds. There is a group in Rockhampton that is very similar to the Lockyer safe driver training group. I think they might have even had a meeting with the minister while he is here about getting some safe driver programs in place for young drivers.

This is an issue that affects people throughout the state, but particularly in rural areas. The young drivers in those areas seem to travel at greater speeds than the younger people in the south-east corner. So when those people have an accident, quite often there are tragic consequences. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise to support this bill. In so doing, I would like to touch on three aspects: marine pollution, speeding on our roads and child crossing supervisors. Everyone who lives along Australia's coastline should be concerned about pollution from shipping. The implications are perhaps even greater for those Queenslanders who live adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. I applaud the amendments in this bill that stipulate that a vessel with an overall length of at least 35 metres or is designed to sleep at least 15 persons will be required to have a

shipboard waste management plan. The move to place an obligation on a ship's crew to monitor transfer operations, such as filling a ship's tank with fuel, is also extremely welcome. I note that the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 will be amended to give Maritime Safety Queensland a greater ability to act if a ship presents a potential danger to Queensland's coastal or marine environment.

According to the CRC Reef Research Centre in Townsville, the introduction of invasive species into new marine environments is considered one of the greatest threats to the world's oceans. Last year the centre released a pamphlet which stressed that, as an island nation, Australia is particularly vulnerable to the introduction of exotic species through shipping. Two marine pollution sources covered in the pamphlet are fouling and ballast water. For those who do not know, the growth of marine organisms on artificial surfaces, including vessels' hulls and internal spaces, is called fouling. According to that pamphlet, both recreational and commercial vessels can carry exotic species as fouling on their hulls or internal seawater systems. Heavily fouled vessels can carry up to five kilograms of fouling per square metre of exposed surface. Many exotic species carried as fouling will not survive the journey but, if the conditions are right, the exotic species carried as fouling can be released and spawn in new locations.

Ballast water is described in the pamphlet as being the carrier of around 7,000 marine species, including viruses and bacteria and small marine invertebrates that are transported around the world every single day. The short transit time between Australian and Asian ports allows many organisms to survive the voyage. Therefore, there is an enormous risk that exotic marine species could establish in Australian waters with ports and harbours being particularly at risk.

Amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 can only serve to strengthen the protection of Queensland's marine environment not only from oil spills and shipboard waste but also from other forms of vessel pollution. At the same time I suggest that more attention should be given to smaller recreational vessels. They also have the potential to spread exotic marine species in Queensland and other parts of Australia's coastline. This is particularly so with the proliferation of marinas along the Queensland coast where boats may sit for long periods. I am aware of the joint Australian and New Zealand code of practice for in-water hull cleaning and maintenance. However, with regard to the spreading of exotic species, smaller recreational vessels are still a cause for concern.

Recent fatal road crashes in Queensland, including a single-vehicle accident in Townsville that claimed four young lives, leave no reason to doubt that amendments in this bill aimed at improving road safety need urgent implementation. I agree wholeheartedly with the minister that the penalties relating to speeding offences must send a clear message that speeding is dangerous driving behaviour. I would go further and say that excessive speeding is not only dangerous but also mind-numbingly stupid. When a court disqualifies a driver for a speeding offence of driving more than 40 kilometres per hour above the speed limit, the amendment in this legislation, which clarifies that disqualification must be for a period of at least six months, will hopefully provide some deterrent to speed demons.

I note, too, with approval that the bill introduces a minimum six-month disqualification for anyone convicted of conducting or participating in racing or speed trials on public roads. It is hard to imagine a more dangerous and potentially deadly practice than drag racing on public roadways. Speaking of drag racing, last Saturday I was privileged to witness part of an advanced driver training course at the Townsville Dragway. Through using their own vehicles, a group of young people were put through their paces under the expert guidance of the director of the advanced driver training centre, Ian McCubbin. They were being shown how to drive safely in dangerous situations and how to react when the unexpected happens, such as when a child suddenly walks onto the road in front of them. Some of those taking the one-day course were doing so at the request of their parents. Others were there off their own bat.

Mr McCubbin said that whenever fatal crashes occur in the region the demand for course enrolments increases dramatically. In recent weeks that has proven tragically to be so. I have just met with a person here in Rockhampton who has a group similar to this group. He wanted to meet with the minister, but the minister has been in this chamber as he is in charge of this bill. So a group in Rockhampton is also trying to save young people's lives.

I was most impressed by what I witnessed at the Townsville Dragway. From my conversations with the young people who took part, I was encouraged by their compulsion to learn how to cope with the unpredicted on our roads and to do the right thing by themselves and others. Roads would be a whole lot safer and there would be fewer fatal and serious injury accidents if more young people—and those who are not so young—took such a course. Certainly, I would be surprised if participants from the advanced driver training course last weekend would ever get into a situation where a court needed to hand down to them a six-month licence suspension.

With respect to the part of this legislation that relates to school crossing supervisors, I can only say that the lollipop women and men whom I have met are dedicated to their job and the safety of children in their care. Several weeks ago I opened a new supervised school crossing at Heatley State

School in Townsville and then had morning tea with a group of crossing supervisors at which they talked about their work and the importance they placed on it. They also told me about motorists who sometimes ignored their stop signs and the crossings and drove straight on, knowing full well that children were in transit under supervision.

Mr Lucas: That is pretty stupid.

Ms NELSON-CARR: It is very stupid. Lollipop women and men can sometimes face insults as well. The *Townsville Bulletin* reported on 22 September that a woman who allegedly verbally abused a crossing supervisor was due to appear in court the next day on a public nuisance charge. I was very pleased to see that. The importance of school crossing supervisors is backed by statistics which show that since Queensland Transport's Safe School Travel, or SafeST, scheme began in 1984 there have been no deaths or serious injuries requiring hospitalisation on supervised crossings in this state.

In supporting amendments in this bill relating to who are appropriate people to become crossing supervisors, we should not lose sight of the fact that the majority of supervisors—many of whom have been doing the job for 10 years or more—do great work in keeping Queensland children safe from harm as they walk to and from school in all kinds of weather. Finally, I would like to say how much I welcome the opportunity to have been able to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill during this very historic Rockhampton sittings of Queensland parliament.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.00 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. I would like to put on record my appreciation to the people of Rockhampton and also to all of the staff and people behind the scenes who have ensured that these sittings have been able to proceed without a hitch—it has certainly been a lot of work. We have all enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Rockhampton. Please take that as a very sincere thankyou.

This legislation changes a number of aspects of the transport regime in Queensland. A number of changes are proposed for port authorities, including some small changes to the establishment, declaration and abolition of port authorities and also to changing the name of a port authority. I am not sure—and I would be interested in the minister's clarification—whether there are any port authorities as GOCs that are proposed to be abolished.

Mr Lucas: No. I can give you the answer now—no.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I thank the minister. I would like to again put on the record the frustration felt by the community in my area when the two ports were amalgamated without appropriate consultation with the community.

Mr Lucas: You don't want to help Rockhampton out?

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: That is not what I said—I said 'without the appropriate consultation'. There was a lot of anxiety and a lot of frustration in the community in Gladstone when the Gladstone Port Authority ceased to exist as an entity.

Mr Lucas: Did you want me to pick up the Port of Gladstone and move it to Rockhampton?

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Not at all, Minister, but there was no consultation. It is not a competition between Rockhampton and Gladstone, in spite of the minister's best efforts at the moment. However, there was a lot of angst in relation to the loss of the GPA as an entity. Consultation must occur if the name of a port authority is going to be changed to ensure that the community and those who work at the port are taken with it and not just told that it is going to occur.

The legislation also changes the requirement for shipboard waste management plans from vessels with a gross tonnage of at least 400 tonnes to those vessels of at least 35 metres in length. I can only conclude that this will include an additional number of vessels that otherwise would have been exempt.

Mr Lucas: It is an easier way of capturing about the same number of vessels. You cannot look at a vessel and say, 'That is its tonnage,' but you can measure it very easily.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I thank the minister for that clarification. Certainly waste disposal is a problem for larger vessels. We have already heard about some of the issues that are of concern, particularly to port managers and to marina managers. The availability of waste management options has certainly grown in the last few years in terms of both the variety and efficiency. It should not be difficult for any vessel if it comes under these requirements to be able to appropriately manage its waste. The saving grace, as I understand it, from our port authority in relation to ballast water has been that the warmer water temperatures around Queensland, particularly as opposed to southern ports, to a great extent kill a lot of what could have been potential problems—the differing water temperatures.

Mr Lucas: The differential.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Yes. However, it is still a requirement that there be great vigilance in terms of vessel operation to ensure that no diseases are introduced inadvertently.

I also welcome the greater flexibility that has been introduced for the harbour master in relation to his or her ability to close a pilotage area. It used to be just for those excessive, immediate and urgent circumstances such as a cyclone or an oil spill. This amendment, I understand, gives some greater flexibility to the harbour master. They still have the ability to do that in extreme circumstances, but this amendment increases the definition of what those safety issues might be. Certainly in ports where cargo is growing, that flexibility is important, and I commend the minister for those changes.

The introduction of the suitability tests for persons conducting examinations for boat licences is a tragic indictment of our society and of our times but a reality of life. I take on board the question that was asked by the previous speaker. The minister was going to check about bike trainee programs as well. It is a sad indictment that we have to constantly be changing legislation to take into account the growing number of people who, through their work, establish a relationship of trust with young people. Unfortunately, recent history has shown that the reality is that there are those who would abuse young people and who choose those lifestyles and those workplaces to establish a position of trust so that they can later take action against young people who believe that they are trustworthy. Those actions are reprehensible. In spite of the impost on people, I welcome the additional safeguards that it will give to young people who have interaction with those examiners.

The amendment to provisions relating to racing and speed trials on roads has already been talked about previously. I note that it will require a mandatory sentence for those who have been disqualified for racing and speed trials on roads. I think most people will welcome the consistency of that provision. I look forward to the time when the government will accept a mandatory sentence in relation to the area of offences in the child safety arena.

Others have spoken about the work of those who are affectionately called our lollipop ladies or lollipop gentlemen. Every member whose electorate has supervised school crossings knows the benefit of the work that these people do. I think the previous speaker raised the issue of the difficulties that these crossing supervisors face on a daily basis. Not only do they have to put up with the abuse of drivers who should know better; also at times their own safety is at risk because of the actions of drivers who are frustrated by the constraints that these workers place on them in protecting the children.

I would like to seek clarification of whether the application for a criminal history check will be a cost to the supervisor or whether that cost will somehow be absorbed or waived. Some of these people have paid positions. Perhaps most of them are paid positions. Some of them, particularly in the rural and regional areas, could be of a more voluntary nature. I seek the minister's clarification about whether there will be a cost allocated to the person who does that work.

In relation to the disqualification period for people driving more than 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit, I think in normal circumstances if a person is driving 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit they are not only presenting a risk to themselves but also most certainly presenting a risk to other road users. I do, however, have to put on the record again my concern about and the frustration of many drivers in relation to roadworks where reduced speed signs are not covered when roadwork construction is not in train. When one travels to Brisbane, particularly on the Bruce Highway, there are sections of the road where roadworks are in progress and the roadworkers themselves are not present because of the time of day or the day of the week and the road itself does not present a significant danger to road users—that is, it is not a very narrow pavement with steep drop-offs on either side—yet the 100, 80, 60, 40 and even 20 kilometre per hour signs remain in operation.

If people have to go down from 100 kilometres an hour to 40 kilometres an hour on a road where roadworks are in progress but there is no present danger to a vehicle operator and it is out of construction hours, it is very easy to exceed the speed limit by a significant amount because the sense of slowing down is more difficult to assess. It is critical for the credibility of the department to ensure that, where roadworks are in progress, where the workers have been removed from that road site and the road conditions do not present a danger to the driving public, those very low speed restrictions are covered and road commuters can use a reasonable speed to traverse that section of the road until the roadworkers come back to the workplace. Without that consideration and commonsense, road users will be frustrated by these new disqualification periods, particularly where they are caught unnecessarily.

There is one other area of clarification that I would seek from the minister and it is probably one that is unnecessary. However, for my peace of mind and for others I would seek it. There has been a change in schedule 2 for disqualifying offences under the Criminal Code for crossing supervisors. The previous legislation listed quite a number of very specific convictions against children in particular. The new list of schedule 2 offences is significantly shorter and appears to be of a lesser magnitude. My assumption is that those offences that appear to be omitted in the new schedule 2 are offences which will be caught under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act and will automatically be disqualifying offences—

Mr Lucas: I am advised that is the case.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: And that the new schedule 2 will be added on to those commission for children—

Mr Lucas: I am advised that is the case.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: Otherwise it appears that there has been a diminution in the list of disqualifying offences, and those that were omitted were the most worrying. I appreciate the minister's answers and I look forward to his response to the other question.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (5.11 pm): I rise to render my support for the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 before the House this afternoon. This is the first opportunity I have had to formally welcome the member for Chatsworth into this House. The honourable member for Chatsworth has two things in common with me—we share a very brilliant Christian name and we are both engineers—but for the benefit of both of our reputations that is where the similarities stop. It is good to see the honourable member sitting on the frontbench and looking very comfortable, because it is certainly a good thing for an engineer to take over the Liberal Party as well as perhaps the National Party in the not-too-distant future.

I also take this opportunity to thank the wonderful people of Rockhampton for their warm central Queensland welcome. It is truly appreciated. For the last few days I have met numerous residents of Rocky—from taxidivers to businessmen, from cattle graziers to IT consultants. They all displayed common attributes—their sincerity and their easygoing and friendly attitude. I thank them sincerely for putting up with us in their beautiful city.

Many of my colleagues have previously mentioned that the Beattie Labor government is elected by the people of Queensland and they do not live just in the south-east corner of this state but across the length and breadth of Queensland. That is why we have brought the Queensland parliament to the people of central Queensland, so they can witness first-hand democracy Queensland style at work. But the Liberal Party is not very happy with that. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party said that it is a waste of money.

I say to the people of central Queensland that this is not a waste of taxpayers' money; it is money well spent. I have enjoyed coming here and I am sure that most of my colleagues from my side of politics treasure the contribution of people from central Queensland. Democracy is not a perfect system. As Winston Churchill once said, democracy is in fact the worst form of government—besides everything else. The Queensland government is not perfect, either. It can never be. But once the Queensland Labor government has identified any area of concern it moves quickly to fix it. The health inquiry is a clear example of this government's willingness to face the music. We prefer to risk losing government than to allow the mistakes of the past to continue, but the opposition wants more inquiries—inquiry 1, inquiry 2 and it wants inquiry 3, 4 and 5—because only through those inquiries can it have a chance to blame the government. Those opposite have to ask Mr Forster why he decided that option 4 is not a preferred option for him. They have to ask him. I have never had the chance to ask him—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Member for Capalaba, could you return to the bill before the House.

Mr CHOI: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This legislation before the House is another example of this government continuing our work in improving legislation to reflect changes in our society, to make amendments to current legislation to ensure its effectiveness and to toughen penalties to make certain the deterrence aspect of our law functions effectively.

The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill amends seven acts administered by Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads with consequential amendments to two other acts. To summarise this amendment bill, it will improve safety at sea, reduce the pollution of Queensland waterways, enhance safeguards for children and other vulnerable people and further improve safety on our roads.

Today I wish to focus on those issues of particular concern to my electorate of Capalaba. Firstly, I would like to point out that this bill amends the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and notably introduces a statutory basis for the position of the marine pollution controller. The amendments will establish the role of marine pollution controller.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr CHOI: That is right. I take the interjection from the honourable minister. It will thereby provide certainty and direction during major responses to ship sourced pollution within our waterways. Honourable members will be aware that my electorate is only a stone's throw away from the majestic Moreton Bay. Without any doubt, Moreton Bay is one of the most beautiful natural assets and certainly deserves our detailed attention and protection. Moreton Bay, with its dozens of islands, is the Redlands' water playground, utilised for the enjoyment of our residents, visitors and, most importantly, homes for local marine life including bottlenose dolphins, dugongs, loggerhead turtles, birds and humpback whales.

As a resident of the Redland shire, I believe I live in the most beautiful part of this country. I believe there are only two types of people in the world—those who live in the Redlands and those who wish they did. However, on behalf of the residents of my electorate, I am prepared to admit that Rockhampton would come a very close second.

Moreton Bay has been described as one of Australia's premium marine parks and, apart from commercial and leisure activities to be derived from bay life, it has been estimated that tourism in Moreton Bay alone generates about \$100 million annually to the Queensland economy. Fortunately for our future generations, the high nature conservation values of the area have been recognised and are protected by the Moreton Bay Marine Park. I therefore fully support the implementation of a marine pollution controller and believe that it is another step in protecting the sensitive marine nature that we treasure so much.

Secondly, and just as importantly, I would like to talk about prominent road safety issues which affect and impact on all of our communities today. The bill also amends the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. These amendments impact on two major issues of concern—speeding and drag racing—which the honourable minister stated in his second reading are both on the rise and frequently occur in our streets. Again, these issues are close to home and are commonly dealt with in my office. It is not unusual in the day-to-day operations of my office that we have constituents requesting a meeting to voice concerns about both of these dangerous practices of drag racing and speeding taking place in their residential streets.

Very recently, due to numerous complaints, I organised a public meeting inviting all residents of Killarney Crescent in Capalaba to air their road safety grievances. Both the local police and the local councillor attended the meeting, and I take this opportunity to thank Councillor Karen Williams for her support and her hard work in her attempt to address the concerns from the perspective of the local government. I also thank the police officers from Capalaba station for their readiness in assisting the residents. I am pleased to say that a number of initiatives were identified and agreed upon for implementation to deter the hoons who were disturbing the peace and posing safety risks for residents and visitors within this neighbourhood.

The amendments to this bill will clarify speeding and drag racing infringements and toughen up on subsequent penalties. This is a further attempt to encourage individual motorists to take more responsibility for their driving behaviour. It is important that every possible step is seized and acted upon to effectively change dangerous driving behaviour and to improve road safety in our communities. This bill will send a very clear message to the community that those who abuse the privilege of holding a drivers licence and who put lives—their own and other people's—in danger will be dealt with appropriately.

I want to thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for introducing innovative and responsible legislation towards improving community road safety and the Smart State's marine environment protection. It is clear that this Beattie Labor government takes the responsibility of the role it plays in securing the future health and vitality of our oceans seriously. By this government being active, dedicated and respectful of the marine environment, we are protecting our marine environment for our children and our children's children to enjoy.

Road safety is a complex problem that needs to take into account not just the vehicle but the road condition and human behaviour. The Beattie government has continued to be consistent in making road safety a priority. I encourage all motorists to do the same thing. It is a reality that many accidents are avoidable. Ultimately, the driver shares a responsibility.

Road trauma costs Queenslanders more than \$1 billion a year. Motorists need to understand that a road accident is more than just a car accident. In most instances it can mean a ruined life, a broken family and lost opportunities. This amendment bill is an essential tool in increasing safety for Queenslanders and reducing the number of deaths caused by irresponsible motorists who continue to drag race and speed in our residential streets. Again I thank the minister and his team, and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (5.21 pm): At the outset I would like to place on record, as many members have, my thanks to the people of Rockhampton for hosting this regional parliament and for the hospitality that has been shown to all of us. I think some people have probably been shown a little bit too much hospitality.

Rockhampton is a great place that I have visited all my life. I am regular visitor. As I grew up at Taroom, Toowoomba and Rockhampton were the two natural service and educational centres. An awful lot of my friends went to school up here and at Yeppoon and came and did business here. It has been great to catch up with a number of those people since I have been here during this week.

The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, like the environment bill that we were debating earlier today and yesterday, affects a whole range of different areas. I think the contributions by a number of members have reflected the very different takes that a lot of members have because of their particular regional interests or their particular electorate interests. The minister will probably be sick to death of me by the time I am finished because a lot of what I am going to say has already been covered by the member for Toowoomba South; of course, a lot of the issues in Toowoomba are common to both of us.

One of the first things I want to touch on is the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act, which is being amended. One of my previous lives, as the minister regularly likes to remind me, was spent working for the Shell Company of Australia.

Mr Lucas: A multinational.

Mr COPELAND: A multinational, yes, but a very good company to work for and certainly a very good training ground.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr COPELAND: No, I did not, but it is on the parliamentary web site, and it is certainly common knowledge amongst many members. Shell was a good company to work for. It allowed me to look at an awful lot of different areas of its operation, which is a very big operation. One of the areas that I worked in was the bulk shipping of petroleum products. When I was working in Townsville I was looking after the shipping in and out of the Townsville port as well as the ports of Cairns and Mackay.

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I certainly enjoyed my time living in Townsville, member for Mundingburra. It was also a very challenging job because the environment that we were working in in Townsville meant that we were shipping through a very environmentally sensitive area with products that can cause significant environmental damage should anything go wrong. I am very glad to say that nothing went wrong on my watch, which I was very grateful for. It was something that I used to worry about. I think everyone who worked for that company at the time was very concerned about it. We did an awful lot of training to make sure that we did know what we had to do in an emergency response. There was a very good training program run in Victoria at Geelong.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I think it was Shell. No, it was BP. It was a very good training program. All of the people who were involved in bulk shipping had to do that program as a mandatory requirement before they took up any post. I think that was a very good thing. It is an environmentally sensitive area where products are being shipped, but they are products that we do need for our economy and for the way we live. We have to rely on shipping. We have to continue to ship it in and out of those northern ports. That means necessarily that those ships travelled through the Great Barrier Reef which, as we all know, is a very significant contributor to our economy and certainly a very attractive part of our state. One of my concerns when I held that position was: should anything go wrong, would we be able to respond adequately and with confidence? I am glad that we did not have to respond while I was there. That was certainly a good thing. Touch wood, we have been quite lucky in Queensland that we have not had any significant pollution events. I think that is something that we should be ever vigilant about.

Under this bill the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act is going to be amended to improve safety on our roads. It is going to introduce tougher penalties for illegal street and drag races, for example, and also strengthens provisions to prevent the alteration of identifying numbers on vehicles. Anything that we can do to improve road safety is a good thing and is something that we should be supporting. It is something that I have been very passionate about over many years. Coming from a rural area, too many of my friends and too many of the people I went to school with have been killed in road accidents. It is absolutely horrendous. Whatever we can do we should be doing to minimise that carnage on the roads.

The focus of this particular amendment is to toughen up the disqualification periods—the penalties. But I think we also have to look at increasing skill levels. That is something that we need to make sure that we do focus on. The road safety committee brought down a report into this very issue of the training of young drivers—last year, from memory. I know the chairman would be able to correct me on that, and I stand to be corrected. I know that there is some conjecture about the value of increased driver safety training and all of those sorts of things. I am a very firm believer that the more time that young people can be supervised while they are learning to drive the better; they can improve their skills and, hopefully, improve their chances of getting through that very dangerous period when they have just got their licence and they are exposed to a whole range of different road conditions.

Of course, it is going to be very difficult to deliver driver training to any great extent in a lot of areas of Queensland. We have to try to come up with some flexible and innovative ways of delivering those driver programs so that people are not relying on a facility but are instead relying on people who have the skills to teach young people how to drive and what they should be doing. We need people with those skills to go around the state, visiting different schools, speaking to young people and teaching them how to improve their driver skill levels and, hopefully, improve their chances of surviving or being able to handle the different road conditions that they are going to be faced with.

In Toowoomba there has been a very good program run by Sel Rollins. In its deliberations, the Travelsafe Committee actually looked at the program that Sel has been running, particularly at St Mary's School in Toowoomba. It has been run at other places as well as at St Mary's. That has been a great program. It is a program that we can learn from with regard to how to deliver driver training to young

people. I would encourage anyone who is interested in the issue to read the Travelsafe Committee report. I am sure most members would have done so when it was tabled. I also ask members to consider driver training programs such as that one in Toowoomba. I urge the minister to do whatever he can to progress the sorts of programs that will increase the skill levels of those learner drivers.

I lived in the Netherlands back in the mid-eighties as an exchange student. I was surprised at just how difficult it was to get a drivers licence in the Netherlands back then. That was 20 years ago now, which makes me feel awfully old.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I did not get a licence over there. These were people I knew who were at that stage going through the process of trying to get their licence. There were stringent requirements and a need for them to have a certain number of lessons before they were even tested to get their drivers licence. It certainly stood in stark contrast to the licensing requirements in Queensland at the time. I did have my Queensland provisional licence at that time. It was a pretty easy thing to get at that stage. I know that it is certainly more difficult now. There is scope for improvement in that area. We can look at the different models in different parts of the world. That was 20 years ago and it was more difficult there then than it is for our young people trying to get a licence now.

Another amendment is to have recreational boat licences and jet ski licences indicated on a drivers licence. That is a commonsense and good thing to do. When I got my speed boat licence it was a pretty easy licence to get. There are risks with towing waterskiers. The driver is not only in charge of the boat but also in charge of the passengers and the person at the end of the ski rope. The potential for danger is pretty significant. People that I have been waterskiing with have had different injuries over time. In some cases that was because of the driver's actions. Not me; I was very cautious. I relied largely on my brothers, who are older than me, to do most of the driving. Waterskiing is a sport that we did a lot of. We were very responsible. There were a few people who were not quite as responsible at that stage.

The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 is going to be amended to make minor changes to existing provisions and processes relating to the following definitions: non-rail corridor land, miscellaneous transport infrastructure and busway land. It will ensure regulations apply consistently for busway and busway transport infrastructure. It clarifies the processes relating to port authorities and road-tolling provisions and clarifies the power to appoint busway safety officers.

As the member for Toowoomba South said, a city like Toowoomba does not have a significant public transport sector. It is something that will be a challenge for us in a growing city and growing area. It has improved in the time that I have been a member of parliament. The way it is done now is much better than the way it was done previously. It is going to be an ongoing challenge for us. It is the chicken-and-egg situation that is faced by public transport everywhere. Without public transport there is not the patronage. If the public transport is not good enough and is not in place for long enough, the patronage will not be there to justify having it in place.

That is always going to be a problem with public transport. We have to make sure that the routes are appropriate and that they go to the right places. In my electorate we have the University of Southern Queensland. Obviously that is an area that has to be serviced by public transport. It is an area that is being serviced.

In the past couple of years there has been a partnership with a private company and the department of transport trialling a bus running a couple of days a week from Pittsworth into Toowoomba and back. That has been a good thing. The trial period has been extended, and I would urge the government to continue to support that. It is obviously going to be a difficult thing. We have been trying to increase awareness as much as possible to get people to use that service. It means that the more elderly or senior citizens in Pittsworth are able to get a bus to go into Toowoomba to make medical claims, see doctors or do shopping as the case may be. If we can continue that service it will be a very good thing.

An area that has been mentioned is the second range crossing. When I was working for Shell, one of my roles was dealing with logistics and transport. I know that all transport operators measure their costs down to a fraction of a cent. The current range crossing costs transport operators an enormous amount of money. It costs the city in amenity. It costs the city greatly when it comes to the 16 sets of traffic lights and the large number of B-doubles and passenger vehicles that go right through the middle of our town. We have to do everything that we can in this regard.

I think it is going to take some innovative investment or financial approaches to make that project a reality. I have written to the minister about this and the minister has written back to me. We are all on the same side on this one. We all want it to happen. It is just a matter of how we make it happen. The federal government has a role to play in this regard. I have taken every opportunity to lobby both the previous transport minister, John Anderson, and the current transport minister, Warren Truss. The week after he was appointed I was on to him about it. Whenever I have seen him I have raised the issue with him. It will be a huge bonus to our city and our area if and when that project gets up and running.

As the member for Toowoomba South and the minister said during the contribution of the member for Toowoomba South, the potential for the logistical centre of excellence that could be established at the Charlton-Wellcamp industrial area is absolutely immense. That would be of benefit not only to the people of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs but also to the people of Brisbane and the south-east corner and the transport companies that operate north to the Northern Territory or south to Sydney, Melbourne and other places in between. We really do need that project. It is something that I know we will continue working on. I know that all local members in our area have been doing that. As indicated by the shadow minister, the opposition will be supporting this bill. There are a whole range of issues in it, but I just put those issues on the record.

Hon. KW HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (5.35 pm): It is certainly a pleasure to rise this afternoon in this parliament in Rockhampton to speak in the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to pass on my appreciation to the people of Rockhampton for their welcome. I take the opportunity to acknowledge the staff. It has been a big effort relocating and setting up this week. A number of people have been involved in that. I think it is important to acknowledge the others, such as the Police Service and other officers, who have been involved in the set-up, the logistics and the organisation of this week.

The purpose of this bill is to make a number of amendments to transport legislation. Over the past few years I have spoken in this parliament a number of times about the upgrade of the Bruce Highway which borders my electorate of Kallangur—in fact, it is one of the boundaries of my electorate—to six lanes. It has certainly taken some time. It has taken over 10 years to construct the upgrade to Boundary Road at Dakabin. That is the boundary of the Pine Rivers shire. I can understand that it has taken that time. An enormous amount of money is involved in that upgrade. Separate contracts have been issued for different sections of that road. People soon forget, but the duplication of Pine Rivers bridge was a massive exercise.

As I have said in this parliament on a few occasions, the people of Kallangur and other road users in that area should exercise patience during the construction phase. It has been going on for a long time. In the last couple of years we have been able to see more progress. This construction has been very welcome. The growth in commuter traffic over the past 10 years has been very substantial. It has been occurring in the fast-growing suburbs in the Pine Rivers shire and the Caboolture shire. Places like Dakabin in Pine Rivers shire and Burpengary and Narangba in the Caboolture shire have experienced massive growth. I thank the Kallangur residents for their patience during this construction. At times traffic on the highway has been slow. I have to say that at times it has been very slow. The work is now complete to Boundary Road.

Work has now commenced on the Bruce Highway six-laning between Boundary Road and Uhlmann Road at Burpengary. Construction has now commenced in Caboolture. As I said before, construction had reached Boundary Road—and the name says it all. It is the boundary between the Pine Rivers shire and Caboolture shire. We are in the Caboolture shire section of this upgrade. That project will cost \$108 million. The upgrading and widening will significantly improve the highway's safety and capacity. I thank the minister for the opportunity on 26 September to, along with the federal member for Longman, Mal Brough, perform a sod-turning ceremony to mark the start of the new \$108 million construction.

The existing nine kilometre four-lane section between Boundary Road and Uhlmann Road carries more than 75,000 vehicles a day now, and that is the section that is to be upgraded to six lanes. There have been a number of off-highway works that have been completed as part of this project. The bridge over Burpengary Creek on Gympie Road has been rebuilt, and I again take the opportunity to acknowledge the consultation process between the department and local road and pedestrians users during that construction. It worked well. A number of meetings were held which I was involved in. I have to acknowledge that the department guys did do what they said they would do as part of that consultation process. They got it done and they got it done well. People were happy and understood that not everything can be perfect when rebuilding a bridge. It can take some time, but it all happened and went well.

There has also been the interchange construction connecting New Settlement Road with Deception Bay Road, and that is near completion. I would think that in the time that I have been here it is probably just about finished. These two pieces of construction are part of that jigsaw towards the upgrade of the Bruce Highway to six lanes now being undertaken. I certainly welcome that, and I am sure that all road users in the Caboolture shire and on the Sunshine Coast welcome that. Certainly the local MPs in that area would welcome that. The construction will be in two stages, with the first stage providing six lanes from the Deception Bay interchange through to the existing six-lane section south of Boundary Road, and that is aimed to be completed by mid-2006. The second stage will complete the six laning through to the Uhlmann Road interchange, and these works are scheduled for completion by mid-2007. This construction is important, as I said, not just for my electorate of Kallangur but for the whole of the Caboolture shire and the Sunshine Coast, because as everyone in here knows it is a very fast-growing area. Currently, there are 75,000 cars per day on that road and it is only going to grow and grow over time. Again, I urge patience by road users during the construction.

One of the objectives of this bill is to improve safety on our roads and at sea, and the purpose is to enhance existing legislation to protect the most vulnerable in our society. For example, it will enhance existing provisions that ensure drivers of public passenger vehicles are suitable with regard to public safety and will introduce a legislative scheme for crossing supervisors to help children safely cross roads. With regard to road crossing supervisors, the chief executive may refuse to authorise a person to perform a role under the authorised scheme to safely help children cross roads if that person has been convicted or charged with a disqualifying offence. It is proposed that applicants for positions as crossing supervisors must give the chief executive details of their criminal history and the chief executive may ask the police commissioner for a written report about a person's criminal history, which must be supplied.

Interestingly, the term 'criminal history' includes charges laid as well as convictions actually recorded. However, of course they must be in relation to disqualifying offences. Also interestingly and importantly, old convictions are not protected from disclosure by the rehabilitation provisions. I think it is the rehabilitation—

Mr Lucas: Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, so they are not protected by that legislation. While the fairness of such a provision may be brought into question, the fact is—and I think everyone here would agree with it—that there is potential for extensive interaction between school crossing supervisors and children, and I certainly support this more extensive provision. The amendment bill covers many other acts—from my reading, 10 in total—many of which have been highlighted by other speakers. I support the bill.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (5.43 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, and I want to confine my remarks initially to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. In particular I want to comment on the change in the penalty for driving more than 40 kilometres per hour in excess of the speed limit. More often than not, speed offenders are young drivers and it is saddening to read the figure of accidents in which they are involved. In Queensland in 2004 there were 104 fatal road crashes that involved young adult drivers or motorcycle riders aged 17 to 24 years. This resulted in 116 deaths, which represents 37.3 per cent of the Queensland road toll, yet at the same time young adult drivers and riders represent only 13.6 per cent of all licensed drivers and riders in Queensland.

Of the 116 fatalities where a young adult driver or rider aged 17 to 24 years was involved in an accident during 2004, 53 deaths, or 45.6 per cent, were the young adult driver or motorcycle rider themselves. Some 30 deaths, or 25.9 per cent, were occupants of the young adult's vehicle and 33 deaths, or 28.4 per cent, were other road users. The figure of 104 fatal crashes involving 116 young adult drivers or riders represents a fatal crash involvement rate of 30.5 per 100,000 of licence holders aged between 17 and 24 in Queensland. When we compare that rate with the rate of 14.2 per 100,000 for holders of licences aged 25 to 59, we note that those aged 17 to 24 are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash.

A car accident can happen in a split second but the legacy is lifelong. At the end of the day, if a person is aged between 17 and 24 years, the reality is that they are twice as likely to be hurt or killed on Queensland roads. The impact on those left behind, their parents, families, friends, employers and in fact the rest of society is enormous and will be ongoing for years. The anguish of losing a child cannot be overestimated. It simply must be overwhelming. There are many reasons for motor vehicle accidents, but without doubt one of the major ones is speed. The Sunshine Coast attracts on Friday and Saturday nights more than its fair share of hooners and, though the bill affects all drivers, I hope the new penalties will deter young people from reckless actions with disastrous consequences.

The bill in essence replaces the maximum penalty of six months suspension for travelling in excess of 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit to a disqualification period of at least six months if the court decides to impose a period of disqualification. I do note that the court under the proposed amendment has the discretion to impose a longer disqualification period than six months. This may seem harsh but, as the minister stated in his second reading speech, the sentences handed down must reflect the seriousness of these offences. I also agree with the minister that, though losing the right to drive a motor vehicle is a major penalty, losing one's life is a greater one. I note a similar provision exists in relation to people involved in racing or speed trials, and again I believe the imposition of the penalties suggested are a positive step.

The second point I want to raise is the ability for drivers whose licences have been suspended to obtain a work licence. The bill proposes that by regulation a process will be established to obtain a limited licence on the basis of special hardship. The regulation I assume will detail the requirements to be eligible to make the application and the criteria to satisfy a court that a licence should be granted. It will be similar in intent and I assume effect as to work licences issued to drink-drivers, although the conditions may not be as onerous.

Mr Lucas: We're going to add a caregiver if you might need to take someone to hospital and those sorts of areas as well. I thought that was important to put in.

Mr McARDLE: I take the interjection by the minister. We all acknowledge that the road toll, irrespective of what it is, is too high. The bill in this regard moves a little further towards arresting that situation. We all must of course understand that, as road users, we need to be constantly vigilant of our own driving errors. Issues such as tiredness, anger and driving unsafe vehicles have a role to play in our road toll, and we need not just pass good laws but apply commonsense to our own driving practices.

I wish to turn quickly to the Sunshine Coast and the traffic situation and the road situation on the coast. The minister knows that I have raised in this House on many occasions the appalling state of the roads across the Sunshine Coast and the undue lengthy time it will take for conditions to improve. Again, I highlight the issue of Caloundra Road. I note that work is due to start on what I will call the preliminary stage intersection of Racecourse Road and Caloundra Road either late this year or early next year. But of course the conclusion of the upgrade is some four years away, as is the multimodal corridor.

As the minister knows, the Sunshine Coast is a tourist destination that provides significant economic benefit to this state. The Sunshine Coast is a growing region in terms of population, economy and many other capacities. It needs a current, updated transport system. The area is not well served by the current public transport system. In fact, it will be years before the bus and the CAMCOS rail system can conjunct to provide an effective system of public transport across the Sunshine Coast.

The benefits of an effective transport system are many, but they certainly include reducing the cost of goods and services to the ultimate consumer, that is, the public; reducing traffic congestion significantly; saving time in terms of sitting in queues for hour upon hour; and mitigating the cost of petrol.

Finally, I agree with the member for Kallangur that the upgrade of the Bruce Highway to six lanes is long overdue. I wait and hope to see the day that that six-laning process will continue all the way to and include Gympie. I agree with the member for Kallangur and, I am sure, the minister that the federal government has a major—in fact, the only—role to play in that upgrade. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (5.50 pm): I rise to take part in the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. Although this bill amends seven acts that are administered by Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads, I intend to spend some time talking to those amendments that are intended to improve road safety. The amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 promote the safe and efficient use of our roads. The legislation contains a number of amendments that are aimed at changing driver behaviour. Each year in Queensland excessive speed contributes to approximately 17 per cent of fatal crashes. The cost of excessive speed is high for offenders, for crash victims, for the citizens of the community, for the families of those killed and for the community through medical and financial support. But we still have people who want to go to the extreme.

Increased vehicle speed equates to dramatically increased braking distances in an emergency, reduced vehicle manoeuvrability and much greater impact forces in a crash. That is what a lot of people do not understand: it is what happens when you actually get into a crash. Every kilometre per hour of groundspeed in a motor vehicle contributes to the severity of a crash and body damage. In the minister's second reading speech he stated—

While everybody is familiar with on-road enforcement of speeding by way of radars and speed cameras, there is another dangerous behaviour occurring in the community which can potentially have much more serious ramifications. I am referring to racing and speed trials on roads, or more commonly known as drag racing.

The minister went on to state—

These are inherently dangerous activities, often involving vehicles travelling at high speed.

These activities are occurring in the community on many days of the week, but they occur almost every night of the week. We rarely hear about it from the media until there is a fatality. Then the media focuses on it big time. Unfortunately, a couple of weeks ago we had a fatality of a 17-year-old, and I also believe that recently there was a very serious accident in the Townsville area. The media really focused on those accidents and made a lot of comment to the community.

The government and road safety authorities always seem to have the finger of blame pointed at them. Usually the media and the community ask, 'Why doesn't the government do something about this?' The blame always gets put on the government. Loss of life and serious injury as a result of a speeding vehicle or motorcycle are tragic, but they can be avoided. The amendments that are before the House today are about changing the sanctions imposed by the courts. Currently, the act provides for a six-month suspension of a drivers licence when a person is caught driving at more than 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit. I do not understand why anybody would want to be driving at that speed, anyway. If a driver receives an infringement notice and the six-month suspension is automatically imposed, this means the immediate suspension of the licence.

It sounds straightforward, but it is not that simple. The matter can find its way into the courts where magistrates can—and regularly do—use their discretion to order shorter disqualifications. It seems to me that in those circumstances the purpose of suspending the licence is not achieved. What is achieved if a person can go back to a court and ask the magistrate to have a shorter disqualification?

In bringing the amendment to the House, the minister acknowledges and understands that the suspension must be ordered to have the impact that it was intended to have. Otherwise, he is wasting his time. He might as well not worry about it. The amendment will allow the courts to impose a disqualification of at least six months for a speeding offence of driving more than 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit. Now we are starting to talk, because the suspension is becoming reality. That suspension must be for at least six months. The courts will be able to impose a greater disqualification period if it is appropriate after taking all matters into consideration. So if the police can offer more reasons for the suspension to be for longer than six months, the magistrate can make a decision at that time.

This amendment sends a warning to those who want to continue to drive at excessive speeds. As a result of this legislation, there is no get-out for driving more than 40 kilometres per hour over the speed limit. A person's licence is suspended for six months. Personally, I do not have a problem with that. I have no sympathy for anybody who wants to go out there and break the speed limit by 40 kilometres an hour.

The minimum six-month suspension will also apply to drivers convicted of conducting or participating in racing or speed trials on roads. It will take away the ease with which a person can apply to the courts on the grounds of extreme hardship to keep a licence that would otherwise be suspended. In those cases, full driving privileges are returned to the driver. That is much more lenient than for the drink-driver who appeals because of much tighter restrictions imposed.

A total of 80 per cent of appeals against administrative licence suspensions result in no significant deterrent being imposed. The purpose of the licence suspension is to discourage repeat traffic offenders and excessive speeding, to punish those who have engaged in unsafe road behaviour and to remove from the road drivers who are a road safety risk. The punishment must be certain and appropriately severe to achieve that purpose. If a driver attends a court and has their licence returned to them unchanged, the punishment is no longer certain or severe. Therefore, the purpose of suspending the licence must be achieved.

I support what the minister is doing with this legislation. As chair of the Travelsafe Committee, I can assure the minister that he has my support. I will stand behind what he is doing.

Mr Terry Sullivan: You do a great job as the chair. You have a great commitment to road safety.

Ms Keech: You are well recognised by your constituents.

Mr PEARCE: I appreciate the favourable comments of my colleges. The suspension of licences can lead to an increase in the number of unlicensed drivers on roads. By changing the legislation so that we have a better system in place and making sure that people who break the speed limit by driving 40 kilometres an hour over the speed limit have their licences taken off them for six months, we could increase the number of unlicensed drivers on our roads. So we have introduced one positive thing that could turn into a negative. I do not know what we do about that.

There are people who have no sense at all, who are just plain ratbags, who will break the law in a motor vehicle and then, when they lose their licence, will walk out of a court and jump in the car and drive away. A young gentleman came to see me a few weeks ago about losing his licence. He thought the government was giving him a hard time. So I did a bit of checking up and I found out that he had a few problems that I needed to talk to him about. I asked him to bring in a record of the number of times he had had his licence suspended. He brought in three A4 pages. That is how many times he had lost his licence and he wanted me to go in to bat for him. We cannot do that as members of parliament. I just cannot understand the way some of these people think.

Unlicensed drivers and riders are people who have never held a licence, who have had their licence cancelled for the class of vehicle they are driving, who drive outside the restrictions of a special licence or who have let their licence expire. It is surprising to find out how many people have done that. They have let their licence expire yet still get in the car and drive around. Unlicensed drivers are a high risk on our roads. Evidence from the 1999 Travelsafe report showed that 6.1 per cent of drivers and 20 per cent of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes in Queensland between 1992 and 1996 were unlicensed.

Just imagine the problems unlicensed drivers cause when they are involved in accidents not only for themselves but also for their families as all the expenses mount up as a result of their being stupid enough to get behind the wheel of a car when unlicensed. Drivers who are prepared to drive unlicensed are more likely to do other dangerous and illegal activities—speeding, drink-driving and drug-driving. Why? They do not have any respect for the law anyway, so why respect the reality of life of being required to hold a drivers licence? They are a threat to other people on the road. Their attitude to risk taking and illegal behaviour behind the wheel may be reflected in other aspects of their lives. For example, 84 per cent of unlicensed drivers and riders are male and 57 per cent are under the age of 25 years.

What do we do about people who continually thumb their nose at the courts, the police and the community by continuing to drive after they have lost their licence? Tougher penalties for driving while disqualified will not stop some from continuing. I believe that the only way to stop is to confiscate their motor vehicles—take away their means of transport. I know that this would cause a lot of problems

because they might be driving cars that belong to other family members. We need some sort of mechanism in place to trace them. For example, if somebody was caught driving my motor vehicle tonight, I should be warned that if the person is caught driving in that vehicle again I will lose the motor vehicle. That means that I then have to accept responsibility. That is one way we could do it. We have to get these people off the road. Taking away their means of transport is one way of doing it.

Given that amendments focus on road safety for all road users, I would like to speak very briefly about young drivers because this is an issue I am very passionate about. I did not think I would get so passionate about issues when I was elected as the chair of the Travelsafe Committee but the more I got involved in it—looked at the data and talked to road safety experts—I got a passion for it. Evidence collected during our Travelsafe inquiry into young drivers, tabled in parliament in December 2003, showed some frightening statistics. In the five years from 1998 to 2002 there were 22,920 crashes involving young drivers and riders—I am talking about those aged between 17 and 19. Police judged that young drivers and riders were most at fault in 71.6 per cent, 16,421, of these crashes. Of those crashes, 17.6 per cent, or 2,895, were serious, with individuals either killed or hospitalised. That is only 17 per cent, but we have to remember that every one of the 22,920 crashes had the potential to cause serious injury or death. That is the problem that we have to deal with.

Experience or lack of expertise is considered the highest contributing factor. Young drivers are likely to be involved in a car crash in the first six months of getting their licence. That says one thing to me: they do not have the experience. So what can be done to address this lack of experience? There is evidence around to say that if we can address this issue of lack of experience we can give our younger drivers a greater chance. It is interesting that when we were doing our work we looked at a Swedish study which linked crash reductions of 40 per cent for young drivers with high levels of supervised driving experience—that is, getting experience before they get behind the wheel of a car on their own. So someone who has just got a licence should spend 120 hours with somebody being with them. That approach is supported by road safety experts and the Travelsafe Committee. Young drivers need to get experience in as many environments as possible before they get to drive on their own.

The Travelsafe Committee went to nine different communities across Queensland during this inquiry. I could not believe the number of young people who had a licence or who were getting a licence and had never driven on the road at night-time. The most dangerous time to drive in a 24-hour period is at night-time, and most of the people we spoke to had not driven at night-time. We have to change that and it can be changed, but it is going to take the support of the community, and parents of young drivers have to get involved and take an interest in what their sons and daughters are doing. The evidence is there. If they get the experience, they are going to have a greater chance of getting through the first six months of driving without being involved in an accident.

This approach, along with night curfews and passenger restrictions in the first 12 months of holding a licence, will save lives. The fact that other countries around the world are doing these things means that the evidence is there to say that it works. We put those ideas to the young people when we travelled around Queensland. I have to tell honourable members that we almost got kicked to death with those two suggestions because young people thought that we were trying to take away their rights. We have to try to do it better—maybe educate them before we ask the question.

As I have said, I am very passionate about young drivers. I am very passionate about better preparing young drivers for our roads. I believe sincerely that with more public awareness and parental involvement we can discipline young drivers to put in the hours to get the vital experience that they need. We are going to need the support of families and the community. Government will not be able to move forward and put in place the things that are important, the things that are effective, the things that will work, if we do not have the support of the community. I think we have a big job of trying to educate the community to understand what we are about. We are about saving young people's lives.

I will finish on this point: the last thing that those of us here today who are parents want to do in our life is to bury our children. That is the last thing we want to do. It is supposed to happen the other way around. If we, as community leaders, can do something about it, then we should have the courage to do so.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (6.08 pm): I rise to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I would certainly like to acknowledge the time we have had here in Rockhampton. It has been excellent. There has been a lot of support from a range of people who I am sure are dedicated to ensuring the best outcome from this sitting of parliament. I would also like to acknowledge the speech by the chairperson of the Travelsafe Committee, which is so concerned about the safety of people on roads. The member for Fitzroy made a great contribution. The dedication of people like him in parliament should be acknowledged.

I would like to speak about the AusLink bilateral agreement reached with the federal government on funding for the state to carry out work on the National Highway for the next five years, because this is particularly important. Great concern has been expressed by a number of people in the northern areas about the \$80 million that has been allocated by the federal government for the highway in the Tully region. I would like to report that quite regularly I have people come in from Queensland Transport telling me how the planning process is going.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr ROWELL: Yes, it is. And it is a very complex process because of the nature of the country it goes through, the amount of rainfall, the crops that are grown along the roadside and a whole range of issues relating to compaction. It is a massive project. This process should be planned properly and not rushed. There is a lot of cooperation coming from the locals as far as the planning is concerned.

Mr Lucas: There is. I am told that as well.

Mr ROWELL: I think it is going pretty darn well. I commend those responsible for the planning process for their willingness to get on with the job and make sure that there is local involvement in it.

We were very mindful of the need for this road to be constructed as quickly as possible, because in recent times there was a severe hold-up. A whole range of people a kilometre either side, and probably even further in some instances, had to wait to get through because of floods on the highway. With the money that has been provided and the time that it will take—it is quite a lengthy piece of road that has to be dealt with—I am sure that we will have a good outcome. I think people in the region are prepared to wait a little longer to make sure that it works well and that we have a good process in place.

There is another serious situation developing on the highway at Yabulu. A very big project is under way—some \$600 million. There is a considerable amount of risk involved in people trying to cross the southern lane and those coming out of Yabulu to go onto an acceleration lane which is only small. The space for those who want to turn off and go north and then cross the highway at Yabulu extends to five or six vehicles. That is totally inadequate. Sometimes during the change of shifts there is quite a considerable build-up of traffic going through to Yabulu and traffic going further north.

I have spoken to the people in Townsville, and I believe that there is a discussion between the management at Yabulu and Transport in that region about what is to be done, because there are some significant risks to people who are coming and going in that region with the amount of traffic that is coming in and out of Yabulu. I understand that an increase will occur in the concentrate that will come from elsewhere. That is quite a significant issue, and I would like the minister to take that on board.

I know that the people in the north have been doing a good job in communicating with Yabulu. There was some talk of limiting the speed of those approaching this turn-off to 80 kilometres an hour. We are not sure whether that is a solution, but it could be an interim measure. I believe those sorts of things are being planned at present.

As far as shipboard waste management plans are concerned, it is essential that small vessels, those in the 35-metre range, and 15-person berths are also considered. We are seeing more and more vessels reaching our shores, and we do not want to see something come in that will be detrimental to the health of products in Queensland, whether that be in primary industries or other areas, or to general health. We are seeing a number of flus overseas that are very detrimental and we would not like to see something of that nature being brought in. I am not suggesting that it would necessarily come in on a ship, but this is the sort of thing that we have to adopt in the shipboard management plans.

I want to talk very briefly about the Ports Corporation in Mourilyan. This is a vital area. A lot of activity is going on at present in the live cattle trade. We are also looking at woodchips and so on going onto the sugar terminal conveyor belt. The Mourilyan port is becoming quite an interesting port. There are some limitations on the capacity of the port in terms of the area that is available, but I think the planning that is going on between all participants augurs well for some good outcomes there.

I would like to talk about mass management routes on the highway. We have discussed those in the past, but there needs to be joint cooperation between the state government and the federal government for roads that could be used in the future that would benefit the transport industry. Let us face it: we have to find better routes. Fuel is now getting very costly, we are competing with other nations' imports and we have to do things to the best of our ability.

I want to talk about the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act. I saw in the legislation some interest in vessel monitoring systems and GPSs. This was brought in in about 1998 and there was some funding for some of those trawlers that were unable at that time to install VMSs. Something like \$2,000 was provided at that time. The intention of the monitoring system is not just to track the vessel but also to be used as a distress mechanism. In the event that a vessel is having difficulties, they certainly have the radio on but a VMS can pinpoint the location of the vessel at the time the distress signal is activated.

It is a very useful mechanism for trawlers because they can go across no-go zones because they do not trawl at anything over five kilometres an hour. It really is an excellent system and it was very useful in the Representative Areas Program, with the pink, green and yellow zones that these vessels could negotiate. We knew if they went at speeds greater than five knots that they would not be trawling because they do not trawl at those speeds. It is all monitored from Brisbane. They can also use it to monitor the catch and possibly what they sell in the future.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr ROWELL: Yes. I want to go into this a bit more because I am concerned about a few blips that have happened in the past. Trawler operators were obliged to install the VMSs, particularly with the east

coast trawl fishery management plan that was brought in because they can actually determine effort. So it is a great mechanism to demonstrate how many days they are out, where they are, what they are doing et cetera.

What I was mostly concerned about—I was very involved in the organisation of this system—was the distress signal. We should have been able to accurately track the trawler. In the minister's second reading speech he said that since 1999 six collisions have occurred in shipping lanes involving ships and fishing vessels and small craft. The whole idea is to implement the reef vessel tracking system, but I would like to mention some incidents to the minister. They go back some time, but I raise them because of some concerns that I have. In some instances this VMS system did not respond to the distress signal.

A trawler called the *Ronadel* sank off Bundaberg in April 2000. The skipper sent a VMS distress signal but the alarm failed to activate. The skipper of the vessel actually used a mobile phone to call his wife who then called the authorities in Canberra. The man spent two hours in shark infested waters before being picked up. The *Ronadel's* owners then bought a vessel called the *Sharon Lee*. On 16 January 2002 a distress signal was activated on the *Sharon Lee* at 6.00 am. It was 40 minutes before the *Southerby* in America acknowledged the call to Canberra.

There was another incident of a trawler called the *Eastern Leader*. It sank 37 kilometres from Dunk Island near Otter Reef. The vessel was purchased only weeks before this happened. Three emails were sent to the former owner three days after the vessel sank. The *Eastern Leader* was not polling for three days. If the former owner had been notified sooner, he could have said that he no longer owned the vessel. There could have been some determination about what was happening. They should have attempted to make contact with the *Eastern Leader* to find out why they were not polling.

Mr Lucas: I'm told the issue was the DPI. Of course because it was a Fisheries management tool, they don't poll it all the time.

Mr ROWELL: That is right, it is QFS.

Mr Lucas: Once we get the material, of course our marine people poll it 24/7 so that issue—this is one of the reasons why we want to do it.

Mr ROWELL: There have been some problems associated with the VMS in the past. The outcome from all that was that two men lost their lives and another one was saved; thank goodness for that.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr ROWELL: If there are problems with the VMS, the minister is then going to latch into this vehicle monitoring system—

Mr Lucas: We monitor it 24/7 because we have to, because it's not about Fisheries' effort; we're about where ships are.

Mr ROWELL: That is the ships, but I am talking about the trawlers themselves.

Mr Lucas: And them as well.

Mr ROWELL: The trawlers themselves.

Mr Lucas: Yes.

Mr ROWELL: So the minister has to link up the VMS through QFS. However, there have been problems with the VMS as far as QFS is concerned. That is the point I am making. That is why I am raising the issue.

In a response that I received from the minister, he said that initially there had been some problems with the software. If the minister is going to use this mechanism, I think there needs to be a close examination of VMS because it is quite evident that in the past it has been found to be defective. Men's lives have been lost.

Now we are hoping to prevent collisions with bigger ships. I think it is a great idea to tie the two mechanisms together. However, if there is a fault with one and the other one is working okay, as the minister is saying in relation to marine safety, then that is fine. I am saying that I am aware of some instances in which the VMS has been inadequate.

Mr Lucas: This is about addressing that.

Mr ROWELL: For the most part I am supportive of the legislation. However, I think it is important that we address these defective situations concerning VMS as it relates to the safety of ships at sea.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.22 pm): I am delighted to support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to confine my comments to a couple of parts of the bill in relation to the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act amendments.

I will deal with the sections relating to port authorities. The bill will clarify the Transport Infrastructure Act provisions for the establishment of a port authority, and that is very worth while.

Hervey Bay has a port that is controlled out of Bundaberg. It is a major piece of economic infrastructure for our region. Previous studies by the department of transport have confirmed just how important that port is to Hervey Bay's economic life. It is certainly a busy tourism port, running whale watching and other commercial fishing and recreational fishing activities. It is fair to say that it is not a commercial port in any reasonable sense of the word. That may need to change over time.

I am aware of discussions in the community from port users and from people associated with the marine industry of hopes that that port can eventually grow to take superyachts, cruise ships and maybe coastal barge traffic in the future. That is the sort of planning that needs to be going on at the moment. I know the minister is aware of a number of proposals that are doing the rounds. The important thing for me about these proposals is that they are coming from the ground up. They are coming from users of the port and people involved in the marine industries, and they are looking over the horizon of where Hervey Bay's port needs to be in 10 or 15 years. It may not be that we necessarily need a port authority based in Hervey Bay, but it is certainly useful in terms of driving growth and planning for the port.

I would particularly like to thank the minister for his financial support for that planning process. There is a planning process running at the moment between Queensland Transport and the Hervey Bay City Council in relation to land use around the port over the next few years. That is a very important process that will underpin the growth that is occurring. I would like to invite the minister to visit the bay in the near future and meet with the council and others who are involved in this process. It is particularly important that we get the planning right at this early stage.

Hervey Bay has a fabulous tourism industry which is supported by accommodation, attractions and transport. We are a little bit thin on transport insofar as we have air links and road links but, unfortunately, due to the progressive policies of the Goss Labor government we do not have a rail link anymore. That makes the development of our sea link a substantially important opportunity for this government to improve that limb that supports our tourism industry.

I would also like to very briefly touch on the provisions relating to non-rail corridor land. The Hervey Bay City Council has been running a very successful project with lots of support from the government called the Links Corridor. That has involved, first, the acquisition of the old rail corridor from Urangan to Pialba and, more lately, a lease which the minister has been good enough to oversee for the section from Pialba to Takura. The Links Corridor project involves cycling, walking and scooters using the old corridor. It has been done up and has been beautified. It is very busy, but there are still some issues about how much traffic that corridor can handle, what sorts of ways we can link with bikeways to try to get as much traffic off the roads and provide people with alternatives. The new section of the Links Corridor from the old railway station up to Boat Harbour Drive has just been completed. I understand that the council is very keen for the minister to be in Hervey Bay sometime soon to be part of the opening of that other extension. With those few comments, I commend the minister for the bill and I recommend it to honourable members.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (6.27 pm): There are just a couple of issues that I need to raise in speaking to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill in relation to my electorate of Mirani. As members well know, my electorate starts about 30 kilometres north of here at The Caves. It does encompass that boring, long drive from Rockhampton through to Mackay. In relation to that, I might just mention to the minister that in terms of accidents that is probably the worst section of highway in Australia simply because of the boring drive and the overtaking opportunities on the highway. I know that it is initially a funding issue from the federal government, but I believe that the state government would be identifying those issues that would make the highway safe.

Over the last couple of years there has been a program to put in pullover stops that would accommodate a semitrailer or a couple of cars. Unfortunately, on a lot of those long stretches there is no opportunity to pass simply because of the volume of traffic on the road. As all members would know, the highway traffic can be a culmination of a lot of different traffic, with some traffic doing 110 kilometres per hour—which is the speed along most of that stretch—and some other traffic towing caravans et cetera travelling between 80 and 90 kilometres per hour. It is rather frustrating to sit for up to an hour behind that line of traffic without having an opportunity to overtake.

We need to look more carefully at the road from here to Marlborough and from Marlborough north to Sarina and putting in fairly long overtaking lanes so that there are clear overtaking opportunities for traffic travelling a little faster than the average car and caravan. That is an important issue. There have been a lot of accidents there over the last couple of years. They continue to happen. A lot of them are single-vehicle accidents. That will not be addressed by my proposal.

There has been some remedial work done. The audible lines on the side of the road seem to work. Fatigue is an issue in that area and those lines help. There are still a lot of single-vehicle accidents. There is a fair bit of drama attached to the issue. A lot of the communities along that road are not big and do not necessarily have access to ambulance services or SES volunteers. That local community has to do a lot of trauma rescues—that is, pull people out of cars and retrieve bodies, et cetera.

I commend the minister on his quick action in terms of the \$200,000 commitment to the Sandy Creek bridge west of Mackay. This will allow some of the heavy vehicles to go back on the track that they had been using for a number of years. The wooden Sandy Creek Bridge was closed to heavy traffic. The oversized dump truck bodies, buckets et cetera that are being rebuilt in Mackay and weigh up to 150 tonnes are being carried through the urban areas of Walkerston, Marian and Eaton. There are up to three road movements a day in some cases. The issue came to a head when a huge truck body, up to 14 or 15 feet wide, passed over the top of a school bus. It made everybody aware that this is a huge issue.

People living on that corridor that is being used as an alternative route were having their power disconnected up to three times a day simply to allow these heavy vehicles through. That is completely unacceptable. The real answer is a dedicated heavy vehicle bypass of the Peak Downs Highway. There needs to be a fair bit of work and a fair bit of money put into that. There is a real urgency for that to happen.

The growth of secondary industry in Mackay that is feeding into the huge growth in the mining industry means that more heavy vehicles will be travelling through that area. Until we get a dedicated bypass around Marian there are going to be problems. Even though there has been talk about that for more than 30 years we are getting to the stage where real work needs to be done on that.

The identification and safety aspects of shipping are of concern to me. As members would realise, the Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay coal ports are currently the biggest in the world. I hear from the Premier that they will be overtaken by Gladstone in four or five years time. We have had 50 or 60 ships sitting out at sea off Hay Point. Obviously there is a real concern in terms of the safety and control of those ships. If a ship was sunk at the moorings or while it was loading coal it could create a huge bottleneck for the export of coal through the ports on the central coast of Queensland. We really have to address the safety and security issues.

I will raise quickly the issue of the coal rail corridor from the Bowen Basin mines to the central coast area of Dalrymple Bay. The coal rail corridor passes through some of the cane areas. The issue of urban traffic in Emerald was raised in the parliament last week. The same is happening in areas around Sarina. We have farmers trying to haul coal across rail lines that have no protection. If there are thoughts—and I believe there are—for a third line the opportunities to cross the line would be quite limited. There does need to be some thought given to grade separation. We need to put some overpasses in the areas that are frequently being crossed.

I call on the minister to use his influence to put boom gates in those areas. I am sure the minister has been close to a coal train. They move fairly silently. We saw an accident north of Mackay last week involving a coal train and cane haul-out equipment. A person was killed in that accident. We need to look at the safety of those crossings. There need to be boom gates across those crossings wherever possible.

I have some concerns about the turnouts along the highway and the warrants that Main Roads are using to allow development off the side of the highway. I have been dealing with the issue of the turnout at Marlins Road just north of Sarina. People situated off the road made an application to put an industrial site close to the turnout. It is continuing to be rejected by Main Roads because they think that an increase of up to five vehicle movements a day is going to create a hazard on the highway.

That turnout was created for a quarry when the Dalrymple Bay port was being built. There were probably up to 200 or 300 heavy vehicles turning out of there on a daily basis when that was being built. Main Roads is basically putting a dampener on the development of the land behind that turnout. I think it is quite unfair that Main Roads is creating a disincentive for that to happen. I am sure it is happening all the way up and down the highway. This turnout has been designed to handle quite a number of vehicles per day. I cannot see how an extra five or six movements a day would make any difference.

The Peak Downs Highway that feeds out to the Bowen Basin is of concern to me. That is a very busy highway. I notice that Jim Pearce's Travelsafe Committee report tabled this morning talked about the number of accidents due to fatigue. Miners drive back from their work out there in the mines.

I also have concerns in relation to overtaking lanes on Peak Downs Highway. The reality is that that highway is not as safe as it could be.

Mr Lucas: Some more overtaking lanes are programmed in the next financial year. I am pretty sure about that.

Mr MALONE: That is good, Minister. That highway is becoming very busy, particularly in peak times. At change of shifts et cetera there is a lot of traffic. People are obviously fatigued. I know that they should not be driving but they will attempt to get back to their families as quickly as they possibly can. I do not think we can blame them for that. We need to make sure that the highway is as safe as possible. Maybe we need to do an audit on it to make sure that we look at all issues involved. We need to remember that a lot of times there are heavy vehicles—fuel tankers, tankers carrying explosives and so—on that highway at the same time. With those few words I support the bill. I thank the minister for the opportunity to speak.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (6.38 pm): I will be brief in my contribution on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I will limit my comments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. I note that the minister has identified a need to bring about greater consistency in the penalties for many high-speed offences. I note in his second reading speech he goes on to say that the act will be amended to clarify that when a court elects to impose a disqualification for a speeding offence of driving more than 40 kilometres an hour over the speed limit this must be for a period of at least six months. He goes on to say that a court will still have a discretion to impose a longer period if it believes that is appropriate. It is important that the sentences handed down reflect the seriousness of these offences.

I use this as an example where I would urge the minister to speak with his cabinet colleagues to ensure that his passion for ensuring that our current offences are consistent with community expectations also flows through to other penalties imposed in other acts. It is great to see an update of our sentencing in this act, because quite frankly on many occasions we see community outrage and extensive lobbying of our Attorney-General and previous Attorneys-General to appeal sentences because of the perception in our community that they are simply not appropriate for the offence that has been committed. I congratulate the minister on doing a review of this section of the act and I believe many Queenslanders would support him in this regard.

While speaking on the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act, many of my constituents would love to see radar cameras operating on our local council roads. Unfortunately, I understand that at the moment their use is limited only to state government controlled roads. The reality is that many people who visit the Sunshine Coast in particular do not distinguish between roads that are a council responsibility and roads that are a state government responsibility. Many offences are being committed regularly on our local council roads, but unfortunately the police do not have the power to take that over to the local council roads. I certainly would urge the minister to take that matter up with his cabinet colleagues.

Finally, I again put on the record my approaches and urging of the minister when he brings down his next announcement of the projects to be funded for our roads in Queensland that he again revisit the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road and especially the bridge at the Belli Creek crossing No. 2. Earlier this morning the Premier announced significant bridges to be constructed in Queensland, and I am certain that one of those is also a bridge in my electorate. I simply again put on the record my urging for the minister to consider the importance of replacing the Belli Creek crossing bridge No. 2. This bridge is on a road which is identified as a tourist road but is also identified as a heavy haulage road. There is a real conflict here in terms of school bus in the morning and evening and tourists driving willy-nilly down the road mixing with these massive haulage trucks and trailers carrying material from our blue metal quarries from Mary River to the coast. I urge the minister to try to see if he can find some way to provide the appropriate funding for the replacement of the Kenilworth-Eumundi Bridge.

I commend the bill to the House and I know that members are looking forward to the conclusion of the sitting of this historic meeting of parliament in Rockhampton. As an Independent I am very pleased and honoured to be part of the 51st Parliament and am very honoured to be one of the members who have had the privilege of attending this sitting here in Rockhampton. The hospitality and the treatment from the residents of Rockhampton has been wonderful, and they have certainly made us all feel part of their family. It has been a privilege to be here. I wish them well in the future, and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wallace, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Sitzings of Parliament, Rockhampton

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (6.42 pm), by leave: As the Premier is in Cairns this evening, it is my privilege to thank Rockhampton and central Queensland for hosting this our second ever regional sitting of the Queensland parliament. In the 1890s the central Queensland separatists petitioned the Queensland state parliament five times to have central Queensland declared a state governed by its own parliament. I think we as members of the 51st Parliament can all share with pride the fact that we have delivered to central Queensland its very first parliament. This week parliament came to town in Rocky and the Governor has visited. She was here for today's Executive Council meeting at Kenmore at the Mater Hospital, Kenmore of course being the home built with the purpose of being home to the new state's first Governor in the late 1890s. This was indeed an historic moment.

From the moment when cabinet met at the Gracemere saleyards on Monday right through until this evening, it has been a most memorable event. From the hype associated with the annual Brahman Week sales to the robust debates that we have all engaged in this week—and some might say that some of it has been a lot of bull, but I could not possibly comment—it has had the state's focus squarely

here on this great region of Queensland. Much has been said about beef this week and the importance of it to the city of Rockhampton. I have to say that it is a sad reflection that I have not had an opportunity to eat any yet, but I understand that that will be remedied tonight by a number of people at the Criterion Hotel.

There has been a real buzz in Rockhampton this week, and central Queensland has truly been a winner. All 89 of us I think will leave wiser, with a far better understanding of the economic, cultural and social benefits that this part of Queensland injects into our state. This central Queensland sitting has been a further example of the government's continuing commitment to ensuring that all Queenslanders have the opportunity to be part of Queensland's decision making and our democratic processes. This sitting and the first one three years ago in Townsville have shown themselves to be an important initiative to increase access to the parliament for people who live in regional Queensland. They are an ideal Smart State link between regional Queensland and George Street. The regional sittings provide the opportunity for the local community to directly witness and become involved in our wonderful democratic processes. As the Premier said in his opening statement on Tuesday morning, it is important that each and every one of us cherish our democracy, that we cherish the democratic institutions that underpin it and we give them our active support at all times.

We have had some very robust debates here this week on the benefits of taking the parliament to the people. Can I just say on behalf of the government that we are gratified that this sitting has seen the parliament endorse the principle that regional sittings should continue to be held once a term. A major focus of this sitting has been to engage with schoolchildren and schools throughout the region to educate them on the parliamentary process. That is important for the future of this state. Thousands of students from state schools, non-state schools and tertiary institutions have visited. Tomorrow 87 senior secondary students from seven state and five non-state schools will participate in a Youth Parliament here in this venue. The opportunity that this sitting has provided for these students to personally experience how the parliament works cannot be overstated. On behalf of everybody here, I would like to thank all of those students who visited the parliament and encourage them to continue to access the proceedings of the parliament via the live audio broadcast on the internet. I also take the opportunity to thank those teachers and parents who worked to make it possible for those students to be here this week. I also thank the parliamentary education service for the very hard work it has done to assist these students during their visit.

As members are aware, this sitting and all of the other events that have been held over the last three days would not have been possible without the efforts of a large number of people. We all know that when parliament sits in Brisbane there are an extraordinary number of people working behind the scenes to make sure that everything proceeds smoothly, and I think that we can all take the opportunity this evening to thank those people for making sure that it went just as smoothly here in Rockhampton. I first of all, Mr Speaker, start by thanking you and your office for the work you have done to ensure the smooth proceedings of the parliament this week. I also thank the Clerk and all of the parliamentary staff for the tremendous effort that they have made in making sure that the services that we all rely on to do our business have been available to us here. It has taken an extraordinary amount of planning. We come here for a week, but these staff have been working to make this possible for literally months and months.

It is difficult in these circumstances to single out any individual, but I would like to put on record the extraordinary work that Kerryn Newton of the Parliamentary Service has done. Kerryn has done a magnificent job and she deserves our thanks, so thank you. I also thank staff from ministerial and opposition offices. Each and every one of them have played their role and worked in very different conditions and yet they have still delivered for every one of us, so thank you to them. A very big thank you to the technical support team. I think there were a few palpitations on the first day when some of the printers failed 10 minutes before question time, but other than that it all worked, and that is the great measure of the technical team. I thank them for their enthusiasm and for their dedication in ensuring that the proceedings have gone so well and been so successful.

I also thank the Hansard team. As important as it is for us to be here of course, it is important that our presence here and the debates that have occurred this week have been recorded and recorded with their usual accuracy. To all of the Hansard staff, thank you not only for being here and doing the great job you always do but for doing it with a great deal of enthusiasm and patience.

I also thank all of the volunteers—and there are so many of them—who have given their time to assist here in the chamber, in the Pilbeam Theatre, at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre and at all of the other events that have been part of this week's sittings. Their involvement and their support have been invaluable. In particular, I would like to acknowledge that when we are not sitting here in a parliament this building is a working theatre. I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the staff of the Pilbeam Theatre, the art gallery and the Walter Reid Cultural Centre. The last time I was on the stage at the Pilbeam Theatre I was launching, as minister for the arts, the annual theatre program. The Pilbeam Theatre is one of the great cultural institutions of Queensland. It had a sensational theatre program this year. I think we have added our own little bit of spice to it.

To the police, security officers, restaurant and cafe staff, volunteers and friends of the theatre I say: thank you one and all. On behalf of all of us, can I also say thank you to Rockhampton's accommodation houses. I think we have tested their limits. I also thank the taxi and bus operators and each and every person who played a role in making this historic occasion memorable and rewarding.

I would like to recognise the efforts and thank the Mayor of Rockhampton City Council and all of the councillors for their support for this sitting. As Mayor, Councillor Margaret Strelow has enthusiastically embraced this opportunity for her city. She has not only attended the sitting but also actively participated in a range of associated activities. Many of us have seen her at a number of functions all week. I thank her for her support.

Of course, the local state members have all contributed to the success of this sitting. I want to especially recognise the efforts of Robert Schwarten and thank him for his contribution to this week's events. Not only has he done a stellar job as Leader of the House, under sometimes trying conditions; he has also obliged all of us by sharing his birthday with us. So I thank him. I think it is fair to say that this has been a milestone event in the parliamentary career of the member for Rockhampton. I hope that he feels very proud that his city has truly shone this week. The member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce; the member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan; the member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham; the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson; and the member for Callide, Jeff Seeney, all now have something special to boast about in terms of service delivery when meeting with their constituents.

Finally, I would like to thank the people of Rockhampton. I would like to thank them for the welcome that they have given all of us. I would like to thank them for their hospitality. Like everybody else this week, as I have moved about town I have had people talk to me. People come up and say things to me about the parliament and generally just wave a friendly hello. I think that speaks volumes for the kind of people who make up the community of Rockhampton. So I thank them for the hospitality they have extended to each and every one of us.

It has been a pleasure and it has been an honour to participate in this historic sitting, which marks only the second time that the parliament has sat outside of Brisbane. I hope that we will see many, many more such events in the years to come. I move—

That the House take note of this ministerial statement.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.52 pm): On behalf of the opposition, I rise to pay tribute to those people who have been involved in the organisation of this regional parliament—and there are many. It has been an interesting week of opportunity. It has been a chance for many people to experience Rockhampton and central Queensland unlike they have ever done before. Probably for many people, it is the longest period they have spent in this great part of the world in any one stay. First of all, I knowledge our wonderful parliamentary staff that the Deputy Premier paid tribute to a moment ago. I will not single out any of them; I will just say that they have done a fantastic job—as they always do in their various disciplines in supporting us in our roles as members of parliament.

I know that preparing for a regional parliament is extremely challenging for these dedicated people, because the planning starts years out. They hit the road months out in terms of sizing up the venue and everything else that needs to be planned for and put in place. I go back to what I said before. This does not happen weeks out or months out; it starts years out. It needs to be announced so that an appropriate venue can be identified and everything put in place.

The other day I was speaking to the state manager of Telstra Country Wide. He said to me that they also were having some palpitations about their capacity to maintain the mobile telephone network. They were putting in provision for the network to handle an additional 500 mobile telephones. That is what was required. So often we do not think about the outside support that is necessary.

As I said, to the parliamentary staff: thank you very much for providing the very high standard of service that you provide to members of parliament. It has been exemplary. It certainly is no different from what we expect and what we know we get from them at parliament in Brisbane. To the various staff who support the Nationals, the Liberals, other MPs and also government members: thank you for your assistance.

This has probably been a significant period of dislocation for the Pilbeam Theatre staff. Something that would otherwise be used for other sorts of entertainment has been used for a different sort of entertainment. This has probably upset the program that was set down. Also, for those people who have provided various refreshments in the cafeteria and the restaurant in the foyer, this has been a process of dislocation for them. We pay tribute to and thank them.

To the police and security staff: thank you very much for a great job. In this day and age we know that you can never, ever be too careful. It is a great pity that we live in the times that we do. However, the police have done a fantastic job, as have the security staff. I also thank the council for its support in various ways.

Members of the community have turned out to support this regional parliament. As the Deputy Premier said, many other members of the community have supported us and made us feel very welcome, such as when we have been dining out at our various venues and where we have also been accommodated.

This is a once-a-term opportunity for people in regional Queensland to appreciate and see parliament in action in their community. It is something that I think is very, very special. It is a chance for people to see democracy at work in their community. I know there has been a lot of speculation about the turnout. I am not sure that is how we are able to measure the success of the regional parliament. The success of the regional parliament is in what it ultimately achieves—the fact that we are committed to doing it, the fact that we think so much of our state and the regions in our state that we support the principle of locating the parliament in a different area once a term.

As we prepare for the next regional parliament, I caution not to set ourselves unrealistic benchmarks in potential crowd turnout against which we are then judged and sometimes judged negatively. I think that is unfortunate. We have to see it as a success. Last night at one stage there were 500 people here. I think that in itself is quite a success. So I think we have to stop what sometimes becomes counterproductive parochialism by challenging ourselves to achieve unrealistic expectations, which becomes a high bar that we do not jump over. Unfortunately, that tends to devalue the exercise of regional parliaments.

Can I make one suggestion, as I did yesterday, for an enhancement of the regional parliament in the future. Regardless of who the opposition leader may be, or the alternative premier may be, I say that a parliament is a parliament. A parliament is made up of a government and an alternative government, of a premier and an alternative premier. I believe that there is an opportunity for the opposition leader to be involved in some of those civic forums by jointly hosting the regional parliament. Parliament is about keeping the government accountable. It is about making sure that there is an express opportunity for all MPs, regardless of which side they are on—whether they be Independent, opposition or government members—to operate properly. I think the government should consider that for the future.

The opposition—the Nationals and the Liberals—have enjoyed this opportunity to raise issues that are important to this local community and to understand those issues. We have been through those issues, and I do not intend to go through them again tonight. I say to all members of the parliament from this region: thank you for your contribution. I would like to take the opportunity to mention the local members of my team—the member for Callide, the member for Mirani and the member for Gregory—for their contributions. I also mention the member for Gladstone, who sits on the crossbenches. There have been a lot of announcements made in relation to that city during the course of the week.

Central Queensland is a great and vibrant part of Australia and the Queensland economy. It is contributing so much to this state's resources, so much to the state's coffers. It is therefore very important that we recognise it in the area of the mining industry, which will continue to boom for years to come, the beef industry, which is enjoying a very positive time at the moment notwithstanding the very difficult weather, and also the tourism and other important industries that underpin this area.

In conclusion, I have enjoyed the opportunity. I am sure that many members have. We look forward to being able to go back to parliament in Brisbane much better edified and being able to advocate more tenaciously on behalf of this part of the world.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as this historic occasion draws to a close, I want to acknowledge those who have worked hard to make this regional parliament a success, which it obviously has been. At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the people of central Queensland and, in particular, Rockhampton who have demonstrated their support for the parliament sitting in this region.

Of course, the sittings would not have taken place without the efforts of officers of the Parliamentary Service, not just in the last week but over many months of planning for the sittings. Whilst many officers have been involved—and they will all be individually recognised in due course—I would like at this time to particularly acknowledge the efforts of the advance party of staff who transported and set up our facilities.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous work of the Clerk, Neil Laurie; Linda Plynt from my own office, who has certainly been an outstanding employee; Kerry Newton, who project-managed the regional sittings and has spent months planning and coordinating the sittings; John McDonough and Jason Gardiner of Property Services; Ian Thompson and Bob Bradbury from Chamber Services; Kevin Jones, the Manager of Security and Attendant Services; Mike Coburn, Matthew Stacey and Allan Nelson of IT Services; Mary Seefried, Graeme Kinnear and Roylene Mills of Library and Education Services; and Lindsay Watson and Graham Ehler from the contractors Shendale. I understand that many of these staff will remain for the next couple of days to disassemble and transport our chamber back to Brisbane. I also acknowledge the work of the Hansard reporters. I also acknowledge the work of Craig Atkinson and Robert Bizjak, who made financial, accommodation and travel arrangements for members.

Electorate officers from the offices of the local members who serviced the front counter must be recognised. Honourable members, I also acknowledge the contribution of the Queensland Police Service, in particular Inspectors Graham Coleman and David Scott. The assistance of police to ensure everybody's safety has been quite excellent.

I would also like honourable members to join me in thanking the Rockhampton City Council and, indeed, the staff of the council; the staff of the Pilbeam Theatre, where we are gathered; the friends of the theatre; the art gallery; the da Berto restaurant, which has provided an excellent service to those people who availed themselves of the food and refreshments there; and the staff from Public Works and Housing who assisted with the set-up.

I also want to recognise the work of the media. Whilst we do not always appreciate some of the comments, I think on the whole they have reported this parliament and certainly brought it into the rooms of the people not just of central Queensland but the whole of Queensland.

Honourable members, I am sure you will all agree that this week has been successful for the parliament, for the people of central Queensland and, of course, for the institution of democracy.

I conclude by saying a big thankyou to the temporary chairs, who have certainly assisted me to maintain harmony in the parliament. I would also like to thank each and every one of you for the contribution you have made to ensure that this parliament has been the success which it certainly has been. I advise members of public and, of course, all members that we still have the adjournment debate, which will last for 30 minutes. I look forward to meeting you all in three years time in Mount Isa.

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (7.04 pm): Mr Speaker, I was going to thank a few people, but I think the only person you have left out is the Pope. I want to thank all the people who have stuck with us until this last hour tonight.

Mr Springborg: They are tenacious.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, tenacious like everybody else in this place is, and we share that tenacity with them. The reality is that I will be 102 by the time the parliament comes back to Rockhampton.

Mr Springborg: Life has not been too kind to you.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition that life has not been too kind to me. He obviously does not have a mirror in his house.

The reality is that I do appreciate the efforts of each and every member of this House. I am obviously very proud of this place. My ancestors came here in the 1860s. I am very proud of it. I welcome the opportunity to have all of the members here in this electorate with me and not have to travel to Brisbane for once. It has been great. Thank you very much. We do not always get on all the time, but I do recognise the fact that there has been an individual commitment by people to travel away from their homes, their families and their electorates and be out of the comfort zone that we have at Parliament House to some extent. I do thank each and every one of you for that.

Mr Speaker, I echo the congratulations that you gave to every person. In particular, I congratulate my two staff, Debra and Karen, and the staff of Paul Hoolihan and Jim Pearce—Sara, Thelma and Gai. With those few words, I again wish everybody a safe trip back to their electorates, and I thank members for their contribution to what I think has been a very successful sitting of parliament in Rockhampton, a very historic event. I thank the people of Rockhampton for their wonderful support for it.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.07 pm): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 25 October 2005 at Parliament House, Brisbane.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.07 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Bird Flu

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (7.07 pm): In Queensland we have built tunnel-ventilated poultry facilities alongside large bodies of water in the greater Brisbane area. These are places such as Pumicestone Passage, Logan River and soon to be Wivenhoe. As everyone knows, we are in drought, so bodies of water are becoming further and further apart. The air is dry, and one thing a dry area is very good at is allowing dust to travel vast distances. Pumicestone Passage is a staging point for in excess of 85,000 migrating birds from South-East Asia and beyond. We all know that avian flu is running rampant in South-East Asia. Migratory species of wader birds like those seen regularly around Bribie Island are seen as a possible avenue for the disease into Australia. The risk of avian influenza, or H5N1, coming to our shores via migratory birds is very real.

The World Health Organisation says that it is not a question of if avian influenza makes the jump from human to human but when. The federal government says a flu pandemic could infect up to 25 per cent of the Australian population. The *Courier-Mail* quotes the draft report of the Queensland pandemic plan. It states—

If the flu had a relatively low infection rate of 15 per cent, 670 Queenslanders would die.

But if the infection rate was 35 per cent—

which is a possibility—

the death toll would climb to 3850.

The number of people would become ill in Queensland would range from 311,000 to 514,000, depending on the potency of the virus. Of these, between 2,100 and 13,700 would require hospitalisation.

The Commonwealth Serum Laboratories state that it will take up to seven years to vaccinate the Australian population. The federal health minister, Tony Abbott, said that the odds of the pandemic had shortened from 'about 100 to one to about 10 to one'. I would like those odds when buying a Lotto ticket but not with the possibility of contracting this particular virus.

Piggeries and cattle feedlots are controlled by the state and yet produce substantially less tonnage of meat per hectare. The regulations for feedlots and piggeries are likened to volumes of encyclopedia, yet the chicken industry has virtually three pages on a notepad. Eighty per cent of the total chickens grown in Australia are farmed out to growers under contract to the major processors. The chickens are at all times owned by processors, yet in Queensland the processors have never been held accountable for the problems associated with the industry. There are at least 70 of these facilities in the south-east corner at the moment and there are applications rolling in daily for many more. Every shed exchanges somewhere between six and 10 million cubic metres of nutrient rich, pathogen laden air per day—

Time expired.

Sexual Violence Awareness Month

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (7.10 pm): In 2002 the Premier, Peter Beattie, formally proclaimed the month of October Sexual Violence Awareness Month in Queensland. I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, and the members of this House for wearing yesterday the teal ribbons and for the donations that they have made. I hope that members will continue to wear the ribbons throughout this month as the ribbons not only help promote Sexual Violence Awareness Month but also remind us that one in three women and one in six men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime; that most will be sexually assaulted by someone whom they know—a partner, a family member or an acquaintance.

Wearing the ribbon sends a very strong message that forcing a woman to have sex when she does not want it is called rape. The ribbons serve as a reminder that rape is a frightening and humiliating experience during which the victim has no control over what happens. Indeed, the ribbons should remind us of the strength it takes for many victims to ask for help and the hope that victims do make the choice to seek help, report the rape, and that perpetrators are appropriately dealt with in our courts.

This month the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence will hold a number of events and activities on the Gold Coast to increase community awareness of the context, nature and extent of sexual violence, to promote available resources and to challenge attitudes, behaviour and values in relation to sexual violence. I would like to mention Di Macleod and the coordinator of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence and the team on the Gold Coast for the work that they do in running support programs, developing resource material, correlating data and, most importantly, actively working towards addressing attitudes and sexual violence crisis situations.

The centre services Coolangatta to Coomera and west to Mount Tamborine. The staff are supportive and caring and in the case of a crisis can be contacted on 55911164. Young women, women with disabilities and Indigenous women are at higher risk of sexual violence. The short- and long-term effects of sexual violence can include gynaecological problems, substance abuse, depression, eating disorders, high-risk behaviour and suicide.

Studies show that women who have been abused use health services more than other women and they tend to assess their health as not very good. As a society we all have a duty to support young women to grow into confident, strong, important and respected members in a safe community. Let us together send a message that sexual violence is not accepted in our respective communities by wearing the teal ribbons, donating to their nearest centre and by supporting the events and functions being held across Queensland this month.

Dolphin Feeding, Tin Can Bay

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (7.13 pm): The shadow environment minister has already thrown some sensible ideas into the ring regarding the feeding of Indo-Pacific humpbacked dolphins at Tin Can Bay, stating that this contentious issue could be resolved if the Beattie government were prepared to work with, rather than against, the local community. He, along with other reasoned commentators, asked the government to consider establishing a strictly controlled scientific research

Trail Bikes

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (7.19 pm): I also congratulate Rockhampton on the way that it has hosted this very special week—not only the sitting of parliament but also the special week for Brahman sales as part of their bull sales and the barramundi fishing competition. It seems to me that Rockhampton has done extremely well in terms of work for visitors, as have the shops and especially the eating places.

Ms Jarratt: Shoe shops.

Mr LINGARD: I did not go into the shoe shops. I had two magnificent years living at the Great Western Hotel. Those people who have ever been down to the Great Western Hotel would know what a young footballer living at the Great Western Hotel for two years would do. Brown Park did not have the magnificent facilities that it now has. Members can just imagine what happened when we beat the Poms and went back to the Great Western Hotel to celebrate, or how magnificent it was at the Great Western Hotel when we won the premiership.

I think Rockhampton has done with this theatre. Quite ironically, I was here for the opening for this theatre when my wife, Alison, was the main singer. She is a Rockhampton girl. I find it a little disappointing that I was never sent off at Rockhampton but 50-odd years later I ended up getting sent out! I think it is quite unfair, Mr Speaker, to do that to a person who has had all that experience in life. I really do think that Rockhampton has done extremely well, and I congratulate the city.

On a serious note, I ask the government to look very seriously at the problems involving trail bikes in the area south of Brisbane where five-acre and 10-acre blocks are being established. A number of people continue to have concerns about trail bikes. I know that the trail bike working group is to report in approximately May 2006. The people who move to those areas are traumatised by having to listen to trail bikes at the weekend. The police also experience trauma. Unfortunately at Jimboomba, just before the last election the government came down with the commissioner and promoted a special trail bike program. About two weeks later they took the bikes back to Brisbane, and they have never come back to Jimboomba. The bikes can be provided, but the difficulty is in providing the police who have the experience to ride those bikes and who can catch some these young scallywags.

I support the program at Wyaralong, where the new dam supposedly will go. Hopefully the land that is being resumed will be tendered out for lease. I would hope that the government supports a program of that particular property being used by trail bikes of a weekend—not only trail bikes but also motorbikes.

Child-Care Centres

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (7.22 pm): As it is my first opportunity to speak this week, apart from adjourning the last debate, I pass on my thanks to the people of Rockhampton and central Queensland for their hospitality. My grandmother hails from Mount Morgan, so perhaps I have a bit of blood in this town and around the area. I also send the greetings of the people of north Queensland to the people of central Queensland. We regional people need to stick together and fight for a better deal from every level of government.

Many hardworking Australian families utilise child-care centres located right across our nation. Indeed, my four-year-old Gigi goes to our local child-care centre, where she has a great time playing with her friends. With many mums and dads forced to work to make ends meet, child-care centres have become an important resource in our local communities. The Hawke and Keating Labor governments of the eighties and nineties recognised the importance of child care and offered assistance to the parents using these centres. The Howard government has, despite some attempts to pare back financial assistance, largely kept that assistance in place.

Mr Speaker, you can imagine my shock last week when I was contacted by three federal government employees who live in Thuringowa and Townsville regarding plans by the coalition government to crack down on fraud within the child-care industry. They had been told at a Centrelink and Family Assistance Office management meeting that consideration was being given to fingerprinting children using child-care centres. Yes, that is right: fingerprinting babies, toddlers and young kids whose parents claim child-care benefits from the federal government.

Ms Liddy Clark interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection of the member for Clayfield. That really is dreadful. I could not believe my ears. I know that the Howard government is one of the meanest governments in our history, but fingerprinting our kids as if they were common criminals really is disgusting. If these Tories think Australians are going to stand by while our kids get fingerprinted, they have another think coming. Never would I let my four-year-old suffer the indignity of having her fingers covered with ink just to satisfy the Howard government's lust for power.

I hope that every other member in this place, be they Labor, National, Liberal, One Nation or Independent, joins me in opposing this revolting plan. If the Commonwealth is going to crack down on

people claiming child-care assistance fraudulently, it should not penalise the 99 per cent of legitimate users whose young children will have their fingerprints recorded for life.

Sixty years ago my grandad and hundreds of thousands of other men like him fought fascism and its evils. If we allow John Howard to fingerprint our kids, then we as a nation do my grandad and those who fought with him the greatest of dishonours. We would be no better than the Nazis that those lovers of freedom were forced to destroy.

Rosemary Bishop Indigenous Education Scholarship Program

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (7.25 pm): A few weeks ago I received a phone call from an old school friend of mine who attended boarding school at the Toowoomba Grammar School from 1980 to 1984. Waverley Stanley rang me, asking if I would partake in a ceremony that is being conducted at the Toowoomba Grammar School this Saturday afternoon. He is launching the Rosemary Bishop Indigenous Education Scholarship Program. I will be very honoured to co-launch this scholarship with his grandmother, Mrs Viola Hill, if she is well enough to attend.

Waverley is an Indigenous man who grew up in Murgon and Cherbourg descending from the Wakka Wakka people with ancestors from the Barunggam people of Chinchilla. He was a very good friend of my cousin, who also attended the Murgon school. I became good friends with Waverley when he became a boarder at the Toowoomba Grammar School for the same years that I did.

He has named the scholarship program the Rosemary Bishop Indigenous Education Scholarship Program in honour of what he calls a caring woman and a wonderful teacher. Mrs Bishop was instrumental in organising an opportunity for him, as a grade 7 pupil, to attend Toowoomba Grammar School, a private boarding school for boys, in 1980. The opportunity came about through Mrs Bishop recognising something special in him as a 12-year-old schoolboy. In conjunction with Mr William Dent, the then headmaster of the Toowoomba Grammar School, she was able to organise for Waverley a five-year scholarship to attend the Toowoomba Grammar School. Although I have never met her, Rosemary Bishop is obviously a wonderful woman. I can speak from experience that Bill Dent was certainly a fantastic man and a wonderful headmaster of the Toowoomba Grammar School.

Waverley says that he was given the chance to attend the Toowoomba Grammar School on scholarship for five years. It was organised and developed during the school term of 1979 through the liaison between Mrs Bishop and Mr Dent. He goes on to say—

This one act of kindness and commitment to my future provided me with the motivation to establish the Rosemary Bishop Indigenous Education Scholarship Program. The purpose of the scholarship is to establish an educational scholarship for Indigenous students initially from the Murgon and Cherbourg communities, but with a broader view of providing scholarships for Indigenous children throughout Australia.

On Saturday we will be launching the scholarship with three young girls and three young boys from the Cherbourg and Murgon communities to attend the Glennie School and the Toowoomba Grammar School starting next year.

The long-term goal of this scholarship program is to reshape the educational standards and statistics of Indigenous education in Australia by giving educational opportunities to 250 Indigenous children Australia-wide by the conclusion of the 2015 school year. Waverley says that is having a positive effect on three generations of Indigenous people.

Each of these scholarships is worth \$150,000. That is a significant amount of money being contributed to these six young people whose lives will be benefited significantly by participating in this program. It will be my very great honour and my very great privilege to jointly launch that with Waverley's grandmother on Saturday afternoon at the Toowoomba Grammar School.

Queensland Health

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (7.28 pm): The member for Fitzroy and others, including the Premier, have mentioned the damage done to the morale of Queensland Health workers by the indiscriminate and unfair criticism levelled at them. Tens of thousands of these workers have been affected by this cheap political point scoring.

In a letter to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* some weeks ago, the member for Currumbin gave the workers at the Gold Coast Hospital a backhander by telling everyone how great the Tweed Heads Hospital was. As a result of that I received several phone calls from constituents complaining. I sent the following letter to the editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—

In response to the Member for Currumbin Jann Stuckey it is important to note that the closure of the Gold Coast Hospital's Haematology/Oncology Day Unit is not permanent. The District is actively involved in recruiting medical and nursing staff and plans to restore services to the previous levels as soon as possible.

Despite the temporary closure of the Haematology/Oncology Unit just over half of the newly referred patients to the Gold Coast Hospital are able to be treated there (including several from northern New South Wales). Patients are managed on a case by case basis to assess the most appropriate treatment plan and where necessary transport is also made available.

On behalf of the community I would like to thank organisations such as the Queensland Cancer Fund, Leukaemia Foundation, domiciliary nursing services, Tweed Heads District Hospital and local private hospitals for their support and interest in this issue.

Particular thanks must also go to the dedicated, hardworking and compassionate medical staff who continue to work in the Haematology/Oncology Unit at the Gold Coast Hospital.

I got a letter in reply to that on 20 September. It stated—

Re: Recent letter to the Editor

On behalf of the staff of the Haematology/Oncology Day Unit and Ward 9A, I would personally like to extend a heartfelt **Thank You**.

I was at work that day sitting having a much valued tea break with my Acting Nurse Manager discussing the impending events of the unit, when a nurse came in with the newspaper very excited and read out your letter. Comments such as, 'Well, thank god' and 'Yes, I was going to ring that Jann Stuckey and give her a piece of my mind' were heard. All staff were uplifted by the truths being printed finally.

Our Acting Assistant Director of Nursing even thought it beneficial to email a copy of your letter to all staff involved.

I must commend you on your information and tone of the letter. A copy of your letter has been enlarged and posted on the information board in our staff room. Thank you again for listening. I just wanted to let you know that it was the simplest of things that brought significant relief for staff who were feeling very undervalued and misrepresented.

So there we have it. They are undervalued and misrepresented by the members of the opposition—the carping, negative opposition. As has been mentioned time and time again, they are the best resourced but laziest opposition in history. Nothing constructive comes out of their heads.

Dairy Industry

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (7.31 pm): At the moment Queensland is facing an incredibly hot season. This morning the Minister for Emergency Services spoke about the expected temperatures. I spoke to a dairy farmer today who told me that his crops are simply wilting in the field. He is fearful that over the next two or three days everything will probably die.

That brings me to the state of the Queensland dairy industry at the moment and the recent announcements of a four to eight per cent price increase by two of the three processing firms in Queensland. There may be an announcement made by the other one. I think most people in Queensland think that this price increase is passed on to the dairy farmers. But it is not. It is simply staying with the processors. Not only that, the price increase is limited to the strip shopping centres and corner stores. It does not apply to the major supermarkets where longer term contracts have been entered into.

When the Beattie government deregulated the dairy industry early in its term we warned that it would shift any negotiation chance or opportunity away from the primary suppliers, the price takers, the dairy farmers, to the operators of the supermarkets. That is what happened. The previous system, the Dairy Industry Authority, used to every so often check whether a price change was needed. If there was a price rise of 8c in milk it was shared in a reasoned way between the producers, the processors and the retailers. We no longer see that.

At the moment we are seeing a very dangerous trend within the major supermarkets. The expansion and growth of those supermarkets in recent years is due to them taking over other types of retailing such as hotels and them trying to get pharmacies, newsagencies, butchers, bakers, greengrocers and service stations. They are trying to get everything they can.

They screw down the price that they pay those people who provide them. That is how they get their growth. They get the price down and down. I think it is time that we had some corporate responsibility. Dairy farmers are facing fuel hikes and drought. This is simply forcing more and more off the land. We will see the family farm in Queensland and Australia disappear as a part of our society and our economy. It is time that these people who say they sponsor Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and all sorts of other major events and take out full-page ads in the papers put a little bit of corporate responsibility into having a contract with a trigger in it that allows them to give the price taker, the dairy farmer, a decent price when they hit hard times.

Health System; Proserpine Hospital

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (7.34 pm): I begin tonight by welcoming my son, Ben, and his girlfriend, Kyan, to the public gallery. Welcome! I also thank the whip for letting me have the last word at this historic regional parliamentary sitting, and what more appropriate word to have as a last word than a positive story about our health system. We do have an enormous task ahead of us to improve the health service and to make the delivery of the health services in this state better, more accessible for patients and more supportive for the staff who provide medical and nursing care to the thousands of patients who depend on our public health care system. But it is important that we begin that process by acknowledging the outstanding contributions already being made by doctors, nurses and allied health staff in our public hospitals and community health centres right across this state.

I recently saw this dedication for myself when someone close to me was rushed to the Proserpine Hospital suffering chest pains. I had nothing but praise for the calm and professional attention provided by the staff at the hospital both during the initial emergency and in the follow-up attention he received. I want to especially mention Dr Melanie Lewis, who was summoned to the hospital near midnight, stayed until the crisis had passed and was then on deck again early the next morning for a full day at the hospital.

Just before that episode, I ran into one of our local tourism operators, Al Grundy, whose wife, Ruth, had recently given birth to their first child—a son, Kai—at the Proserpine Hospital. Al was almost as excited by the fabulous treatment they received during their stay at the hospital as he was about the birth of his son, although I am kidding a little. But he said that in light of all of the bad publicity connected to our hospitals lately he was amazed at the quality of the medical attention and professionalism of everyone he encountered and the friendliness of the nursing staff and medical staff. People like Al Grundy know that the public hospital system has much to recommend it. I have to say that Dr Lewis is an overseas trained doctor, having been credentialled in South Africa. But if our community has anything to do with it, she will be staying with us in Proserpine for a very long time.

Not only is Proserpine blessed with great doctors like Dr Lewis; I was absolutely delighted to learn that the Proserpine Hospital will next year host medical interns from James Cook University's first group of graduates. Isn't it great to know that we will soon have regionally trained doctors practising in regional hospitals? Yes, there is much to do in response to the Forster review, but there is also much to be grateful for in what we already have.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.37 pm.