PROOF ISSN 1322-0330

WEEKLY HANSARD

Hansard Home Page: http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/hansard/
E-mail: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au
Phone: (07) 3406 7314 Fax: (07) 3210 0182

51ST PARLIAMENT

Subject **CONTENTS** Page

Wednesday, 23 November 2005

PETITIONS **4143**
PAPERS **4143**
NOTICE OF MOTION **4143**
Revocation of Marine Park 4143
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4143**
Claims Harvesters 4143
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4144**
Critical Infrastructure, Security 4144
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4144**
Federal Member for Blair, Ipswich Motorway 4144
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4145**
Referendums 4145
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4146**
Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4146
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4146**
Southbank Institute of TAFE, Redevelopment 4146
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4147**
Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Service Management 4147
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4147**
Take 5 Young Bravehearts Awards 4147
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4148**
Trade Missions 4148
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4148**
Smart State, Business Investment 4148
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4149**
Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4149
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4150**
Crawford, Mr B 4150
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4150**
Queensland Health, Reforms 4150

BY AUTHORITY
L.J. OSMOND, CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER—2005

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4151**
Schoolies Week 4151
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4151**
Respite Services 4151
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4152**
Mining Industry 4152
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4153**
Corrective Services 4153
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **4153**
ICT Industry 4153
NOTICE OF MOTION **4154**
Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies 4154
NOTICE OF MOTION **4154**
Telstra 4154
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS **4154**
Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4154
Flooding, Rocklea 4155
Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, Atherton Tableland 4155
Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4156
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Mental Health Patients 4156
Yeppoon Hospital 4156
Queensland Racing Ltd 4157
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE **4157**
Fraser Coast Patients Support Group; Brock, Mr L 4157
Small Business 4157
Coalition, Preselection Process 4158
Queensland Health 4158
Coalition, Preselection Process 4159
Mental Health Services 4159
Queensland Coalition 4160
Prison Officers, Rosters 4160
Daylight Saving, Coalition Policy 4161
Singh, Mrs S 4161
Ipswich Motorway 4162
Use of Parliamentary Letterhead 4163
Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4163
Electricity Supply, Gympie Electorate 4164
Coalition Health Policy 4164
Development Planning, Moranbah 4165
Federal Welfare to Work Legislation 4166
Local Government Electoral and Boundaries Review Commission 4166
Queensland Coalition 4167
Queensland Health 4168
HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL; HEALTH PRACTITIONERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL **4168**
Resumption of Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate) 4168
Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill 4168
Third Reading (Cognate Debate) 4168
REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL **4168**
Second Reading 4168
Consideration in Detail 4171
Third Reading 4173
LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL **4173**
Second Reading 4173
PRIVILEGE **4179**
Alleged Bribe, Member for Gympie 4179
MR SPEAKER'S RULING **4179**
Motion of Dissent 4179
NOTICE OF MOTION **4190**
PERSONAL EXPLANATION **4191**
Use of Parliamentary Letterhead 4191
LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL **4191**
Second Reading 4191
TELSTRA **4207**
LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL **4216**
Second Reading 4216
Consideration in Detail 4219
Third Reading 4222
SUGAR INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL **4223**
Second Reading 4223

ADJOURNMENT 4240
Industrial Relations 4240
Dragon Boat Racing 4241
Home Hill State School 4242
Bribie Island Surf Club Redevelopment 4242
Maryborough Amateur Boxing Club 4243
Caboolture Area Youth Service; Federal Industrial Relations Legislation 4243
Development Planning, Moranbah 4244
Liberal Party, Broadwater; Councillor Fay Barker 4245
Caloundra 4245
Poker Machines 4246

WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2005

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

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Kuranda Range Road

Ms Lee Long from 1,033 petitioners requesting the House to ensure the Kuranda Range Road upgrade is fast tracked as a matter of urgency, for completion as soon as possible.

Gateway Motorway

Mr Caltabiano two petitions totalling 127 petitioners requesting the House to refuse permission for the proposed access ramp to be constructed giving access from the Gateway Motorway at Hendra to the TradeCoast Central development site.

PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following Ministerial papers were tabled—

Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

- A proposal under s 22 of the Marine Parks Act 1982 and a brief explanation of the proposal

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation of Marine Park

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (9.33 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 28 calendar days as provided in the Marine Parks Act 1982, I will move—

1. That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation the setting apart and declaration of that part of the Moreton Bay Marine Park within the areas described as:

   Lot 11, Lot 31 and Lot 41 on SP 175931 as set out in the proposal tabled by me in the House today on 23 November 2005.

2. That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women for submission to the Governor in Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Claims Harvesters

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.33 am): My government intends to ban radio and TV advertising by claims harvesters—nonlawyers who offer free advice about personal injury claims but who only want to sell people's details on to lawyers. The Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, has raised this matter with the government. We intend to ensure that we protect people.

Advertising by claims harvesters has advised people they could get tens of thousands of dollars for injuries in places such as work, shopping centres, sporting events or schools. One claims harvester has radio advertisements that start with the sound of an ambulance siren. Claims harvesters ask for fees of up to $8,000 and this extra unnecessary cost is passed on to the injured person. The state government has led the way in changing the sue-for-anything mentality that has contributed to spiralling insurance costs. This includes passing the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 to prevent lawyers advertising personal injury services on radio and television. However, claims harvesters avoid the existing law because they are not lawyers.

The government is not prepared to let these ambulance chasers get a toehold in Queensland. We have taken strong steps to prevent a US style compensation culture in this state. The government does not want claims harvesters getting in the back door. The Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, will be bringing appropriate legislation to the House. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland will proceed with the TV and radio ban after the High Court last month rejected an appeal against NSW laws banning personal injuries advertising.

Claims harvesters are so called because they collect personal injury claims from as many people as possible, with the sole intention of selling case histories on to lawyers.

It is not about providing those individuals with advice or assistance in making a claim.

According to legal sources, claims harvesters can charge up to $8,000 for referring individual cases.

An amendment to the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 is the most likely way to proceed.

We will also seek further national action on claims harvesters by taking the issue to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, comprising attorney-generals from all states and territories.

It is only fair that claims harvesters face the same advertising restrictions as lawyers and companies acting on behalf of lawyers.

We do not want to restrict awareness of personal injury compensation or restrict access to information about claiming compensation.

Equally we do not want to encourage people to make frivolous claims that can force up the price of insurance premiums.

The Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 also bans "no win, no fee" advertising.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Critical Infrastructure, Security

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.34 am): Queensland government agencies have been working to ensure the security of our critical infrastructure. As I mentioned in the last sitting of parliament, staff of the Security Planning and Coordination Unit in my department, along with officers from the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Emergency Services, have been providing information on counter-terrorism measures to government and industry over the last few months.

Eight industry sector briefings were held for Queensland's critical infrastructure owners and operators in the week from 7 to 11 November. These briefings were attended by 127 industry and government representatives from 95 per cent of the organisations that own and operate Queensland's critical infrastructure. The industry sectors included energy, banking and finance, communications, health, aviation, maritime, surface transport, such as rail, bus and road, and water services. Each sector received information on the roles of owners and operators and government which is outlined under the Queensland plan for the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorism. Information tailored to the specific needs of each sector was presented.

The briefings also considered a number of future activities such as the involvement of critical infrastructure owners and operators in counter-terrorism exercises—a key element in testing and continuously improving our readiness to overcome terrorism. A joint team from my department, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Emergency Services delivered the briefings. Queensland government sector lead agencies also participated in their respective sector briefings.

Regional police and emergency services officers in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton have also been updated on critical infrastructure protection. In October, officers in these centres received information to strengthen their ability to help and support owners and operators of critical infrastructure to ensure the best results. They are now equipped to better incorporate the risk of terrorism into plans for security and on-site emergency response.

Further briefings on the protection of critical infrastructure will be held for police and emergency services officers in south-east Queensland over the next two weeks. The briefings complete a major part of the implementation of the Queensland plan for the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorism, all of which aims to ensure our state is well prepared to prevent, respond to and recover from any act or threat of terrorism.

I want to highlight the last part of what I said. Our plan is to obviously ensure that we are well prepared to prevent, respond to and recover from any act or threat of terrorism. I think everyone in this House and in the community needs to clearly understand, nevertheless, that when people are prepared to kill themselves to kill others it is virtually impossible for government to give people a guarantee of their safety. What we need is to ensure that the community is our eyes and ears so that we can respond, based on that intelligence, to potential threats which is why we have to respond in the form of legislation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Member for Blair, Ipswich Motorway

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.37 am): Over the past couple of weeks the federal member for Blair, Cameron Thompson, has rightly come under the spotlight for his inaction over the Ipswich Motorway. The pressure has obviously got to him. On Saturday he distributed a newsletter in the *Queensland Times* newspaper titled the 'Thompson Tribune', which I table for the benefit of the House. The special edition told local residents that the federal government had decided to build the half northern bypass to the Ipswich Motorway.

There is no plan to build. He was obviously stung by the criticism of his inaction and is hoping to stretch the lousy $10 million provided by the Prime Minister a very, very long way. The reality is that John Howard committed to nothing more than another planning study—leaving thousands of motorists who use this dangerous road in limbo yet again. What he said was not plan but build. The reality is that what he said is not accurate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Could all honourable members switch their mobile phones off.

Mr BEATTIE: I make the point again. His special edition told local residents that the federal government had decided to build the half northern bypass to the Ipswich Motorway—not plan but build. That is grossly dishonest. The reality is that John Howard committed to nothing more than another planning study leaving thousands of motorists who use this dangerous road in limbo yet again.

However, Mr Thompson is deceiving residents in his electorate by claiming that a decision has been made to proceed with the bypass. Our Department of Main Roads indicates that any planning study could take up to three years to complete. The Howard government knows this, and this means that any decision to build the bypass, if it happens at all, probably will not happen until 2009 at the earliest and probably will take, as I said, three years to build—that is, until 2012. We acknowledge the need to properly plan, design and consult about road upgrades. What we do not agree with is Mr Thompson misleading locals into believing the half-northern bypass will happen any day now following the Prime Minister's announcement.

I note Mr Thompson has decided not to join us in the gallery today. I am glad, because I am afraid he may have been a negative influence hanging around the member for Chatsworth or vice versa. After all, it was the member for Chatsworth who drew a random line on a Google Earth map and told residents in his electorate that this was one of the new routes for the eastern busway. The Liberals, both state and federal, obviously appear to be picking up bad habits from each other. It would be nice if they actually told people the truth.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Referendums

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.40 am): The issue has recently arisen again as to whether a referendum can be held concurrently with a state election. The Referendums Act allows for two sorts of referendums: one is a referendum to approve a bill and the other is a referendum on a question. It arose earlier this year when this government considered a referendum on a bill for four-year parliamentary terms. The Constitution—and this is clear—provides that some of its provisions, including the three-year term provision, cannot be amended unless the amending bill is approved by a majority of electors at a referendum. Various legal opinions have been obtained on this issue, and there is no clear and definitive legal opinion on the matter. The issue about four-year terms is clear, but on other matters there is no absolute view.

I can inform the House, however, that recent legal advice obtained by me and the government states that it is arguable, but untested, that a referendum to approve any bill that has been passed by the Legislative Assembly may be held concurrently with a state election. However, there exists the very real risk that the Governor will not have the power to assent to the bill, even if the majority of electors approve the bill. That is the advice. To put it another way, the Governor may not be able to validly give her assent to a bill that has been passed by the Legislative Assembly once the assembly has ceased to exist by reason of its dissolution—and that is the heart of it—because a general election has been called. In such a case, the constitutional requirement cannot be cured by resubmitting the bill to the Legislative Assembly after the election.

For all of these reasons, the government decided that a four-year term referendum would not be held concurrently with a state election. Bills that are not constitutionally required to be put to referendum can, nevertheless, be submitted to referendum. Such a bill put to a referendum may very well need to be passed by the new parliament to ensure it is valid. However, the new parliament might not be so minded to pass the bill or may want to make amendments to the bill which were not considered in the referendum. The approval of a bill, whether a referendum is constitutionally required or not, concurrently with a state election creates a legal uncertainty. This is an uncertainty to which I will not subject the parliament and the people of Queensland without strong legal advice. It would entail significant cost and involve high risk.

It would be simply improper for the government to act in that fashion. The whole process could be a complete waste of time and money. To be certain, it is preferable that a referendum on a bill takes place concurrently with a Commonwealth general election, which requires the approval of the Commonwealth government, or with a local government election where the same problem of a dissolved Legislative Assembly would not arise. The other scenario is a referendum that submits a question, not a bill, to the people. The daylight saving referendum in the early 1990s was a case in point

and a fluoridation referendum would be, too. A question referendum as opposed to a bill referendum can be held at any time, including concurrently with a state, Commonwealth or local government election.

If the state put a referendum on a question only, then arguably the parliament, particularly after an election, could differ from the people on the enactment of their intent. That is why it would be preferable for any referendum to be a question on a bill which, for the reasons indicated earlier, would be most efficiently put at the time of a local government or federal election. There is no intention to hold a referendum at the present time. I hope that has clarified the issue. I know there were some matters raised, and the Minister for Health and I have both expressed views about this. Those opposite have expressed views. We now have a considered legal opinion, and I hope that clarifies the issue for everybody.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.43 am): Senator Barnaby Joyce has a chance here to rectify what he did in relation to Telstra. He blew his chance when he caved in on the sale of Telstra. He promised to stand up to the Howard government to protect the interests of rural and regional Queenslanders and then he rolled over. Now he has another decision to make: will he roll over again and support the Howard government's proposed industrial relations laws, or will he stand up for the rights of working families in Queensland? When he heard the details of the legislation at the Senate estimates committee earlier this month, he admitted that he was worried. The minister for industrial relations and I discussed this. We thought there may be some hope.

However, the Senate committee findings were tabled in parliament yesterday with only minor amendments to the legislation recommended. Workplace relations minister, Kevin Andrews, must have rubbed his hands in glee when he saw the report and immediately said that he was prepared to make 'technical' changes. 'Technical' changes will do nothing to help the legislation support productivity, employment security, skilling and innovation. 'Technical' changes certainly do nothing to address the concerns of thousands of ordinary Australians who face having their entitlements and conditions stripped away by this destructive legislation.

Our government has already announced that if it is enacted into law we will issue an immediate challenge in the High Court, and we have set up a new advisory service for workers confused about the proposed changes. We are playing our part. Barnaby Joyce has a choice to make: when it comes to the crunch, will he stick up for Queensland working families or will he roll over again for John Howard? The problem the senator has is that he is really getting the reputation of the boy who cried wolf. He said that he would do something about Telstra and then he rolled over. Basically, what he says is, 'I don't like it, but I'll vote for it.' One is judged on how they actually vote. Talk is cheap. What is really important is how he votes. He betrayed the bush on Telstra. Now he has an opportunity to stand up for Queensland when it comes to workplace relations. If he rolls over on this, I hope no Queenslander ever takes him seriously again.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Southbank Institute of TAFE, Redevelopment

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.45 am): The employment and training minister, Tom Barton, and I recently launched the construction of Queensland's first public-private partnership project, the $550 million redevelopment of the former Southbank TAFE. I table three documents which update the parliament on its progress, and I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Employment and Training Minister Tom Barton and I recently launched construction of Queensland's first public-private partnership project, the $550 million redevelopment of the former Southbank TAFE.

The Queensland Government is working closely with its partners—ABN AMRO, John Holland and Spotless Facilities Management—to deliver a magnificent facility.

This project on a four-hectare site will produce world-class, energy-efficient buildings worthy of being the Smart State's flagship for international training.

By bringing together the innovation of the private sector and the planning and service delivery skills of the public sector, we will provide Queenslanders with the quality infrastructure they deserve and need.

This will be more than just buildings—it will be a world-class centre of education and training excellence.

The institute will deliver programs to train the people who are desperately needed in knowledge-based enterprises such as biotechnology and health science, multimedia, engineering, eBusiness and the creative industries.

The present Southbank TAFE is developing a number of these programs, which are critical to our future as the Smart State.

The redevelopment involves construction of 11 new buildings and the renovation of another four.

It will create around 315 jobs during the construction phase and ongoing employment for 100 facilities management and support staff.

Since work began on the site, six buildings have been demolished and excavation work started in preparation for the staged construction of faculty buildings.

Completion of the first building shell is on target for mid-2006.

The institute currently delivers more than 40 per cent of TAFE Queensland's diploma and advanced-diploma programs.

We are now creating a high-tech centre of learning that will help break down traditional barriers that have previously inhibited students' progression from secondary to tertiary learning.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Service Management

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.46 am): Tonight I will be presenting the 2005 Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Service Management. I want to thank the Public Service for the excellent job it does on behalf of Queenslanders, and I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

There were many very positive achievements during the last 12 months and their impacts will be felt for years to come.

The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026 is a good example.

This was the most comprehensive, infrastructure planning strategy ever released in Australia.

That strategy and the South East Queensland Regional Plan serve as our blueprint for the future in this fast-growing region.

The Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector are about rewarding those individuals and teams who have made an outstanding contribution in helping to deliver the Queensland Government's Smart State vision.

Queenslanders throughout this vast state rely on the public sector for a huge range of services, from roads and railways to health and housing and everything in between.

Indeed, the high standard of living we enjoy in Queensland would not be possible without the skilful planning, creative problem-solving and ongoing commitment of our public sector.

This year's awards have attracted 99 nominations across eight categories and every one of them reflects the innovation and smart thinking flourishing in our public sector.

For example, nominations in the Growing Queensland's Economy Award category included the Department of Education and the Arts Showcase, which was on display during Queensland Week at the 2005 Aichi World Expo.

I visited Aichi World Expo while I was in Japan earlier this year and I saw first-hand what a fantastic job that team achieved showcasing Queensland to the rest of the world.

And in the Engaging Communities Award category there's Get Involved—South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026, a project from the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation.

An initiative such as this is a crucially important tool for government as we set plans in motion to cope with the demands we increasingly face as Australia's fastest growing state.

Most importantly, I want to thank all the people who make up Queensland's public sector for their contribution over the past year.

Congratulations to all of you.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Take 5 Young Bravehearts Awards

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.46 am): Yesterday I mentioned the announcement of the winners of the Take 5 Young Bravehearts awards, which are being made this morning at Movie World. I would like to add my congratulations to the six Young Bravehearts selected for their amazing courage—Victoria Hort, Joshua Bates, Danielle Aris, Terry Vo, Blake Fowler and Sean Gageler. I congratulate them and their families.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Trade Missions

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.46 am): We have another sad example of the coalition getting the basics wrong. One in five jobs in Queensland depends on exports, a figure that rises to one in four in the regions. We have to go out to our export markets and increase sales of Queensland merchandise and services. I have asked a number of ministers to engage in trade missions to advance a range of industries in this state from the primary sector through to the businesses. I seek leave to incorporate some details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Labor Government is a government for all Queensland and is planning a trade mission which aims to increase overseas sales for rural producers.

Surely, the National Party would support such a trade mission.

Sadly, I have to tell the people of rural and regional Queensland that the National Party is opposing this trade mission.

It wants to postpone the mission, despite the need to visit North and South America before the end of this year to encourage foreign buyers and investors to attend the World Meat Congress in Brisbane and the Beef Australia event in Rockhampton next year.

The National Party has got the basics wrong again.

Instead of backing the trade mission it prefers to try to score political points by saying the trade mission should be postponed until the Crime and Misconduct Commission has finished judging a complaint by the National Party.

The Minister will be acting on a number of trade initiatives established in North and South America over the last two years, including two agribusiness missions led by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

The gross value of beef cattle exports in Queensland in 2004-05 was more than $3.7 billion and a major export earner for the state.

South America has several hundred million cattle on broad pasture production systems, which represents a potentially significant market for Queensland livestock products and services.

The USA's sophisticated feedlot-oriented industry of 100 million cattle provides considerable opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and technologies in intensive beef production systems and genetics.

Queensland is increasingly being seen as the source of world class agribusiness technology, particularly in tropical beef cattle. The Minister will be seeking to promote our knowledge and expertise to the animal industries in these countries.

Meetings with representatives of government and industry in these countries will provide opportunities to promote technology similar to that used by Australia's National Livestock Identification System.

In Texas the Minister will visit the world's leading feedlot company and the Texas A&M University.

In Brazil the focus will be to promote Queensland technology including genetics, pasture systems, traceability and a leading research centre for ethanol.

As North and South America are leading producers of ethanol, the Minister will be exploring ways to expand the ethanol industry in Queensland.

People involved in rural industries need to know that the party which is supposed to represent their interests has got the basics so wrong that it is opposing their interests.

Mr BEATTIE: I want to make this point: if Queensland was isolated and if we do not go to the world, then we will be left behind. Let there be no doubt about that. It does not matter whether it is the education minister, the minister for small business—although they should not get too excited—the minister for state development or the primary industries minister or any other, if there is an opportunity for this state we will do it. I would have thought that the interests—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition has in the past shown an interest in supporting international business, and I actually acknowledge that he does. The important point is that he cannot then say, 'Well, we'll do it in certain areas but we won't do it in beef, for example.' I hope that we would get to a sensible position that, when it comes to trade and business, we actually do trade and business. I know that he supports this, because I have seen what he has said and I think he is genuine about this. However, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that we have to be very careful that we do not have a cheap point scored against somebody which is not in the interests of this state. I will send ministers to the world if it is good for Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart State, Business Investment

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (9.48 am): Today I am pleased to inform the House that one of the world's biggest gold producers has resolved to establish its head office in Brisbane. The move to Brisbane by the Lihir group of companies is expected to initially create about 27 highly skilled jobs for

Queenslanders. This is further proof that the Beattie government's Smart State vision has created one of the best environments for business and investment in Australia. This is a multibillion dollar company, and it has chosen Brisbane over Sydney and Melbourne as the location for its head office. This is a great endorsement of our capital as a premier location for business and for industry. Today's announcement follows yesterday's news that packaging giant Visy will soon begin construction of a $74 million factory near Beenleigh, creating some 84 full-time jobs.

Just a few weeks ago, Boral announced that it had chosen Queensland as the site of its new $106 million manufacturing plaster and plasterboard plant, creating some 100 full-time job positions. It just goes on and on. We are continuing to attract major world players here. It is not by chance. The Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation has played a key role in attracting Lihir Gold to Queensland, as it did with other companies, by selling our state on some key attributes and using our government's investment attraction strategies. Major companies moving to Queensland have access to a pool of highly skilled and experienced workers, to world-class infrastructure and to a supportive, business-friendly government. It is achievements like this that show that our government is serious about attracting the big players in business because, particularly with Lihir, we were facing stiff competition from Sydney and Melbourne.

With its large Papua New Guinea reserve on Lihir Island, solid financial position and quality management, Lihir Gold has grown steadily to become one of the world's premier gold operations. The company produces more than 600,000 ounces of gold annually and reportedly has reserves of more than 15 million ounces. The move to Queensland will place Lihir in the top three of Queensland's largest listed companies based on current market values. The new Brisbane headquarters mean the Lihir group of companies will now be closer to investors and the important capital markets in Australia.

Queensland has fast become an international centre for mining and mining related services. We are, of course, a resource-rich state with a long history of successful mining operations. However, the government saw the opportunity to further progress the industry because we are confident that we have the skills base, the technology and the cost-effective business environment to transform Queensland into the Asia-Pacific mining support services hub that it now is. Lihir joins other major international mining related companies such as Bechtel, Hatch and SNC Lavalin among others in setting up their base in Queensland. It is critical that as a government we should continue to attract more big companies to move their head offices here to Queensland. By attracting companies like Lihir Gold, we are continuing to create more long-term sustainable jobs for Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Hon. TA BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.52 am): The news on the federal industrial laws just keeps getting worse. Let us look at the issue of compliance and how the new laws will actually be enforced. I believe this aspect of the reforms is looming as a disaster for Queensland workers and employers.

Workers covered by the state industrial relations system are supported by dozens of inspectors, who follow up on wages and other complaints as well as auditing 'problem' industry sectors. Under WorkChoices, the role of enforcing federal laws is to go over to the Office of Workplace Services. What will this mean for workers if they are moved across to federal laws? Well, Canberra has previously shown no particular commitment to compliance issues. Canberra is promising to improve on its dismal record, but can we trust it? Queensland workers and their families, as well as businesses, have a reason to be fearful because you need comprehensive compliance campaigns to ensure a level playing field, otherwise employers who do the right thing will suffer because their competitors will get away with paying lower wages.

Under WorkChoices there will be 200 inspectors across the whole of Australia. Yet, under Queensland's existing system, we have about half this number working in this state alone. This financial year, these inspectors from the Department of Industrial Relations recovered a record $11 million in wages for workers, either from prosecutions following complaints or targeted auditing. Compare this with Victoria and its federalised system. In the 2003-04 year Victoria completed just 2,618 investigations into wage claims, compared with 7,518 investigations in Queensland. That is what targeted inspection will do—help boost what we recover for employees.

Employers and employees in rural and regional Queensland could be the worst affected by changed circumstances. Outside Brisbane the federal government is likely to set up just one other office to handle industrial complaints, and this will be at Townsville. With Queensland being the country's most decentralised state, this is simply not good enough. It is yet another reason for the members opposite in rural seats to get off their hands and start acting on behalf of their own.

Finally, today we learnt that the chair of the industrial relations Senate committee, Victorian Liberal Senator Judith Troeth, defied parliamentary rules and warned the government of its findings ahead of schedule. It tells you everything about the federal government's attitude. Ignore parliamentary tradition, steamroll the Senate and bring in laws that override 100 years of fair play in the Australian workplace.

Ms Molloy interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Noosa!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Crawford, Mr B

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.55 am): I would like to advise the House of a serious accident yesterday involving one of Queensland Transport's school crossing supervisors. Fifty-year-old school crossing supervisor Barry Crawford was hit by a car while on duty at Musgrave Hill State School at Southport on the Gold Coast. Early reports suggest that a driver coming through the crossing hit the supervisor, who was in the middle of the crossing at the time. Police are investigating the incident. I understand the crossing supervisor is in a very grave condition in hospital and my thoughts are with him and his family, including his young daughter, as I am sure the thoughts of other honourable members in this House are as well.

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight the great service that school crossing supervisors are providing for schoolkids right across the state. It is not a high-profile or glamorous job, but it is a vital one. They protect our most important asset in the world, our children. Queensland Transport currently has 1,736 school crossing supervisors operating 1,120 children's crossings at 627 schools throughout the state. We are committed to protecting our state's children and enhancing safety in our community and school crossing supervisors help fulfil that commitment.

The Queensland Transport school crossing supervisor scheme began in 1984. Queensland Transport, Main Roads, Education Queensland, the Queensland Police Service, local authorities, parents, students and friends all share a role in ensuring the safety of students travelling to and from school. The school crossing supervisor scheme is a component of the Safe School Travel package. This program is about improving the safety of travel to and from school for students. Yesterday's crash was the first fatality or serious injury requiring hospitalisation on supervised crossings since the scheme began in 1984. The incident yesterday is another sad reminder about safety on our roads. Obviously, the police will be investigating this incident and Queensland Transport also will, of course, take a very close interest in the investigation.

A dedicated school crossing supervisor who has been working with Queensland Transport for more than two years and had worked as a school crossing supervisor for eight years in Victoria was seriously injured while doing his job protecting our kids. I want to place on record my thanks to the 1,736 school crossing supervisors throughout the state. I commend the dedication to duty displayed by our school crossing supervisors. Their service to the Queensland community, especially to the young people of this state, is invaluable. On both sides of the House I know that our thoughts and prayers remain with Mr Crawford and his family.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health, Reforms

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.57 am): Queensland Health and the University of Queensland are currently running a health workforce innovation workshop in Brisbane involving international and local experts in health workforce reform. In my view, this workshop represents a turning point in the health workforce debate. I am keen to hear the outcomes of the workshop so that our government can consider what more we can do in this crucial area.

Last month we made the biggest single injection of health funding in Queensland's history; a $6.4 billion package in just over five years. A lot of that money will go into our health workforce, as it should. However, our workforce reforms need to go further than recruiting more health professionals and paying them better. Australia is facing increasing challenges to maintaining quality public health services into the future, challenges that are common around the world.

These challenges include our growing population, our ageing society, and a health workforce that is struggling to grow in line with these trends. As the independent Queensland Health Systems Review observed, there are a number of options for addressing these challenges. One is to invest more in prevention to reduce demand on our health services, which is occurring. Another option is to reform the health workforce, which our government is delivering on several fronts in the absence of any real

national leadership. I know that the need for workforce reform is not supported by everyone in the health workforce. There are concerns, for example, about maintaining quality in relation to nurse practitioners. However, well-considered workforce reforms, in consultation with our health professionals, are essential to delivering a world-class health system—one that is well equipped to face the challenges ahead.

The workshop will feature more than 200 delegates including representatives from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States. Experts from a range of disciplines will look at new service models and the development of new roles such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and anaesthetic assistants. This workshop is not just about looking at how we attract more staff, but about challenging our ideas and looking beyond tradition and trends for new and different solutions.

There is nothing more powerful to snap jurisdictions into action than a recent global study undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The study canvassed 580 hospital executives, physician groups, governments, medical supply companies and employers from 27 countries and interviewed 120 health experts in 16 countries. The study concluded—

There is growing evidence that the current health systems of nations around the world will be unsustainable if unchanged over the next 15 years. Globally health care is threatened by a confluence of powerful trends—increasing demand, rising costs, uneven quality, misaligned incentives. If ignored they will overwhelm health systems, creating massive financial burdens for individual countries and devastating health problems for the individuals who live in them.

The message is clear. If we do not think now and carefully craft viable, sustainable ways of tackling these challenges, we will simply be passing this ever-growing problem on to future generations. This workshop, which concludes today, will generate healthy debate towards sustainable solutions.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Schoolies Week

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.00 am): Yesterday in this House, the Leader of the Opposition made an incorrect and scurrilous accusation against my office regarding dealings with radio station 4BC and the state government's involvement with coordinating schoolies week on the Gold Coast.

In a question without notice he asserted that staff of my office have been 'intimidating staff at radio station 4BC, demanding that they drop their programming relating to violence being experienced at schoolies'. That is not true. He has completely misrepresented what happened. On Monday afternoon when schoolies was being discussed on 4BC, a member of my staff phoned the radio station to say that I was available to come on the show. That offer was refused. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to correct his mistake when he spoke about schoolies as a matter of public interest following question time yesterday, but he did not, which is a mark of how he is more focused on sensationalism than he is on meeting his responsibility to this House.

Thankfully, 4BC announcer John Miller had the decency to contradict the opposition leader and correct the mistake on his radio program yesterday afternoon—not once, but twice. Mr Miller said, 'When Lawrence Springborg asked why Mr Pitt's staff had been harassing, Lawrence did unfortunately get it a little wrong in that they weren't demanding that we didn't do the story.' This is yet another example of the opposition leader being very loose with the truth. He is, as we all know, a master of the half truth.

On a positive note, I congratulate the police for arresting a man in connection with the attack on Mr Miller's son. We have worked very hard to increase the safety and wellbeing of the school leavers, with an increased police presence and many volunteers on hand to give help and advice. But in any large gathering there will always be one or two people doing the wrong thing. As a father, having endured a similar experience, I sympathise with Mr Miller and can understand how he feels about the attack on his son.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Respite Services

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.02 am): The availability of respite services for children and young adults with a disability has been severely reduced following changes to the Commonwealth government's National Respite for Carers Program. The recent Commonwealth decision to redirect respite funding from children to frail aged persons will impact on a large number of Queensland families. Whilst this is good news for frail aged persons, it represents additional challenges to those families struggling to cope with a young family member with a disability.

It is likely that 14 Queensland agencies could lose approximately $1.4 million as a result of this funding redirection. This means that a significant number of families or individuals with a disability will

experience a reduction, or the total loss, of respite services. This is a totally unacceptable situation that will impact on a significant number of Queensland families who have relied upon respite services to help hold the family unit together in difficult times. I am deeply concerned about this redirection of Commonwealth funding, as it not only impacts on Queensland families but also may result in even greater pressure on emergency and crisis funding provided by the Queensland government.

The Commonwealth government must honour its responsibilities toward both frail aged and young persons with a disability. I call on the Commonwealth minister, Tony Abbott, to restore full funding to affected services. I also call on members opposite to stand up for Queensland carers and demand that their federal colleagues fund carer services to the level they need.

Yesterday, the member for Beaudesert feigned outrage at the efforts of this government to secure sufficient respite funding. I suggest he direct his outrage where it is deserved—at the Commonwealth government. The state government is providing $15 million this year for a range of accommodation support and community services, including respite. The Commonwealth government cannot abrogate its responsibility and must at least restore the status quo. I am sure that all affected families and individuals in Queensland will echo my call.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mining Industry

Hon. H PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.04 am): I have good news for Queensland.

Mr Springborg: When do you resign?

Mr PALASZCZUK: They do not like to hear the good news. All they want to be is nasty, nasty, nasty.

The value of Queensland's coal and mineral exports continues to grow. Preliminary figures indicate that these sectors contributed approximately $16 billion, or more than 12.5 per cent of Queensland's gross state product in 2004-05. In just five years the volume of coal exported to China has increased ninefold from half a million tonnes in 1999-2000 to 4½ million tonnes last financial year.

Direct employment by the Queensland mining industry rose from 19,225 in 2002-03 to 23,049 in 2003-04—an increase of nearly 4,000 full-time jobs. This trend has continued into 2004-05, with more than 2,500 new jobs created in the central Queensland coal industry alone last financial year.

In terms of gold, we have seen an increase of 26 per cent in exploration expenditure for gold. There are currently 55 companies either mining or exploring for gold in Queensland. However, improvements can be made. The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies has recently written to me voicing its concerns. It advises that Australia has recently reported its lowest ever recorded share of global mineral exploration and in the last four years has dropped from first to fifth as a regional destination attracting exploration investment.

The industry indicates the need for two reforms to ensure a good future for the mining industry. Firstly, there is the need for publicly available geoscience data to encourage and focus exploration activities and the introduction of a flow through share model similar to that in Canada. Our government has already committed to spending $20 million over four years to double the area covered by modern geological and geophysical data. This smart exploration initiative will target high priority regions, such as the Mount Isa province, the Charters Towers-Clermont gold province and the Surat energy province, that have the greatest potential for the discovery of additional mineral and energy resources.

Last year, more than $88 million was spent on coal exploration in this state, which accounts for 70 per cent of all coal related exploration in Australia. The federal government's Geoscience Australia has estimated that each $1 of government expenditure generates, on average, $5 of exploration expenditure by the private sector and results in the discovery, on average, of resources worth between $100 and $150.

The flow through share system is in essence a scheme of allowing tax concessions for investing in mineral exploration. I am advised that Canada has seen an increase from $Can300 million being spent on exploration in the mid-1990s to $Can800 million in 2004. I understand that this system has led to a tenfold increase in financing raised by the junior mining companies in Canada and 122 new discoveries.

The Queensland government has shown its commitment to advance mineral exploration. Now for the bad news. I call on the federal government to support this worthwhile initiative advanced by industry. I will be taking this message to the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources when it convenes in Adelaide this week. It is time that the federal government developed a framework to secure a strong future for Australia's mining industry and introduced a scheme similar to that operating in Canada.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Corrective Services

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.08 am): Earlier this year I announced that cabinet had approved amending the Corrective Services Act. Proposed changes included abolishing remission so all prisoners complete their sentences either in jail or supervised in the community. Changes will also include a restructuring of the Community Corrections Board. For serious offenders, serving sentences of eight years or more, the Queensland Community Corrections Board will remain the appropriate decision-making body albeit with a new name. The Queensland Parole Board will continue to operate as a specialist board to ensure consistency and expertise in dealing with the release and reintegration of offenders who have served long terms in prison.

Cabinet has also agreed to have two regional boards consider parole for prisoners serving shorter sentences. This will result in a board for southern Queensland and one for central and northern Queensland. By reducing the number of community corrections boards from six to two, there should be greater consistency in decision making. The two boards will consider more matters and meet more frequently. Changes will mean standardised assessment and meeting processes, more detailed guidelines and limiting the geographic isolation of some existing boards. The two regional boards will be able to use up-to-date technology to conduct hearings with prisoners which will include video conferencing.

All other states in Australia have only one parole board. However, because of the decentralised and geographically disparate nature of Queensland, the government felt that there was a need to continue with two regional boards. The existing Queensland Community Corrections Board and regional community corrections boards will be renamed as parole boards. The name Community Corrections Board is not easily understood by the general community. The term 'parole board' clearly indicates the new roles and functions of the boards.

The new parole boards will be responsible for determining whether offenders are ready for supervisory release into the community. As I have announced previously, victims will be able to make a submission in writing to a parole board prior to the board's consideration of the offender's application. The parole boards will place conditions on parole orders based on the parolee's offending history. Parole orders may include conditions relating to employment, accommodation, programs to be undertaken and curfews. These orders will assist in protecting the community and will reduce the level of reoffending. These changes will strengthen community safety by making sure there is a consistent approach in the way that prisoners are released back into the community.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ICT Industry

Hon. CP CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs) (10.11 am): As part of the Beattie government's four-year ICT industry development strategy, Smart ICT: Taking it to the World, launched by the Premier in December last year, our government is promoting the use of ICT solutions to enhance productivity in a range of industries including mining, manufacturing and agriculture.

The cut flower and foliage industry is now in the process of developing its first ICT uptake strategy. The industry is forecast to have a gross value of production of $130 million in 2005-06 and is part of the larger lifestyle horticultural industry, which is valued at $1.5 billion annually. The Information Industries Bureau, the IIB, together with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, is working with the Flower Association of Queensland on a range of opportunities for ICT applications within the industry. Together they have identified several key areas for improvement including business production and management systems, industry-wide communication systems, crop monitoring and control systems, and supply chain and client databases.

The industry is now looking to Queensland ICT companies to come up with tailored solutions. A workshop at the IIB in Milton on 2 December will bring together ICT companies and industry representatives to create a smarter flower and foliage industry in Queensland. This is a true cross-fertilisation that will help the industry bloom. There are at least 250 commercial cut flower and foliage businesses in Queensland employing more than 600 people. As a result of this strategy, we expect to see improved communications between growers, better managed client and supplier relationships and the introduction of cutting-edge technology into farms and fields. Tailored solutions could also be applied in other areas of the lifestyle horticultural industry such as landscaping and nurseries.

This is a smart strategy designed to take the cut flower and foliage industry into the future. It is about innovation, and it is about improving efficiency and cultivating productivity to help boost profits and encourage growth and more jobs for Queenslanders. I would like to commend the ICT and cut flower and foliage industries to the House for embracing our Smart State Strategy.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That in accordance with section 5(b) of the *Referendums Act 1977* this House resolves that the following question be submitted to the electors of Queensland—

Should fluorine be added to any public water supply?

NOTICE OF MOTION

Telstra

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House condemns the direction being taken by Telstra management including—

- the proposed sacking of 12,000 workers which must affect service provision particularly in rural and remote areas
- the announced concentration of business to large urban areas maximising profit based on consumer numbers but ignoring the importance to all Queenslanders of strong reliable telecommunications

and calls on the Prime Minister to finally acknowledge that the intentions of the current Chief Executive Officer will, if allowed to be implemented, disadvantage Australians and further calls on the Prime Minister to rescind the legislation which will allow the full sale of Telstra.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.15 am): We have seen a lot of crocodile tears from members opposite regarding the WorkChoices legislation. We heard the minister for industrial relations in this place yesterday, today and on other occasions rallying about the very dynamic intellectual debate he has been taking forward in Canberra and other places. I had the opportunity the other day, coincidentally, to look at the *Hansard* of the Senate committee's inquiry into this matter, particularly at questions put by Senator Barnaby Joyce to the minister for industrial relations in Queensland.

Senator Joyce asked the minister opposite if he would consider referring any matters outside of what was required by the WorkChoices legislation to the Commonwealth government. There was an interesting confrontation on no fewer than six occasions from then on. First of all the minister said, 'No, we are not going to.' Then the minister said, 'I cannot give any guarantee that they will not.' Then under further questioning he went on to say that they will not but cannot commit anyone to what might happen in the future. Frankly, they are not the sorts of assurances that workers in the public sector in Queensland want. I think some of the things that were said are very interesting, and I urge members to have a look at the transcript, which reads as follows—

Senator JOYCE—So you will not be referring any further powers?

Mr Barton—We will not be.

Senator JOYCE—That is a guarantee?

Mr Barton—I would not say it is a guarantee.

Senator JOYCE—It is not a guarantee?

…

Mr Barton—Let us be clear: the position of the Queensland government is that we will not be handing over those powers.

Senator JOYCE—Any further powers?

Mr Barton—Any further powers. I cannot guarantee that forever ...

And he then goes on to waffle some more. The workers of Queensland and the public servants of Queensland who are wanting some guarantees from this government deserve much better than Senator Barnaby Joyce having to put this minister on his toes and finally get him to guarantee that he is not going to usurp the public sector in Queensland by agreeing for 30 pieces of silver, or anything else, to hand over the responsibilities of this government. The minister should have said no from the first—

Mr BARTON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I did give an absolute guarantee.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Flooding, Rocklea

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (10.17 am): The Lord Mayor has deserted the people of Rocklea and he is waving the white flag on Rocklea's flooding problems. He is known as 'Can't do Campbell' in Rocklea as he tries to shift responsibility onto everyone else for his problems. Let there be no mistake: fixing the flooding problems in Rocklea is the responsibility of the council and the Lord Mayor is ducking and weaving.

I have spoken in this House about the need for all levels of government to work together, but all we get from the Lord Mayor is petty politics, personal attacks and blame shifting. In October he sent me a copy of his flood report and advised that he was reviewing the recommendations, but I am still waiting for the results of his review and his plan for Rocklea.

Let us look at his public comments. He thinks the answer is a 20-year-long property buyback—two or three Rocklea properties a year from the 40 or 50 that flood. The problem is that his buyback will not provide a value that will enable people to get into home ownership in another suburb, and so they sell out to the council and go back to renting.

Rocklea is a great community and people simply do not want to leave. The people of Rocklea cannot afford to live with the Lord Mayor up on a hill in Windsor, but they are proud of their local community and they want to stay. His minuscule buyback plan is simply the drip by drip destruction of a proud community. Where is his plan to help people raise their houses? Where is his engineering plan to address upstream catchments to stop the wall of water hitting Rocklea?

Just getting him to clean out the creeks took extensive agitation from local residents, and he complains about the local newspaper raising these issues. Where is his proposal and request for assistance? The Lord Mayor has never written to me outlining a proposal to fix flooding in Rocklea. He has never said how much assistance he is seeking—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr FINN:—or how he intends to spend it. The people of Rocklea do not want—

Mr Hopper interjected.

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

Mr FINN:—his petty politics, buck passing and responsibility shirking. They know that a hard rain is going to fall. They want politicians who face up to their responsibilities and fix problems. Over to you, Lord Mayor.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, Atherton Tableland

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.19 am): For those who do not know, the Atherton Tableland is located inland of the Great Dividing Range with its closest major centre, Cairns, on the coast. It is a combination that makes for outstanding scenery and a unique environment, but for the sick and injured who need to travel to the centralised medical services of Cairns based doctors, dentists and specialists it poses a major problem.

While there are several routes down from the tablelands to Cairns—the Rex, Kuranda and Gillies highways—one is head and shoulders above the others, that is, the Kuranda Range Road. It is as quick or quicker than the other routes and, by comparison, it is smoother and far less bendy than the Gillies. However, the Queensland Health Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme is based on distance. For many tablelanders that means a subsidy is paid on the Gillies Highway route—a narrow, extremely windy road which, although a bit shorter, makes for very slow travelling. But it is worse than that. It has so many tight curves that it can make even healthy people ill. This happened to the Minister for Child Safety, the Hon. Mike Reynolds, during one visit to my electorate a few years ago. When he came again last week he did not take that option on that occasion.

To force people who are already sick or injured and who are, at best, already uncomfortable to take this road simply because, on a map, it is shorter fails to recognise a unique reality. Yes, it is shorter. From Atherton, which is the centre of a sprawling region the size of Tasmania, the trip to Cairns down the Kuranda Range is some 93 kilometres and via the Gillies it is 77 kilometres. Both take about the same travelling time but, on the ground, very few people, if any, willingly choose the Gillies to transport the sick or injured. Not even the professionals of the Queensland Ambulance Service use the Gillies for normal patient travel. Surely that speaks for itself.

I urge Queensland Health to recognise the very specific set of circumstances that apply in this case. The patient travel subsidy should be paid on the basis of the Kuranda Range Road as the preferred route for tablelanders. I ask Queensland Health not to make sick Queenslanders even more unwell for the sake of a few dollars in travel subsidy.

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (10.21 am): All employees employed by companies with fewer than 100 employees will lose their legal protection from unfair dismissal under the Howard government's changes to industrial relations. Over recent years many cases of unfair dismissal have been reported to union call centres and community legal centres. For example, Jane had been at her workplace for 4½ years when she questioned whether she was being paid correctly. The employer then called her to dismiss her, saying that he could not possibly work with her anymore because she had questioned him.

Valerie, 54 years old, was a full-time manager at a small transport company. She had worked there for over two years and had never been paid any superannuation. She raised the issue of the nonpayment of superannuation with her employer before she went on annual leave. Her employer left abusive messages on her mobile phone while she was on leave. When Valerie returned she was asked to go on annual leave again the following week. While on leave she was not paid. When she contacted her employer about payment for the annual leave he was abusive and dismissed her over the phone. Valerie was also told to come into the office the following week to return her keys and security pass. She took a friend as a witness and was verbally abused by her employer.

These dismissals highlight the kinds of harsh practises that working people have to contend with in today's workplaces. Regrettably, with no protections under John Howard, things will get worse, not better. Many workers are very worried, such as the more than 200 people who attended my recent IR forum in Arana Hills. Australian workers deserve better than this. I look forward to the growing community-wide backlash sweeping John Howard's government from office.

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Mental Health Patients

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (10.23 am): Concerned health professionals at the PA Hospital, who rightly identified the seriousness of the problem of mental health patients being unable to be seen in a timely manner, put together the Mental Health Emergency Care Interface Project 2004-05, which I table a copy of. This project identifies major problems where many patients were unable to be seen over three shifts; in other words, they were waiting more than 24 hours. The results were that many had to be drugged and sedated for control, the patients were subjected to risk of harm, the emergency department staff and other patients were stressed, and there was the risk of an escalation of violence. Many of these patients walked out and were subject to the risk of suicide.

The project set three targets—to have a reasonable number of people seen within four hours, to have substantial reductions in the number of people who could not wait and to reduce the number of people who had to come back again within 24 hours.

What was the government's response to this project? Nothing. It has not said a word about it. It has simply suppressed this. This document had to come through informal sources. This is a major and serious health problem confronting not just the PA Hospital but the Gold Coast Hospital and other hospitals. The government does not want to know about it. It covers the situation up. Now we see that the response in the PA Hospital is to build a police beat to deal with mental health patients. We all want to see better security in our hospitals, but the risk in relation to security in our hospitals from mental health patients is as a result of the government not effectively running the mental health presentation of patients. Mental health patients make up in excess of 10 per cent of all of the patients presenting at the PA Hospital. It is absolutely bizarre that we would expect disturbed mental health patients to wait in excess of 24 hours to be seen.

Yeppoon Hospital

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (10.25 am): During recent sittings of parliament and last week the opposition tried to portray that the people of the Capricorn Coast had not benefited in relation to health services because there had not been provision by Queensland Health for a new hospital. Nothing could be further from the truth, because the Capricorn Coast has had its own hospital which has worked very closely with Rockhampton in providing quality health services since around 1920. The dedicated staff of the Yeppoon Hospital are very upset at the suggestion that there are no medical services on the Capricorn Coast. I would like to bring to the attention of this House the dedication that those people show in relation to health services.

In recent times Mrs Helena Moxham, who is the carer for her husband and resides in Keppel, suffered an accident. She was admitted to the Yeppoon Hospital. Her daughter, who usually lived with her and could assist her husband, was away. That would have left her husband at home on his own. He has a disability that requires some hospitalisation and medical care. Whilst Mrs Moxham was in hospital her husband was also admitted for respite care. She was later transferred to Rockhampton Hospital. During her time in Rockhampton Hospital the staff at Yeppoon Hospital rang her every day to let her know how her husband was and to assure her that he was well cared for because they did not want her recovery to be upset by worrying about him.

This is just one instance of those very dedicated and caring people who look after their communities and who get slapped in the face continually by the opposition and its claims in relation to Queensland Health and the provision of services by those dedicated professionals.

Queensland Racing Ltd

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.27 am): I rise to express my concerns and concerns expressed to me by stakeholders in the racing industry about some powers that will be granted to the board of Queensland Racing under incorporation. The constitution of Queensland Racing Ltd is due for implementation on 1 July 2006, so I appeal to the minister for racing to assess some of these aspects.

My first concern relates to the proposed tenure that current board members will serve under incorporation. Under the draft proposal the current board members will be the founding directors of Queensland Racing Ltd and are seeking an initial term of not less than three years. Then two will retire every year, meaning that the chairman may not come up for retirement until the third year after the initial term of three years. I think that it would be more appropriate if board members were elected for an initial term of 18 months. That would give the current chairman up to 4½ years on the board.

Bob Bentley, the current chairman of Queensland Racing, has been chairman since 1998 and, under the draft constitution, could be there a further six years. I think most of us would agree that 13 years is too long for one person to be CEO. In this case, whilst I have nothing personally against Mr Bentley, 13 years as a CEO is too long. It precludes the chance for new ideas, strategies and a chance to heal relationships.

The second concerning issue that has arisen from the draft constitution of Queensland Racing Ltd is that of remuneration for board members. The constitution outlines that remuneration will be determined by the board. This is unsuitable. Remuneration should be determined by a different body.

Another concern I have relates to the voting classes that will be established under these proposals. This needs to be tidied up as we will have the absurd situation of a board dominated voting process at meetings.

The simple fact is that racing in Australia has always been a community activity. It has always been a sport for all Australians, which is in stark contrast to the UK and France, where racing is run by the social elite, and the United States, where it is run by business. This has been the case for over 100 years in Australia and I hope we can keep it that way by emphasising transparency from the outset and ensuring Queensland Racing Ltd meets the high expectations that are held by the broader community in relation to racing administration.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Fraser Coast Patients Support Group; Brock, Mr L

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 am): I refer the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to her statement to this House on 27 October 2005 in relation to her failure to provide assistance to the Fraser Coast Patients Support Group. She stated—

The Minister for Health has just advised me that the request that was made to the Minister for Health and the Premier was for assistance to travel to a hearing and presentation of a submission in relation to the inquiry, and that request has been granted.

I now table a letter from Mr Laurie Brock, facilitator of that support group, dated 28 October 2005, which states that the minister's statement was false and that 'no assistance, financial or other, has been given by the Minister for Health, the Premier or the Attorney-General'. Why did the minister mislead this House in her statement, or did the Minister for Health provide her with false information? Will she now retract her statement and apologise to this House and to the victim of Labor's failed health system?

Mrs LAVARCH: I can confirm that I met with Laurie Brock and the lawyers for the Fraser Coast support group on 2 November. I can confirm that the Department of Justice reimbursed Mr Brock for his train fare from Maryborough to Brisbane on the day of that meeting, 2 November. In relation to the matters under the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Health or the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition will have to refer those questions to them.

Small Business

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is to the minister for small business. Of the 600 acts of parliament administered in Queensland by 18 government ministers, how many of those is the minister individually responsible for, and can he name just one?

Mr CUMMINS: I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The implication of his question is that he objects to a ministry for small business. It shows that this opposition not only is overly funded and lazy but also has sold out small business, just like its federal colleagues have. We do

not hear this opposition come into this House with any policies. We do not hear this opposition come into this House and talk about what a useless federal government we have towards small business and towards ICT policy.

I have travelled extensively around this state talking to small business. Do I hear that the person who asked the question is the alternative premier? No. All I hear is that he is a whinger who has no policy, who has no future and who has no idea.

Coalition, Preselection Process

Ms NOLAN: I refer the Premier to the alleged coalition between the Nationals and Liberals, which seems to involve joint preselections, and I ask: what evidence is there that this is a solid arrangement?

Mr BEATTIE: I notice the heading in the *Courier-Mail* this morning is 'Coalition defended as "solid"'. That is Mr Springborg.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I would not say that. As a result of what happened in Redlands they had to cancel Hervey Bay. The article states—

Mr Springborg said the cancellation of the Hervey Bay joint preselection was 'a recognition that there are some issues'.

'That has been postponed pending a resolution of certain issues,' he said.

That is what Mr Springborg has said. Let us move on. The Liberal Party state director, Geoff Greene, said that the delay had been forced by a clerical mix-up in which the Liberals supplied—and how about this—the incorrect list of preselection delegates to the Nationals. I have to say: there is a 'C' involved, but it is not 'clerical'; it is 'Caltabiano'.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, please refer to the member by his electorate.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to do that. It is still a 'C'; it is 'Chatsworth'. The list goes on. In the *Chronicle* today it gets even worse. The article states—

Nationals' state director Brad Henderson said the party had called for a postponement because of 'concerns that the integrity of the process had been compromised'.

So we have a clerical error, we have some issues to deal with and now we have the integrity of the whole process being compromised. But it goes on—

The Chronicle understands the Nationals decided to call the poll off after the Liberals removed about half a dozen local Hervey Bay members from their pre-selection panel and replaced them—

wait for it—

with party heavyweights, among them state president Michael Caltabiano—

the member for Chatsworth. It goes on—

The reason, according to sources, was to remove local Liberal members who believed Mr Dixon's stated support for Labor's Andrew McNamara at a previous election would hurt his election chances.

There is a photo of Stephen Dixon looking like a stunned mullet and underneath it the caption reads, 'What happened?' He cannot believe what happened. Mr Henderson said the joint preselections would not be held until 'we had some resolution of these matters'.

If that is a coalition, it is a coalition of enemies doing their best to destroy one another. If they cannot govern themselves, they cannot govern Queensland. Sometimes things change, but sometimes they remain the same. I notice Wayne Goss ran this campaign in I think 1992: 'Leadership, not a squabbling coalition'. I have to say: Queenslanders are entitled to better than this. If ever there was a rort in action, this is it.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Leader of the Liberal Party, I welcome into the public gallery the deputy principal—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, please have some respect. I was welcoming to the gallery the deputy principal and the student leaders from the Redcliffe State High School, which is in the electorate of Redcliffe, which is represented in this parliament by Mr Rogers.

Queensland Health

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Health to the $85-a-head breakfast conducted by the Institute of Public Administration to which over 600 public servants signed up to listen to a presentation by Mr Peter Forster based on his publicly available report, and I ask: was the $85 attendance fee for the public servants from Queensland Health paid by his department and, if so, what was the total amount paid?

Mr ROBERTSON: Obviously I do not have those kinds of details available to me. I will take that on notice and get back to the honourable member as soon as possible.

Coalition, Preselection Process

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I refer the Premier to the fact that a newspaper headline today refers to the opposition leader claiming that the alleged coalition between the Nationals and the Liberals is absolutely rock solid on important issues when it is taking on the government. Does the Premier have any examples of where the Nationals and Liberals are rock solid, or is the coalition wallowing in mud or simply sinking in quicksand?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. You would not be dead for quids in Queensland politics! There are a couple of things that I should have mentioned before. One of the things I did not mention when I was talking about the postponement of the preselection is an article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin.* It states that Geoff Greene denied that there was any branch stacking and put the postponement down to just confusion over the dates. I can tell them it is 2005.

The Nationals' leader, Lawrence Springborg, has warned his party it would have to re-evaluate the way the next four joint preselections were conducted after the goodwill and trust in Springwood was not returned in Redlands. He said in that article—

'I think it is unfortunate that some people believe three-cornered contests are a better option than picking the best candidate,' he said. 'The consequences of the weekend may change the dynamics for joint selections.'

Typical! What we have is a coalition when we are not having a coalition. Let us have some debate about how they would operate. If they cannot govern themselves they cannot govern Queensland. One of the fundamentals about sitting around a cabinet table is all cabinet ministers being able to come to an agreement. What Queensland needs is strong leadership and direction for the future.

Let us look at where those opposite disagree. Here are some of the areas where the Liberal Party has a policy on the one hand and the National Party has a policy on the other. They cannot have two cabinets; someone has to make a decision. There is no agreement on tree clearing. They have different views on daylight saving. Shopping centre trading hours—Sunday trading—is another one. The Liberals were in favour of this and the National Party was against it. Do honourable members remember gun control? What did the Liberal leader say? He said—

I have made it clear: we will not back down on the issue of gun control. It is a threshold issue for the Liberal Party. If it's the choice between tough gun control and a coalition, we will take gun control.

So will we. What does the National Party think about that? The list goes on. Members opposite should try this out in their constituencies. The Liberal leader said that farmers should prove they have used responsible environmental practices before they receive taxpayer funded drought assistance. Those in the National Party should try that in their electorates. They should go out and tell everybody that that is what the Liberals think.

The Nationals say that the coalition is rock solid. This is a pretty shaky foundation. The list goes on. Here are the other areas. They have differences in terms of a water policy for agriculture, student unionism, Telstra—remember the great position the National Party had on Telstra?—a flat rate of tax, four-year terms and fluoridation. Do they agree on anything? This is a coalition that really needs an annulment. Those who understand what an annulment is would know that it means they were never married in the first place.

Mental Health Services

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the mental health emergency care interface project 2004-05, which I tabled this morning, and I ask: why were the stated objectives of this project unable to be achieved? Why were the details of this project covered up from the people of Queensland? Will the minister now release the most current data for mental health waiting and re-presentation times at the emergency department of the PA Hospital?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. I do not have the details in relation to that particular matter with me. I treat with great caution any contribution by the member opposite given the number of times—it is almost on a daily basis—we catch him out telling either untruths, exaggerating or being downright misleading. I will treat his question seriously. I will have it investigated and advise the House at some later stage on this particular issue.

I think it is necessary to put on the record that mental health is something that I have spoken about on a fairly regular basis since becoming the Minister for Health. We are acting on it. We are injecting record amounts of funding into mental health services on the Gold Coast and in other places throughout Queensland. An additional $201 million is going into mental health services in this state.

I treat mental health services very seriously. I treat mental health and providing services to those people who unfortunately suffer from a range of mental health problems as serious issues. I think I also have an appreciation of the demand that mental health services have on wider clinical services in our hospitals. That is why I have made mental health funding a priority in the time that I have been the Minister for Health. The record will speak for itself in terms of my commitment to ensuring that people and their families in the mental health community receive better services than ever before irrespective of where in Queensland they live.

Queensland Coalition

Mr LAWLOR: My question is to the Minister for Energy and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. I refer to comments by the Leader of the Opposition in today's *Courier-Mail* about areas of importance in taking on the government and saying that the coalition is 'very solid'. Can the minister provide some evidence of this solidarity?

Mr MICKEL: Yes, I can provide evidence to add to a list given by the Hon. the Premier. I want to take honourable members back to 30 July last year when the Leader of the Opposition announced that, under the National Party, electricity corporations would be abolished and brought back under government control. Two weeks later what happened? On 12 August the member for Robina disputed this and said of that proposal that, quite frankly, it was ridiculous. So that is yet another break in the coalition.

As the honourable member for Southport takes a deep and abiding interest in other matters that I also look at, I want to go to the solidarity in the preselection in Broadwater where I note that a Mr Jim Nicholls has been knocked out by the executive of the Liberal Party from even contesting the preselection. Why? Because it said that he exaggerated his curriculum vitae. That process was allowed to happen because the member for Chatsworth and others put through an amendment at the Liberal Party state convention giving them the power to veto candidates. It is an attempt to get around the Electoral Act. Why did they vet Mr Nicholls? Because last year he stood for a senior position to do what? To clear up the rorting in the Liberal Party. Obviously he did not have a chance. Members would think that they would put in somebody approaching Mother Teresa.

I am advised that they have put in a fellow named Christopher Stear. Mr Stear was involved with a company called Child Care Centres Australia. It appears that he is a bit prone to exaggeration. In fact, he might have exaggerated a profit figure by several million dollars in the context of equity raising in Child Care Centres Australia. Child Care Centres Australia was floated by JT Campbell, the merchant bank of prominent Victorian Liberal Michael Kroger. It predicted a profit of $2.8 million. Just after the money was banked they revised the profit down from $2.8 million to $64,000. So one is allowed out if one stands against the member for Chatsworth but if one exaggerates by a couple of million then one is allowed in.

This process can be altered if the National Party members in Broadwater do one thing. If instead of voting for the Liberal Party candidate where the fix is on, because the Liberal Party was to get Broadwater, the National Party members voted for the National Party candidate—in other words, they stand up for their own person—they can stop the rort. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to show true leadership and stop the rorting.

Prison Officers, Rosters

Ms LEE LONG: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to a determination which was handed down by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission in 2004 under which the Department of Corrective Services, in partnership with the Queensland Public Sector Union representing prison officers, is required to establish new rosters for prison officers throughout the state within certain guidelines. The minister's department, despite the proactive enthusiasm of union members in carrying out this directive, has continually refused to provide the union with a list of all posts, including secondments, which these officers will be required to fill. Given that such a list is a prerequisite to determining how many officers are needed to fill these reserve rosters, I ask: why has the minister's department continually refused to provide such lists? Would she now provide these lists in the interests of safety and duty of care to the officers and to the public?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for Tablelands for the question. I reject her assertion that the department has refused to provide the union with the details of the rosters to which she was referring. The member is quite accurate in saying that the full commission of the Industrial Relations Commission last April, as part of the enterprise bargaining process with prison officers, agreed on a new rostering system.

The department has been working with prison officers very significantly in the last six months to get this new rostering system in place. As part of the consultation process with the union—the Queensland Public Sector Union—officials have been taken off line in work time to consult with the department about the structure of these new rosters.

There are certain frameworks within which every roster will take place in a correctional centre but one correctional centre has the capacity to frame their roster differently from another centre. In each centre—and we are talking about 10 centres—they have balloted on these new rosters. Four centres have balloted positively and six centres have opposed the rosters that have been put forward.

Yesterday the Industrial Commission heard its first case on the Wolston roster ballot, and we expect that decision to come down on Friday. That will give us some guidance about how we go with the other five negative roster ballots. I have been fully advised of how this rostering process has been

conducted over the last 12 months or so. I have met with the QPSU and talked about its issues concerning the new rostering system. I do appreciate that many prison officers do not want to see any change. They resist the fact that we are asking them to move around and be multiskilled in their roles within the prison. Some, of course, welcome it as a career enhancement, but many of them actually resist that. They do not want us to rotate their rosters on a regular basis. They resist that. But I am very confident that the department has undertaken very extensive consultations with the union not only centrally but on a prison-by-prison basis. What we have seen is the QPOA, the Prison Officers Association, which is not a registered union, attempt to represent its members in the industrial commission. As it is not a registered union, the commissioner to date has not given it leave to appear in the commission. It was the QPOA officers who took the Wolston prison officers out on strike on Saturday. I think that this turf war between the QPOA and the QPSU has certainly unsettled many of the prison officers who are trying to grapple with the issues.

Daylight Saving, Coalition Policy

Mr BRISKEY: My question is for the Deputy Premier. The coalition today claims it is rock solid. Nothing is more basic than the time of day. How rock solid is the coalition position on daylight saving?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. As he has outlined, there is an extraordinary claim in today's press that the coalition is rock solid on basic policies. But what does it have to say about daylight saving? Early in November the Leader of the Opposition told his coalition partners and the *Courier-Mail* that 'hell would freeze over' before the Queensland Nationals adopt a statewide daylight saving policy. Meanwhile, the leader of the Liberals is actively out campaigning and supporting a two-year trial of a zonal system of daylight saving. In September the Leader of the Opposition told the *Courier-Mail* and the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—

It's Bob's job to convince us that a zonal system is a good idea and it will take a lot of convincing.

In the same report, the leader of the Libs said—

It's well known I have an opinion on this and Lawrence has a different opinion.

That is unity? That is rock solid?

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett, I have warned you on two occasions. Please.

Ms BLIGH: If that is rock solid, it is only true if the rock is some crumbling limestone. How is it actually going to work on the ground when those opposite go to the election? We know that they are not going to go to the electorate with one leader. What is clear is that they will not be going to the electorate with one policy on time zones. Let us look at this issue in some parts of the state. Let us take the Sunshine Coast, for example. Maroochydore will have a National Party candidate and it will be on Nat time. The candidate will be putting forward Nat time. Caloundra, which will presumably have a Liberal Party candidate, will be on Lib time. In the seat of Redlands, where we have one of each, in about 214 square kilometres of that electorate we will be on Nat time and Liberal time, depending on which street one lives in. In Hervey Bay, with the current preselections that are going on, we may not have either candidate—

Mr Lucas: No time!

Ms BLIGH: We could have no time—no time at all! We will have the Libs zone. We will have the Nats zone. We will have the coalition zone. It all adds up to the twilight zone!

But it is not just about what those opposite say. I point members to the coalition web site where, I have to say, a picture tells a thousand words. There members will see listed with photographs members of the opposition's frontbench, and it is very instructive. We see the member for Robina standing all on his own. Then we see the member for Callide standing together with the Leader of the Opposition. Then we see the member for Moggill standing all on his own. Then we see the member for Maroochydore standing with the Leader of the Opposition. Then we see the member for Caloundra all on his own. What is absolutely clear is that if you are a Liberal member of the frontbench the Leader of the Opposition is not going to stand next to you. There is one notable exception—the member for Burnett is all on his own, but members can understand that! The marriage might be two months old, but there are no happy honeymoon snaps!

Singh, Mrs S

Mr JOHNSON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Minister, in October last year, 12 months after the murder of her three children, Mrs Shirley Singh was advised by police involved in the investigation of the murders that a prosecution brief had been prepared and was to be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who would confer with a senior barrister with the intention of commencing prosecution. After yet another year, Mrs Singh has been told that the matter has not been referred to the DPP. Minister, has a brief of evidence been prepared and has the brief been referred to the DPP and, if not, why was Mrs Singh advised that it would be?

Ms SPENCE: The police commissioner and I met with Mrs Singh last year, I believe. She is a lovely lady. We also met with her husband. They are a lovely couple. The murder of their children will certainly go down as one of the greatest tragedies in this state's history. It is a murder that the Queensland Police Service is determined to solve. We have all read quite a bit about this murder, and I think we appreciate the difficulty that the police are experiencing in solving this murder. But I can tell the member that from the commissioner down we have incredibly determined detectives continuing to work on this case and they are absolutely determined to solve this case. Mr and Mrs Singh deserve no less. I am not going to comment today on the operational issues or the practicalities of this case, but I can give the shadow spokesperson and all members of parliament an absolute guarantee that the Police Service is still working on this case and it is committed to solving this case.

Ipswich Motorway

Mr LIVINGSTONE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please inform the House of the mixed views emanating from those on the other side of the chamber and their various colleagues regarding the solutions to fixing one of the state's most dangerous and congested roads, the Ipswich Motorway?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Today we heard how the Liberal Party cannot agree with the National Party. The problem is that the Liberal Party cannot agree with the federal Liberal Party and the federal Liberals cannot agree with each other and the state Liberals cannot agree with each other when it comes to the Ipswich Motorway. Just last week we heard the Prime Minister announce $10 million for a further study of the discredited half-northern bypass. Indeed, I table his media release where he says that the Australian government is therefore allocating an additional $10 million to undertake studies to further explore these three options. But of course the Typhoid Mary of federal Liberal politics in Queensland, Cameron Thompson—the only one who wants to talk to him is the member for Chatsworth—was in a taxpayer funded newsletter in the *Queensland Times* this week headed 'Go ahead for Goodna bypass', which states that the federal government commits to the bypass of the Ipswich Motorway. So, thanks, John Howard for the $10 million for the study. Cameron has got $1.1 billion—$1.1 billion apparently that no-one else has got to build the unwarranted and discredited half-northern bypass.

But when we are talking about the Ipswich Motorway, the member for Ryan of course is going to get it right in the neck because he violently disagrees with the half-northern bypass. What does he say about the federal government policy when it comes to the Ipswich Motorway? He said in the *Courier-Mail* on 14 September—

'It is somewhat frustrating the government hasn't moved quicker than it has', Mr Johnson said.

Of course the Leader of the Liberal Party as a member of the opposition has flip-flopped all over the place. On Channel 9 on 12 November he said that his preference was to upgrade the Ipswich Motorway. Then on 17 November he said to the *Courier-Mail* that he had dropped his party's opposition to the bypass, saying that he would support an upgrading of the existing road or a suitable alternative. So he cannot even agree with himself. In fact, I actually note that at the Liberal Party conference he was very thankful of his federal colleagues for putting him right in it. The problem was that the camera was rolling when he said it. Well done!

The member for Moggill is in a great situation here because he has consistently opposed the half-northern bypass, but the get square is on, because he challenged the member for Chatsworth's hand-picked candidate, Russell Galt, in the Supreme Court. So that is coming back to haunt him. The member for Chatsworth has now got on board with Typhoid Mary Cameron Thompson to support the half-northern bypass right through the electorate of the member for Ryan. The member for Moggill said on 13 June—

The report made it clear motorists won't see any benefit from a bypass road for too many years. Meanwhile, traffic would continue to mount, reeking havoc for Ipswich and Brisbane residents. The most viable option is to upgrade the existing road to six lanes and add service roads.

Of course, we have Campbell Newman, who has been the one Liberal who has been consistent about it all the way along. The problem is that you are undermining him. He has actually consistently said with the other mayors, the RACQ and the state government that he does not support the half-northern bypass and that he wants the full Ipswich Motorway upgraded. They cannot even agree with themselves when it comes to the issue. They cannot even agree within their federal parliamentary party when it comes to the issue. They cannot even agree within the state parliamentary party when it comes to the issue. No wonder the National Party is tearing its hair out.

Time expired.

Use of Parliamentary Letterhead

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. She will recall earlier this year the public outrage when the member for Kawana used his parliamentary letterhead to write to his local council demanding that a series of parking fines be waived. I have provided the minister with a copy of the letter, which I will table for the benefit of the House, which indicates that another member of parliament is similarly abusing her position by using her parliamentary letterhead to make demands regarding her personal affairs. Can the minister advise the House if the demand by the member for Gympie to force a neighbour to upgrade the standard of fencing is in accordance with the provisions of the Dividing Fences Act? Does the Attorney-General think it is appropriate for members of parliament to conduct this type of personal business on their parliamentary letterheads?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just sought advice and I am of the view that a question of this nature does not fall within the responsibility of the Attorney-General or, indeed, any other minister. I think, of anybody, this falls into the realm of the Speaker or, indeed, the Clerk of the Parliament.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, the question has two parts. I will accept your ruling about the second part and withdraw the part of the question about the parliamentary letterhead. However, there is a part of the question that refers—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Hold on a second, member for Callide. I insist that when members are asking questions to ministers there is silence. There is a point of order being taken here and there is simply too much talking on this side of the House.

Mr SEENEY: The first part of the question refers to the Dividing Fences Act, which falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Attorney-General. I believe that part of the question is certainly in order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the whole basis of the question is whether or not the member named has used her electorate paper and, indeed, the facilities of her electorate office wrongly. I think that is the whole nub of the question. Therefore, I have to rule that that does not come under the responsibility of the Attorney-General.

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Ms STONE: My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. In listening to statements in this House and elsewhere I notice that the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party seem to have differing viewpoints on the federal government's Howard Work Choices legislation. Could the minister shed some light on this?

Mr BARTON: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, this is another one of those areas where the coalition seems to be anything but rock solid. Yes, this is an area where they appear to be poles apart and that is the draconian industrial relations proposals of the Howard government.

Firstly, the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Quinn, firmly stands with the federal coalition and the changes that will impact on workers and their families. He is all the way with John Howard. So we know clearly where he and his fellow Liberals stand. We also know where the federal Leader of the National Party, Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile, stands when he says, 'Queenslanders want these industrial relations changes.' He was born here, but he hardly knows what Queenslanders think now. Mr Vaile has even spelt out to National Party Senator Barnaby Joyce, who is looking to make some changes, that the legislation will go through.

But what is the position of the Queensland Nationals leader, Lawrence Springborg? Earlier today we talked about guarantees. The opposition leader's position on the federal government's IR changes is about as clear as the Queensland coalition's preselection strategy. From what is on the record, the opposition leader appears to be paying lip-service to protecting Queensland's interest. On 11 August, during the debate on the industrial relations bill, the opposition leader said in this House—

> My concerns are about basic working conditions and rights and also a unitary system and what that unitary system may ultimately mean for our capacity to run a separate industrial relations system in Queensland. In my opinion there is a whole range of good reasons why it is important for us to maintain that.

Further on, he said—

> I can guarantee the House that if there is anything that needs protecting in Queensland's statute then the government will have our support. That is the commitment that I and my colleagues can give the government here today.

However, as I said yesterday—and I will repeat—recently in my local newspaper, the *Albert and Logan News,* the opposition leader was quoted as saying that he supports the majority of the federal government's industrial relations reforms. So which reforms does Mr Springborg support? More importantly, which ones does he not support? Either way he is not rock solid with the Liberals about where they stand on the industrial relations policies of the Howard government. It is about time Mr Springborg came in here and told us exactly what the National Party's position is and what the opposition's position is. That is why today I have written to the Leader of the Opposition to ask him which aspects of the proposed federal legislation he supports and which he does not support.

Queensland workers, their families and I look forward to a timely response from the Leader of the Opposition. All the way through since the Howard proposals were announced what we have seen in here is the Leader of the Opposition and the National Party in Queensland and Barnaby Joyce going out and doing the same thing—saying, 'Oh, it's terrible and we're going to change it.' But he will not come clean. Clearly, there is a different position from the Liberal leader's.

Electricity Supply, Gympie Electorate

Miss ELISA ROBERTS: My question is to the Minister for Energy. Constituents in the Sunshine Coast hinterland part of my electorate have expressed their frustration to me as they continue to suffer power interruptions with the latest only last week, which also affected Gympie. I understand that last week's interruption was due to damaging thunderstorms. However, to ensure my constituents are receiving a reliable power supply, I ask: what work is Energex doing in the Gympie electorate to provide households and businesses with a more reliable electricity supply and to minimise the length of power outages when they occur?

Mr MICKEL: I thank the member for Gympie for her insightful question. Yesterday, I was on the Sunshine Coast at Cooroy where we announced an initiative that will help not only the electorate of Gympie but also the electorate of Nicklin and the electorate of Noosa. We announced an upgrade to the substation at Cooroy at a cost of $5.4 million. Last year we identified a problem in the Black Mountain area. The Black Mountain area, because of its terrain and the number of trees, has had a high number of outages caused when there is a storm event. In fact, one line up there goes for about 185 kilometres.

Yesterday, we broke up what we call the 11 kilovolt line into three feeder lines and another one going through Black Mountain. It is my belief that that will improve the reliability for that part of those three electorates. The member can go and tell her electorate that she has been very successful in convincing Energex to upgrade that.

I might say that this is part of an $80 million program for the Sunshine Coast. We are spending more than $1 million a week in that area. As well as that substation at Cooroy, there is another one due to be completed in February for the Tewantin area at a cost of $8.9 million. We are also replacing existing transformers in and around Caloundra.

The honourable member also mentioned the storm events in and around Gympie. I want to take her back to 15 November. The honourable member is right. There was widespread damage to homes, businesses and the electricity network. I am advised that the thunderstorms generated winds of up to 70 kilometres an hour. Local Energex crews—and, I might add, Emergency Services people and police—were working tirelessly under extreme conditions to restore power, fix roofs and ensure that people in the area were safe and secure. I want to join with all those members who represent that area in thanking the Energex crews who went out in those very difficult conditions.

I could not let it go without saying that the previous question was an attempt to discredit the member for Gympie. It would not surprise me in the lead-up to the next election if there was a financial offer to the member for Gympie by one of the coalition members to get her to run for them.

Miss Elisa Roberts: There has been.

Mr MICKEL: I understand that a figure of about $50,000 has been offered to the member for Gympie to change her status—are you saying there has been?

Miss Elisa Roberts: Yes.

Mr MICKEL: From an Independent to a coalition candidate. They should come clean on whether this offer is real. They owe it to the electorate to fess up to this $50,000 bribe.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Beattie: She's confirming it.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I am on my feet. Before I call the member for Hervey Bay, I recognise in the public gallery a former minister in this place and the current federal member for Kennedy, Mr Bob Katter.

Coalition Health Policy

Mr McNAMARA: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. The Beattie government has made its direction on health policy clear, with a $6 billion plus allocation of additional funding over the next five years in order to implement the Forster recommendations. Is the minister aware of any difference of opinion amongst members of the opposition on the vital issue of health policy?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Yes, I am. One of the things I found curious over the last almost four months that I have been the Minister for Health is the number of times the National Party members come into this place calling for more specialists, more doctors and

more nurses in order to boost regional and rural health services. Yet what do we see when they come into coalition? A policy advanced by the Liberals to actually reduce the number of specialists in rural and regional hospitals. For the last six months the Liberals have been putting forward the proposal to do away with deemed specialists in this state. In fact, if they had their way they would do away with them from 1 January next year.

What would be the effect of that in terms of rural and regional hospitals? There are 94 deemed specialists working in our public hospitals at this point in time. The Liberal member for Moggill would tell us that those people are incompetent and do not have the qualifications, despite the fact that they are qualified specialists in their country of origin. Take the case of Dr Susan Ireland as an example. Her qualifications are from the University of Cape Town. What is she doing for public health services in Queensland currently? As a deemed specialist she is providing paediatric services at hospitals in Charters Towers, Ayr, Townsville, Hughenden, Julia Creek and Richmond, under the supervision of Dr Alan Sive. Another example is Dr Gary Phelps, whose qualifications are from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in the United States, which is hardly a Third World country. He is an ophthalmologist providing services at the Gold Coast, Southport and Robina.

Another example is Dr Helen Davies, who is an anaesthetist at Redcliffe-Caboolture. Where did she come from? Her qualifications are from the University of Liverpool. Another example is Dr Christopher O'Brien. He is particularly interesting because he is an orthopaedic surgeon. Where is he providing services? Bundaberg. When do his qualifications as a deemed specialist expire? 31 December 2005. If the Liberals have their way, he would be out of a job come 1 January next year in a place that is desperate for surgeons. The Liberal Party would actually take away an orthopaedic surgeon from Bundaberg in Bundaberg's greatest hour of need.

The difference between the Liberals and Nationals in terms of health policy is stark. Either the National Party has been caught napping and has let the Liberal member for Moggill get his way in the belief that because he is a doctor he knows everything or it has sold out the bush, it has sold out rural and regional Queensland, because each and every one of those deemed specialists under the supervision of others makes a contribution each and every day.

Time expired.

Development Planning, Moranbah

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women. I refer to the town plan for Moranbah gazetted by the state government in 1995. This plan identified the necessity for future residential expansion, but a mining lease was subsequently issued over the areas identified as future residential. After the minister called in the development approved by the council for 350 residential lots in April this year, 2,000 or so residents and petitioners of Moranbah called on the minister to honour the town plan. Can the minister advise the people of Moranbah when they will get a satisfactory response to their concerns?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for the question. It is appropriate that he express concern for the people of Moranbah in terms of residential development, their future and their jobs growth. He certainly should be expressing that concern because his vote in terms of industrial relations has sold all those people in Moranbah right down the river and they are going to know about it.

The situation in Moranbah is actually a wonderful one. They have tremendous growth—thanks, of course, to the expansion of the coal industry in the Bowen Basin. That pressure on the township means that there is pressure to find the mix of housing that is needed for the increasing number of residents. These are people who want to move there with families. They are also singles and some of them are workers who want to come in for a work period but prefer to live primarily on the coast.

The council agrees with us, as do the community and mining companies, that a proper perspective in terms of a master plan for the community is needed. That is why I called this development in, to look at the broader situation to make sure that there is going to be a good quality mix of residential land available for the short term, the medium term and the longer term for the people of Moranbah and to make sure that their community amenity is not affected. That job, I am pleased to say, is nearly completed and it will not be too long before I will be able to inform the people of Moranbah of the good news in terms of their long-term future.

I take this opportunity, nonetheless, to note that this week the member for Charters Towers has been very quiet about the flying foxes in Charters Towers, after having created such a ruckus some time back. In fact, I am pleased to inform the House that the situation has eased considerably in Charters Towers. The little red flying foxes have been seen in great numbers leaving the town and roosting instead some 14 kilometres outside of the town. The remaining flying foxes are, in greatly reduced numbers, now in a couple of manageable sites in the town and the situation has improved, and I hope it stays that way. Unfortunately, however, it has come to my attention that the local member for Charters Towers has been peddling misinformation to the people.

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. There are still thousands of flying foxes roosting above people's homes.

Mr SPEAKER: That is really not a point of order, member for Charters Towers.

Ms BOYLE: At a recent meeting in Charters Towers, to which the honourable member and his office staff were invited but failed to attend, there was a good discussion with a local medical practitioner, with people from the health department and with people from the council that really made clear that there are no health effects and there are no tick problems. Ticks, in fact, are not associated with flying foxes.

Time expired.

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. I do not know who the minister is getting her advice from. There is a tick problem. You just have to go down to the park or to residences where there are flying foxes and you will find ticks and parasites.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Charters Towers, that was not a point of order. I warn you about taking frivolous points of order in the future.

Federal Welfare to Work Legislation

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. Can the minister please inform the House if he is aware of comments made this week criticising the federal government's proposed welfare to work legislation which will force people with a disability to work or lose their entitlements?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for this important question. It highlights the treatment that this federal government hands out to vulnerable people in our society. I am aware of comments made during a public hearing as part of a Senate inquiry. For the benefit of members, the federal government's sweetly named proposal will in actual fact force people with a disability to work a minimum of 15 hours per week or they will lose their benefits.

We are not talking here about able-bodied unemployed people; we are talking about the federal government's latest attack on people with a disability. At the Senate inquiry, the theme of the questioning was that the proposed changes will discriminate against disabled people and the type of work they can find. I could not agree more with the comments made. Specifically, the questioner asked the Senate committee what the federal government is doing to ensure that people with a disability are matched to jobs which match the capacity and ability of these people to work. The questioner was concerned about the capacity of a disabled person to work, that barriers to work would be overlooked by the federal government and that the job assigned to a disabled person might not fit their ability and their interest. They are all very worthwhile and relevant questions, and reflect concerns from a person obviously worried about the negative effect that the proposed changes would have on disabled people.

Members opposite might be interested to hear that the comments did not come from federal ALP members, who, like us, care about the needs of vulnerable people and oppose what the current federal government is doing to erode them. No, they came from one of the coalition's own—Nationals' Senator Barnaby Joyce. We are yet to see whether Senator Joyce is prepared to hold his nerve against this distasteful proposal from his coalition colleagues or whether he will fold, just like he did with Telstra.

The welfare to work proposal highlights how Australian society is under threat from a national government seemingly hell-bent on squeezing the livelihood out of those Australians who have little choice or little flexibility in their lives. There is also the negative consequences of the IR legislation, reductions in respite funding for carers of children with a disability, and reduced Commonwealth contributions to SAAP funding. These are just some examples of how the federal government is attacking those members of society who have a limited capacity or no capacity to fight back. At a time when these people need support and compassion, they are getting neglect and condemnation from an uncaring federal government. Again, for the umpteenth time I want to call upon members opposite to stand up to their coalition colleagues in Canberra, stand up for Queenslanders, stand up for vulnerable members of our society and put a stop to this rot.

Local Government Electoral and Boundaries Review Commission

Mr HOBBS: My question is directed to the minister for local government and planning. I refer to the proposed doubling of the panel of the Local Government Electoral and Boundaries Review Commission between now and 2008. Can the minister confirm that this dramatic increase is because he expects increased references to the panel as a result of his government's decision to force amalgamations onto a number of councils across Queensland between now and then?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the minister for the environment, I welcome to the public gallery staff and students of Cleveland State School in the electorate of Cleveland, which is represented in this parliament by Mr Briskey.

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to clarify why we have increased the number of people on the panel. We did so for several reasons. First, when we called for expressions of interest there was a large number of people from around Queensland who offered their services. It was time to appoint new people. Then, as a regional member of this parliament, I noticed that previously there had not been as fulsome a choice as there should have been of people with experience and knowledge from around the regions of Queensland. Further, as the minister for women, I noticed that it has been a bit blokey. There have been rather too many fellows on the panel and so I was determined, as I believe I should be, that there should be a good representation also of women with different backgrounds from different regions.

We now have a broad range of commissioners who understand that they will be called on in rare circumstances to provide assistance to the Electoral Commissioner. He and his staff will be the ones to determine who amongst the panel of members will be suitable. Nonetheless, I do take the opportunity to further update the parliament on the size, shape and sustainability debate that is going on very sensibly but nonetheless very seriously across the world of local government. It is being led quite properly by the Local Government Association of Queensland. I particularly recognise the association's good efforts in this regard, the leadership of Paul Bell and the efforts of Greg Hallam and Greg Hoffman in making sure that this proceeds on a steady, sensible and factual basis.

What has happened is that my department has provided some $290,000 to the LGAQ to do some benchmarking in local government; to provide some independent facilitators who have no particular bias or predisposition towards any outcome and who will work with local governments individually, in the first instance, to have a look at their long-term viability and at other aspects of their service provision and performance. This is a pretty courageous move, I must say, and it has been welcomed by local governments and embraced by them. Further, in the new year, through my department, funds are available for an additional study should some local governments wish to consider boundary changes, amalgamations, joint bodies or whatever other choices they may come up with.

I recognise that local governments in Queensland are doing something that local governments in no other state have done. They are leading this debate, not my department. They are going to search their own future for the long term, for the viability, independence and strength of the third tier of government.

Queensland Coalition

Mr ENGLISH: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. While Barnaby Joyce signed off on the sale of Telstra to secure a deal for the bush, many families in my electorate cannot even get broadband services and there are still numerous mobile black spots. I ask: how will urban and regional centres get a fair go under a coalition here in Queensland?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. The short answer is that they will not get a fair go. I notice the member for Warrego enthusiastically embracing yet again the dreadful do-over that Barnaby Joyce did on areas in the inner part of Brisbane. For example, a good friend of mine lives in the electorate of the member for Chatsworth and he cannot get broadband. The member for Stafford was telling me that he cannot get it there. The member for Springwood cannot even get mobile phone coverage in her own home. Who is going to stand up for those people?

We know of the deal that was done by Barnaby Joyce that dudded the people of those areas, but we also have the situation where the Liberals in your electorate dudded the Nats there. So what have we got as a result? We have no voice whatsoever to get those broadband services out, because we know that the Liberals have supported this all the way along and the Nats have won as a result of it.

Have we got a good coalition deal out of it? No, we have not. I heard a joke the other day asking why the coalition cannot clap. The answer is that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Somebody also pointed out to me the other day that one of the great analogies that we could apply to the coalition is that of the butcher marrying the vegetarian. I do not know who is the vegetarian and who is the butcher, but I do know one thing: the marriage is going to last for approximately the same period of time.

The marriage made in hell over there, which is going to spell the ruination of IT services in this state, will be exploited by every member on our side of parliament during the next 12 months. We have an opportunity to ram home to every one of their electors just how they have been dudded by the so-called coalition when they are in a partnership—that is, the National Party has won out of that deal and the Liberals have lost in the Brisbane seats. We also know that the Liberal Party is going to continue to undermine the processes out there, so we will end up with more Liberals than Nats in the inner part of Brisbane. But they ought to be reminded that broadband services and the mobile phone network in places like Hervey Bay—where they cannot make up their mind whether they are Arthur or Martha, Liberal or Nat—are issues for which both of them stand condemned. I say to the member for Hervey Bay that it does not matter whether he gets a Liberal brown snake or a National black snake: you get bitten the same way in terms of services to the bush in Queensland. While rural Queenslanders can gloat about it like the member for Warrego does—

Time expired.

Queensland Health

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. I have a constituent who is a 73-year-old former nurse. She has written to the minister about this matter. This constituent has chosen to have an incisional hernia operation and is upset because they want to admit her for day surgery and discharge her the same day even though she will be left with a 7½ inch scar. Will the minister review her case and ensure that appropriate treatment is available for her?

Mr ROBERTSON: The last person who should be referring clinical cases is the Minister for Health, so I will not be doing that. However, I will ask for advice in relation to the constituent that the member has referred to, even though I have requested that he not raise individual cases. Nevertheless, I will have a look at it and get back to the member at an appropriate time.

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

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance as Speaker. I raise this in a constructive way. The member for Maryborough has given notice of a motion in relation to fluoridation which states—

That in accordance with section 5(b) of the Referendums Act 1977 this House resolves that the following question be submitted to the electors of Queensland—

Should fluorine be added to any public water supply?

My concern is that the *Notice Paper* contains the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Amendment Bill. That bill actually deals with whether local governments should be able to either have a referendum or make a decision about fluoridation. The issue for us is that you, Mr Speaker, would need to rule on the contributions people make if this motion is debated tonight. We have consulted with the Clerk. The Clerk has indicated that there are difficulties here. The Clerk can speak for himself, but he indicates that probably technically it is not in breach of the anticipation rule. The difficulty for us is that if the Minister for Health is to argue against this measure he has to deal with what is in the bill.

I am simply drawing this matter to your attention, Mr Speaker. I am not trying to be difficult. We are actually quite happy to debate this—we are in favour of fluoridation—but we do not want to be hamstrung in the debate tonight. Therefore, I ask for some consideration of how the debate would proceed. I am simply trying to avoid the situation that people are sat down because they have had to refer to the contents of the bill. I make it clear: we are not trying to stop the debate; we are happy to have it. I am just concerned that it is done in an orderly way.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I will give some thought to the point you have raised and I will come back to this House within the hour.

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL
HEALTH PRACTITIONERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumption of Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)
Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill

Resumed from 22 November (see p. 4135).

Resumed on clause 2—

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Health Services Amendment Bill, as amended, read a third time.

Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill read a third time.

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 October (see p. 3438).

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (11.34 am): I rise to speak on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. I indicate at the outset that we will be supporting the bill. However, we will be dividing on a number of clauses that we find objectionable.

This bill is an amalgam of numerous government announcements over the past six months or so. Prior to the budget there were a range of announcements by the Treasurer in terms of changes to various duties within the legislation as a result of his agreement with some of the other Labor premiers and treasurers around Australia. That was in the context of the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, pressuring the states to do something about their state taxation regimes in light of the enormous increase in GST that has been flowing to the states over the past four or five years.

There were announcements in the budget. Changes to the land tax regime and other parts of that are also incorporated in this bill. Then there were the announcements in the mini budget that are also incorporated in the bill before the House. This bill ought to be seen in the context of the huge increase in revenues over the past five years from both a state and a Commonwealth perspective. Our state budget has gone from $20 billion to $26 billion over that period of time, and revenue is flowing in proportionate amounts. One of the largest contributors to that additional revenue has been the huge increase in the GST component to this state. At this time it is worth while looking at those figures to remind everyone of how beneficial the GST increases have been over that period of time.

In the 2000-01 financial year Queensland received $4.658 billion from the GST. This financial year that amount is predicted to be $7.721 billion. That is a huge increase of some $3 billion over that period of time. It represents about half of the revenue increases in the state budget over that period of time. In this year alone the forecast is for some $768 million over and above the guaranteed minimum amount. That gives members some idea of how this state has really been the beneficiary of the GST.

When we look at the way the GST has flowed into all of the states around Australia, we can see that Queensland has been by far the biggest beneficiary, of all of the states, since it was introduced in the 2000-01 financial year right through to the 2005-06 budget. That is a huge increase in revenue for Queensland. I have mentioned the numbers—$3 billion over that period of time. We can compare that with the other states over that period. For instance, New South Wales received $3.1 billion, just marginally ahead of where we are; Victoria, $2.7 billion; Western Australia, $1.4 billion; South Australia, $1.1 billion; and Tasmania, $500 million. The ACT and the Northern Territory received much smaller amounts.

On a per capita basis, and on any measure, Queensland has been by far the greatest beneficiary of the GST over that period of time. We are just marginally behind New South Wales, which has a far larger population and a far greater economic base from which to draw. This state has been the major beneficiary, and this bill should be seen in the light of all those additional GST revenues coming into the state. The increase in revenue flowing from our own state taxes and charges has been roughly of the same order. Today we are debating a bill that incorporates a number of revenue-raising functions. This is principally because this is a government that cannot manage its own finances, despite having this huge increase in revenues over the past five financial years.

The bill itself contains a number of amendments to the legislation, and I indicated before that we would be supporting most of them. The ones we will not be supporting will be the increase in the transfer duties and, as I have mentioned in a number of public statements, the way in which the health services levy is incorporated in the legislation to provide money for health services in this state.

Going through measure by measure, I see that one of the parts of the bill abolishes lease duty and credit business duty, which was in line with the announcement by the Treasurer prior to the state budget. That, as I said before, was in line with a commitment he gave as well as some other Labor treasurers around Australia after pressure was put on them by the federal government to abolish a range of business taxes in light of the huge increase in the GST. So we support this part of the bill.

We have been advocating for these matters for some time. This is the first tranche, if you like, of those reductions in business duties. There will be more to follow over the next three or four budgets, and we will be supporting those as well. In this year alone, the abolition of lease duty and credit business duty will mean a saving to business of some $42 million, and that will flow to about $500 million when all the changes are put in place. Quite rightly, when there are changes of this magnitude, some transitional arrangements have to be incorporated in the legislation. Those are in this piece of legislation, and we will be supporting those as well.

As I mentioned before, the part that we will not be supporting will be the changes to the transfer duty scheme. We think that is unnecessary. This is designed to gather in another $94 million in the 2008-09 financial year. It was announced in the mini budget. Despite the best spin the government can put on this about saving some people some transfer duty moneys, the reality is that it is designed to gather in more over the longer period. We will be opposing that part of the legislation.

This section incorporates a new band within the transfer duties schedule and an increase to four per cent for those dutiable transactions from $500,001 up to $700,000. It creates a new top rate of 4.5 per cent for all those dutiable transactions greater than $700,000. We will not be supporting this. That is clause 18 in the legislation, from memory. We will not support this part of the legislation.

We will be supporting the changes to the principal place of residence exemption for land tax purposes. Along with everyone else, we recognise that there need to be changes to this part of the legislation as more and more people start to work from home and apply technology to their working environment. This is a sane and sensible proposition. It is much needed. Those people who have home businesses or generate some income in some way by using their principal place of residence will be very pleased to see this being put into effect. Not only does it cover those home businesses; it also has some effect in terms of granny flats and other residential renting arrangements. The legislation and the way in which it is set out give a great discretion to the principal decision maker to make sure they are commonsense decisions that are being made on those partial exemptions. There is an infinite range of residential arrangements out there these days. So it is very hard to nail it down in legislation in black and white what should and should not be exempt and how the partial arrangements might be made. The commonsense arrangements in the bill, the process in the bill, is the way to go. As I said before, this announcement was made in the 2005-06 budget announcements and it has taken this long to come before the House.

The other part of the legislation that we will be supporting will be the changes to the superannuation acts. They are necessary in light of what the Commonwealth has done. These amendments will reflect those changes at a Commonwealth level, particularly in relation to the phasing out of the superannuation surcharge over the next couple of years. All higher income earners will welcome this measure passing through the House today.

The last part that we will not be supporting will be the way in which the government is using what used to be called the major facilities levy now to fund health services and putting the onus on the Community Investment Fund to pay the interest on those loans. We will not be supporting that. That is clause 21, from memory.

It is interesting to note that we must be the only state in Australia that has a range of levies to support health-type programs in the government. We now have the health services levy, the ambulance levy and I think it is called the accident and emergency levy on the car registration. It is only a small amount of money, but the principle is still the same. So we have a range of three levies now supporting health services in this state. I am fairly certain we would be the only state to have that range of levies.

We will not be supporting this change, as we did not support the change in 2000 when this regime was put in place. I think the Treasurer at that stage was David Hamill and our opposition Treasury spokesman was David Watson, the previous member for Moggill. David Watson outlined his concerns about the changes in the legislation that were being put forward by the government at that stage and indicated that there was no guarantee that the money put into the Community Investment Fund was, in fact, going to be used in the ways in which people thought it would be, that is, for community organisations. There was a statewide program that was in there as well, and he questioned the use of that and did not support the change in the legislation at that time. We will not support the change in the legislation this time either.

We believe that the money that goes into the Community Investment Fund should be used for community purposes—that is, it should be returned by grants out of the community benefit fund through the application program so that community groups can access an ever-increasing pool of money. At this stage it is tied to the CPI. That was the change that was put in place by the year 2000 arrangements. It was at a fixed amount and then with the CPI increases. Prior to that, it had been increasing in line with the amount of money coming into the fund. That change in 2000 obviously has created some unused money and the government is keen now to take that unused money and allocate it towards major facilities and then, as I said before, redirect the money that is coming in as part of the major facilities levy to health services. We do not support that.

I think those are the major parts of the legislation. There are a lot of transitional arrangements which we support. But, at the end of the day, this is one piece of legislation that, overall, we will support. However, it has to be seen in the light of the huge increase in government revenues over the past five years. We believe there are ample revenues if the government uses them properly. It is a question of the priorities of this government and the way it uses its funds. With those few words, I have indicated that we will be supporting the majority of the bill.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (11.47 am), in reply: I thank the shadow minister for his support of those parts of the bill which the coalition has indicated it will be supporting. It is good to see that there is bipartisan acceptance of the need for continued tax reform. I am surprised, I have to say, that the opposition has indicated that it will be opposing the changes to transfer duty provisions. I am surprised for two reasons. Opposition to these provisions effectively means, firstly, that it will be opposing the tax relief that these provisions provide to buyers buying properties below $750,000. It also means, in effect, that the opposition is opposing the health funding package. This package that underpins the significant reform that our government is undertaking in the health system is not a package that you can pick the eyes out of; you cannot cherry pick those bits of the package that you

would like to see and then continue to expect that we will see the reforms that this House accepts are needed. I am disappointed to hear that those will not be supported.

I also indicate that I am surprised that the Liberal Party and the opposition have indicated that they will be opposing the major facilities levy transfer. There has been substantial criticism from the opposition on many occasions to expenditure by this government on major facilities. Its members have been some of the most vocal critics of expenditure on facilities such as the Suncorp Stadium.

I would have thought that those opposite would understand the importance of ensuring that the integrity of the total health package is retained. I conclude my remarks by thanking the Leader of the Liberal Party who, on behalf of the opposition, indicated support for parts of the bill. I am sure we will talk about some of the other issues when considering the clauses.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—

Mr QUINN (11.51 am): As I said before, we will be opposing this clause. It is the one that puts in place a new transfer duty regime. It puts the new band in and increases the rates for the two categories that I mentioned before. We do not think that is necessary. It is simply a revenue-raising measure designed to get more money in light of the increase in the GST. I mentioned before that some people will benefit from it but overall the net effect will be to increase the government's revenue take during that time. We will be opposing this clause.

Mr RICKUSS: I support the member for Robina in terms of the points that he raised about this clause. We cannot support this clause. Unfortunately, it really is not as good as it first appears. We will be opposing this clause.

Ms BLIGH: I reiterate the points that I made earlier. It really is important to see the entire funding package that the government has put together to underpin the health reforms as a total package. I do not think it is a responsible attitude for the opposition to think that it can cherry pick or pull the eyes out of this. What we have not heard from either of the opposition speakers is which part of the health package they would want to drop in order to remove this part of the funding package. As I said, I am surprised and disappointed with the view that those opposite have taken but, in some ways, it is not all that surprising.

Mr QUINN: It is simply not true that we have not indicated which parts of the bill we would not support or otherwise. Our opposition spokesman on health has put out our view of the health policy and how we would raise the funds. We oppose this clause for the reasons that I have given. In terms of the overall health package, I refer members to Dr Flegg's policy.

Ms BLIGH: First of all, I acknowledge that I do not think that that answers my question to the Leader of the Liberal Party which was: which part of the government's health package would they not fund? Would they cut the number of nurses? Would they cut the number of doctors? Would they cut the number of health practitioners?

I will put two things on the record. Firstly, as a result of the revenue bill that is being considered by the House today, Queensland will continue to have the lowest standard duty rates for properties below $1 million in the country. I think we can hold our heads up high on that. In this term alone the Beattie government will have delivered $2.3 billion in tax cuts by 2008-09. In that context, I think members have to see the moderate changes to the transfer duties as just that—very moderate and very reasonable in light of the funding task we have before us for the Health portfolio.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before I put the question, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of staff, students and parents from Wandoan State School in the electorate of Callide, which is represented by the honourable Jeff Seeney.

Question—That clause 18, as read, stand part of the bill—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 58—Attwood, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Cummins, E Cunningham, N Cunningham, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T Sullivan, Nolan

NOES, 24—Caltabiano, Copeland, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Quinn, Rickuss, E Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Stuckey. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clauses 19 and 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—

Mr QUINN (12.02 pm): This is the part of the bill that I indicated we would be opposing. This is the clause that allows the government to redirect funds from the major facilities levy into health related services. That would mean that moneys used to pay off the loans for major facilities such as Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba and so on would then come out of the community benefit fund. We do not approve of that. We think it is a way in which the community groups are not going to get the funds. We opposed this change in the arrangements before. We oppose it now. The money that goes into this fund ought to be used for community purposes. It should be given back to our volunteer organisations, our P&Cs and others which desperately need access to these types of funds. Limiting it to the formula at the moment, which is simply an increase in CPI despite the enormous increase in poker machine revenues over the past couple of years, is simply not returning that sort of money to our communities. What the government plans to do now of course is pay the interest on the major facilities out of this fund. We think that is inappropriate and, as I said, we will be opposing it.

Mr RICKUSS: I have to support the member for Robina. This fund was originally set up for the community benefit groups. That money should keep going there. I know that it was set up on a level playing field, unfortunately, and it has not been climbing. The community groups are therefore going to miss out. I have written to the minister on a number of occasions about gaming machines and the cost of gaming machines for the south-east Queensland area. It is an ongoing debate that has to be had with the Queensland Hotels Association about the cost of gaming machines and the unfair distribution of the gaming machines. Some of our large corporations have a major money-making ability out of gaming machines unfortunately. I think some of our smaller establishments in the south-east in particular are disadvantaged greatly by this. Some of this money that should be going back to the communities is going to disappear into a big black hole.

Mr MESSENGER: I, too, want to speak to clause 21 relating to the amendment of clause 316A, which states—

Amounts attributable to the levy may be used for health services and services related to health services.

The amount of revenue taken out of my community by gaming machines amounts to around $35 million. I would like to see a percentage of that revenue taken from my community put back into my community for valuable community works. I refer to the minister's second reading speech where she says that this part of the legislation is to fund the health system in Queensland. We must remember that the changes that are driving this legislation arise from the fact that we are investigating the largest health disaster in Queensland's history, and I would have to add probably the largest health disaster in Australia's history. It is not because the Forster review is driving this legislation. This review was driven by the largest health disaster in Queensland. If members read the minister's second reading speech they will see that she is being quite deceptive as to the reason why this legislation is before this parliament.

Ms BLIGH: I want to make two points. I reconfirm my previous statements to the House, particularly for the benefit of the member for Lockyer and others who have a concern about the effect that this change might have on the funds that are available to community organisations. This clause makes absolutely no change whatsoever to the provisions relating to the community gambling benefit fund. The funds that are allocated into that fund will remain the same. They will continue to grow at the same rate as they would have if we were not changing this clause. This clause relates only to the funds that are collected from the minority of hotels that have an exceptionally high turnover. In that regard, I would say to the member for Burnett—and I am actually getting some information checked; I do not have it yet but I am happy to get it for him—that I would be very surprised if there were any facilities in his electorate that are paying the major facilities levy. There might be one, but it is generally only the really big hotels that reach a certain threshold of turnover. While all of his gambling facilities will be paying the tax, it does not relate to the levy that is the subject of this clause. It is only a minority of very large hotels. As I said, I would be genuinely surprised if any facility in his electorate hits that threshold. But I have asked for some information and I will get back to him in terms of his point about money coming back to his community.

Question—That clause 21, as read, stand part of the bill—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 50—Attwood, Barton, Bligh, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Cummins, E Cunningham, N Cunningham, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Miller, Molloy, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, Nuttall, O'Brien, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T Sullivan, Reeves

NOES, 24—Caltabiano, Copeland, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Quinn, Rickuss, E Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Stuckey. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 22—

Mr QUINN (12.16 pm): This is the clause that allows the government to use money coming into the Community Investment Fund to pay off loans taken out to build the major sporting facilities and cultural facilities across the state. We have already had a division on the previous clause. I will not call a division on this. I simply make the point that we oppose this as well. We believe that major sporting

facilities should be paid for out of the major sporting facilities levy. That is what it was intended for, and the Community Investment Fund should be left as it is to provide funds for non-profit community organisations. As I say, we will not be dividing on it, but we do oppose this as well.

Clause 22, as read, agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before calling the other clauses, I would like to welcome to the public gallery staff, students and parents from Wandoan State School in the electorate of Callide, which is represented by Mr Jeff Seeney.

Clauses 23 to 36, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 29 September (see p. 2983).

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (12.20 pm): I rise today to speak on the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005 in my capacity as shadow minister for tourism, fair trading and wine industry development. In doing so, I would like to take this opportunity to place on record my gratitude to the minister for making available a number of her key departmental staff for a briefing on this bill. They were most helpful.

The primary policy objective of the legislation is to amend the Liquor Act 1992 to impose statutory licence conditions on all licensed premises in the Brisbane City Council area which are authorised to operate after 1 am. The amendments include regulations relating to house policy, crowd controllers, restricted activities, alcohol related competition prohibition, responsible-service-of-alcohol training of all staff, installation and operation of closed-circuit television and incident and training registers. The legislation also aims to implement a number of miscellaneous amendments to the Liquor Act in an effort to reduce a range of administrative processes for the government and stakeholders, to reinforce harm minimisation principles and to clarify the intent of particular sections of the act.

The additional minor administrative amendments to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 relate to real estate transactions. Specifically, the amendments attempt to clarify and codify the ways residential property contractual documents and precontractual documents may be provided to proposed purchasers. Amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act, which I will refer to as the BCCM act in future, will also impact on the sale of lots in community title schemes that are not residential property.

However, I will first address the proposed amendments to the Liquor Act. As the shadow minister, I have undertaken considerable consultation with licensees and the general community who will be impacted by this legislation. We have encountered in recent times yet another knee-jerk reaction by this government, which seeks to address issues in the community by hosting summits and proposing impromptu solutions to issues without considering their full ramifications. We have witnessed this with Labor's approach to the Queensland Health debacle. They only want to address symptoms, not the cause. History has proven that in taking this approach real issues tend to become clouded, with the government's response being limited to what appears in the media or in the court system. Interestingly, all three acts undergoing amendment by this bill fall into this category.

It is clear to me what is happening with these current proposed changes to the Liquor Act. As I have said in a previous debate, the Premier held a hastily put together safety summit earlier this year resulting in a much talked about 17-point safety action plan, followed by amendments to the Liquor Act, which was enacted earlier this year. The coalition does not object in principle to the amendments to the Liquor Act being proposed in this bill. We recognise that this amendment bill aims to address specific issues of post 1 am licences within the Brisbane City Council area and the introduction of measures to curb perceived problems with alcohol misuse and aggression in the area through the staged implementation of the 17-point plan. That is, it is designed to address a particular problem.

It is also clear that the government recognises that the act, with its 375-plus pages of law and regulations, needs major reform to give it relevance to today's society. I wholeheartedly support the need for review, but as this is a whole-of-community issue there should be an all-party parliamentary review. All we are really doing here is grafting another 30 or so pages onto the cumbersome 375 pages, or whatever it is, in the existing Liquor Act. It might have been a better idea, as one stockholder stated, to toss out the lot and start over with a clean sheet of paper.

May I remind members that alcohol is a licit drug. Its consumption is sanctioned by cultural norms and social practices of generations gone by and its production contributes significantly to government coffers, as I am sure the minister would agree. According to medical journals, there is even good evidence that one standard drink per day for women and one to two standard drinks per day for men helps to prevent heart disease from middle age onwards. However, I have been told it depends, of course, on the quality of the liquor that you drink.

Amongst these requirements is the need to recognise that the hospitality industry is a major employer and foreign exchange earner, and a very important part of the tourism industry in Queensland—a major Australian destination for domestic and international tourists alike. At the same time the government needs to recognise that the consumption of alcohol, while acceptable for most people in most circumstances, is a problem with a small but growing number of people in particular sites and locations. Urgent and comprehensive measures must be taken to minimise the impact of the antisocial behaviour of this small group on society. However, as I have said before, it needs to be seen as a whole-of-community approach.

The liquor licensing regulatory arrangements should deal only with that issue and should not be operating to regulate free market competition to the advantage of one group of businesses to the disadvantage of others and consumers. Unfortunately, too much of the existing legislation does just that and too much of the legislation directs, encourages and empowers the state bureaucracy to interfere in the day-to-day operation of those in the liquor industry at the most trivial level, with little identifiable relevance to the safety and security of the public. This is clearly identified in a comparison of the Queensland regulatory system with the systems of New South Wales and Victoria.

I note in the background material attending this amendment—and I refer to the 17-point plan here—that the government is planning to conduct a comprehensive review of the Liquor Act 1992 to ensure that it reflects recent community attitudes. From the available information, it appears this review will take into consideration issues such as alcohol abuse and binge drinking as well as consider how the nature of venues that serve alcohol is evolving and the rapid growth of the tourism and hospitality industries. During my research for this legislation I came across a publication that outlined our nation's and Queensland's history of state alcohol policies. This book informed me that our overindulgence in this drug can be traced back to the beginning of European settlement, as is evidenced by the following statement—

At the outset heavy drinking was an established cultural norm transported to Australia with other Anglo-Celtic cultural baggage.

So what has changed, I wondered. The industry is already heavily regulated. Perhaps this review, with the aim of modernising the Queensland regulatory regime for the sale of alcohol, would curb these increasingly violent and destructive behaviour patterns in and around our late-night entertainment venues. My hopes for this review's potential were somewhat crushed when I read that this comprehensive review is to be undertaken by the Liquor Licensing Division of the department of fair trading. To permit the Liquor Licensing Division to undertake the review is akin to allowing a schoolboy or schoolgirl to mark his or her own exams. It could be viewed also as another way for bureaucrats to punish small business operators, as included in topics for discussion are whether licensees should pay more for late-night trading permits.

In supporting the need for review, the coalition believes that it is too important to leave this work to the bureaucracy, involving as it does significant and far-reaching policy considerations rather than solely administrative issues. I do not know that the government and the coalition are necessarily diametrically opposed on the policy approach and I suggest that this review would be more appropriately carried out by an all-party parliamentary committee that could take evidence from all interested parties, both commercial and community, and report to the parliament for final consideration by the government. I do hope that the minister takes these comments on board.

Recognising that, one way or the other, the present legal and regulatory situation is to be reviewed, I suggest to the government that the amendments to the Liquor Act before the House should be limited to dealing with the particular problem it was designed to address and should not make significant legislative amendments to the existing act at this time.

The Liquor Act 1992, part 2, division 2, outlines in section 30 entitlements to appeal against decisions of the chief executive to the tribunal. The introduction of these amendments under statute law removes any opportunity for a licensee or any other aggrieved person to appeal or object and severely inhibit avenues for review. May I remind the minister of her comments on 20 April 2005 in her speech in reply to the Liquor Amendment Bill that indicate the consideration as to whether to introduce these changes was based on a matter of timing rather than fairness. The minister stated—

... had we introduced this through conditions of licence, it would have taken a very long time for it to come into play and that the best way to do it was through legislation.

This circumstance in itself is of concern to many in the industry with whom I have spoken as it does not permit true accountability for the people of our state. It is also interesting that this bill is supposed to be working towards reducing red tape and reinforcing harm minimisation strategies. I do not believe the government has managed to achieve this, because it has plainly been the case that many of these incidents of harm have occurred external to licensed premises rather than within them. It

is unfair of the government to victimise legitimate business owners by imposing harsher conditions on their operating capacity.

It is indeed a sad indictment on our society today that we are facing a generation who are experimenting with alcohol and other substances at an earlier age. To reverse this trend, we need to adopt a whole-of-community approach. Statistics from surveys of school students in my own and neighbouring electorates disclose frightening results, with children as young as 11 and 12 drinking alcohol on a regular and semiregular basis. As many members of this House would agree, intoxication at this tender age places our youth in highly vulnerable situations that may well negatively affect them for the rest of their lives, either in a physical or in a psychological sense.

As a matter of urgency we must all direct our focus towards educating the youth of today about the dangers of binge drinking as a preventive measure rather than using a big stick approach after the fact. Reinstituting lifestyle programs such as Life Education for all primary schoolchildren would be a positive move. Funding for this important and popular lifestyle program was cut by the Beattie government soon after it came to office in 1998. When we look at the statistics I mentioned earlier of primary school-age children experimenting with and imbibing alcohol on a regular basis, we see a very strong argument for the implementation of such and similar programs as part of compulsory core education.

Over recent months in my electorate I have personally held two public community forums in a genuine attempt to initiate proactive measures to assist the adults of tomorrow through the choices they make today. Almost on a daily basis we read of dangerous episodes and behaviour associated with alcohol related crimes. I encourage and applaud measures that can reduce alcohol related incidents. Overall, I am supportive of the government's attempts to make the Brisbane city area safer for locals and tourists. However, in saying that I have serious concerns about some of the provisions in this amendment bill and, as I have said before, the restrictions they may place on the livelihood of business operators in the area.

Clause 26 inserts a new division 6 into part 5 of the Liquor Act. The new division imposes statutory licence conditions on licensed premises which operate after 1 am in the Brisbane City Council area. Clause 26 is a direct response by this government to circumstances occurring in and around the Brisbane city area. What the government has failed to acknowledge is that safety issues are not generally a result of what occurs, as I said earlier, within the premises; they predominantly relate to what occurs after patrons leave and in some cases a considerably long time after the patrons have left.

I have also raised the issue that binge drinking and violence resulting from it is a problem that belongs to the community. It cannot be resolved simply by heavily penalising businesses operating these premises. New section 142AE identifies to whom the statutory licence conditions apply and which statutory licence conditions do not apply to certain operations. The statutory licence conditions apply to all licensed premises in the Brisbane City Council area which are authorised in their liquor licence to sell or supply liquor on the premises at any time after 1 am.

Licensees or permittees of a post 1 am licensed venue must comply with the provisions every night they operate, even if they have authority to operate after 1 am only on specific days of the year or the week. I ask whether this is a realistic expectation. As we would all be aware, each week, month and year has its quiet times and also its extremely busy times. Traditionally, on weekends there would be an increase in trade, with other days of the week being quieter. This fact will not impact greatly on most of the provisions in clause 26, but it is very likely that it will result in a little overkill in others, most particularly new section 142AG.

The provisions also provide that at least one crowd controller must be located at each entrance and exit accessed during the trading period by patrons. The crowd controllers just have a current security licence and a responsible service of alcohol training course certificate which are kept in the venue's training register, and they must be dressed in a way that makes them distinguishable from patrons of the premises.

Industry stakeholders have spoken earnestly to me about how this and other suspected upcoming changes to liquor regulations and legislation will severely affect their livelihoods. My consultation has revealed a somewhat different story from that reported by the Liquor Licensing Division. Response from the industry highlights the chronic lack of availability of security personnel, coupled with their concerns that the Liquor Licensing Division is going to penalise them if they cannot find licensed staff to work as crowd controllers in their venues.

Additionally, the financial impost of up to $150,000 per annum per venue has the propensity to cripple some businesses. The following information details the industry's concerns about crowd controllers as outlined in new section 142AG. It is physically impossible for the security industry to supply the licensed work force required under the proposed legislative changes. Over the last 12 months one CBD venue operator has been continuously advertising in 15 newspapers but is lucky if he gets four inquiries from any advertisement. The industry is struggling to find staff to support the current requirements let alone the additional ones in the amendments. Another comment was that the Office of Fair Trading is taking far too long to process licences—up to 12 weeks in some cases. The security

industry is not viewed as an attractive employment opportunity as the costs of the course and the licence are quite high, with many people unable to access sufficient funds to pay up front and nor can they wait up to 12 weeks after outlaying the money to receive any income.

Another point raised was that the Office of Fair Trading is actually licensing unsuitable people. One venue operator met an applicant for a job who was licensed yet could not read, write or speak English. If there were an incident, this man would be a liability and would not be able to complete incident register documentation.

There are also other concerns about crowd controller ratios. This legislation already places undue financial and logistical burdens on operators in that crowd controllers must be engaged when the premises are open for business from 8 pm until at least one hour after the close of trade. Some clarification is needed here and I, together with the affected operators in the Brisbane area, look forward to being advised by the minister.

On the issue of crowd controllers, the advice I have received from licensees is that there is a very high demand and a limited number available. Given the fact that many of the licensed establishments which will be impacted by the amendments put forward today are struggling with reduced patronage as a result of the 3 am lockouts, how can they be reasonably expected to fund extra wages for crowd controllers, assuming they can find them?

I will now move on to new section 142AH. This new section outlines the conditions about closed-circuit television, or CCTV. New subsection 142AH(a) provides that the licensee or permittee must ensure that they install closed-circuit television equipment at each entrance and exit of the licensed premises which patrons access during the trading period. The CCTV equipment must meet the standards prescribed under the regulation, be operational and recording for the trading period from 8 pm until one hour after closing.

The section also details a range of conditions including that, to accommodate privacy laws, venue operators must display signage in the premises to notify patrons that CCTV is installed and operating. It must be operated only by the licensee, permittee, nominee or designated person responsible for the management of the premises. The recordings must be kept in a secure place and available for inspection or viewing by an inspector as requested until it is erased, destroyed or given to an investigator. The recordings cannot be reviewed, erased or destroyed by a person other than an investigator, licensee, permittee, nominee or designated person responsible for the management of the premises. The recordings, unless given to an investigator, must be kept for at least 28 days after they are made if there is not an incident on them which is to be recorded in the incident register, but must not be kept longer than 30 days after the 28-day period. The last condition is that, for all other purposes, the recordings must be destroyed not earlier than one year after the retention period for the recording ends.

For the most part, my industry consultation relating to this particular section revealed that the majority—all bar two operators, I might add—already have CCTV installed and operational. However, some concerns have arisen. The very fact that this government expects businesses to install CCTVs under the proposed division 6 and effectively monitor movement of the general public calls into question how the Queensland people feel about this invasion of their privacy. The amendments promote the advice to patrons that there are CCTV operations within a licensed establishment. However, if they object they are then faced with the choice of not entering an establishment they may well have liked to have been in.

Section 142AI sets out the requirements for incident training registers legislating that an incident register must be kept in relation to any incident on the licensed premises in which a person is injured or is required to be removed from the premises with details as prescribed under the regulation. The incident register must be signed by all members of staff who dealt with the incident and must be available to an investigator as requested.

In respect of privacy laws, the incident register must be kept in a secure place at the premises and must not be inspected by anyone other than the licensee, permittee, nominee or a designated person responsible for the management and the staff involved in an incident recorded in the register.

The introduction of section 142AI will see that an increase in more bureaucratic processes on licences as incident registers will result in additional processes they will have to comply with. The determination of incidents by staff will also be open to a level of judgment that may impact on the recording of incidents. Are there likely to be ramifications against licensees for the level of recorded incidents in their register?

Section 142AI(2) outlines that a training register must be kept where current training course certificates, as outlined in the crowd controllers provisions and responsible service of alcohol training, must be kept. The training register must also contain information relating to training persons involved in the service or supply of liquor at the licensed premises or premises to which the permit relates and be available to an investigator as requested.

New section 142AJ provides for the condition about a house policy. The licensee or permittee must have a house policy for the premises which must be available for inspection as requested by patrons and investigators. Signage must be displayed at the premises identifying that there is a house

policy and that it is available for inspection. The licensee or permittee must ensure that all staff of the premises, including crowd controllers, are aware of this and perform their duties at the premises in compliance with the house policy and must present a copy to the division as soon as possible after the house policy is prepared on an approved form. The section defines this policy in section 142AJ(3) as—

...a document containing information about the procedures and practices, relating to the matters prescribed under a regulation, for the conduct of business at the premises.

Mission statements, visions, policy procedures and house policies are a normal part of business practice in today's environment. They all serve the purpose of defining business, organisation and individual goals and how they might be achieved. It assists employers and employees to remain clear that what is important to the business is customers and the community. I fully support this particular amendment. I ask why such a worthwhile idea will be restricted to post 1 am licensed venues in the Brisbane City Council areas.

Another new section 142AK provides for the condition about training course certificates for the completion of the division's responsible service of alcohol training program. The section provides that licensees, permittees, nominees and all others staff, including bar tenders, glass collectors, floor hosts or hostesses and room service staff who serve alcohol all must have a current training course certificate. Section 142AK(2) provides that members of staff have 30 days from beginning employment to obtain a training course certificate. The section also reiterates the provisions set out in 142AI(2) with regard to a training register. I have perused this course with some interest, and I commend the government for its inclusion.

However, once again the government is playing catch up. Most other states in Australia already have responsible service training legislated for those in the liquor service industry. However, in Queensland only those in the Brisbane City Council area with post 1 am licences will have to undertake the training. I would have thought that responsible service was vital in all licensed premises. Perhaps if some of the venues where the public did much of their early drinking were practising responsible service of alcohol the Brisbane City Council area would be experiencing fewer alcohol related problems. Responsible service of alcohol training should be a standard right across the industry regardless of the trading hours and the location of the venue.

In consulting with the industry and training providers on responsible service, I have been advised that since the division's exit from the delivery of this training in favour of using registered training organisations to deliver the training there are insufficient RTOs approved for delivery of the course. Though there are plans afoot to reopen submissions for licensing of this training and a month's grace on the completed training of affected staff, I ask the minister: will there be sufficient training providers available to achieve compliance by the due date?

The new section 142AL provides for the condition regarding drinking practises. Section 142AL(1) provides that the licensee or permittee must not conduct a competition or game in which contestants or players consume liquor on the premises or free or discounted liquor is given as a prize on the licensed premises. Section 142AL(3) provides that the licensee must not conduct a restricted activity which is defined as an activity 'in relation to which liquor is available for consumption on the premises at a price less than that normally charged for the liquor.' Section 142AL(2) provides an example of a restricted activity, such as a happy hour, must not be conducted for more than two hours a day or after 9 pm in the trading period.

This amendment will complement the Liquor Licensing Division's code of practice for the responsible service, supply and promotion of liquor. While I support this amendment, I have to repeat myself again and question why it only applies to post 1 am licences in the Brisbane City Council area and not to all venues where much of the public's alcohol consumption takes place. As mentioned earlier, it is to be hoped that the minister will address this in her reply.

Examining this legislation, I failed to find any mention of public consultation with patrons of these establishments within Brisbane City Council boundaries. I would ask the minister to advise me if the government has actually bothered to survey patrons of licensed premises to see what their concerns are. If so, what are the results and how many responded? Recent street polls of members of the public by local newspapers on this matter have clearly indicated that the 3 am lockouts are not working and that they do not feel any safer. When asked, is the Brisbane CBD a safer place since changes to rules about alcohol sales in nightclubs, the majority of respondents to a major newspaper in Brisbane indicated that they did not feel it was safer. A sample of the responses is as follows. 'No, it makes people more agitated. After the lockout they don't have anywhere to go. There should be some sort of leeway.' Another comment was, 'I don't think so because there are more people out just hanging round because they have nowhere else to go.' Another comment was, 'No, I don't think the changes have done anything.'

These comments reiterate the need for strategic community consultation, which I strongly advocate, which begs the question: has there been any discussion with residents in the vicinity of these premises or any investigation involving the general public? Does the government intend to advise all licensees through a specific mail-out detailing the 1 January 2006 compliance deadline, or are the licensees just expected to fall in line?

Also, there is insufficient resolution of transport issues in the Brisbane action plan which have been intrinsically linked to unfortunate situations of violence in the past. There are still problems occurring with the location of the cab rank in the Caxton Street precinct. Locating the rank in Caxton Street is a problem. It is a dilemma for a taxi driver if they take a fare from someone who wants to head into the city as, let us face it, who wants to pay to travel a distance in the opposite direction to where we want to go? It would be more practical to locate the rank outside Harry's Fine Foods on Petrie Terrace to make it easier for cabs to take passengers in all directions. It would also be very good crowd movement.

I also question whether the government has followed through with the extra 14 officers in the Tactical Crime Squad. The new sergeants in the city and Valley are to liaise with the security industry, and the inspector is to liaise with the Brisbane City Council. Just how far has this government progressed with the review of the Bail Act, which it proposed in the Brisbane action plan to have completed by the end of 2005?

It is imperative we return to the concept of making our communities much safer places. Whilst we may try to enhance safety by promoting greater measures in and around licensed premises, we should do so in a manner which does not impose unreasonable hardship on business or place restrictions on the general public.

The general consensus among stakeholders with whom I have consulted is that the amendments are an attempt to adopt a blanket method to a solution. This does not work and venues should be assessed case by case, venue by venue with consideration of past history, what other precautionary measures are in place and the scope of their clientele. For example, what happens if a licensed venue has a wedding reception, amongst other things? One venue operator who will be affected by the changes put it this way—

By and large we are all quite responsible adults with families to feed and so on, we are no different than any other members of the community.

Remember, this is a licensee saying this. He went on—

We have no problems in supporting constructive measures such as the requirement for responsible service of alcohol courses for all employees involved with the servicing of alcohol. We also have no problem with the introduction of CCTV, in fact, most of us already have it, nor the restriction on promotion of alcohol which may encourage binge drinking. However, it appears that so far our State government has simply taken away our liberties and not given us any privileges other than token late night train and bus services.

Why has the government allowed these additional transport services to be delayed, as reported in the *Courier-Mail* on 7 November this year? The Premier claims the delay has been caused by industrial issues with drivers, but why is this government only trialling these late-night services for a period of six months when the amendments will be assessed over a full 12-month period?

The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill includes minor administrative amendments to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000. I am mostly supportive of the proposed amendments but take this opportunity to highlight a few areas that seem to omit some very important and much-needed details. Clause 54 amends section 363(b) to include a requirement that proposed relevant contracts as well as relevant contracts must include a statement that the contract is subject to a cooling-off period, the PAMD form 30c warning statement I refer to here. I ask whether the definition of 'precontractual' includes option agreements and vendor contracts. In my consultation with stakeholders on the proposed changes to PAMDA, concerns have been expressed to me by solicitors and academic lawyers that these types of agreements do not appear to require a warning statement. This legislation is not clear as to whether a proposed relevant contract includes vendor contracts and option agreements. It has been further suggested that if it does not then further amendment is required to correct this submission.

Fair Trading has quite rightly expressed concerns on rent-buy deals, both on the web site fact sheets and in *Real Estate Realities,* yet fails to make any concrete moves to protect consumers entering into these contracts by legislating the need to include warning statements with the documentation. I would ask the minister to please advise in her reply whether these contracts are included in the protection offered by warning statements and, if not, what is the reason?

Clause 55 amends section 364 to add definitions for a range of terms that apply in chapter 11 of the PAMD Act. Examples of 'attached' indicate ways of attaching the warning statement, and the information sheet in the case of a unit sale, to the contract or proposed contract so there is compliance with provisions of the PAMD Act. The requirement for the warning statement to be attached to precontractual real estate purchasing documents was tested in the judiciary and found to not sufficiently cover forms of electronic communication media that are becoming more expedient and convenient in today's technological business environment, particularly in Queensland, where there is an increasing number of real estate purchases from interstate entities.

It is imperative that consideration be given to ensuring that PAMD Act documents comply with the act's requirements that they be in a form which would protect them from unauthorised change and how this could be achieved if they are provided in an electronic format. The amendment enables real estate sellers and their agents to utilise facsimile and email for transmission of precontractual and contractual documents to purchasers, thus providing an additional and convenient avenue for real estate processes to allow alternative means of forwarding sales documents to purchasers without sacrificing the

consumer protection process awarded through the legislative requirement of providing the PAMD 30 warning statements as the first document in all precontractual and contractual agreements. This amendment is in accord with the act's regulation for consumer protection and promotion of enterprise freedom in the marketplace.

Clauses 57 to 59 amend the act by omitting section 365 and inserting a new section 365 and amending sections 365A and 365B as necessary. A stakeholder consultation has brought to my attention issues surrounding section 365, which I will address later on. When the minister last year tabled the results of the Office of Fair Trading's review of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, reference was made to section 365 in these terms. Section 365 states that the buyer and the seller under a relevant contract are bound for all purposes by the contract from the date on which the buyer or the buyer's agent receives a copy of the contract signed by both parties. The phrase 'bound for all purposes' has raised several issues in practice, including that it purports to alter the common law time of formation of the contract from the time the seller notifies of execution to the time the buyer receives a copy of the contract. Consequently, obligations in the contract which are linked to the date of contract are commencing at the time prior to the time at which the parties are bound under section 365(1). In some cases, the dates specified in the contract and the date the cooling-off period commenced can vary by up to a week.

Fair Trading's recommendation was that the words 'for all purposes' must be clarified or removed so that the intention of this section is clear and unambiguous. Obviously, Fair Trading's proposed amendment now is for the removal of those words which, frankly, still leaves the intention of the section unclear and ambiguous. Is there a difference between 'bound' and 'bound for all purposes'? Ultimately, it may cost a seller or a buyer an awful lot in legal costs for a court to determine this. To my mind, the best solution is to leave the words 'for all purposes' in the document but to explain that they override any expressions in the contract whereby time limits are calculated from the date of the contract, the contract date or the time thereof. All too often formulas like that are used so contract time limits, for example 'subject to finance', 'subject to building and pest inspections' and 'time for settlement', run from dates arbitrarily inserted by the real estate agent.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Stuckey, adjourned.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Honourable members, I have been asked by Mr Speaker to advise the House that the motion of which notice was given by the member for Maryborough will not be moved and debated this evening so as to avoid issues of anticipation in this evening's debate. The motion is not out of order; it is simply deferred until after the bill is dealt with. The Speaker will provide a more detailed explanation of reasons in due course.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Bribe, Member for Gympie

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.57 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. This morning in the chamber the Minister for Energy claimed that the member for Gympie had been offered a bribe of $30,000 by one of the coalition partners and the member for Gympie confirmed this claim. In view of the seriousness of this accusation, which, if it were proved to be true, would indicate a breach of section 60 of the Queensland Criminal Code and a similar breach of law if it was made knowingly not to be true, I formally ask that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, immediately refer this most serious matter to the Queensland Police Service for urgent investigation. I also formally ask that you refer the matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for its consideration.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition to please write to the Speaker urgently today on that matter.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

MR SPEAKER'S RULING

Motion of Dissent

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (2.30 pm): I move—

That Mr Speaker's ruling on 10 November 2005, that the Minister is entitled to answer the question in the way he sees fit, be dissented from.

On 10 November I asked a question about the ability of the state government to hold a referendum on fluoridation at the next state election. I detailed at that time Senior Counsel's opinion that it is possible for that to occur. I asked the minister to table the legal advice he stated he had that a referendum on fluoride was constitutionally not possible. The minister said that it was constitutionally not possible.

The minister, as usual, arrogantly ridiculed the question and then proceeded to ignore the question I asked and then talked about 'an earlier matter referred to by the opposition leader concerning the Yeppoon Hospital'. The matter of the Yeppoon Hospital is far removed from the question that I asked. I requested a ruling from the Speaker that the answer was not relevant to the question that I had asked.

The Speaker ruled that the minister could answer the question in the way he sees fit. The minister continued with that irrelevant answer. In other words, the minister's answer does not have to be relevant to the question. The Speaker's ruling was that the minister's answer does not have to be relevant to the question.

That ruling is clearly inconsistent with the standing orders of the Queensland parliament. Standing order 118(b) clearly states 'an answer should be relevant to the question'. I suggest that if we do not follow that standing order then we should tear that page straight out. It is as simple as that. The issue of relevance has in recent years regularly been defined in this parliament by the Speaker and deputy speakers. Opposition members have consistently been bought back to the topic or have been sat down on the basis that their contribution was not relevant to the issue being debated.

There are numerous examples of relevance given in this parliament. I refer particularly to the *Hansard* of 23 August 2005 and the debate on the Racing Venues Development Amendment Bill. Mr Speaker stated—

Can I refer the member for Burnett, to the actual bill itself. What you are saying is not really relevant to the bill. Please come back to the bill.

Mr Speaker on a second occasion stated—

Member for Burnett, I have ruled that you have to address your remarks to the bill. Please make your comments relevant to the bill.

On a third occasion the Speaker stated—

The member for Burnett for the third time ... this is your last warning. Make your comments relevant to the legislation.

Mr Messenger stated—

In light of being told that my remarks are not relevant to the legislation, I will not continue.

This clearly shows that the ruling was inconsistent with the rulings and the standing orders of the parliament. Further, the Speaker regularly allows ministers to ridicule and taunt the opposition about their questions. When even the slightest attempt is made by the opposition to set the record straight it is met with shouts and screams from the Speaker and threats of standing order 253.

If members view the *Hansard* record of the day in question, 10 November, they will see that my interjections were so mild that even Hansard could not record what I said. Yet the Speaker threatened to take action against me. If the Speaker allows ministers to ridicule, taunt, lie or be irrelevant in their answers to opposition questions then he should play the advantage rule and allow the opposition the opportunity to respond in the normal parliamentary manner.

The Speaker has the opposition caged up more than in any other Australian parliament. He allows ministers to openly and blatantly prod the opposition and does not allow us to respond or to correct blatant misrepresentations. The Speaker and I have got on fairly well during our parliamentary careers and it truly disappoints me to be moving this motion of dissent against him today.

Government members interjected.

Mr HOBBS: I am serious. Democracy in the Queensland parliament has reached a new low where ministers can say anything they want without challenge.

I further refer to *Hansard* where Minister Robertson, when answering a question from the member for Callide on the deteriorating elective surgery waiting lists—other questions on this matter were asked by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Moggill—gave an answer that was not truthful. When the opposition interjected and tried to set the record straight the Speaker rose to his feet and warned opposition members.

At the end of question time the minister rose on a matter of privilege and advised the House that he had provided incorrect information to the House. That was no surprise to us. We knew that he had not told the truth. He apologised to the opposition and acknowledged the veracity of the question. He acknowledged that; that was good of him. The point I am making is that the Speaker may not be aware of the finer details of elective surgery waiting lists. However, that example clearly shows that the opposition is not always wrong and the need for flexibility during question time is clearly evident.

I wish to further quote from *Hansard*, the official record of this parliament. A member in this House said—and I would like all members to listen to this—

The rules of this parliament include one of relevance. I make no apology for standing here and asking for the rules of the parliament to be upheld. I know the member holds them in contempt—we know that—but what I am asking is for that to be ruled on.

That member was the Leader of the House, the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. He was speaking in a debate in this House on 23 August 2005. I was the member to whom the minister was referring. The minister was demanding that my contribution be ruled not relevant to the debate. I was requested to come back to the bill.

The Speaker cannot have it both ways. The issue of relevance has to be consistent. He cannot say that the member for Warrego has to maintain relevance when he speaks in the Queensland parliament but when Minister Robertson responds to a question from the member for Warrego he does not have to maintain relevance to the topic. It is not reasonable and could not possibly be right. The standing orders quite clearly say that that is not the case.

The Yeppoon hospital was not a relevant topic and was far removed from my question. The minister even stated in his answer 'in relation to earlier matters'. That should have alerted the Speaker to the fact that he was on another subject. It was as clear as that. He even said he was talking about another subject.

The Speaker has been in this parliament for 16 years and has been a minister for 11 years. No doubt he considers that he has made some achievements in that time. I urge the Speaker not to ruin the last part of his parliamentary career by being totally intolerant of the usual workings of this parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! I strongly advise the member for Warrego to be extremely careful in what he is saying now. You are reflecting on the integrity of the office of the Speaker, not the issue under debate, which is dissent from Mr Speaker's ruling. I have received advice from the Clerk that you have stepped over the line. Please come back to the issue.

Mr HOBBS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker English. It is certainly not my intention to do that. My intentions are quite sincere in terms of this debate. This is very important. I am saying that this is intolerant of the usual workings of this and any other parliament in this nation and Mr Speaker will be the loser in the eyes of his colleagues, his friends and the people of Queensland.

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (2.39 pm): I second the motion moved by the member for Warrego. Honourable members should not underestimate the significance of this debate today. In the history of the role of the Speaker in the Queensland parliament, this debate could become one of the most significant in the history of the Queensland parliament. On the one side we have the attitude of the need to adhere to standing orders. The standing orders are the rules which this House—we as the members of parliament—have decided upon. They are the rules which the Standing Orders Committee has decided upon and which this parliament has passed in a bipartisan way. They are the rules written in the standing orders book dated August 2004, and that is significant—that is, the date of August 2004—because they are the rules we have adopted as a parliament.

When we elect a Speaker, we elect a Speaker to enforce the standing orders—standing orders which, as I have said, have been decided upon by this House. We do not elect a Speaker to enforce his own rules and we do not elect a Speaker to enforce rules of previous parliaments. That is completely wrong, because these are the standing orders of August 2004. We do not endorse the rules of Speakers of previous centuries. It is wrong to refer to previous rulings, because previous rulings have been made under previous standing orders or, for that matter, they have been made during the roles of previous Speakers.

There were times in history when the Speaker simply listened to the debate and reported a summary to the King. There were times when the Speaker was beheaded. We still see the Speaker in this parliament being dragged to the chair after his election as per those traditions. But the most significant statement of all Commonwealth parliaments is the statement of Speaker Lenthall when he was imposed upon by Charles I when he said—

I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me whose servant I am here.

So as much as the Speaker would like to make his own rules, as much as the Speaker would like to refer to decisions of previous Speakers, the Speaker is a servant of this House and must make decisions as this House decides. So unless this House suspends standing orders and makes different rules by way of specific motions, the rules of this House are the standing orders, and the standing orders of this House are, as I have said, in the standing orders book dated August 2004. Standing order 118(b) specifically states that answers must be relevant to the questions.

A Speaker might interpret 'relevant' whichever way he wants. There is obviously considerable latitude given by those who framed the standing order as it sits here in this particular book. But the Speaker's statement on 10 November that 'my ruling is that the minister is entitled to answer the question in the way he sees fit' must be dissented from. If we do not, then we are not adhering to the standing orders. If members want to refer to previous rulings of the Speaker made under previous standing orders, they are completely incorrect, because these are the rules that we have decided upon in this particular parliament. If it is not dissented from, then I ask: how can those opposite ever vindicate any decisions in the future based on the standing orders of this House? If government members do not vote against the ruling, it means that they condone the Speaker making any ruling he wants to without having to refer to the standing orders. That precedent flies in the face of the role Speakers have played since the famous statement of Speaker Lenthall.

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (2.43 pm): I rise to oppose the motion of dissent from Mr Speaker's ruling on 10 November 2005 that the minister is entitled to answer the question in any way he sees fit. This is the second time we have had members of the opposition rebelling against the authority of the Speaker simply because they do not like to be required to behave appropriately. It is very simple. As the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly note—

The Speaker is a representative of the House in its powers, rights and immunities and is to preside over its proceedings and maintain order in the House and the parliamentary precinct.

He has to maintain order. A few years ago I recommended to my colleagues—and it was endorsed by this House—the three-minute rule for questions without notice. Why did I do it? Because members of the previous government, of which the member for Warrego was a short-term minister, used to get up in here and rabbit on. Santo Santoro, the former member for Clayfield, would have to have been the worst. He used to go for eight or 10 minutes and talk absolute drivel. He would never answer a question. I brought in the three-minute rule, which basically said that ministers had three minutes to respond. Let me tell you: there are many occasions when I would like to have more than three minutes, but I brought it in to ensure that there are more questions asked by the opposition. Who does the three-minute rule for answers assist? It assists the opposition. It does not assist us; it assists the opposition. We brought in this rule because we believe in accountability.

But the three-minute rule will work only if you allow ministers to answer the question. I say with great respect to the member for Warrego, and you know this, that the interjections make it difficult for ministers to answer questions—and you have been in here as long as I have; perhaps even longer. I think you came in when I did in 1989. That is almost 16 years. It will be 16 years on 2 December.

Mr Hobbs: '86.

Mr BEATTIE: You have been here 19 years. In fact, that is worse. You should know even better.

Mr Hobbs: I do know.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me tell you, and I say this with great courtesy to the member for Warrego because I am a nice guy: you are one of the worst offenders. You come in here and interject like a row of parrots sitting on a telegraph line out near Charleville. That is what happens. You sit there like a lot of parrots on a telegraph line—chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp—and none of the ministers can answer the question.

Ms Bligh: I think you are defaming parrots!

Mr BEATTIE: I am, and I take the Deputy Premier's interjection. I have defamed a whole lot of cockatoos and parrots. That is what I have done, and I apologise unreservedly to the cockatoos and parrots. But the point remains that ministers have to be given the courtesy of being able to answer the question. That is why I brought the three-minute rule in. If you want to change it and get rid of the three-minute rule, ministers might go on for five or 10 minutes, because some of them are so verbose—including me. I could do an hour on my own without any trouble. If you want that sort of nonsense, you can do it. I would prefer to stick to the three-minute rule, but you have to allow ministers to answer the question.

Let me come back to the standing orders, because Perry Mason Jnr QC over there from Warrego talked at great length—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I said 'junior'—a very little junior!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am just generous. I am a generous person, so I am happy to be generous. The member for Warrego talked a little bit about standing orders, of which the member knew very little. In order to effectively manage the business of the House, it is absolutely necessary, as Erskine May says—and Erskine May is the authority when it comes to the running of the parliament—that 'the Speaker should be invested with authority to repress disorder'—take that as written—'and to give effect promptly and decisively to the rules and orders of the House.' Erskine May also said that the Speaker is the executive officer who enforces the rules of the House. As members we give the Speaker the responsibility to use his judgment to maintain order. We may not always like the Speaker's rulings, but someone has to have that power vested in them. However, it is essential that we respect his authority to do his job. Without that respect, we will have a House that is not able to function effectively.

The standing rules and orders require that answers be relevant to the question. That is a requirement that I support. It has been a longstanding practice of governments of all persuasions that a minister can answer a question as he or she sees fit. I made reference to the longevity of the service of the member for Warrego because he will be reminded of these things. I want to illustrate this point: I remind members of what happened when I was opposition leader when I asked a question of Joan Sheldon on 11 September 1996 when you were in this House. Neil Turner as Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: You can see my point. You—

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No. The point I was trying to make is that I am trying to deal with this matter here. Your mate behind is going yak, yak, yak, yak, yak, yak.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The point I am trying to make to you is that your mate behind goes yak, yak, yak, yak, yak, yak.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Premier, you will direct your comments through the chair.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, the point I am trying to make is this: that the opposition never, ever settle down on these matters. Anyway, let me go on.

I remind members of what happened when I was opposition leader. Neil Turner as Speaker stated—

I will allow the question, but it is up to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

that was Joan Sheldon—

to answer it in the way she chooses as is standing practice in this Chamber.

The standing orders have not changed to any significant degree since then. What a lot of nonsense! I have been Premier for seven years, and I know exactly what has changed. They have not changed to any significant degree in that regard. To suggest otherwise is a nonsense. On 5 June 1997, in relation to a question on notice asked of Joan Sheldon, then Premier Rob Borbidge stated to the House—

I rise to a point of order. I understand that the Standing Orders in this place have always stated that Ministers answer questions as they believe to be appropriate from time to time.

Neil Turner is held out, quite rightly, as a good Speaker of this place. I share that view. They are his rulings. They are exactly the same as the rulings of Tony McGrady. Erskine May points out—

While an answer should be confined to the points contained in the question, a certain latitude is permitted to ministers of the Crown in responding to the question.

Speakers at the federal level have consistently ruled that, provided the answer is relevant and not couched in unparliamentary language, ministers may answer oral questions in virtually any way they see fit.

The test of relevance can be difficult to apply. At times there has been very wide interpretation of what is relevant. In practice, Speakers at the federal level have accepted relevance as meaning 'relevant in some way' or 'relevant in part'. As I have already pointed out, this also happens at the state level. Erskine May notes—

The Speaker takes no part in debate either in the House or committee. He votes only when the voices are equal and then only in accordance with the rules, which preclude an expression of opinion upon the merits of the question.

A logical corollary is that, as members, we should not be demanding that the Speaker express an opinion on the merits of an answer. As honourable members are aware, the Speaker's role includes interpreting and applying the standing rules and orders, responding to members' points of order relating to them and ruling on procedures where necessary. The Speaker supervises rather than participates in proceedings.

At the end of the day, if members continue to question the authority of the Speaker we will have a House which is not functional. Queenslanders expect their members of parliament to observe standards and respect authority. I am sure members would agree that that is an eminently reasonable expectation. I think some members of the opposition have behaved disgracefully and it is about time they started to behave themselves in this parliament.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (2.52 pm): I think the facts surrounding this issue and this motion of dissent have been canvassed comprehensively by the Premier. It is clear, as the Premier has outlined, that it is the Speaker who rules on relevance, and relevance is that which is determined by the Speaker not only in this parliament but also in every Westminster parliament of the world.

I do not think the facts of this matter are what this debate is about. This dissent motion is the continuation of a grubby political campaign to undermine the authority of the Speaker. The member for Mount Isa has been the subject of smear, innuendo and attack by the opposition from day one. I ask members to cast their minds back to the day we gathered as a parliament to elect a new Speaker. That debate was one of the most disgraceful debates I have seen in this chamber. It contained, as members will recall, absolutely groundless insinuations of misconduct by the member for Mount Isa. Those insinuations were nothing more than that—insinuations that were absolutely without foundation. They further claimed that the member for Mount Isa had failed somehow in his duty as a minister to adequately provide an answer to a question during the estimates hearings. The opposition even

subsequently moved that that matter be referred to the MEPPC. Of course, it was subsequently proved to be without foundation. The basis of the question was wrong in every respect. In fact, the question asked by the opposition of the member for Mount Isa as the minister for state development during estimates was factually wrong. They had asked the minister to outline a series of grants made under a number of programs. As it turned out, not one of those programs was a grant program. Of course, the minister was not able to provide them with the detail they had asked for because their question was without any knowledge of the operations of the department.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like you to rule on the relevance of the Deputy Premier's contribution. My motion was about—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): I understand what your motion is about. I will seek advice. I will continue to hear the Deputy Premier.

Ms BLIGH: My point is very clear. My point is absolutely relevant and germane to the motion that is before us. My point is that this is not a debate, as the member for Warrego would have it, about parliamentary procedure. This is a debate designed to continue a political attack, launched by the opposition—

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn. It is not true.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Deputy Premier withdraw?

Ms BLIGH: I withdraw. As the new Speaker, the member for Mount Isa, from the earliest time that he took up the chair, made his intentions in relation to his responsibilities as Speaker absolutely clear. He was unequivocal, from the moment he assumed the chair, that he intended to maintain order in this House. He was unequivocal about the fact that he expected ministers and those asking questions of ministers would be heard in silence. He also made it clear that, especially during the first two hours of the day—during ministerial statements and other matters in the first hour and then during question time—he expected the highest standards of behaviour of every member of this House.

The reality is that opposition members have never, ever been prepared to accept the authority of the member for Mount Isa in his efforts to maintain order. Not only did they argue in the most disgraceful way against his nomination as Speaker; from the moment he took the chair they have rebelled and defied his authority at every opportunity. When the relatively junior member for Charters Towers defied the Speaker's authority, not only did the opposition fail to take that member to task for what was clearly erroneous behaviour; they also backed him up. I say again that, in my view, the opposition has never accepted the authority of the member for Mount Isa in the chair and that what we are seeing here today is a just another part of an ongoing campaign to undermine that authority.

I will respond to one of the points made by the member for Beaudesert. I do not think I have ever heard a more spurious argument, and I have heard a lot of spurious arguments from the member for Beaudesert. The argument he is putting is that, because the standing orders of this House were ratified in August 2004, somehow all that went before it is irrelevant to us—that somehow we started at ground zero last year. The reality is that not only have the standing orders not substantially changed—and particularly not in relation to this matter—my recollection is that this matter was contained in the sessional orders in the previous parliament and that those sessional orders had prevailed for almost two decades. Last year those sessional orders became standing orders.

It is also the case that, whether they are old or new, the rules are subject to precedent. We are part of a Westminster tradition, and our behaviour and our rules are subject to the precedents set by this chamber and set by other Westminster parliaments. In all of those precedents, the authority of the Speaker is something which is not to be questioned lightly. Indeed, some Westminster parliaments make it impossible to move a motion of dissent, so highly is the authority of the Speaker regarded. One would think a former Speaker would know that, but obviously not the member for Beaudesert.

Moving a motion of dissent is very serious and is not to be taken lightly. But this dissent motion is not serious. We are not here debating a matter of great gravity—

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier did not refer to you personally. I ask the Deputy Premier to continue.

Ms BLIGH: This is a frivolous motion and its frivolity is a direct attack on the integrity of this House. A dissent motion should only ever arise as matter of grave significance. This is about politics, not parliamentary procedure, and it reflects very poorly on those who have moved and those who are supporting it.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (2.58 pm): I rise to support the motion of dissent moved by the member for Warrego. Just to recap on some comments made by the Premier and Deputy Premier, this debate is not about order in the House; it is about relevance in the way in which ministers answer questions. We on this side reject the imputed motive that this is about dragging down the authority of the Speaker. It is not about that at all. It is a debate about the application of the standing orders of the House.

The member for Warrego was quite within his rights to raise the issue of whether or not the minister's answer on that day was relevant. The question that was asked was about fluoridation of the water supply and the first part of the answer was about that. But then the minister started to talk about an entirely different matter that was raised in question time and that was the Yeppoon hospital. There were two distinct answers given on that occasion. The member for Warrego was quite within his rights to ask the Speaker to rule on relevance. The Speaker did so and the member for Warrego was quite within his rights to move a dissent motion. So let us put aside all the humbug that has been put about by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. This is provided for under the standing orders. It was done according to the standing orders and it was done with the motive of asking the Speaker to rule on the issue of relevance, particularly when, in this glaring example, the minister was answering two questions within the three-minute time frame. How the second answer can be relevant to the question at hand is something that puzzles us on this side of the House. How can the second part of the answer be relevant to the question at hand?

As the member for Warrego said, it is about making the ministers provide a relevant answer, and that is provided for under standing order 118, which clearly states—

The following general rules shall apply to answers:

(a) in answering a question a Minister or member shall not debate the subject to which it refers; and

(b) an answer shall be relevant to the question.

The member was within his rights. We on this side of the House have moved this dissent motion because unless we have the Speaker applying the standing orders to this chamber—which everyone in this chamber effectively endorsed when they were adopted by the chamber—then we are not going to get a fair application of the standing orders. That is what this is about. It is about an issue of fairness—applying the standing orders to all members of the House as they are written.

As I have said, we on this side have moved this dissent motion. We want the standing orders applied fairly and evenly. It is in the standing orders that answers by ministers shall be relevant to the question. On this occasion the answer was clearly not relevant. The second part of the answer had absolutely nothing to do with the question. How can an answer about the Yeppoon hospital be relevant to a question about fluoride? How can that be? The general rule that the minister can answer in any way he or she likes just invites the flouting of the standing orders. That should not be allowed. The role of the Speaker is to apply the standing orders fairly to everyone. On this occasion that did not occur. Hence, we have moved a motion of dissent.

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (3.02 pm): On 10 March 1982 a former Premier of this state was giving one of his usual rambling answers to a question when the then Leader of the Opposition rose to his feet on a point of relevance.

Mr Quinn: Who was that?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The Premier was Bjelke-Petersen. The statement that was made by Speaker Muller was—

Order! The question asked by the Leader of the Opposition has been answered. Whether it was answered to his satisfaction or not is not my concern.

On 2 August 1983, Speaker Muller referred to standing order 70, which stated—

(a) in answering a question a Minister or member shall not debate the subject to which it refers; and

(b) an answer shall be relevant to the question.

The member for Warrego says that the standing orders have changed. Yet section 118 of the standing orders states—

(a) in answering a question a Minister or member shall not debate the subject to which it refers; and

(b) an answer shall be relevant to the question.

That has been unchanged for that whole period.

Mr Quinn: No. There's a third part there, Robbie.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, there was a third one but it does not change the fact of relevance.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Both honourable members who are interjecting rudely on me—and I did not do it to them—are guilty of hypocrisy in the greatest extreme because they know full well that this standing order has applied to this parliament since it began. The honourable member said that he came to parliament in 1983. So what is his excuse for not knowing this? The then opposition leader, Wayne Goss, rose to a point of order and Speaker Powell said—

The Leader of the Opposition has asked the Premier a question. The Premier will answer that question as he sees fit. If the Leader of the Opposition continually interjects, he will have to be dealt with.

The reality is that it does not matter what reference we want to find or how far we want to go back. If we want to go back to Speaker Pollock in 1933, a similar ruling was made. If we want to go back to

Speaker Brassington, a similar ruling was made. I know for a fact that Speaker Turner did. How do I know that? He did it to me when I asked a question in this parliament. The reality is that what we are seeing is a lot of fluff and nonsense. If we go back to Bernay in the Canadian parliament in the 1880s, there is reference there, too. Let us be done with this nonsense and hypocrisy.

What I saw the member for Warrego do at the outset of this debate I think was remarkably childish, and that was to destroy one of the books of this parliament. The member for Beaudesert, Mr Lingard, is a former teacher. I know what he would have done.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. I find the words offensive and ask the member to withdraw them. I did not destroy the book.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw. But I merely point out to the House that the member for Warrego tore a page out of the standing orders and people can work it out for themselves whether that is decent behaviour and conduct for a member of parliament. My point was that the member for Beaudesert, who was well known for his discipline in the classroom, would not have tolerated that in his classroom. I am sure that the people in the gallery here today do not expect to see members tearing up the standing orders of this parliament. I hope the honourable member is going to pay for a replacement copy of the pages torn from that book that has rendered that book useless.

Mr Hobbs: I didn't.

Mr SCHWARTEN: As I say, as a schoolteacher, it is not something anybody should aspire to.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It is symptomatic of the contempt with which especially the member for Warrego holds this parliament. He continually interjects on me while I am on my feet. I did not interject while he was speaking. I am having enough trouble speaking as it is, so he shows no courtesy or consideration for my condition. But that is not surprising. The fact of the matter is that this is nonsense. I challenge the member, as experienced as he is and as someone who has been in this parliament as long as he has been—he has been here since 1983—to say that he has never, ever heard a Speaker before Speaker McGrady rule on this point. He tried to allege that the standing orders have changed. We have already established that that is not true. That does not bear any semblance to fact at all. This is, as the Deputy Premier indicated, nothing more than a political cheap shot coming on the tail of what was a recent attack upon Mr Speaker.

The fact of the matter is that if the opposition is going to judge what an answer shall be we might as well give the game away, quite frankly, because if members of the opposition actually know the answer before they ask the questions then we are actually wasting question time. Question time in its inherent sense is to delve, to find out the answer to things. How is it that the opposition knows more about relevance than the minister and how is the Speaker expected to interpret what is relevant in that regard?

Mr Rickuss: It's a different question. He was talking about a different question.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I notice that members continue to interject while I am on my feet—and I did not do it to them. They continue to show discourtesy.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! Members will not call across the chamber.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am glad there are people in the gallery. I wish there were a few more to see it. I will get back to the point. The points made by the opposition were that this was a new standing order. That is not true. They also made the point that this has never occurred before and that precedence does not count. Again, that is not true. The fact that they claim to know more about relevance than anybody else in this chamber is a sign of arrogance and irrelevance. The reality is that there is not one skerrick of a reason to support a motion of dissent.

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (3.09 pm): This dissent motion is a classic opposition stunt. When I say 'opposition' I mean it is an opposition stunt no matter who is in opposition and who is in government, and it should be seen for that. It is classically the sort of thing that an opposition which is desperate to get a cheap run in the media will do. It speaks volumes about the lack of capacity in this lazy opposition that it seeks to attract some publicity for itself rather than providing some genuine policy discussion.

The Speaker of this parliament, the Hon. Tony McGrady, is a tough Speaker and I have no problem with that. I have been chastised by the Speaker on a number of occasions in the House, just as I have been chastised in the House by a previous tough Speaker, Neil Turner. I have to say that in this place debate is robust, but at the same time we accept that a Speaker will seek to control the place in a way that is appropriate.

One of the things we also need to remember is that this relates in many respects to the way that the opposition seeks to misconstrue the application of the standing orders in this place. We saw again today the member for Charters Towers take two points of order that in no way whatsoever were points of

order. It is very lucky that the Speaker did not sit him down and warn him for doing that. When you do it once, that is fine but when you do it twice or even a third time you cease to have an excuse. But he got the tolerance of the chair—indeed, perhaps more tolerance than I would have given had I been in the chair—and he still did it today.

We need to reflect in this House on the sorts of standards that are applied in other houses. Members opposite got upset about the member for Charters Towers getting booted out because he refused to sit down and he continued talking over the Speaker. During the same period of time we had 11 members of parliament—

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The minister for transport is referring to another incident that I do not believe is relevant to the motion that we are currently debating.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! I will make that determination. There is no point of order. Resume your seat. I call the minister for transport.

Mr LUCAS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is typical of the opposition to make frivolous points of order. I can cop it when you guys want to make contributions to the debate—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister will address his comments through the chair and refer to the particular motion that we are debating.

Mr LUCAS: I can cop it when opposition members want to take points of order in debates such as this, because that is the way that they behave; they cannot rely on the arguments. But I do not need to do that, and not many people on this side of the House need to do that either. On the same day that members had objections to this Speaker, 11 members, and then nine the next day, were kicked out of the federal parliament.

This chamber is a place of ideas and a contest of minds. That is what the whole place is about. It is about oppositions having the ability to ask questions in the manner that they see fit and that governments cannot control, and governments being able to answer questions in the way that they deem appropriate, and it has been ever thus. Members know that very well because there is a former Speaker sitting there who is no dill. He is someone who has significant experience in this place, and he would know that there is a string of rulings going back decades where the Speaker in this House allowed ministers to answer questions in the appropriate manner. It would be different if there were people who were sat on their backsides by Speaker Lingard or Speaker Turner when they were in the chair, but that did not happen. Of course oppositions complain about it, as we did when we were in opposition. But the fact is that that is how it is applied, and that is how it is applied in Westminster parliaments generally. Indeed, what we had to cop was the then minister Santo Santoro and his interminably long answers to questions without notice—something that we no longer have as a result of what happens in this House here.

The standing orders in this chamber are designed to promote debate. They are designed to promote debate in a number of ways. Opposition members have an ability to make private members' statements and we in the government have to cop them. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree with the content or not, whether we think it is ridiculous, whether we think it is juvenile or asinine, we have to wear it. When we on this side of the House make them, opposition members have to wear them as well.

Similarly, matters of public importance are for members generally to express their views, and members have an ability to do that in a robust fashion. Again, if governments do not like it, they have to wear it. Indeed, outside this chamber there are a number of ways in which members can address issues—ways that are unique to members of parliament. For example, if members do not agree with the way that a minister has answered a question or with what a member of parliament has said, they can call a press conference. They can put reams of paper out. They have the ability to correct it. They have the ability to make a personal explanation. They have the ability to comment on it at other times in this House. This is what a robust democracy is all about.

The Leader of the Liberal Party talked about the need to apply the rules of this House fairly to everyone, and he is right. That is all that we are saying here today. It is appropriate that the Speaker applies the rules fairly to everyone, just as the Speaker applied those rules when the National and Liberal parties were last in government and the Labor Party was in opposition. That is exactly how they were applied to us. Why were they applied that way? Because, like it or not, when one is in opposition that is the way that the rules are applied. And that is the way that the rules were applied to us.

From time to time I have to put up with matters raised by the other side that I do not like. I had to put up with the member for Chatsworth yesterday going on about claims of delays on the Ipswich Motorway—and I table this—when the federal minister announced a timetable that we are adhering to and early works being undertaken. What did I do? I shut up and I put out a media release. I did that because I did not have the ability to take a ridiculous point of order like the member for Charters Towers, the member for Warrego or the member for Surfers Paradise do. I sat there and copped it, and I corrected it in the right way. It is about time that we had some more maturity here. There are some saner and wiser heads on that side of the House. We have not heard from them today because I suspect they know that it is dead right.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.16 pm): The standing orders as amended were put in place in this House on 26 May 2005. These are not some dated directives. The paint has only just dried on them. It is the job of the Speaker to enforce these rules, each and every one of them. That much I think we all understand. It is not the job of the Speaker to selectively apply rules, particularly ones that are black and white. Standing order 118(b) under 'General rules for answers' clearly states 'an answer shall be relevant to the question'. I understand that different Speakers may interpret parts of standing orders in different ways, but there are no two ways of interpreting that standing order. It clearly states that an answer should be relevant to a question.

When the member for Warrego asked a question of the health minister in this place on 10 November, the health minister rose and started to carry on with the piffle that he generally does. When the member for Warrego sought a point of order on relevance, the Speaker said this—

My ruling is that the minister is entitled to answer the question in the way he sees fit.

The first thing we need to establish is that this was not some sort of brain fade; this was not a one-off ruling. The Speaker has ruled in this manner on other occasions. Another example would be a ruling made on a point of order by the member for Beaudesert in the regional parliament. The point of order was taken on an answer being given by the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. The Speaker again dismissed the point of order and informed the parliament that ministers could answer the question in whatever manner they desired. So that means that ministers can come and read excerpts from the Bible or the *Women's Weekly* as answers to questions.

I recall in the no-confidence motion the member for Robina commenting that we on this side of the House had a boot on our throat, whereas the other side of the House has been given a free reign. More apt words have not been spoken on the issue. There are double standards that the member for Warrego, in moving this motion, outlined. Let us look at it historically. In his time as Speaker, the member for Ashgrove had 11 dissent motions moved against him. None were about his rulings on relevance. The former member for Redcliffe, Mr Hollis, had 11 dissent motions moved against him. None were in relation to rulings on relevance. So it is clear that we have a precedent being set by this Speaker—a Speaker who is allowing ministers to get away with answers that even predecessors from his own party have been tougher on. It is clear that the Speaker needs to make his rulings more relevant or risk losing even the confidence of his own party. The Speaker has been in this House for 16 years. He has had ample time to understand the rules of this House. I think that since the no-confidence motion in the last sitting week he has been much more calm, and credit should be given where it is due, but the issue of relevance has remained.

The final example that I need to mention is question time this morning when ministers were asked up to seven questions on the nature of Liberal and National preselections and they were given a broad range to target members on this side of the House and make comments that were not relevant to the questions.

I refer members to question time in today's *Hansard*. The Minister for Energy, when asked a dorothy dixer, said—

... in other matters that I also look at ...

Then for the duration of his answer he railed about our Liberal preselection. The Speaker did not pull him up on relevance. The member for Logan, the Minister for Energy, cannot decide if he wants to be a cabinet minister or if he wants to dish out dirt on the coalition. He gave the role to the members for Thuringowa and Southport, but they were not up to it. So he has taken it back on himself to be the purveyor of political tripe.

We have set the standing orders in this House and made them as a group of adults, a group of representatives. The rules are clear. We on this side of the House are happy to work with the current Speaker, but we ask for the rules of this House to be applied as they are outlined.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (3.20 pm): I rise to support this dissent motion moved by the member for Warrego. This comes about as a result of the standing orders of this parliament. On 10 November 2005 the member for Warrego asked a very valid question of the Minister for Health about what was quite clearly misleading information that the minister had provided previously about the government's constitutional ability to hold a statewide referendum regarding fluoridation at the next election. After conspicuously refusing to answer the question from the member, the minister said—

In relation to earlier matters referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, he claimed quite unfairly that in his view there had been no action taken in regard to the Yeppoon Hospital.

This comes back to the issue that has been canvassed by many speakers on this side of the parliament this afternoon, and that is relevance. It is not about what somebody said or what somebody has not said; it is about relevance. The member for Warrego then asked the Speaker to rule on relevance. Standing order 118(b), which outlines the general rules for answer to questions, states—

An answer shall be relevant to the question.

In the past, when this standing order has been raised with the Speaker he has advised the House that by precedent it is up to the minister how they answer a question. I have witnessed—and everybody on this side of the House has witnessed—on numerous occasions a minister, in answering a dorothy dixer, start to abuse the opposition in some way or another even though it is not relevant to the question that was asked. We see this time and time again. This smacks in the face of what relevance is about.

This matter is about tolerance, too. I think in a lot of ways the opposition has been very tolerant in respect to the answers that some ministers give to questions. It is by sheer weight of numbers that we see contempt bred on the other side of the House. The government has a commanding majority in this parliament. We have seen contempt and arrogance come from that. I do not believe that is a true reflection of what question time is about. Members on this side of the House and the members of the government have a right to ask ministers relevant questions about the issues of the day.

We are the 89 members of parliament elected by the people of Queensland to represent them in their parliament—the people's parliament. Those standing orders were put in place for both the government and the opposition to uphold. I have heard the Deputy Premier cast doubt on the member for Warrego for moving this dissent motion in the House. The member for Warrego has every right to move this dissent motion, because he asked a question to which he wanted an answer. We have seen the fallout from this question about fluoridation from the Local Government Association of Queensland. Many people have questioned the government. When the government is questioned, it dodges the issue. There is a cover-up.

This matter is about relevance, accountability and transparency. If we are going to be fair dinkum in representing the people of Queensland, we have to be fair dinkum with ministers giving the right answers to questions. I ask members opposite to remember that, if a minister is not capable of answering a question asked on behalf of the people of Queensland, that minister should not be protected by destroying the meaning of this parliament.

When this parliament voted on the support of the Speaker, some members opposite had to be somewhere else—and they know what I mean. Some members on the government side of the parliament disappeared when that motion of no confidence was moved. I have heard members talking in the corridors about not supporting that motion. Everybody needs to be fair dinkum about this cause.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Come back to the point.

Mr JOHNSON: This is not casting doubt on the Speaker. I respect the Speaker. I think the members on the other side of the House should also respect the Speaker and respect the standing orders and come back to relevance.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.24 pm): As the final speaker in this debate, I rise to lend support to the motion that was moved by the member for Warrego dissenting from the ruling given by the Speaker. It is quite clear that members on this side of the House, right from when the member for Warrego moved the motion through to the contributions of members who spoke in support of his motion, have clearly won this debate. The points that have been made by all of those speakers have not been rebutted by any member from the government side. It is noteworthy that not only did the four speakers who were courageous enough to try to oppose this motion not address the motion itself but also they did not speak for very long. The government could get only four members to speak to this motion. It could not fill up the speaking list. It could get only four members to try to defend this ruling that was made by the Speaker.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. A number of other members had indicated to me that they wanted to speak. That is a lie.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! There is no point of order. Resume your seat.

Mr SEENEY: The relevant point, which even the Government Whip cannot dispute, is that those speakers from the government side who took part in this debate did not even come close to addressing the crux of the motion.

The motion that was moved by the member for Warrego related very specifically to a ruling that he went through in some detail. When he asked the Speaker to make a ruling, the Speaker made a ruling in regard to standing order 118 and the member for Warrego sought to dissent from it. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the transport minister and the member for Rockhampton all spoke about something different. They all talked about what happened to the member for Charters Towers the week before. That has nothing to do with the dissent motion that has been moved by the member for Warrego. It has nothing to do with the ruling that was given that the member for Warrego sought to dissent from. Every member in this House knows why those members chose to do that. Every member knows why the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the member for Rockhampton and the transport minister chose to talk about something else—because the ruling that was given by the Speaker in the case that the member for Warrego sought to dissent from cannot be justified. It cannot be defended by anyone with any sort of intellectual integrity and by anyone who wants to read the standing orders.

To reiterate the point, the contribution that was made by the member for Beaudesert—a former Speaker himself—should exercise the minds of every member in this House and every member who aspires to be a Speaker, a deputy speaker, or a chairman. It outlined very succinctly what the standing orders are about. The standing orders are the rules that we decide that we are going to operate under. We give those rules to the Speaker to enforce. As a number of members outlined, those rules say quite clearly in standing order 118 that the answers shall be relevant to the question. We have decided that the answers need to be relevant to the question.

Yet when the member for Warrego asked the Speaker to rule on whether a particular answer was relevant to the question the Speaker said, and it has been quoted a number of times and I will quote it again—

My ruling is that the minister is entitled to answer the question in the way he sees fit.

There is a clear difference between that ruling and the standing order. If we wanted to take the kindest possible approach, we could probably accept that the minister is entitled to answer the question any way he sees fit so long as it is relevant to the question; otherwise, as the member for Surfers Paradise indicated quite clearly, ministers could come in here with a copy of last week's *Women's Weekly* and stand up and read page 42 or page 54, depending on which question was asked. Of course, that would be ludicrous and, of course, this parliament should not accept that. That is why we have the standing orders and why we appoint the Speaker to enforce those standing orders.

It is clear from the contributions that have been made by various members in this debate that the ruling that was given by the Speaker should be dissented from. It was the wrong ruling. Ministers have to answer questions in a way that is relevant. This motion should be supported.

Time expired.

Question—That Mr Hobbs' motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 25—Caltabiano, Copeland, E Cunningham, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Quinn, E Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Rogers

NOES, 58—Attwood, Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, N Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fouras, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T Sullivan, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, this morning the member for Maryborough gave notice of a motion calling for a referendum on the fluoridation of the state's water supply. There is a bill before the House which seeks to make it clear that local governments do not have to conduct a referendum before fluoridating water supply and allowing other methods of consultation. The question that has arisen is whether the debate of the motion tonight would anticipate the debate on the bill and, thereby, contravene standing order 231.

Whilst the motion is not out of order, I do have concerns about how the motion can be properly debated without restricting members' contributions. In particular, it would be difficult for the government to respond without reference to its policy contained in the bill. Bills are superior forms of proceedings to motions, and debate on motions must give way to bills. I have spoken to the member for Maryborough and it has been agreed that the motion will not be moved until the bill has been dealt with. The notice of motion will remain on the *Notice Paper* despite standing order 74 until the bill has been debated by the House.

Finally, I note that the Speaker has considerable discretion in standing orders as regards anticipation and that standing order 231(2) provides—

The Speaker when determining whether a discussion is out of order on the ground of anticipation, shall have regard to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before the House within a reasonable time and the degree to which debate of that matter is likely to be anticipated.

Standing order 231(2) safeguards members' rights as it ensures that the Speaker may, despite the likelihood of anticipation, allow a matter to be debated if a matter on the *Notice Paper* such as a bill remains on the *Notice Paper* too long without debate. Thus, if the bill is not dealt with within a reasonable time, the Speaker may allow the motion to be moved.

Honourable members, I understand the member for Gympie has a personal explanation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Use of Parliamentary Letterhead

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (3.40 pm), by leave: This morning a matter was raised regarding my use of parliamentary letterhead for a private matter. To put this matter in context, I table three letters in relation to this matter dated 28 October 2005, 20 November 2005 and 21 November 2005. It is correct that the letter written in October was on letterhead; however, the follow-up correspondence was not on letterhead. The use of my letterhead in one of these letters was an oversight and I apologise to the House and to my neighbours for any offence.

The use of my letterhead on one of the two letters was not an attempt to misuse my position but a simple clerical error. The content of the letter clearly demonstrates the content and its tone as being reasonable and in no way coercive. I urge anybody interested to please have a look at the tabled correspondence.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4179.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (3.42 pm), continuing: Section 365 states that the buyer and the seller under a relevant contract are bound for all purposes by the contract from the date on which the buyer or the buyer's agent receives a copy of the contract signed by both parties. The phrase 'bound for all purposes' has raised several issues in practice, including that it purports to alter the common law time of formation of the contract from the time the seller notifies of execution to the time the buyer receives a copy of the contract. Consequently, the obligations in the contract which are linked to the date of contract are commencing at a time prior to the time when parties are bound under section 365(1). In some cases the date specified in the contract and the date the cooling-off period commenced can vary by up to a week.

Fair Trading's recommendation was that the words 'for all purposes' must be clarified or removed so that the intention of the section is clear and unambiguous. Obviously, Fair Trading's proposed amendment now is for the removal of those words, which, frankly, still leaves the intention of the section unclear and ambiguous. Is there a difference between 'bound' and 'bound for all purposes'? Ultimately, it may cost a seller or a buyer an awful lot in legal costs for a court to determine this.

To my mind, the best solution is to leave the words 'for all purposes' in the document but to explain that they override any expressions in the contract whereby time limits are calculated from the date of contract, the contract date or from the date hereof. All too often formulas like that are used so contract time limits—for example, subject to finance, subject to building and pest inspections and time for settlement—run from dates arbitrarily inserted by real estate agents and these dates bear no relationship to when the contracts were formed or to when the parties were bound.

I am in favour of new section 367, which deals with buyers' rights if a warning statement is not given or is not effective. It is substantially the same as the omitted section 367, save for amendments to make it consistent with the other amendments to chapter 11, part 2. The amendments preserve the buyers' rights to terminate the relevant contract at any time before settlement of the contract if the warning statement requirement for a proposed relevant contract or relevant contract is not complied with or the warning statement is of no effect, such as not being substantially in accordance with the approved form. However, I ask once more: should option contracts not be included in this important provision?

The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill also provides for minor administrative amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997. Inclusion of definitions of 'information sheet' and 'unit sale' ensure that requirements in the BCCM Act to provide an information sheet for the sale of lots or proposed lots in a community title scheme, in addition to the PAMD Act requirement for the warning statement, fit within the processes for providing documents. This act includes consumer protection provisions relating to the sale of lots in community title schemes, such as home units. The amendment introduces a provision that requires sellers to provide purchasers with an approved information sheet setting out various body corporate issues the purchaser should consider which must be attached to the contract of sale. This amendment comes at this time to ensure the benefits of the proposed changes to PAMDA in how warning statements are attached to contractual documentation also apply to the sale of lots in a community title scheme.

While developing these amendments, consultation with the real estate industry, through the REIQ, was undertaken. However, it appears that the process did not include any community consultation. I feel sure that if this vital legislative change process had been completed option contracts would have been flagged as an important inclusion to the amendment.

The BCCM Act has been under scrutiny for some time now, with promises from the Labor government that issues of body corporate manager restriction and the Body Corporate Commission were in the process of being addressed. What a shame it is that these important considerations have not been taken into account at this time. Perhaps the inclusion in the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Act of these innocuous minor amendments to the BCCM Act are to make us all believe that the more important issues are not so important after all.

Acknowledgment is given of the attempt which is being made to tighten up the requirement that disclosure statements be as accurate as possible. In the past these disclosure statements have often been too casual or generalised. However, the amendments to the BCCM Act which are before us are really little more than housekeeping arrangements. One of the things these amendments fail to do is set a limit on what charges may be made by body corporate managers for the provision of disclosure statements.

I understand that, while these statements can be accessed at the press of a computer button, some managers charge as much as $200 for the service. This appears exorbitant and raises in my mind the whole issue of what this round of amendments does not do. Indeed, these amendments are important not for what they achieve but, in this case, for what they fail to achieve.

It is now almost one year since the minister announced a review of the act. In fact, when a previous minister, the honourable member for Stretton, introduced amendments to the Body Corporate Act in December 2003 he promised the review would be ongoing. The honourable member for Stretton was aware then that the two issues that most affected, and drew most criticism from, unit owners were the failure of this government to register body corporate managers, which he also threw into the too-hard basket, and the incompetence and perception of bias at the Body Corporate Commission.

Lamentably, dissatisfaction extended even to the case management of the commissioner herself at the time. I note that, despite massive dissatisfaction with her services and that of the commission under her leadership, to use a euphemism, the same person has been promoted and is now Acting Commissioner for Fair Trading. I have read some of the unit owners' submissions to this government over the years, and they all condemn the failure to register managers and the failure to reform the commission, in which it seems most unit owners have little or no confidence at all.

I understand that some whole bodies corporate have passed motions of no confidence in the commission after the commission has handled disputes in their resorts. The primary focus of body corporate reform has to be transparency and guarantees of honest dealings with unit owners. In short, unit owners just keep paying. One of the few areas where they control their spending is with the management of their body corporate, or they may also have some control over their letting agreement. But it is in the body corporate management area that they are most vulnerable if they are not vigilant.

Here we are today with another set of amendments to this act, and two years after the last major overhaul we still have no indication of when the government will move to register these managers or whether it will set a bar such managers will have to reach or whether it intends to merely register all operators currently in business. The synonymous factor in each of these amendments appears to be the lack of community consultation, in particular relating to the Liquor Act amendments. We cannot ignore our constituents or their needs. The reforms that the minister eventually brings to this House will have to be effective indeed to overcome this failure of the government so far to meet the very real needs and concerns of unit owners whom I speak to in my electorate of Currumbin.

Wining and dining leaders of unit owners associations, which has been a strategy tried in the past to neutralise criticism, will not work with the sort of people I know who have first-hand experience of both bad managers and bad decisions from the commission. The leader of one association is one vote. While he may or may not have the power to influence others, he will not change the perceptions of those hurt by their experiences. Only real reform will do that. It is a challenge and we are all waiting to see if the current minister has the toughness to meet it. No point scoring in this House will win the confidence of these people. No political spins in letters fobbing off people with real complaints will work either. The idea that the government has failed unit owners is strong in the electorate and throughout Queensland.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my call for an all-party parliamentary committee to immediately review all of the issues I have raised today with regard to the Liquor Act to ensure that they are appropriately addressed and dealt with. With some reservations, but mostly praise, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (3.51 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill to make a brief contribution. After listening to the 45-minute contribution of the shadow minister, I was not sure whether members of the opposition were supporting or opposing the legislation.

Mr Mickel: That's typical of the coalition.

Mr FINN: Personifies the coalition, I think. But I was very pleased to hear the final comment that the shadow minister will be supporting the bill. This legislation delivers stage 2 of the Premier's 17-point City Safety Action Plan, which is all about making the city safer. This arose from some violent incidents that members in this House are aware of.

The first stage of this bill was introduced in April, and members spoke at length about those issues then. As I said, this legislation brings in stage 2 of that city plan, which is about tougher legislation for licensed premises in a few areas. I do not think I need to go over any of the violent incidents that occurred. As I said in the April debate, I believe that we live in a fairly safe city. It is pretty low rent in that sometimes in politics we exploit law and order and violence issues. Having said that, it is very important for us to introduce legislation that regulates an industry that maintains the safety of our city and introduces those responsibilities that are required if we are to live in a tolerant and civil society.

I am not going to comment on all of the issues with regard to liquor. I do not think I need to comment on the drinking competitions. I am sure other members will, and I am sure the minister's staff are very well briefed on these things. However, I want to pick up on a couple of issues that the member for Currumbin mentioned in relation to CCTV and crowd controllers, and this is why I was flummoxed as to whether she was supporting or opposing the bill. This legislation in terms of CCTV brings in a requirement that there is closed-circuit TV at public entrances and exits to licensed premises. I think that is a pretty hard one to argue with. However, the member for Currumbin said that this might discourage people from going into a place that they otherwise might like to enter. Well, bad luck! My view is that, if people are not prepared to be on a closed-circuit television camera going into or leaving a venue, I am quite happy for them not to come in if I am in that premises. There is a safety aspect of closed-circuit TVs. This is one of them. This is a good proposal.

In relation to crowd controllers, this legislation brings in regulations that determine the number of crowd controllers that are required. My colleagues in the LHMU have worked very hard, together with the minister's office, with this industry to determine safety for both patrons and crowd controllers. This legislation is about safety for both. It is about making sure that a crowd controller is not outnumbered in a difficult situation and it is about making sure that there are enough crowd controllers to maintain order in difficult environments. So this is about safety of both patrons and crowd controllers.

It is interesting to note that in her contribution the member for Currumbin said that it is hard to get crowd controllers and she said that she consulted the industry. I understand that it probably is a job that not everyone wants to do. But the best thing she could do to ensure that there are crowd controllers available for employment is to get on to her federal colleagues and say, 'Don't take the penalty rates off these people. Don't take their workplace conditions off them. Don't put at threat any of the penalty component of their wages,' because these people rely on that income. That is why they do those jobs. That is how we are able to get those people—because they rely on their penalty rates. If the member is really concerned about it, that is one thing she could do. She can sit there and smirk and laugh at it, but if she thinks that crowd controllers do not rely on their penalty rates then she is completely out of touch with the industry she purports to represent. This legislation actually makes it more likely that crowd controllers will be available to licensees in the industry, because this legislation is about making it safer to work as a crowd controller. In fact, the member has her argument completely mixed up. Here is a way she can contribute to the people she purports to represent by standing up to the feds. One of the reasons for supporting this legislation is that it makes it safer and therefore easier for licensees to get crowd controllers.

The member for Currumbin also talked about the review of the legislation and said that it would be better to throw it all out and start with a blank page. She said that she believes that the people reviewing the legislation under its complete review next year are not the appropriate people to be doing that. I do not have any concern with the department reviewing legislation. One only has to look at the explanatory notes to this bill in relation to the Office of Fair Trading reviewing the Security Providers Act. It says that the consultation group comprised representatives from the Office of Fair Trading, the security industry, unions, Griffith University, consumers associations, representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury, Justice and Attorney-General. This is who the department consults within the review of acts. It does not just do it in the department building; it consults with industry, stakeholders and relevant people. If one looks at the consultation that went into this bill, there were written surveys, telephone surveys, meetings with peak bodies and meetings with independent licensees. Consultation goes into the review of legislation, and I have no concern about the passage of the full review that is happening next year. I am sure that the opposition will be consulted in the review of that legislation. Every time there is a review there is an opportunity for the members opposite to be involved in it. So I have no concerns about that at all.

With regard to the comments by the member for Currumbin about the consultation process, she indicated that some businesses were not supportive of the legislation. It is acknowledged in the explanatory notes that they were generally supportive. Sure, there were some concerns amongst licensees. As was mentioned in the April debate, the responsibility for safety falls on all. It falls on licensees. It falls on patrons. It falls on governments to regulate, and there are going to be some restrictions on people. That is tough. There will be some people who will not want any restrictions and who will want to be able to run licensed premises without restriction. They will be the people who are concerned about some of these impacts, but it is their responsibility to deal with this. When we talked about this issue in April, we talked about the 12-month trial on lockouts. I do not intend to talk too much about that, except to say that I have not had complaints to my office about the 3 am lockout at all.

I have talked to some young people who say they find that they come out of a nightclub at three o'clock and they have to go home. They cannot get back in and they subsequently go home. So I do not think that it is having any negative effect that I can find, with one exception which I think will surely show up in the review. It happened to my partner's mother who went outside a nightclub after lock-out time in Cairns and left her handbag inside. She had some difficulty getting back inside to get it. I can assure members, my partner's mother is not somebody that we need to be worried about in terms of the level of public drunkenness on the streets of Cairns, but that is an area that will need to be looked at—how individual licensees manage that lock-out when there are those kinds of situations. I am sure that has been raised on plenty of other occasions.

Finally, in terms of the amendments to the act known PAMDA, this addresses the contract situation which gives protections to buyers and sellers. It fixes up an anomaly where there was concern about the faxing and electronic transmission of contracts. I have met with Don Mackenzie of the REIQ and spoken to him about this. He says to me, 'This is great. Get this amendment through. Get it done. Get it quickly. We all want it in the industry.' I know that this delivers protection to consumers under contracts because it gives the warning up front. So I am not concerned because the REIQ wants this through. It wants it through because it wants the industry to be as clear and up front as possible for both seller and consumer. So I support that area of the act. I am sure the real estate and vehicle sellers in my electorate will be very happy with that too. With those few comments, I support the bill.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (4.02 pm): I rise to make a few brief comments on the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. In doing so, I indicate that the shadow minister has covered the issues in a wide-ranging contribution to the debate and covered it very well. I would just like to put the point of view that in regional Queensland as well there are issues that need to be addressed in the longer term. I know this bill particularly relates to the situation in Brisbane; however, there are throughout regional Queensland—Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and so on—issues that need to be addressed in a very similar way.

I will go quickly through those issues which have been identified in the second reading speech. Developing and maintaining a house safety policy or house policy is obviously a requirement that needs to be in force. Another issue is the employment of crowd controllers in sufficient numbers to ensure safety and security. The issue, obviously, in the previous speaker's contribution was that there was a problem in that area that maybe is of the federal government's doing. I assure members that crowd controllers and bouncers, as they are well known, are well paid. There have been some issues in previous times in respect of that employment, but they have been addressed. The crowd controllers are well trained nowadays and are basically working to a policy that ensures that patrons of licensed premises are well looked after. However, there is a problem in terms of the numbers of crowd controllers that needs to be addressed.

The training of those particular people certainly is an issue right throughout Queensland. I raise the issue with the Queensland government in terms of what provision there is currently in relation to training of crowd controllers and security staff right throughout Queensland. This concern is not related just to that area of employment. The issue of competitions that involve contestants consuming quantities of alcohol on the premises is not just related to Brisbane. It goes right across Queensland and my view would be that that also needs to be looked at on a continuing basis right across Queensland. Of course, to ensure all staff complete responsible service of alcohol training is also an issue that is relevant across Queensland.

In Mackay, the installation of closed-circuit television has been an issue in the nightclub precinct for some time and, indeed, probably goes back five or eight years as the member for Mackay, who is not currently in the House, would attest. There has always been an argument about who should actually put that closed-circuit television monitoring in. Mackay City Council, for instance, refused to do it because of the cost involved. The police were keen to have some sort of closed-circuit television so that they could maintain some watch on the streets and, of course, the licensed premises were averse to actually spending that sort of money on the installation of closed-circuit TV if they did not have to. So there was an issue and that has been partly addressed but it really needs to be looked at on a continuing basis right across Queensland.

I have to say, though, that we can pass legislation through this House until we are black or blue in the face but the reality is that the legislation has to be enforced. I have raised the issue in this House previously where we had a situation in Sarina where there was a licensed premises that went for, to my knowledge, between three and six months without a licence. They traded without a licence. The previous licensee had left the hotel and three or four months later when an inquiry was made it was found that the previous licensee had cancelled her affiliation with the Liquor Licensing Commission in Mackay but was still identified as the licensee of those premises. There were all sorts of things going on at that licensed premises. It was a bone of contention with the police and the public in the Sarina area for quite some time. I am just wondering how that could possibly happen under the licensing provisions we have currently. So what I am saying is that it is great to have legislation but it has to be enforced and we really have to be on top of it. In respect of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and real estate transactions, I totally support the legislative clarification. It will give some certainty in respect of transactions of real estate. With those few words I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise today to support the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Premier and Minister Keech on their determination to make Brisbane a safer place at night by requiring pubs and clubs to ensure adequate security is in place at their venues. I think everyone would agree that it is vitally important that our young people can enjoy a night out without fear. Having enough trained crowd controllers working in these venues and closed-circuit TV installed at all entry and exit points are essential steps in achieving a safer environment for all patrons.

I would like to refer to an instance recently up in Noosa, where we have had closed-circuit TVs in operation. We have had the additional requirement of crowd controllers maintaining surveillance outside the venues for at least an hour after the designated closing time. That demonstrates both the Beattie government's commitment to making Brisbane's streets safer for everybody and also some individual operators' taking this initiative and running with it. This pub in Noosaville has closed-circuit TV and, also, you have to produce your ID card. Recently there was a sexual assault on a young woman who imprudently left the venue intoxicated on her own and was sexually assaulted by a group of young men. They have been tracked down and prosecuted. I think that is a remarkable outcome. It is showing that clubs and pubs, the police and the security providers are working in concert and are having tremendous outcomes. Hopefully these youngsters will cotton on to the fact that if they hand in their ID and there is a camera on them in and out of a venue they are not able to commit dreadful crimes on other people with impunity. We can only hope and pray that that kind of behaviour is deterred.

I am aware that the majority of the licensees already provide a high level of security for their patrons and their willingness to support the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan is applauded. We also have to acknowledge that there is a level of personal responsibility that all people have to exercise when they are out in public spaces. It is not up to just security providers, hoteliers or bartenders to manage the behaviour of other people. People have to start taking responsibility for themselves.

I congratulate the minister on the initiatives and the consultation that she took with the security providers consultation committee, which I had the great pleasure of chairing. Yes, not everyone was going to end up happy but there was consultation around the table and people came to a consensus of what would be best to take the industry forward. I do not know who the member for Currumbin has been talking to but obviously they are not key stakeholders. Perhaps they are just a litany of grumblers who have been involved at some stage but who need to be more professional in how they approach their business.

I fully support the amendments to the Liquor Act and believe that they are a significant step forward in creating a safer Brisbane for everybody. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.10 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill—a bill that the opposition will be supporting. This bill will amend three acts: the Liquor Act, the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997. First of all, I would like to deal with the PAMDA provisions and I would like to thank the minister for having incorporated those. I have had correspondence with the minister about a particular case that, I think, instigated the review of the PAMDA legislation. The case was MNM Developments Pty Ltd v. William Alan Gerrard. The gentleman involved was a constituent of mine. It was a quite a significant matter. I refer to my letter to the minister, which states—

> This matter concerned the definition of attachment of a warning statement, particularly with regard to a faxed contract. Until this decision, trial judges had interpreted the above sections in a manner that protected the contract. This decision, however, makes it difficult for agents and sellers to enforce contracts.

I note the comments from the member for Yeerongpilly, who said that he had spoken to people from the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. Of course, they were greatly supportive of changes to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. I had had correspondence from the solicitors for this particular constituent. The matter was very upsetting and, as I understand it, it is still in the process of being appealed because unfortunately—or fortunately, I suppose, because I am not someone who is necessarily in favour of retrospective legislation—there were a number of contracts that were in danger or could be in danger of being terminated simply because of, as it happened in this court case, judges literally referring to the dictionary definition of the word 'attachment'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Is this before the courts at the moment?

Mr LANGBROEK: I think it has been—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You be very careful if it is before the courts.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I say, I am glad to see that the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act has been amended.

I now turn to the amendments to the other acts. The reaction by the government in addressing this issue was aptly described by my colleague the member for Currumbin as 'knee-jerk'. While there has been a lot of talk about the minister's 17-point plan—and I remember it being instigated after some incidents last year on the Gold Coast following some incidents in Brisbane—making our nightclub precincts safer is obviously a priority, I think the state government is kidding itself if it believes that it has made substantial ground in the ongoing battle to make our nightspots safer.

One major problem with this government's bill and, indeed, its overall policy to make our nightspots safer is the red tape that is preventing implementation. For example, the problem of a chronic shortage of security guards in our entertainment hubs is being compounded by the red tape that is stopping businesses from rapidly hiring new security guards. Another concern I have is that under the proposed legislation there will be no avenue to appeal decisions and that will make it more difficult for businesses to go about their day-to-day operations. Under current arrangements proprietors can appeal against decisions.

There are other matters that the member for Currumbin has gone over that will seriously affect nightclub proprietors and businesses, while not necessarily making our nightclubs safer. There is also an issue about the cost and the ability of providing closed-circuit TV on property that is not the property of the business owner. I ask the minister to clarify paragraph 142AH(a), which states—

'It is a condition of the licensee's or permittee's licence or permit that the licensee or permittee—

(a) must have closed-circuit television equipment at each entrance and exit of the licensed premises or premises to which the permit relates that provides access for patrons of the premises during the trading period;

Obviously, there are times when closed-circuit TV is going to have to be provided in areas that the business owner may not necessarily have access to because they do not own those areas. I will be interested to hear what the minister has to say in addressing that matter.

As the member for Surfers Paradise, I obviously have a great interest in matters relating to the safety of nightclub patrons. I urge the government to keep looking for ways of, and I will obviously give bipartisan support to, making nightclubs safer for our younger people.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (4.15 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005. The bill is brought before the House to further the implementation of stage 2 of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. I commend the Premier and the minister for the enormous amount of work that they have done around the issue of safety in the greater Brisbane area. Of course, as we have heard, the issue of safety in nightclub areas is not an exclusive issue for Brisbane. Indeed, in the Whitsundays presently we are seeing something of an escalation of what can only be described as very poor behaviour by patrons of nightclubs at Airlie Beach. It is of some concern to me, and I know it is to my constituents, because we are seeing an increase in incidents ranging from police being spat at to police being assaulted. I think there is a lot that can be taken from the amendments in this bill and applied across-the-board.

I want to commend the work of the public safety task force in the Whitsundays that voluntarily addresses issues such as behaviour in and around licensed areas, security providers and their reactions to incidents that occur. The task force does a good job. The members get together from a whole range of areas—the police, the council, Liquor Licensing officers and other interested bodies as well. They do the very best they can to address these issues as they arise.

One of the important things that we are moving towards, and it is certainly addressed in this bill, is responsible service of alcohol training. Indeed, this amendment bill introduces mandatory RSA training as a condition on all premises in the Brisbane City Council area that operate after 1 am. All staff involved in the sale and supply of liquor must attend the responsible service of alcohol training course. The phrase 'all staff' includes licensees, permittees, nominees, bartenders, glass collectors, floor hosts or hostesses, room service staff and crowd controllers. While a glass collector or a floor host or hostess or a crowd controller do not directly serve alcohol, they actively circulate throughout the premises to monitor patron behaviour. They may not directly hand a glass of beer or alcohol over the counter; however, they are responsible for the safety and security of the patrons on the premises.

We have heard of instances where less intoxicated persons keep buying drinks from the bartender while unduly intoxicated people remain at the table at the back of the premises largely undetected. Only the staff who are circulating on the floor will be aware that the patron is engaging in the excessive consumption of alcohol because the bartender cannot see them. So the staff who circulate on the floor of premises need to be aware of the signs of unduly intoxicated persons so that they can identify patrons in this state and ensure that this type of destructive behaviour stops.

The content of the responsible service of alcohol training developed by Liquor Licensing and trained statewide by licensed trainers in registered training organisations is both comprehensive and inclusive. It has information which is imperative to working on licensed premises in a Queensland environment. Information covered in the program includes, but is not limited to, how to develop a house policy; what is responsible service of alcohol; identification for entering licensed premises; minors on licensed premises—and that refers to younger people, not the type of miners we have in my electorate; identifying unduly intoxicated and disorderly patrons; understanding the purpose of crowd controllers; anti-aggression tactics for dealing with intoxicated patrons; how to refuse service to patrons; the benefit of staff training and the premises' operational philosophy; responsible hospitality practices; noise and amenity issues; working with liquor accords and within the community; understanding the range of laws governing the operation of a licensed premises; Indigenous issues and alcohol management plans; and antismoking reforms.

As members can see, it is a comprehensive program that clearly outlines to all staff of licensed premises their role in ensuring a safe and secure environment for patrons and their fellow staff members. The program also highlights the risk to employees of licensed premises if they decide to break the law by serving intoxicated or under-age persons. In the case of a bartender serving a minor, that bartender could be fined a maximum of $3,000. If I knew that I was employed by a company, I would want to be aware of the risks associated with the tasks that I perform in that employment, especially if the risk is linked to a hefty financial burden.

Considering that a large percentage of staff on licensed premises are not permanent—particularly in areas like the Whitsundays where often these jobs are given to transitory visitors such as backpackers—and that they might be in employment to facilitate other goals in their life, such as pursuing further education and travel or as a backup to other employment, it is imperative that these people who are least likely to be able to pay these fines are made aware of the risks that they face. They need to be informed.

The responsible service of alcohol training program developed by Liquor Licensing seeks to educate and empower staff of licensed premises to work within the bounds of the law. This ensures that they are aware of their responsibilities and earn a pay packet that is free from unnecessary fines. So I applaud the bill for seeking to educate and inform all staff of licensed premises of their responsibilities to their colleagues, to the patrons, to the community and to themselves. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.21 pm): It is my pleasure this afternoon to rise to speak in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005. The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005 includes amendments to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, and it is these two bills to which I would like to direct my comments.

The Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act provides important consumer protections for people purchasing residential property. These protections include strict requirements for sellers to provide buyers with statutory warnings about real estate contracts and strict requirements as to the form of those warnings and the manner in which they are presented to purchasers. The warnings must be attached as the first page of the contract documents to ensure that they are prominent. Similarly, one of the objects of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act is to provide an appropriate level of consumer protection for people intending to purchase a lot in a community title scheme such as a home unit or a town house. The Body Corporate and Community Management Act requires sellers to provide buyers with statutory warnings about various body corporate issues.

The complementary consumer protection provisions of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act are designed to ensure that buyers are aware of the important information so that they may be able to make informed decisions about their purchase. Amendments to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act proposed by the bill are intended to facilitate the use of communication technology in real estate transactions. In particular, the amendments are aimed towards facsimile and email transmission. While the current provisions cater for the physical exchange of contract documents, the provisions do not contemplate the conduct of real estate transactions by facsimile or other electronic means. For some buyers and sellers in real estate transactions, the physical exchange of hard copy documents is impractical, particularly where the parties are not in close proximity to each other.

The present legislation is unclear as to whether documents transmitted by facsimile or email meet the requirements of the act regarding prominence and clarity. These amendments seek to provide buyers and sellers with a process for using electronic transmission to conduct their transactions in a manner which ensures that the consumer protection warnings are displayed appropriately. However, the amendments have been carefully drafted to ensure that the existing consumer protections are not diminished by the use of facsimile or electronic devices. For example, proposed amendments to section 366 of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act prescribe a clear and detailed process for sellers to follow if they have provided the buyer with a contract and associated documents by facsimile. The process is designed to ensure that the buyer's attention is drawn to the statutory warning statement and that the warning statement takes a prominent place in the faxed documents. A similar and complementary process is established for the sale of lots included in community title schemes.

The amendments also make it clear that the use of electronic communication under the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act is subject to the Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act 2001. This provides important protection for buyers and sellers in that people must consent to required information being given by electronic communication for it to be an effective transmission. Neither a buyer nor a seller will be required to accept documents electronically if they do not wish to do so. I believe that these amendments will provide further protection to home buyers in Queensland, and I thank the minister and her department for bringing these amendments to the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (4.26 pm): I rise in the House today to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005. This piece of legislation brings before the parliament stage 2 of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan, which came about after a visit that the Premier, the police minister and

the Lord Mayor, I understand, made to central Brisbane in March 2005. I want to say to the House today, though, that I feel very safe in Brisbane. Brisbane on the whole is an incredibly safe city. At various times, for various political reasons, people have had an interest in suggesting that the city is unsafe. I do not know that the Lord Mayor is necessarily the best person to take advice on how safe Brisbane city is in the evening, but I feel safe in Brisbane. I feel safe in the centre of Brisbane. I feel safe in the Valley and in West End. I feel safe in my electorate late at night. This is a city that is not unsafe for people to go out, have a drink, have dinner and have a good time.

I have raised in the House before my concerns about how the lockout is affecting not just young people but also live music in Brisbane city. I want to bring to the attention of the House once again a number of concerns about the way that the lockout is working in practice. I understand fully the intent behind it. It was designed to ensure that we are all safe when we are out and about at night, but I have a couple of concerns that I want to raise and the first involves live music.

It is not unusual nowadays, particularly with larger concerts, for the main act to be scheduled to go on stage as late as 11 pm. That is the scheduled start but quite regularly acts will not go on stage until 11.30 or a quarter to 12. I will give members an example. On Sunday night Ben Lee will play at the Arena. He is scheduled to go on stage at 11 pm. He is scheduled to be on stage for two hours. If he is late starting, which is not unreasonable, he will not come off stage until probably 1.30 or a quarter to two. I raise this as an example because I cannot imagine anyone in this place who would describe the sort of music that Ben Lee promotes as being in any way inappropriate or unwholesome. It is great music. He had a wonderful concert at the River Stage supporting Missy Higgins recently. It is wonderful music. I think there are reasonable values that are expressed in it. I am fortunate enough to have some tickets and I am going to go along. But let me say this: if he comes off stage at 1.30 or a quarter to two, it is not unreasonable for people to want to spend a couple of hours celebrating a great concert.

People come out of the Arena at a quarter to two. People are not going to run out like they are in a mad stampede. They are going to walk out in an orderly fashion. It is going to be a quarter past two or 2.30 before people leave the venue. Then the lockout is going to kick in at 3 o'clock. We have to be reasonable about how we apply some of this legislation. I think it is creating a problem where quite sensible people, who want to celebrate having been to a nice concert, are going to be disadvantaged and are going to be told that they cannot come into a venue except for the one place that, sadly, is exempt from the legislation—I think it is the one place that the legislation should apply to—the casino. People leave the concert. They want to have a drink and the only place they will be able to go is the casino. I do not think that is the intention we had when we introduced the legislation. The lockout was designed to ensure people's safety. It is not going to do that in this case.

I want to raise a concern that has been raised with me by a number of taxi drivers and a number of young people about a serious problem in Brisbane, namely that it is incredibly difficult on a Friday or a Saturday night to get a cab between about a quarter to two and four in the morning. It is not unreasonable for people to want to get around Brisbane between those times—they might be leaving a party, for instance. It is now incredibly difficult to get a cab at those times in Brisbane. Maybe I am incorrect in saying this, but cab drivers tell me—and the anecdotal evidence would suggest it, too—that it is the lockout that creates this situation. There are people moving around at about 3 am. I do not think that was necessarily the intention, but that is clearly what is happening.

Another concern is one that affects my electorate, and it particularly affects suburbs such as St Lucia. This is the second last sitting week before we come back next year. When we come back next year our first sitting week is actually during Orientation Week at the University of Queensland. St Lucia is situated on a peninsula in the Brisbane River. There is the university at one end and there are two pubs at the other end, but in between there are large numbers of student households.

One of the problems that occurs, particularly at times like Orientation Week, is that people want to drink and party and do things late at night. It is something that goes on. Because of the lockout, I have been told by student societies at the University of Queensland that they are planning not to do things away from the suburb. A lot of people are actually saying, 'Look, what we'll do is we'll have the party at someone's house in the suburb where the lockout doesn't affect us.' It creates a problem in my electorate. The party is held in an atmosphere where people do not necessarily have any training in the responsible service of alcohol. There are no bouncers to stop people showing up, as happened in Kenmore Hills recently. In that incident a high school party turned into an absolute shambles. A couple of hundred people turned up, and a number of them were violent. The lockout is creating a situation where people are having these events in the suburbs.

A clearly unintended consequence is that we are going to have massive problems, I would predict, in the suburbs in and around Orientation Week at the universities next year. We have not actually had an Orientation Week at the unis since the lockout has come into effect. We are going to see it next year. I think the Queensland Police Service and Liquor Licensing should resource a number of police liaison officers or police officers whose responsibility, at times like Orientation Week, is not to deal with normal policing matters but rather with things associated with the particular atmosphere that is created in places such as St Lucia.

One of the concerns that a lot of my residents raise with me is that they will call the police and say, 'There's a party. It's pretty outrageous. It's now 3 am. There are bad things going on. You've got to come and deal with it.' But if no-one's life has been threatened or if there is no accusation of a serious crime, it does not necessarily get police attention within four, five or six hours. It is causing a lot of bad blood between some of the older residents in St Lucia and some of the younger residents. I have had contact with some of the older residents whose concerns, I have to say, are often incredibly valid. They are quite reasonable people. By the same token, I have spoken with some of the younger residents who are quite reasonable, too. There are concerns that they have been unfairly treated. That is quite reasonable as well. A breakdown of communication has been created by a situation that was not intended.

I have raised in the House before my concerns about the degree of binge drinking that is prevalent within our society. The member for Ashgrove has spoken quite passionately in this place about his concerns that people in their latter teens are binge drinking rather than enjoying a drink over a period of time. It is a serious concern. I would like my concern on this to be noted.

I want to raise a couple of issues about how bouncers operate. We all know the role that they play at pubs and clubs. These are individuals who are licensed, which is wonderful. However, they are people who are in a position of authority and a position of power. They often deal with young people who, because they have had a few drinks, are not necessarily at the peak of their decision-making abilities and can at times be a little matey. I can understand the frustrations that people would have because of that.

There is absolutely no excuse for bouncers behaving inappropriately. I was on a LCARC visit to Sydney earlier this year. I was very impressed with the way a number of bouncers dealt with a patron at a pub who was behaving in the most atrocious way. I thought those bouncers were incredibly professional in how they behaved with a very difficult patron. By the same token, I want to say that I saw an incredibly inappropriate situation at one club in Brisbane almost 12 months ago. I was absolutely stunned and amazed by it. A couple of people and I intervened. It was a disgusting display.

I think that bouncers should be randomly tested for alcohol. These are people who have a responsibility to be stone cold sober when they are performing their duties. I call upon the minister to make sure that in the future the legislation is amended so that people cannot operate as a bouncer in the state of Queensland with a blood alcohol limit that would not allow them to drive a taxi. I think that is a serious and useful consideration. I also think that there should be random drug testing of bouncers. An allegation that has been made to me on a number occasions is that bouncers have been, quite frankly, off their face when dealing with the public.

I want to finish by raising a concern that was raised with me by a young man who I know to be someone of integrity and who has a lot of commonsense. It involves an experience that he had last Wednesday night when dealing with people who were licensed crowd controllers at the RE. He wrote to me. We understand that the guys were from Queensland Hospitality and Security Staff. They were not RE employees but were employed as contractors from this company. The situation was basically this. He drove to the RE to meet friends who were finishing uni. He parked his car in the car park at the rear of the pub. He said—

... they refused me entry on the basis I was drunk or failing that (when it became apparent I was sober)—

that is, that the man was sober—

... on drugs and told me to take a break.

He then asked them for reasons. It seems to me a bit odd that people would suggest that someone who had pulled into the car park at their pub was drunk and that their immediate response would not be to call the police and say, 'There's a bloke who's driving who's tanked,' rather than just saying, 'Oh, no, you just can't come in.' That strikes me as a little strange.

I am told that there was one fellow on the entrance to the beer garden, who was No. 977, and there was another man, No. 197, who is described here as 'an obese chap with peroxided hair'. Failing to get a satisfactory response at the time from either guard, they told him that it was at their discretion and that they could guarantee that he would not be allowed entry for arguing with them, so he asked to speak to the manager. The guards brought out another fellow who was in charge of the security staff that night, so he was told. He made his complaint about their conduct to the manager in terms that their refusal to allow him entry was arbitrary and unreasonable.

He did not have any success. He then returned to his car to go elsewhere. The letter states—

As I walked up the laneway from Moggill Rd to the carpark (having walked around from the front of the hotel) I saw a large bouncer and 2 of his mates running into the carpark. The fat guy told me, 'There are no cameras out here. Why did you insult me like that?' He then proceeded to push and kick me a number of times, when I tried to run to a camera to at least have it recorded, a 2nd fellow adopted a karate stance and tried to kick my legs out from under me. Eventually, as other patrons seemed to be leaving the hotel they desisted in the assault.

This young fellow fortunately walked away while bouncers called out statements like, 'Run, boy, run,' as he walked back to his car. Quite sensibly, this young man then drove to the Indooroopilly Police Station and made a report of the incident to them. I understand that possibly there will be some legal action proceeding.

I think that this behaviour was totally inappropriate and I am going to follow it up with the club. I raise it in the House tonight to put on record my absolute disgust at the sort of behaviour that was arbitrarily meted out to a law-abiding member of the Queensland community.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.41 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of this bill. In doing so, I want to respond to the comments made by the member for Indooroopilly. I must say that I am a strong supporter of the lockout. A few years ago I used to go out until late in the night—and the member for Fitzroy will attest to this. I used to like going from place to place. However, the lockout applies not just to places in Brisbane or in coastal areas. Mooloolaba has had lockouts from 1.30 am since 1990. Lockouts are being introduced throughout the whole of the country because of their effectiveness. It is easy to tell after only a few months whether it is working or not working. However, it is going to take a while for everything to settle down before we can make that assessment. It needs a holistic approach, such as the transport minister announcing the 24-hour train and bus services and the introduction of 50 new licences for cabs in Brisbane. Solutions are not going to happen overnight.

It is also wrong to say that parties at houses are a new invention. Late-night partying at residences has been around since Jesus played full-back for Jerusalem. They have been around forever. We have to manage that. That is not to say that we need to allow people to move from hotel to hotel after 3 am.

I heard the example given of a concert that might finish at two o'clock. Those patrons then have an hour to get to a club or a hotel that is open. If the concert was held in the Arena, there are plenty of avenues to get to a hotel or nightclub that is open. The only difference is that if patrons leave after three o'clock, they go home. There are plenty of opportunities. If they have to go home early that night they can go out at eight o'clock the next night and stay out until 5 am if they like. As responsible legislators, we passed legislation and we need to allow that legislation to work before we jump the gun and say it did not work and try to criticise it. We must allow that to occur.

We talk about responsible drinking practices. We have passed legislation dealing with that. We have passed legislation dealing with promotions. Hotels cannot promote activities to people outside; they can only do that in house. We have also cracked down on a lot of those five drinks for $5 promotions. The Liquor Licensing Division is doing a great job in that regard.

It is also easy to say that we have a binge-drinking culture. However, people have been drinking for a long time. At least now we have measures in place promoting the responsible service of alcohol and promoting responsible drinking. At the end of the day people have to take responsibility for their own actions.

It is a bit like saying we should be banning schoolies week. We cannot. It is impossible. At the end of the day people must be responsible for their own actions. It is terrible that two assaults have occurred during schoolies week. From all reports, the two victims of those assaults were walking by themselves. I know from all the advertising and from the hotel chaplaincy going to schools and talking to students that the one bit of advice they give to people is, 'Stay with your friends. Stay in a group. Do not go walking individually.' People need to heed that advice.

It is easy to say that we have a binge-drinking culture. Let us face it: the biggest problem within our culture, particularly within the nightclub scene, is the drug culture. We need to work with communities, individuals and groups to try to counteract that. While some people suffer from that binge-drinking culture—and we need to continue to work on that—it is silly to say that it is a new creation, because it is not.

I would like to talk about crowd controllers. The crowd control ratios will be mandatory conditions for all licensed premises in the Brisbane City Council area which operate after 1 am. Crowd controllers must be licensed under the Security Providers Act. They will also be required to attend mandatory responsible service of alcohol training, ensuring that they understand how a licensed premises should operate when hosting patrons. This ensures that crowd controllers are able to deal with the issues and risks associated with licensed premises and prevent problems before they occur. They are there to assist licensees maintain a safe environment for patrons and staff.

I understand that many Brisbane licensees are worried about the impact on their businesses of hiring crowd controllers on a regular basis. However, it would seem to be a small price to pay if it is going to make the streets safer. Licensees have a duty of care to their patronage.

To have a licence is a privilege. To have a licence, particularly after one o'clock, is a greater privilege. With that privilege comes commitments. Contributions have to be made to obtain that privilege. Endorsing the appropriate ratio of crowd controllers to patrons will ensure the removal of patrons from premises professionally and appropriately. Crowd controllers will deny entry to unwelcome patrons, ensuring that those entering are not underage or unduly intoxicated. Adequate crowd controller numbers will provide an extra set of eyes on the floor of the premises to ensure that patrons are not gratuitously drinking, lining up drinks away from the bar, taking advantage of or impinging on the good times of others. The presence of crowd controllers will ensure that patrons act appropriately.

Although a number of factors underpin violent behaviour in Brisbane's inner city, alcohol has been identified as a significant contributor to existing problems and late trading environments. Crowd controllers are a licence condition that will assist in managing public safety in and around licensed premises. When compared to the benefits that the imposition will deliver to the community, the minimal disadvantage to licensed venues is justified. It is considered that, in the long-term, licensed establishments will adjust to the initial impact the licence conditions will have on them. Professional crowd controllers, licensed and trained in the responsible service of alcohol, will provide a public benefit. They will increase safety for staff and patrons, ensure safer streets, reduce violence and encourage greater responsibility in the service and consumption of alcohol.

I congratulate the Missos union, which looks after crowd controllers. It does a great job. It has worked with the minister and the department with regard to this legislation. It does a terrific job of representing crowd controllers and working in with industry.

Before I commend the bill to the House, I congratulate the Liquorland group, particularly the local manager, Jason Tyler—who is moving up to Bargara—and his assistant manager, Cade. Recently, the Mansfield Hotel Rock Arena had a relaunch after an absence of eight to ten years. The Rock Arena used to be the place to see live acts on Brisbane's southside. I remember seeing the Sunny Boys play there a few years ago—well, many years ago. It was great. Jimmy Barnes was there a couple of weeks ago.

A government member interjected.

Mr REEVES: I did not go. As I have said before, the next concert I will attend is The Wiggles in two weeks' time. However, 1,000 people attended. It is great that the southside of Brisbane, once again, has the Rock Arena open for live acts. I particularly congratulate Jason Tyler and Cade of the Mansfield Hotel. It is great that people do not have to travel to the city to see great acts perform. I look forward to possibly attending one in the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (4.51 pm): I rise to make a few comments in relation to this bill. I will confine them to the Liquor Act itself, initially concerning the conditions imposed on licensed premises in the Brisbane City Council area that are authorised to operate after 1.00 am.

The bill highlights five requirements: all licensees must develop and maintain a house policy; licensees must employ sufficient numbers of crowd controllers, as outlined under the regulation; a prohibition on competitions that involve contestants consuming alcohol on the premises; all staff must complete training in the responsible service of alcohol; and closed circuit television is to be installed to the public entrance and exit. These conditions stem from the summit held on 25 February 2005 from which the 17 point Brisbane Safety Action Plan derives, which was released by the Premier on 1 March 2005. In essence, the purpose of the conditions is to broaden the action plan to manage alcohol abuse and misuse and associated violence in Brisbane. It will be applied equally to all licensees in the Brisbane City Council area.

We are all acutely aware that alcohol consumption and abuse has led to many violent clashes and incidents in Brisbane. The necessity for that to cease is self-evident, not only to protect our youth but also to protect the people in the city who are going to-and-fro from different functions and destinations. On many occasions in the past, third parties—in this case, licensees—have failed to provide adequate protection. They will now be required to provide extra care and security. This will ensure that young people who use their premises do not suffer at a time when they are simply enjoying themselves and that their enjoyment is not inflicted on passers-by.

Similar requirements would apply equally to nightclubs in Caloundra, Mooloolaba and across the Sunshine Coast. My office often receives complaints from people who live in or are visiting Caloundra that they are hounded by drunken youths late at night or early in the morning over the weekend. A lot of these people pour out from nightclubs where employees are serving alcohol to people who are well past being able to deal with it, thereby putting those young people and the public at large in jeopardy.

Actions by nightclub owners must be responsible and any action that is taken to make them responsible is to be applauded. The Sunshine Coast has now seen the result of ongoing alcohol abuse over many years. In Caloundra there are arguments and fights between youths who come out of nightclubs. Other areas across the coast suffer a similar fate. A very firm hand needs to be placed on nightclub owners and the young people themselves to ensure that they and the public do not suffer as a consequence of their actions, which are dictated by alcohol. We need to ensure that the public are able to exercise their right to walk down the street at night without being molested by drunken youths.

This bill, though applying to Brisbane, could apply equally to many other areas throughout Queensland. Again, I highlight the Sunshine Coast has similar concerns stemming from hooliganism brought about by alcohol abuse at nightclubs.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (4.54 pm): At the outset, I would like to say how interesting I found the member for Mansfield's contribution to this debate. In fact, it seemed quite a bit like a confession about how he used to wander around from place to place. In fact, the member for Fitzroy and I used to call him 'the wanderer', after that great song, *The Wanderer.* He wandered 'round and round

and round and round'. No binge drinking was done because we never stayed in one place long enough to have two beers. He used to drive us insane. However, now that he has been married for a number of years Megan does not allow him to go out very much so he has quietened down quite substantially. That is a good thing.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: Well, Sunday was very pleasant. I might make mention of that later on in my contribution.

I want to speak briefly about the part of the bill that introduces a licence condition which prohibits conducting drinking competitions or games on licensed premises where competitors or contestants are encouraged to consume liquor rapidly or excessively, or free or discount liquor is given as a prize for on-premises consumption. This initiative is a real measure that will deter people from engaging in irresponsible consumption.

I applaud the minister for introducing such a condition on licences. However, I am sad that that condition had to be introduced. The hoteliers that I know would never have engaged in this sort of activity, and never have. Some of the families have run hotels in this state for generations. They did it responsibly and they continue to act responsibly. Unfortunately, some people in the industry have not and that is why this licensing condition has had to be introduced. It is a pity that it has had to be introduced because the hoteliers that I am aware of have self-regulated for generations and have always done the right thing.

This licence condition will set a precedent that encouraging the consumption of excessive amounts of liquor is not a responsible way to do business in the liquor industry. The limiting of this behaviour at licensed premises will send a message to patrons that they do not have to drink irresponsibly to have a good time—and that is true. If licensed premises demonstrate to their patrons that they offer much more than alcohol consumption, they will not have to bear the significant cost caused by the risk of excessive drinking. In recent times, excessive consumption of alcohol is the action underlying a false message about community acceptance of alcohol as a symbol of adulthood, trivialising the negative consequences of intoxication.

I note that the honourable member for Mansfield mentioned in his contribution the schoolies week that is presently occurring down on the Gold Coast and in other places. I have a daughter—in fact, our second daughter—who is attending the celebrations. We talk to her every day; I will ring her shortly. I am sure she is out of bed by now. They are having a wonderful time down there. My elder daughter also had a wonderful time down there. They have a lot of fun. They get up to a bit of mischief.

Mr Pearce: And she is a beautiful daughter, too.

Mr BRISKEY: I take that interjection and thank the member. She certainly is a beautiful daughter. She is having a wonderful time down there with her friends. They stay out very late—her father has probably done that on occasions, as well—but they sleep for most of the morning, then get up and go to the beach and start again.

Mrs Reilly: Is she a chip off the old block?

Mr BRISKEY: I think that she is. I think they all are—which worries me. However, it is now Wednesday and she is still travelling okay. Fingers crossed that she gets through the rest of the week. I am sure that she will. She is having a ball with her mates. That is what it is all about; getting together with friends and celebrating the end of their school days. They are having a wonderful time. As the member for Mansfield said, schoolies cannot be banned. That is ridiculous. Whether or not it is banned, students will still celebrate the end of the year. They will still go to the beach—as Queenslanders do when they are celebrating something—and they will still have a lot of fun. If this parliament decides to ban it, which I am sure this parliament will not, it will not stop the event from continuing.

Mrs Reilly: No-one ran it when I went.

Mr BRISKEY: I am old enough to say that there was no schoolies week when I finished year 12 in 1972.

Mr Hoolihan interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: Yes, repeated grade 3 six times, I think.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: You are too young to know, member for Mansfield.

Mr Reeves: That's not what my sister tells me.

Mr BRISKEY: I remember her well—a lovely lady, much younger than me, of course.

Mr Terry Sullivan: I was teaching at the school when you were in senior.

Mr BRISKEY: Yes, you were. I will not tell you what we called you.

Mrs Reilly interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: No, 'Brother Sullivan' in those days.

No benefits can be derived by the community or licensed premises from such practices of overconsuming alcohol with drinking competitions or games and the destructive messages that they send out to the community. Drinking games which encourage patrons to consume alcohol excessively are harmful—we know that—and generate unhealthy competition between licensed premises in an attempt to increase patronage. In the end, it does not work. As I said at the outset, the hoteliers that I know of do not engage in this activity and still run successful businesses and have done so for many years. So this belief that it will increase patronage is not true at all. It does for a short time, but then of course the patrons go to another place which has activities other than just these drinking games, which only a few people engage in in the first place. They also encourage rogue operators in the industry trying to make a quick buck and showing no respect for their patrons. Irresponsible drinking games send the wrong message to the community about industry integrity and responsibility.

I take this opportunity to congratulate one of those hoteliers whose family has been in the industry for many years. At the recent Queensland Hotels Association awards evening the Fitzgibbon family took out the supreme award for the Glen Hotel. I congratulate Brian and his family on their achievement. It is well deserved.

Mr Horan: Fibber Magee's in Toowoomba.

Mr BRISKEY: Yes, Fibber Magee's and of course the Fringe Bar in the Valley and other pubs around the place. The Fitzgibbons are and continue to be a well-known family within the hotel and liquor industry. I know how excited they were on that night at the QHA awards. I congratulated Brian, his brothers and his mum, who was there on the night. They were very pleased to receive the award and, as I said, it was well deserved. In fact, the member for Mansfield and I and our partners were at the Glen Hotel on Sunday for the birthday of the member for Mansfield's lovely wife, Megan. We were there enjoying that hotel and the food and drinks provided. I must say it was—

Mrs Nita Cunningham interjected.

Mr BRISKEY: We had wonderful seafood provided by the member for Mansfield. I was very happy that I arrived after he had paid the bill, which was wonderful. The member for Mansfield was very well behaved last Sunday because—

Mr Pearce: Megan was there!

Mr BRISKEY: Absolutely. Megan was there making sure he behaved himself. I take this opportunity to wish Megan a happy birthday. I am sure that when we see her again I will be in trouble from the member for Mansfield—

Mrs STUCKEY: I rise to a point of order. What is the relevance of this speech that we are hearing at the moment?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): I take the point of order. I think we can give a tiny bit of latitude, as other speakers have had in this debate.

Mr BRISKEY: With those few words, I thank the minister for bringing this bill before the House and I support it wholeheartedly.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.04 pm): I note that the primary purpose of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill is to amend the Liquor Act 1992 to implement stage 2 of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. This was as a result of incidents of alcohol related violence in the Brisbane City Council area. The bill currently before the House implements stage 2 of the reforms identified by the Premier in the city safety action plan and will place tougher licence conditions on licensees in the Brisbane City Council area who trade after 1 am. These amendments will enhance public safety in the Brisbane City Council areas by requiring these licensees to develop and maintain house policy, employ crowd controllers in sufficient numbers to ensure safety and security, cease competitions that involve contestants consuming alcohol on their premises, ensure all staff complete responsible service of alcohol training, and install closed-circuit television at each public entrance.

I hope this legislation brings some commonsense in relation to issues of security for local bush events. As members would understand, local bush events are very different from events in the city. Shows in the city have Ferris wheels and rides, whereas events in the bush do not. We have events such as the dog and hog, greasy pig chases, chook chases and pig dog racing competitions. We need to hold these community events, but the biggest problem has been in terms of providing security to hold these events. For an event such as a camp draft or a country race meeting, it would cost $2,000 or $3,000 for security. I use the Einasleigh races as an example. While security was being provided, there were three police cars outside those races. When anyone came out of that race meeting, the first thing the police would do is put the breathalyser on them. But they never participated in the event. They are not there to participate or be a part of the event, like some local police officers will do, and this is a big issue.

Commonsense must prevail as security, policing and licensing regulations threaten the viability of community events in rural areas. The Pentland race meeting held last week has adopted a commonsense approach to running community events and is a fine example. Local people volunteered

their services as crowd controllers and security officials. There was a collaborative partnership between the local police officer and the organising committee, without any drama or interference necessary. This is finally recognition that our small communities are quite capable of organising successful community events in liaison with the local police officers. It is finally recognition that what is appropriate in the populated areas of the state is hardly appropriate in smaller communities, where events organised and run by non-profit organisations trying to make a dollar remain viable.

One of the major problems was the requirement that professional security officers and crowd control officers be brought in to run the events with local police. This was costing these committees an absolute fortune. However, it is not necessary, and the Pentland races are proof of that. Many community groups rely on revenue from events where general purpose permits apply. The regulations and restrictions being placed on organisation committees are burdensome and unnecessary. Community events that run in small rural areas bring together the whole community, whether they are run annually or occasionally.

It is vital that we preserve the social fabric that makes up these communities that have lost their race days. It is not fair to impose extensive regulations which may make the organisations think twice about staging other social and community events. The expense of meeting these regulations should not be the determining factor in whether it is worth staging an event. In small communities the event may be the only time people from all around gather to catch up. It is not the event that attracts the crowd, as is the case in the cities; it is the opportunity to renew friendships. That is why bush events are so unique, and it is important to preserve their existence.

Mr FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (5.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill that we are debating here this afternoon. In doing so, I mention that this bill is obviously something that, while relating to Brisbane city as a whole, arose out of the public debate at the start of the year about incidents that occurred in the Brisbane CBD. Of course, my electorate of Mount Coot-tha includes part of Brisbane city—in postcode 4000—including Caxton Street, which has featured in the debate. But I note that Caxton Street has featured in debates of this nature since 1864, five years after Queensland became a colony and long before it became a state of Australia. Debates about the administration of liquor licensing next to residential areas and the proper sale and distribution of liquor have tended to be the same over that period.

This bill introduces a second tranche of reforms, being conditions to append to licences in the Brisbane city area to regulate the way in which alcohol is served, not the least of which are the conditions to maintain a house policy and ensure that people serving alcohol have been trained in the responsible service of alcohol. I know that many traders have expressed their full support for those conditions to be appended to their licences—and properly so—and for those people in the industry with a long-term interest in their business. They know that when these conditions are put in place they contribute to the viability of their businesses in the longer term.

It was those same businesspeople who cheered loudly when the first tranche of the legislative changes were introduced. Those changes included the banning of the advertising of cheap drinks—indeed, the advertising of all prices of drinks outside a venue. Those businesspeople knew that any practice in an industry was only ever as good as the willingness of the bottom player in the lowest common denominator to abuse the freedoms that were allowed and thereby bring the whole industry into disrepute. At the same time there can be no doubt that those same licence holders who cheered loudly about the competitions being banned, which this bill puts into effect, and those who have said that the advertising of cheap drinks should be banned often tend to be the same people who then complain about measures such as the imposition of minimum standards for the number of crowd controllers and also for closed-circuit television.

I think we need to have a modicum of frankness in this debate. When we put all these issues into the sieve and give it a shake, no doubt we would find that elements of this legislation will assist licence holders to run a business more profitably. Any licence holder who was willing to go below the line and run cheap-drink promotions or advertise cheap drinking competitions necessarily took patronage away from those licence holders who did not want to do that. Those license holders were opposed to other licence holders engaging in that activity because they knew that it took business away from them.

At the same time, frankly, I think we need to acknowledge the fact that where licence holders are being required to introduce changes which, no doubt, will be at a cost to them—there is no denying that—they cannot cherry pick this package. On the whole, this legislation will create an industry that will have minimum safety standards, crowd controllers, closed-circuit television and will not feature drinking competitions—the boat races that we know about—that were all part of many people's experiences over a number of years, and the cheap prices.

I think we need to lay our cards on the table and have an element of frankness and honesty in this debate, which I think has not been evident at times from the way in which this debate has gone on throughout this year. There are undeniable gains that have accrued to licence holders through these changes. The cheap drink promotions are no longer possible. At the same time, there are costs involved in implementing these safety measures. In the longer run, that will leave us with a safer industry overall.

In my opinion, any licence holder who has a long-term view about the importance of promoting a safe and responsible service of alcohol in their licensed premises should support these changes. In that regard, when the package is taken as a whole, the reasonable conclusion that should be drawn is that, while it has a give-and-take element to it, it certainly provides in the longer term for an industry that will benefit greatly on the whole.

As I said, these issues are not new. They are not something that has just bobbed up of late. There has been a sharper focus on them but, as I said, in rough terms they have been around for as long as we have been a colony. I know that a more general review of the Liquor Licensing Act is going on at the moment. I flag a threshold issue in my opinion, which is the availability of water in licensed premises for a whole range of reasons relating to safety and for the various practices that that discourages. I think there needs to be an honest and frank debate about that, too, as we move forward into that review. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (5.15 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise to make what I am sure you will be pleased to know will be a short contribution to the debate on the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Of course, one of the reasons I need to make only a short contribution is that the member for Currumbin has done such a thorough job of analysing the various parts of this bill. In her contribution earlier she detailed her support for it so well with a few areas of reservation.

Essentially, the part of the bill that I wanted to make a few comments about was in relation to licensing of licensed premises, particularly in the Brisbane City Council area. I do not think any of us would have particular problems with a lot of these measures. I think our community has suffered a lot because of the antisocial behaviour and irresponsible actions of others. Unfortunately, it is the most badly behaved element of society that forces the rest of us to have to live under a lot more rules. I do not think there is any escaping from that. Obviously, drinking competitions were offensive to most people. They had a very close association with antisocial behaviour. They clearly targeted the young. I think that at times they targeted people who were vulnerable.

The other amendments in the bill relate to house policy, crowd controllers, training for responsible service of alcohol and closed-circuit television. With the few reservations expressed already by the member for Currumbin, we accept the need for measures of this type.

This whole area of alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour is of considerable public concern. Perhaps it gets expressed when we see incidents of violence on the street outside nightclubs or at taxi ranks, but the public concern about this behaviour is quite real. Clearly, we have had to put up with a degree of violence either within venues or outside venues. Unfortunately, on Saturday and Sunday mornings the radio reports of what happened overnight generally manage to detail a series of unpleasant and violent acts that are frequently associated with the misuse of alcohol.

I have a particular concern about the effect that this culture has on the vulnerable people in the community. Clearly, some people with mental health issues get involved in drinking activities and sometimes violent activity. Often these are young people or people who have come from disadvantaged backgrounds. I think as a society we have a responsibility to impose rules that protect these groups.

I think there is a bit of a culture of abuse of alcohol—and it has grown more noticeable in the last 10 or 12 years. Obviously we see it in relation to the licensed premises that we are discussing. We also see it in relation to some of the after-school parties in private residences. It is the same culture and perhaps to some extent the same people. It is an issue that as a society we have not fully faced up to. It would be a mistake to think that simply dealing with the regulation of proprietors of licensed premises would be enough to deal with those sorts of issues. From a government point of view, regulating the proprietors of licensed premises is a relatively easy way to go forward, and we certainly see the need for it. But this problem—and I may be wrong but I get the impression that it is a growing problem—will need further measures and perhaps a more lateral approach at times.

I can understand the concerns that some proprietors would have. No small businessman likes regulation of any sort, I guess. But I think responsible proprietors would generally have a look around them at the sorts of things that were happening and accept the need for these sorts of measures to control antisocial behaviour. Of course, one area in which we are yet to come up with comprehensive solutions is large-scale activities like the schoolies festival at the end of school. Some of it takes place on licensed premises, some of it takes place on private premises and some of it takes place in public places. I think the level of community concern about this activity is perhaps higher than we realise, but it is not an easy activity to come to grips with. I do not think we can say, 'Let's ban it.' I do not think that would be effective. I have a school leaver in my family this year, and I know that other members have had in recent years as well. It is an issue that we, as a government and also as a society, are going to have to look at as to how we educate and modify that sort of behaviour.

My final comment is that not all of the problems occur on licensed premises. There has been a long-running problem in Brisbane that on Friday and Saturday nights after people are locked out under the lockout laws they are unable to get transport home. This has been a significant problem in Brisbane. The government has put some initiatives in place, in particular the trial of all-night public transport. If we want to avoid trouble and violence on the street and also keep young people as safe as possible, we

have to assist people to get home. We do not want them to drive. A lot of the time there are no taxis or there are a very limited number. So we would certainly support that measure that would assist people to get home once they have finished in the licensed premises.

Firstly, I do not think the trial has started. Secondly, whole areas of Brisbane, like my electorate of Moggill, are not included in the trial at all. Yet my electorate has a very high proportion of young people who would be in the category of needing this sort of transport. In terms of the western suburbs of Brisbane, the only service that we would have might be the trains through Indooroopilly, and there is no linking bus service to Kenmore, Chapel Hill or any other area around there. It is important to consider the different areas of Brisbane. Basically we support the bill. We see the need for it, but perhaps the government should not stop there.

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (5.23 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions this evening. I thank both deputy chairs for their allowance of the wide-ranging debate this evening. The essence of the bill before the House relates to responsibility—responsibility on behalf of the government in addressing a whole-of-government response to inner-city violence; responsibility when it comes to the liquor industry and individual licensees; responsibility on behalf of the community in acknowledging the issues which have led to the Brisbane city lockout; and, as many of the government members have acknowledged, personal responsibility when it comes to the consumption of alcohol.

The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill, which we are debating this evening, is stage 2 of the reforms identified by the Premier in the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. These amendments to the Liquor Act will, as members have discussed this evening, impose tougher licence conditions on all licensees in the Brisbane City Council area who trade after 1 am. As I indicated, it complements stage 1, which introduced the lockout in the Brisbane City Council area.

I particularly commend the government members for Yeerongpilly, Noosa, Whitsunday, Broadwater, Indooroopilly, Mansfield, Cleveland and Mount Coot-tha for their significant contributions. They showed, by their contributions, an acknowledgment of the serious issues when it comes to ensuring that when patrons go out in the evening to licensed premises in Brisbane city they want to have a good time but the government wants to ensure that they have a safe time. I have to say that the great majority of licensees—in particular the Queensland Hotels Association, Clubs Queensland and all of the industry associations—support the government very strongly in ensuring the safety of customers both inside licensed premises and out and about and near those premises.

With respect to the comments made by the member for Indooroopilly, the government very strongly supports the viability and the strengthening of the live music industry in Brisbane and in the Valley. That is why last week the Hon. Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women, Desley Boyle, introduced the special entertainment precinct amendment bill, with strong support from me in my role as the liquor licensing minister. This bill was about ensuring that there was strong support for the viability of the live music industry. It is a wonderful industry and the Valley, in particular, can be very proud of great bands such as Regurgitator and all the other bands that have grown up in the Valley. There are amendments to a range of bills that will ensure live music continues, and the Liquor Licensing Division of my department played a very strong and lead role in bringing those amendments to the House.

I now move on to the contributions from the opposition. In particular, I commend the member for Currumbin for her contribution. She put a lot of hard work into her speech this evening, and I commend her for her efforts. I do not support all of the comments that she has made, but I do support many of them. Let me be clear that the presentation of this bill to the House is in no way a knee-jerk reaction on the part of the government, as the member indicated. In fact, we are debating this bill tonight because of the tragic deaths of two young men and a spate of violent incidents in inner Brisbane. The Beattie government takes very seriously indeed its responsibility for public safety. So we make absolutely no apology whatsoever for taking decisive steps to prevent tragedies.

The No. 1 priority of the Liquor Act is patron safety. However, other priorities of the Liquor Act are to ensure that there is industry development when it comes to the liquor industry and to ensure community amenity when it comes to decisions with respect to licensed premises. The latter objective is to ensure that issues regarding nuisance, noise and violence are addressed through conditions on licensed premises. As I have said, the other priority is, of course, to ensure patrons' safety both in licensed premises and around them. So these conditions are certainly tough but they are not too tough. We are providing a balance and ensuring responsibility by both licensees and the community for the safety of patrons in and around premises. The amendments contained in the bill will ensure that licensees, permittees and their staff accept their responsibility for the safety of their patrons and play a larger role in enhancing the safety of the public near licensed premises.

Debate, on motion of Ms Keech, adjourned.

TELSTRA

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the direction being taken by Telstra management including—

- the proposed sacking of 12,000 workers which must affect service provision particularly in rural and remote areas
- the announced concentration of business to large urban areas maximising profit based on consumer numbers but ignoring the importance to all Queenslanders of strong reliable telecommunications

and calls on the Prime Minister to finally acknowledge that the intentions of the current chief executive officer will, if allowed to be implemented, disadvantage Australians and further calls on the Prime Minister to rescind the legislation which will allow the full sale of Telstra.

I have made no secret since I have been in this chamber that I support the retaining of ownership of strategic infrastructure in government, whether that is water, rail or road infrastructure, and I include in that communications infrastructure. Where it is a basic, affordable, uniform communications system across our country, I support the retention of that strategic infrastructure in government ownership. I do not want to see telecommunications become the purview of only those who are able to afford it. If we continue to go the way Telstra appears to be going, which is taking on the profit-only motivation of other telcos, we are going to find that a great part of Queensland, and indeed a great part of Australia, is going to be disadvantaged because people will be required to pay the actual cost of connection and operation, and that will preclude many people from being able to afford this very vital tool.

The second thing I would like to say in opening this debate is that I am not intending to personally attack the CEO, Mr Sol Trujillo. However, I am intending to attack his policies and his direction. I believe that under the previous CEO, but more so under the current CEO, Telstra and its policies and its actions have been moving into an extreme position. I would like to quote from an article by Fleur Leyden in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* which I am going to refer to a couple of times. Her opening comment states—

TELSTRA's job shedding has begun, with the company yesterday confirming "hundreds" of jobs would go from its biggest business unit.

This follows on from the announcement by the CEO that 12,000 jobs would be cut in Telstra over the next five years. That is a huge number of not only positions but also services, technicians, administrative positions and shopfront people. Telstra denies that it is going to be the face-to-face people. It denies that it is going to be the technical staff, but I find it very difficult to believe that 12,000 people can be pared off that telco without affecting service provision, and particularly service provision in rural and remote areas.

Since his appointment, the CEO has had scant regard for people who are serviced by Telstra. In its inception, Telecom—now Telstra—was a service provider for all people of Australia. It was looked upon as being a critical tool to ensure that all Australians were able to safely communicate unless they were in very remote areas, and even then Telstra endeavoured to put in communication sources, whether it was one phone box in a remote town. Now, however, this has been replaced by a completely competitive environment. It is looking for a big bottom line, low overheads, lowered—if any—regulation and massive profits.

It is my belief—and it has been even since T1—that the sale of Telstra should even now be the subject of a referendum, just as we were intending to debate having a referendum on fluoride. It is fine for governments to say, 'We ran the federal election on this issue.' The fact is that in the last couple of elections we had as major headlines for debate things like border protection, security and integrity. We had issues such as terrorism that were on the front page of every paper. People did not vote for the full sale of Telstra. That was not in the front of people's minds and it was not the basis of the majority of the major parties' campaigning. I believe, if given an opportunity, people would overwhelmingly vote against the full privatisation of Telstra. Every single one of us in this House would anecdotally have that information from our electorates. It is no secret. They did not vote on the full sale of Telstra.

As I said, the new CEO has made no secret of his intentions in relation to the direction Telstra was going to take. His mantra has been to call for reduced regulation. Yet the regulations that the top echelon of Telstra want to see removed are the very regulations that the federal government has cited as the protections and the mechanisms to maintain services to rural and regional Queensland. The federal government was saying that even in a fully privatised Telstra there would be no diminution of services to rural and remote Queensland and that there would be improvements in services. But you cannot sack 12,000 people and tell me that those services are going to continue to improve and that in high-cost areas in rural and remote Queensland they are going to continue to improve.

Mr Trujillo showed his intention when he announced in the first week, I believe, of his appointment that he wanted to introduce a partnership between Telstra and regional councils to provide telecommunications services to rural and remote Australia. Local governments have nothing to do with telecommunications, and neither should they, but this is the direction that he was prepared to accept. He has lobbied hard for the removal of regulations on Telstra, and I reiterate that it is these regulations that the federal government was relying on to guarantee the retention of services to rural and remote Queensland.

When concerns were expressed about the sale price of Telstra for T3, it was suggested that the share price could increase and that the CEO would be a party to that increase if some sensible twiddling of the regulations could be achieved. I am left in no doubt—and I am relying a lot on the media and their reporting, but they have no reason to misreport these issues—that it is Mr Trujillo's intention to work strenuously to reduce the regulations on Telstra upon which the government has stated that it relies.

I say again: I was given assurances when the Suncorp-Metway merger was going to happen that no jobs would be lost and that no services would be reduced. When the merger occurred and when offices were closed, I challenged those same ministers about the job losses and I was given a blunt reply: 'We can't do anything; it's a private enterprise now.' That is what is going to happen with Telstra. It is fine to give all the undertakings now. It will be privatised. Telstra, in its new format, will go to the ACCC and complain about unfair competition, unfair regulations and an unlevel playing field. The ACCC will require that those regulations that appear to bind Telstra unfairly in the marketplace be removed. When the bush complains to the federal government, it will say that it cannot do anything about it because it is a private enterprise.

The article in the *Courier-Mail* reports a representative of Telstra as saying—

... the cuts would focus on administration staff rather than "customer-facing staff" such as technicians. He said the jobs would be shed "in the coming months".

This representative went on to state—

... the redundancies would not compromise services to customers, saying that the telco's services had improved during the past decade as its workforce has decreased.

I have to say that I have a huge slab of scepticism as to those comments. It is fine to make breathtaking undertakings on the future. It is another thing when I think people know in the depth of their soul that they will not have to justify their undertakings, because once it is privatised the government's influence over it is gone. I believe the government knows that. I do not believe that it has fairly represented the long-term position to the people of Queensland or to the people of Australia.

The member for Thuringowa noted that there are no National Party or Liberal Party people here to listen to the debate, and I acknowledge that they do not have a part in speaking to this debate, but many of them, particularly National Party people, know that it is going to significantly disadvantage their constituency if T3 is sold.

I do not care which party members belong to. Their primary responsibility is to represent their electorate. The rural and regional electorates are saying, 'We don't want it to go. Forty-nine per cent has gone. We need to keep the 51 per cent so that there is some democratic influence, some policy influence and some political influence.' Every Queenslander and every Australian deserves protection and deserves access to reliable, modern and efficient communications. In our decentralised nation that is essential, and it is essential that Telstra is not privatised.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.40 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by my colleague the Independent member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham. For the benefit of members who are not in the chamber, the motion states—

That this House condemns the direction being taken by Telstra management including—

- the proposed sacking of 12,000 workers which must affect service provision particularly in rural and remote areas
- the announced concentration of business to large urban areas maximising profit based on consumer numbers but ignoring the importance to all Queenslanders of strong reliable telecommunications

and calls on the Prime Minister to finally acknowledge that the intentions of the current chief executive officer will, if allowed to be implemented, disadvantage Australians and further calls on the Prime Minister to rescind the legislation which will allow the full sale of Telstra.

The member for Gladstone has intentionally used very strong words in this motion, because the last time this parliament debated this matter it passed a motion which states—

That this House calls on the federal government to listen to the people of Queensland and, indeed, a great many people across Australia and retain public ownership of the majority of Telstra in order to better protect equity of service, access and standards for all Australians.

At the time this matter was being debated, no-one was aware that we were looking at the possible sacking of up to 12,000 workers. Members of the federal government—senators and members of the House of Representatives—were saying, 'We are going to consult with Australians. We are going to listen to Australians.' The best way to listen and the best way to consult, in my mind, is to pick up on the issue that the member for Gladstone has just moved. Let us have a referendum to let all Queenslanders and all Australians make a comment and send a clear message on a specific issue to the government of the day.

The member for Gladstone said that at the last two federal elections Queenslanders and Australians voted on a whole range of matters. The federal government has claimed that it had been re-elected to lead Australia because people supported its proposed sale of Telstra. I reiterate the comments made by the member for Gladstone. I do not believe Australians overwhelmingly voted to re-elect the federal coalition to lead Australia on the issue of the sale of Telstra. People were focusing on much more important and much more pressing issues. They were the issues of border protection and terrorism.

If the federal government is genuine about listening to the views of Queenslanders and if it is genuine about listening to the views of Australians, why is it afraid of having a referendum, especially now that we are aware of Telstra management's proposal for the sacking of up to 12,000 workers?

Honourable members: Shame!

Mr WELLINGTON: It is a shame. The member for Gladstone also indicated that it was unfortunate that at the time of this important debate, at a quarter to six in the evening, there is not one member of the Liberal Party or the National Party here to participate in the debate. Every member of this the 51st Parliament will have the opportunity to stand up in this chamber in approximately three-quarters of an hour and tell Queenslanders exactly what their views are on this important motion. They will be able to stand up and say, 'I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Gladstone,' or, 'I don't support the motion.' More importantly, they will be able to send a clear message to our Queensland senators, who are elected to represent Queensland in federal parliament and not just be party puppets. They can then take our message to the Senate. That is my challenge. When we vote on this important motion we will be able to send a very clear message to all of our Queensland senators to listen very carefully to the views of this the 51st Parliament of Queensland.

In the past some opposition members have challenged the appropriateness of the state parliament debating very important motions such as this. I say that it is most appropriate that we debate this motion. It is most appropriate that we in this forum are able to send a message on behalf of our constituents to our Queensland senators, who can take our views direct to the Senate and vote accordingly. They should vote according to what is in the best interests of Queensland and not vote simply as party puppets.

The passing of this important motion will provide a chance for the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier to write to the Prime Minister and to all Queensland senators. Then, at a later date, they can come into this House and table that correspondence and inform all Queenslanders of the results of their communication of the view of this parliament to our Queensland senators, to the federal parliament and to our Prime Minister. I commend the motion to the House. I commend the mover of the motion, my colleague the Independent member for Gladstone.

Time expired.

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (5.45 pm): Let there be no doubt about where the Labor Party and the Labor government stand on this issue. We stand right beside the member for Gladstone on this matter. We make an unequivocal statement here tonight. One cannot help but pick up on the point made by the two previous speakers; that is, empty seats confront us. I know that you cannot comment on these things, Mr Deputy Speaker Fouras, but you have been in this place longer than anybody. I do not think I have ever heard of any situation where the opposition has failed in its responsibility to have at least one person in the parliament. Only a couple of conclusions can be drawn from this. One is that it holds this place in contempt and the other is that it holds this debate in contempt. What is it that it holds in contempt? We know that the National Party—finally one has arrived! Finally one member has been flushed out.

Mr Seeney: What do you want? Do you want a blue?

Mr SCHWARTEN: No, we want to know where the National Party stands on the issue of the sacking of 12,000 people from Telstra. We want to know where the National Party—

Mr Seeney: Too easy. Put me on the list and I'll tell you. Where's the list?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member will get his chance. The reality is that we have flushed out the National Party. What about the Liberal Party? We know that Barnaby Joyce buckled at the knees under the pressure of the Howard government. The coalition is absent from this debate. It has no apparent influence on it. However, all members have an opportunity to be here tonight and say 'aye' when the rest of us do. The challenge is to say 'aye'. The opposition should not just send in one of its members; it should send in every member to say 'aye' when the question is put. It is pretty simple stuff.

It is no coincidence that there is only one person from the coalition here tonight. It wants to avoid this debate and it wants to avoid the scrutiny of the public on this issue. It does so at the peril of being seen by the electorate of Queensland as not caring about this issue. I can draw no other conclusion about its agenda.

The member for Mansfield reminded me that he was a Telecom employee and that there were over 90,000 people employed in Telecom when he worked there. When my brother worked there, close to 100,000 people worked there. Now we are down to less than half of that, and another 12,000 are to go. Where will those job losses fall? They will fall in the Gladstone electorate, my electorate and the Callide electorate. What will go with it? The standard of service will go. Members will see a lot more often the structures that are placed around manholes in the street. I am still waiting for certain repairs to be done to my phone at home because they do not have enough labour to deal with it now. This is fattening up the cow to sell it. This is a feedlot exercise. They will plump up the cow, get the best price for it and clear it all. They will do exactly what the member for Gladstone said. When we ring Howard or any of the tories to complain, their answer will be, 'There is nothing we can do about it.'

Mr Wallace: The phone does not work.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The phone will not work for a start and they will not have anybody to ring. This is a scandal. Mr Joyce can well bleat about this and say that they were sneaky, tricky and all the rest of it. However, the bottom line is that the National Party in Queensland supported this.

Mr Wallace: Sold out the bush.

Mr SCHWARTEN: They have sold out on this and the Liberals had already sold out on it. Tonight they have sold out in the parliament as well. No-one can tell me that every one of those seats is unoccupied because of busy and urgent business. No-one will convince me of that. It will not wash. I wish the TV cameras were here tonight to see the skulking, hulking mess that is this coalition. It is letting down the battlers, the workers and the people of this state. It is a disgrace. It is a shameful and gutless effort by the members sitting on the coalition benches. It is something that I will be very pleased to inform my electorate of.

Hon. CP CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs) (5.53 pm): I rise to support the motion. As no coalition members are speaking to the motion, it seems obvious that they are ashamed of Barnaby Joyce and they cannot defend him.

The Queensland Nationals have been dudded when it comes to Telstra. We acknowledge that the vote of Barnaby Joyce sold out the people not only of the bush but also all Queensland. Talking of being dudded, we all know that Bob Quinn has five parliamentary sitting days left as the state leader of the Liberals. He will be gone over the Christmas break. It is bye bye, Bob. Gone. The member for Chatsworth will be the leader of the Liberals with the new partner—whether as the bride or the groom—in the coalition of the unwilling. The state Nationals know that the Liberal leadership deal has been done, but they are only in on half of the conservative deals. They are typically being kept in the dark at both a state and a federal level.

Members should make no mistake: the state Nationals were originally opposed to the sale of Telstra and they were conned, just as they are being conned now. The Liberals are constantly doing the dirty on the Nationals, promising one thing and then doing another. They treat the Nationals like poor simpleton country cousins. Make no mistake—

Mr Seeney: Oh!

Mr CUMMINS: The member opposite was originally opposed to the sale of Telstra and he is on the public record as saying so. He had a chance to speak in this debate.

The present state coalition of the unwilling was a direction from the Prime Minister to con Barnaby that the Liberals want to work with the Nationals. All John Howard wanted was Senate Barnaby Joyce's vote and he got it, hook, line and sinker. Wham, bam, thank you, Barnaby, and not even a phone call in the morning.

All Queenslanders realise that it is an absolute disgrace that 12,000 Australians will be out of jobs as foreshadowed by Telstra. Yes, they will say thank you to Barnaby and thank you to the National Party as rural and remote services continue to decline.

It is sinful that the federal conservative government has presided over a once proud, previously public owned company but the Australian icon now cannot deliver basic telecommunications to people right across Queensland. Again this week we have heard further calls from a former National Party federal leader, asking the federal government to look into mobile phone services in rural areas amid concerns about Telstra replacing its existing network. It is no wonder that everywhere I go the Nationals are seen as a policy vacuum who represent no-one.

It is abundantly clear that Telstra plans to switch off its CDMA mobile network covering rural and regional areas and replace it with yet another service. We will all have to get rid of our mobile phones again. Do members remember that we were told the same thing when the analogues were phased out? The new CDMA system was the be-all end-all. Nationals, former federal leader Tim Fischer, who in 2000 fought for the introduction of the CDMA, has said that an independent inquiry is needed to investigate Telstra's new proposals. The Nationals are continually being taken for a ride by the Liberal Party and treated like the sad joke that it has become.

Earlier this year I attended the 12th Online Council meeting in Perth and very clearly indicated the Beattie government's position on the Connect Australia package, which was one of the sweeteners offered to secure Barnaby's vote. While it is conditional upon the full sale of Telstra, Connect Australia is clearly no gift to the citizens of this state, especially those Queenslanders living in the bush. In fact, it is a package that reminds me of pass the parcel. You keep unwrapping and unwrapping, but at the end there is no substance and no substantial offering. It is just a game. However, we know that the sale of Telstra is no game. Unwrapping this parcel is no fun. It is serious business.

In this package, the Howard government has offered $1.1 billion of targeted funding to address identified gaps in the current services. Current services need upgrading now, not upon the full sale of Telstra. The new Telstra CEO has raised this issue: if there is a need to fill a $1.1 billion void to bring adequacy to existing services, then surely the Commonwealth should be spending that money right now, irrespective of any proposed sale. Telstra is clearly not providing adequate services to the bush or to Australia, and is not ready to be sold.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr CUMMINS: You have sold out. But that will not stop the Nationals. They are very easily conned. Let us look at the recent marriage proposal at a state level. On Telstra we can all do the maths and it simply does not add up. The federal government is arguing that by changing Telstra's licensing arrangements and legislation they will be able to influence Telstra's behaviour in the longer term; they are wrong yet again.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (5.57 pm): I rise to offer my whole-hearted support for this motion condemning the direction Telstra management is taking and calling for legislation permitting the full sale of Telstra to be rescinded. However, the sad fact is that this kind of thing, this stripping of jobs and destruction of services in rural and regional areas, is the inevitable result of privatisation and corporatisation. State and federal governments have willingly signed up to COAG and they have embraced national competition policy, meaning that at heart each and every one of them is a dedicated supporter of globalisation and deregulation. Each one of them believes that market forces will magically provide good social policy. Well, they will not.

Without a doubt, market forces, deregulation and all the rest will give us a profit motive above all. The pronouncements by Mr Sol Trujillo about the direction he is going to take Telstra prove that is to be the case. Let me say this: he and his management team are not to blame. He is doing exactly what he has been brought in and paid to do, that is, to serve the interests of Telstra shareholders to the exclusion of all other considerations. Of course, the interests of shareholders are measured by the price of their stock and by the dividends on offer. Under the Telstra model, service delivery is not a guarantee of reliable rural telecommunications infrastructure. Under the Telstra model, service delivery is a cost to be slashed to the bone and beyond. And that is what we are seeing here. The proposed sacking of up to 12,000 workers in the next few years will gut all but the most profitable parts of the Telstra operation. It simply cannot happen without crippling telecommunications in the bush and in regional areas. It is a betrayal of the bush, not by Telstra but by the federal government.

We might have high-sounding promises of future funds and other supposed ways of preserving telecommunications networks outside the urban centres but, put simply, they are lies. In a few short years, even if our existing infrastructure is maintained, it will be out of date. Let us look at what has just happened. CDMA, which last month was supposed to have been the answer to mobile phone coverage in regional areas, this month is on the way out. There are just three years to go before Telstra shuts it down altogether.

It is the job of government and of elected representatives to ensure that Queenslanders and all Australians enjoy access to necessary services. It is the job of government to provide the vital sinews upon which we, our children and their children can build businesses, grow communities and secure their futures. Those sinews, that vital infrastructure, are represented by our transport networks, our health, education and legal systems, our border protection services and financial regulations and, importantly, our telecommunications environment. In a nation as sprawling as ours, communications in particular are vital.

Yet the Howard-Costello vision for this nation is focused entirely on the crazed, fanatical devotion they have for economic rationalism. They have passed over social policy, they have passed over nation building, they have passed over future proofing, and they have betrayed every responsibility of good government in favour of free markets and the profit motive. They are so blinded by the stream of gold falling into corporate pockets that they simply do not care about the nation at all.

I wish they would listen to the people of Australia. It is what they were elected to do, but they have sold their political souls on this. Telstra will be sold and services in the bush will suffer. 'Backflip' Barnaby has ensured that that will happen. Legislation permitting the sale of Telstra should be overturned. The Liberal/National coalition in Canberra has traded away telecommunications access for most of Australia in favour of profits for a single soon-to-be private corporation.

The Nationals and Liberals in this House have done exactly the same thing. They have not stood up for Queenslanders. Selling Telstra will end 12,000 jobs and businesses will be concentrated in the profitable urban areas. Telstra itself has already told us that. There will be no room in profit margins for line maintenance in rural and regional areas. There will be no room in profit margins for timely telephone repairs in rural and regional areas. There will be no-one to carry out that work, anyway, with 12,000 fewer technicians.

This motion should have unanimous and unstinting support in this place. When it comes to vital infrastructure and when it comes to the building blocks of this nation, people should always come before profits. I support this motion.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (6.00 pm): I will begin by congratulating the member for Gladstone on her continuing leadership on this issue and on the support that she has received from the Independents in this parliament and, of course, from members of the parliamentary Labor caucus. Her motion of 24 August provided a real opportunity to prevent this insidious thing being pushed onto rural and regional Queensland. If the 15 members of the Queensland Nationals had supported her motion against the sale

of Telstra that night, we could have stopped the sale of Telstra. It would have sent a clear and powerful message to Barnaby Joyce and tipped the balance against the sale of Telstra in the federal Senate. Unfortunately, regrettably and tragically, they sold their constituents in regional areas—in fact, all Queenslanders—straight down the river that night.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr O'BRIEN: The Nationals strut about talking about the $3 billion—the 30 pieces of silver—that they have managed to secure to improve services. We all know that that is rubbish. We know it and they know it.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr O'BRIEN: The reality is that services in places such as Theodore, in the member for Callide's electorate, are not as good as the services in capital cities. The reality is that now, because of the Queensland National Party—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. The mobile phone reception in Theodore is terrific.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! There is no point of order.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr O'BRIEN: I wonder what it is like five minutes out of Theodore. I wonder what it is like if you drive five minutes out of Bancroft or five minutes out of Baralaba. I wonder what the CDMA network is like there. I wonder how long you have to wait for a technician in places like that.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook will direct his comments through the chair and the member for Callide will stop interjecting.

Mr O'BRIEN: The member for Callide seems to have a lot to say on this issue. I am quite happy to sit down now and give the member my remaining three minutes so that he can get on his feet and go on the record and say where he stands on these 12,000 people losing their jobs and where the Queensland Nationals stand on this issue. The member can get on his feet. The time is his.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.03 pm): I thank the member for Cook for the gracious way in which he has given me an opportunity to correct some of the rubbish and nonsense that has been part of this debate. Tonight, once again this House has heard the same rubbish and nonsense it has heard over and over again, as the Labor Party tries to turn Telstra into a life raft that it can cling to. Telstra is a good news story for rural and regional Queensland, and it is a good news story for places like the electorate of Cook, which the previous speaker represents.

Mr O'Brien: They wait months for a technician.

Mr SEENEY: They are the areas that will benefit from the massive capital injection that National Party senator Barnaby Joyce was able to leverage out of the federal government. Barnaby Joyce can claim to have delivered more to the electorate of Cook than the current member for Cook ever will. Irrespective of how long he stays in this House, the member for Cook will never deliver to his constituents half as much as Barnaby Joyce has delivered in terms of telecommunications infrastructure. That will be a great legacy for the people of rural and regional Queensland when that communications technology is rolled out, when wireless broadband becomes available to the constituents of members right throughout regional Queensland. The nonsense and the fallacy that we have heard here tonight will be exposed for what it is.

Now let me address the issue of services and employment levels in rural and regional Queensland. A critical part of the agreement that was negotiated was that service personnel would be retained in rural and regional Queensland and that there would be people on the ground to ensure that the network was maintained. That will be delivered.

Mr O'Brien: The member does not believe what he is saying.

Mr SEENEY: Absolutely, it will be delivered.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook.

Mr SEENEY: There is no suggestion of that at all. In fact, it cannot happen under the agreement in the legislation. That Telstra Country Wide and the people who are so critical—

Mrs Pratt: Time! Time!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SEENEY: Oh, come on, give me a bit more time. I only had a couple of minutes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide's time has expired. Please resume your seat. I am on my feet. Honourable members, I do not mind feisty debates and I do not mind interjections, but there is a limit and I will have to warn some members. People have the right to be heard. We cannot go beyond that. That is fundamental to this place. The honourable member for Maryborough, you ought to be heard.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (6.05 pm): I thank the Deputy Speaker for his protection. I think that members here need to do a quick pulse check, perhaps have a drink of water and chill out a little bit.

However, let me say that I am not in the least chilled out at the prospect of 12,000 jobs ending. It is a disgrace. They should hang their heads in shame. Twelve thousand fewer jobs means one simple thing: 12,000 fewer people providing service to the telecommunications customers of Australia.

Mrs Pratt interjected.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. She is dead right. Twelve thousand fewer jobs means 12,000 families with less food on the table.

If you ring 013, it says to say the name you are after. Yackandandah. The response comes back and gives you about 58 other choices. If you need to change your socks, press 3. If you need to change your work boots, press 2. We are sick to death of it. If you would like to speak to an operator, sorry, they are all off having a post-redundancy party.

I have said before that I am totally and utterly opposed to the sale of the second tranche of Telstra. The first one should never have gone through because service has simply slipped down the drainpipe since the day Telstra was sold. The people who will be the big losers will be in the bush. Make no mistake about that.

I wonder if the average Aussie realises that Optus is owned by Singaporean interests. I think that Telstra is a national icon. I can remember it from its PMG days. Where do we stop cutting services in the name of privatisation? Service still counts for something. Some of the providers that have put people back on the phones instead of using automated answering systems are very, very smart because people are fed up with it. The loss of 12,000 jobs is a national disgrace.

What a joke CDMA has turned out to be. My family bought a number of CDMA phones because we like to camp down on Teewah Beach and they are the only ones that can get reception. When I told my wife the other day that the CDMA network was being disabled, she said 'What! I just bought a CDMA phone'. This is what happens when there is unbridled privatisation.

I love gymnastics. 'Backflip' Barnaby should join the Australian gymnastics team because he has done more backflips lately than I care to imagine. It would be very good for his training. I am absolutely appalled that the National Party is selling out Queenslanders in the bush. I believe that if the average person in the bush realised that the Nationals have rolled over on the sale of Telstra, they would be absolutely dismayed and feel totally betrayed.

I have laid my cards on the table. I have never changed my position and I never will, because selling Telstra is like selling the family farm. One thing that is a terrible shame is that services in the bush just get worse and worse. When we are under a regime of private enterprise that simply says, 'The motive here is profit and making a buck,' then anything that is unprofitable will simply be axed. We might say that it will not be axed in the first five minutes or maybe even the second five minutes, but gradually those services will erode and it will go. It has been proved time and time again. Right now we are looking at 12,000 jobs going. Corporate competitiveness is one thing, but we need more government owned industries in Australia that offer service—where the motive is service and not profit.

We have all talked about health. If members want to see a great example of how expensive health is, they should get sick in the United States. That is the fruit of unbridled privatisation. With all of the promises made and the billion-dollar slush funds and so forth talked about, make no mistake about it: the corporate grim reaper in charge of Telstra now is there to do a job. He will do a number on service. The bush will be the big loser. I think it is a shame. I commend the member for Gladstone for having the courage to speak up. In this place I will always choose to be values driven, not opinions driven, in any debate.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (6.11 pm): I, too, rise to support the motion moved by the member for Gladstone tonight. I must say that it is really good to be involved in a bipartisan relationship for a change. I do have to say, though, that the complete capitulation back in August by the National Party members of this House over the full sale of Telstra was very hard to swallow given the protracted breast-beating by National politicians who had previously been outraged over the gloomy prospect for the bush. But then I think of Barnaby Joyce and how he has become a master of the backflip in his very short time as a senator.

Perhaps the Barnaby Joyce syndrome serves as a more clear explanation as to why members of the National Party who made such loud protest noises about Telstra followed in the other direction like sheep when it came time to make the very tough decisions. After all of their huffing and puffing about Telstra's sell-off, Queensland National Party members just crumbled in a heap when it came time for

them to stand up to their convictions. It is too late now to spill tears about telephone services in regional and remote areas not coming up to scratch. And how about those 12,000 jobs, the ones that have to go over the next five years so that shareholders of a fully privatised Telstra can have profitable returns? They will not be too profitable if we can take Sol Trujillo at his word at his recent shareholders' meeting!

Did Senator Joyce not describe the job losses as disappointing and say that it was sneaky of Telstra to wait to announce them after the sale plan went through parliament? That is an awful lot of jobs. Even if some of them are through natural attrition because of retirement, there is no way that people living in regional and outback Queensland can expect a high-level or even a reasonable service from Telstra when things go wrong with its phone systems or when they want to call Telstra to talk to its staff to ask about something. I think we will be heading back to the time when we had two very long, tightly stretched pieces of string between two tin cans. Just picture that!

As recently as July there was a major muck-up with Telstra that prevented 000 calls in north Queensland getting through for up to four hours. Areas from Mackay, north to Townsville and Cairns had no direct access to 000 emergency calls. To be without access to the emergency 000 number even for five minutes could cost a life, not to mention the overall extent of the telephone and internet collapse. If such a breakdown occurred during a cyclone or some other major crisis, the consequences would be overwhelming and the prospect of such a situation occurring again is, to say the least, very scary. Last July the full sale of Telstra was still a gleam in John Howard's eye. Now that it is on the threshold of being born, the chances of repeat scenarios of that 000 experience are all too real.

The National and Liberal parties have betrayed Australians over the full sale of Telstra. I hate using the term 'mum and dad investors'—it is belittling somehow—but I will bet those so-called mum and dad investors who bought in on Telstra 1 and 2 are not too thrilled now. I think they were losing about 80c in the dollar. How will they feel about Telstra 3? But what about the workers? Did Sol Trujillo ever apologise to the workers? He spent a lot of time apologising to the shareholders, but not once did he apologise to all those thousands of workers who will lose their jobs—100 per cent of their jobs.

Mr Shine: They're expendable.

Ms NELSON-CARR: That is absolutely right. It is only a money-milking cow for the Howard government. There will not be too many shareholders who are going to make a fast buck. Meanwhile, jobs will go and services, particularly in outer suburban, rural and regional Queensland and other parts of country Australia, will suffer as a result.

One of my staff members was going on holidays overseas for a month last July and realised that his next Telstra bill would fall due during that period. Trying to do the right thing, he contacted—or attempted to contact—Telstra so that he could pay the estimated bill in advance. After half an hour of getting the complete run-around and being shunted from one Telstra operator to another, he almost gave up. Persisting however, he finally got on to someone who agreed to take a payment, which incidentally turned out to be much more than the actual bill when it was finally tallied. If that is the sort of performance customers get now from Telstra—one cannot even give money away to pay a bill in advance—just imagine the absolute sheer frustration when admin staff are whittled away. A call like the one I have just described could take an hour or more, never mind the half-hour experience.

The question we all need to ask ourselves is: did John Howard know in advance about Telstra's plan to sack 12,000 workers as part of the privatisation agenda? Is that why he rushed the Telstra sale through last month? To add icing to the federal coalition cake, Telstra now plans to switch off its CDMA mobile network covering rural and regional areas and replace it in 2008 with a national 3G, or third generation, service. There are very real fears that Telstra's 1.4 million customers will have to fork out for it. This still leaves a very big slice of taxpayers' money going down the tube, even if 80 per cent of that cost does go into the new network. I stress: if 80 per cent of that money really does go in, I would be surprised. What do we expect? With Sol Trujillo, he is a flash Yank wanting us to go the American way.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (6.16 pm): I also want to acknowledge the graciousness of the member for Cook in giving three minutes of his time to the member for Callide, who waxed lyrical about services in the bush. Well, only today a lady travelled to parliament to speak to me about a couple of issues. This lady was in fact from the Callide electorate. One of the issues she raised is that she has a business in the main street of a small rural town and is having trouble getting her phone fixed again. I suggest that the member for Callide wipe his chin because it is covered in the proverbial.

I am proud to rise to support the motion moved by the member for Gladstone calling on this House to condemn the direction being taken by Telstra management and calling on the Prime Minister to finally acknowledge that the intentions of the current CEO will disadvantage Australians and asking him to rescind the legislation. With regard to those 12,000 jobs, many of them will be Queensland jobs. The Community and Public Sector Union has stated that it warned Barnaby Joyce about the massive job-shedding plan before he voted to allow the full privatisation of Telstra. He had the opportunity to vote yes or no to the sale of Telstra, and he voted yes.

When he was asked if he would have voted against the sale if he had known about the job cuts before, he did not say no. His response was that it would have been handy to know what cuts would occur and if they would hurt bush services. The truth is that he was prepared to let jobs go. He said at

the time that he was 60 per cent sure he had made the right decision in allowing the full privatisation of Telstra. In reality, he voted yes to the sale and sealed the fate of 12,000 workers. The truth is that he received a union letter before he voted warning him that the job losses had been foreshadowed in an internal Telstra document. He knew the likelihood existed that these jobs would go. In early September the leaked Telstra document reported that Telstra would be restructuring its work force. On ABC Radio Peter Costello scoffed at the talk about the job losses and said that there was a letter stating that such a suggestion was false. Well, somebody was lying. Two months later, Telstra CEO Sol Trujillo announced the loss of 12,000 jobs.

I believe very strongly in people having a say via referendum, and in December 2002 I asked the people of my electorate if they found services adequate. There was no surprise in the answer. Some 56 per cent at the time said no. During debate raging around Barnaby Joyce's crucial vote on the Telstra sale, I asked the questions again. I asked if people supported the National Party's agreement to the sale of Telstra. Again, no surprise. Eighty-six per cent said no. When I asked 'Should Telstra be sold, now that the Prime Minister has agreed to the $3 billion bush fund?' the vote for no actually went up. Nobody in the bush believed that services in regional or rural Australia would improve. With the loss of 12,000 jobs, I think there is a guarantee they will not. In fact, I would nearly wager that services will go backwards at a great rate of knots when it is privatised and no government will have any say whatsoever to stop it.

It is often hard enough to attract businesses to rural areas but without good, reliable communications it will be darn near impossible. We who represent these areas—and I used to think the National Party did—work very hard to encourage economic development and the jobs that go with that development and we see in return from the federal coalition—that is, the Nationals and the Liberals—that both supported the sale of Telstra, in so doing making regional and rural jobs even more vulnerable. I can remember very clearly on the day we debated another motion to do with the sale of Telstra hearing Russell Cooper, a National Party man who once sat in this place. Although he did not offer an opinion either way as to the sale of Telstra, he made a comment which stayed in my mind, and I do not think it hurts to repeat it. He said, 'Because of the actions of the Nationals in supporting the full privatisation of Telstra, 12,000 jobs will be lost.' It will not hurt them to be reminded of that now.

Russell Cooper said at the time that the National Party needed to be very careful and consider the impact of voting for the sale. He likened the issue to that of the gun debate, which had enormous impact on the National Party in the bush at the time. It lost an incredible number of seats and lost a lot of party members at the same time. The National Party should remember that loose lips sink ships and they should be very careful about what they say even in this House, or perhaps their ship will sink a little further. The Nationals are supposedly representing rural people but they, like Barnaby Joyce, have duped the people who put them in this place. The federal government supposedly said that Telstra should look at improving its network in the bush before considering job losses at regional centres. But we all know what little credence Telstra's CEO, Sol Trujillo, gives such statements from the Prime Minister. He simply ignores them.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (6.22 pm): We have heard from a number of members in this House about Telstra. If anyone in this House or outside the House has a mobile phone, internet or telephone connection of any nature they could not help but be supportive of the condemnation sought in this motion. I thank the member for Gladstone for raising it. Like her, I support the retention of water, telecommunications, power and transport in public ownership. We are dealing with Telstra here, but Optus is not a great deal better as it was built on the carcass of Telstra, which was forced to give substantial network access at relatively cheap rates. I will deal with one aspect of the Telstra-Optus debate later in my speech.

Once upon a time in Australia we had the postmaster-general's department. Then we achieved Telecom Australia and Australia Post. These entities were owned by Australians and were paid for by the sweat of the brow of our parents and grandparents. We then achieved Telstra as a carrier and the people of Australia owned that company also. We at least enjoyed fixed-line services which gave us contact with the outside world. Then we happened upon John Howard as a Liberal Prime Minister.

Members should make no mistake—the ideological approach of this person knows no bounds. We reaped the whirlwind of world parity pricing for oil from him as Malcolm Fraser's Treasurer and now we have the spectre of our publicly owned telecom being flogged off to private enterprise for short-term gain. We had sales, T1 and T2, which really conned an adoring public. We now have our American CEO and his American team ready to play the game of reducing the work force to increase profits, flog the remainder to do the work of two people and hopefully walk away with millions in share rights from T3. Members should have a look at Qwest and US West in the United States and Mr Trujillo's history with France Telecom. I cannot be as benevolent as the member for Gladstone when I look at his background.

My family had six members employed by Telstra. Slowly they have been whittled away. Only one of them now works for Telstra. Is there anyone in this chamber who lives in a rural area of Queensland? If you do, the sale of Telstra will remove from you the capacity to enjoy even limited Telstra service. I would like to give an outline of the circumstances which exist in my electorate of Keppel and the

adjoining electorates of Rockhampton, Fitzroy and Gladstone, which have substantial difficulties. I also find it difficult to believe that the member for Mirani could support any sale of Telstra because it does not give many of his communities any better service.

If you go to Telstra and buy a mobile phone in our area, do not buy it for your son or daughter for their safety—you will be wasting your money if they travel along Yeppoon Road or Emu Park Road, because one road has no service and one drops in and out.

Mr Johnson: They haven't stayed at home.

Mr HOOLIHAN: The same happens if you go west. The member for Gregory will be aware of the limitations of mobile phones around Longreach. Go to Cawarral, which is a growing area between Rockhampton and Yeppoon, and the only use for your mobile phone is as a sinker on your fishing line. The same occurs if you travel to Keppel Sands. You can be lucky, but do not hold your breath. Throughout all the rural areas we have one spectre which laughs at us. There are often two towers sited together but there is no cross-transmission. If you have Telstra as your carrier but get no transmission, you will not get Optus service.

I know of many people who travel in my region and carry two separate phones. Members need only have a talk with the member for Fitzroy. We now have a proposal to build an $11 billion next-generation broadband and mobile service and to sack 12,000 workers over the next five years. That is approximately one-third of Telstra's work force which will disappear. It would probably raise the end profit but at what cost to rural and regional Australia? I have a CDMA phone, which is supposed to give wider coverage, but it still has limitations. I suppose I will now have to replace that. I live at Cooee Bay, which is approximately two kilometres from the transmission towers in Yeppoon, and cannot receive a signal inside my house, and I have just received the ability to connect to broadband.

It was reported in the *Australian* on 19 November under the heading 'Sol's new direction' that Sensis sales were expected to double to more than $3 billion within five years. What is Sensis? Members may ask. It is the private company, owned by Telstra, which prints the *White Pages* and the *Yellow Pages*. In the 2004 edition there were 48 errors which were brought to the attention of my office and which had to be corrected. If members believe that the community service obligations will be met, I suggest that they have a look at the old 013 service. Telstra was told by the regulator that it had to provide a free service, so we acquired 12355 which was a charged call—and extra charges were incurred if they connected you. It did have a free service, which was 1233, but you got the number and they hung up in your ear. Barnaby Joyce claimed that he would hold out for a fair deal for the rural and regional people of Queensland. I support the motion.

Time expired.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 54—Attwood, Barton, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, E Cunningham, N Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lawlor, Lee, Lee Long, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Pearce, Pitt, Poole, Pratt, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, E Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, C Sullivan, Wallace, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Nolan, Reeves

NOES, 19—Caltabiano, Copeland, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lingard, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Quinn, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg. Tellers: Malone, Rogers

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.30 pm.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4206.

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (7.30 pm), continuing in reply: As I was saying before I adjourned the debate earlier this afternoon, I would like to make some comments with respect to the member for Currumbin's contribution to the bill. One of the issues that she raised was that of CCTVs. It is important to note that most late-night trading premises in Brisbane already have CCTV and employ security providers. So these conditions are not onerous on them. It is important that the provisions of the bill seek to improve community safety but at the same time ensure that the viability of the liquor licensing industry is not debilitated in any way. The amendments contained in this bill bring them all into line with licensees on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast—Cairns, Townsville, the Whitsundays, Rockhampton and Toowoomba, which already have conditions relating to crowd controller ratios and cameras attached to their licences.

Many members, including the member for Yeerongpilly, made comments with respect to the importance of security providers. The member for Indooroopilly called them bouncers which the industry considers to be a derogatory term. Given that they are a professional industry, as the member for Noosa indicated, the correct term is security providers or crowd controllers.

The member for Currumbin said that licensees cannot find the number of security providers and crowd controllers required to meet their licence conditions. I guess this has come about because of the Beattie government's Smart State policies regarding employment. We now have an unemployment rate that is, if not the best, one of the best in Australia at well below five per cent. That means in all industries, whether it be security providers or other areas of the liquor and hospitality industries, it is difficult to get staff. The security provider industry is no different.

It is no secret that there is a shortage of available skilled labour in some areas which may make recruitment difficult for some providers. However, there is no general difficulty in obtaining security personnel provided that they are paid properly. The consultations that I have had with ASIAL, which is the peak body for security providers in Australia as well as in Queensland, indicate that for companies that are prepared to pay their providers award or above award wages they do not seem to have problems in attracting and maintaining security providers. However, there are a few providers now in the industry who are not as professional as others and they try to undercut their competitors. They are the ones who have difficulties attracting security providers simply because they are not providing the necessary conditions and pay which they deserve.

With respect to the training and particularly the licence requirements for security providers, the member for Currumbin said that the consultation she had had with security providers indicated that some were waiting 12 weeks. The average wait for a security provider licence is generally six weeks. It is very important that probity checks are conducted, and there can be no short cuts taken in doing these checks because they are extremely important to ensure that we do have people coming into the industry who do meet the probity criteria that we expect. The other reason that there may be a delay in obtaining licences is that individuals may not have filled out the applications correctly and the OFT is waiting on additional information.

The member indicated that there was a shortage of responsible service of alcohol trainers, or RSA trainers, available in Queensland. I inform the honourable member as well as other members who contributed to the bill that there are 30 accredited trainers on the Liquor Licensing web site. Another 34 have been trained in the past three weeks and another 40 will be trained in coming weeks.

Ms Jarratt: Hear, hear! Well done, Minister.

Ms KEECH: I take that comment from the member for Whitsunday because she knows now important it is not only to ensure that licensees and their staff take part in RSA training but also to ensure that there is a large number of trainers in regional areas such as hers. In fact, the number of RSA trainers by mid-December, I am advised, will be more than 100.

Ms Jarratt: Fantastic.

Ms KEECH: The member for Whitsunday, I know, was very excited to welcome the QTIC training train.

Ms Jarratt: Yes, fantastic.

Ms KEECH: It was absolutely fantastic. It was supported by the Beattie government and, of course, through the wonderful work of people like Daniel Gschwind and Gary Smith from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. This train, comprising 10 carriages, left Brisbane and went all the way to Cairns via Longreach and Mount Isa. On the training train a whole range of training courses were provided, including RSA courses as well as opportunities to learn how to make a cappuccino, to sharpen knives, to make a Tom Cruise-like cocktail and industry training as well. The work that the QTIC did was commendable, and the Beattie government was very pleased to support that great initiative.

I now move on to other issues that the honourable member raised with respect to amendments to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997. The amendments to those two acts ensure that real estate transactions are able to be progressed via faxing and email without diminishing existing consumer protections. The member did raise some issues. I acknowledge her interest in these areas, particularly with respect to PAMDA.

As to whether the provisions cover option agreements or vendor contracts, the bill does not affect the scope or variety of contracts covered under PAMDA. The member's criticism that options may not be subject to the provision is a misunderstanding of the intent of the bill. The bill provides mechanisms by which PAMDA contract documents in all their forms may be transmitted by electronic means. A relevant contract under the act is a contract for the sale of residential property in Queensland other than a contract formed on a sale by auction. That definition has been part of the act since its establishment in 2000.

With regard to the cooling-off period and the binding to be separate times, the member expressed the view that the bill ought to revert to the common law position as to the time that contracts become binding. PAMDA, when enacted, changed the common law in relation to when residential property contracts become binding. The PAMDA position is that vendors cannot enforce a contract until a signed copy has been provided to the purchaser. This was primarily to clarify when the cooling-off period commenced. That is important for the protection of consumers. As I am sure the member would agree, these provisions are complex and they are complicated. But it would be clearly unworkable for PAMDA to provide two different dates on which contracts become binding.

The amendments do not alter the situation in any way, and the process has been working satisfactorily for the past four years. There were issues with respect to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act. The member would be aware that there is to be a review of the act. We have distributed a discussion paper, which has been very well supported, and I am looking forward in due course to bringing amendments to the act before the parliament.

The member for Mirani mentioned an issue pertaining to a town in his electorate—I think it was Sarina. I would encourage him to contact Liquor Licensing staff with respect to the allegations regarding licensees.

Before moving to the amendments in the consideration in detail stage, I want to acknowledge the incredible amount of work that has been done by my department and by my staff in bringing the bill to this stage. It has taken a huge effort. Not only do I commend the work of Chris Watters, Lana Bartholomew, Katherine Navin, Dominic Tennison and Geoff Murphy from Liquor Licensing; from Body Corporate I commend Ivan Catlin and David Reardon; from the CLO area I commend the work of Franceen Glover and Esther Blackwell; and from the Office of Fair Trading I commend Fiona FitzPatrick, Janet Wight and Pat Malone. I also commend the work of the advisers from my office—Michael Caldwell, Ryan Robertson, Cameron Crowther—and Shelley Francis, the cabinet liaison officer.

Before I move to the amendments, I want to make one other comment. There was some criticism regarding the consultation process or lack thereof. To those who have made criticisms, let me say that extensive consultation has been undertaken with the industry in the development of stage 2, the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan.

I would like to mention some of the consultation that has taken place because it has been extremely lengthy and in-depth, and that is because the Beattie government recognises the contribution from the industry. We also recognise that, for government to ensure that licensed premises adhere to their conditions, we need to have a partnership approach. I am very pleased to have the support of industry with respect to the lockout as well as provisions that we have here this evening.

I thank the Queensland Hotels Association, Restaurant and Catering Queensland, Clubs Queensland and the Cabaret Association of Queensland for their consultation. Senior officers of the Liquor Licensing Division met with representatives of the Responsible Brisbane City Licensees Association. The association is a group of licensees from Fortitude Valley, Caxton Street and the central business district. Those senior officers of the Liquor Licensing Division also discussed the proposed amendments with individual licensees and the representatives including liquor consultancy companies.

A regulatory impact statement as well as a draft public benefit test were also canvassed. This was released for public consultation on 22 July 2005, with the closing date for submissions on 22 August 2005. This consultation document examined the appreciable cost to business and the public benefit of the proposed amendments. This is an opportunity not only for the industry but also for individuals and the community to provide their input. As well, my division mailed questionnaires to, and conducted a telephone survey of, approximately 327 licensees in the Brisbane City Council area who have the authority to operate after 1 am, seeking comment on the proposed amendments.

The Brisbane City Safety Action Plan task force, chaired by the director-general of my department, has been consulted on the proposed amendments. The task force includes representatives from key stakeholder groups including industry organisations, industry businesses, community groups and the Brisbane City Council. The member for Currumbin asked about consultation with community groups. That was another area where community groups had an opportunity to express their views.

In addition, consultation has also taken place with the Liquor Industry Consultative Forum. This forum is also convened by the director-general of my department. Representatives on this forum include industry organisations, licensees, social justice groups, industry consultants and representatives of the Gold Coast City Council, Queensland Health and Queensland police. Consultation regarding the proposed ratio for security providers was conducted with a working party for the Office of Fair Trading review of the Security Providers Act. This group comprised representatives from the Office of Fair Trading, the security industry, unions, Griffith University, the Consumers Association and representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury, Justice and Attorney-General and the division. This was chaired very ably by Kate Molloy, the member for Noosa, who has done an absolutely stirling job.

In addition, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union was also consulted. As all honourable members can see, I would expect that there has been so much consultation that not one single individual, community or industry group could say that they missed out on consultation. If anything, their complaint would be that they may have been consulted too often. Despite that, after the introduction of the bill into the parliament, the Queensland Hotels Association, in particular, as well as other industry groups, approached the division with respect to the practicalities of some issues. For that reason, I will be seeking approval for some amendments to be made in the consideration in detail stage.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Ms KEECH (7.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 2—

At page 6, lines 7 to 20—

omit, insert—

'(1) Parts 4 and 5 commence on 1 December 2005.

'(2) The following provisions commence on 1 January 2006—

- section 3
- section 4(2), to the extent it inserts the definitions *Anzac Day event*, *development approval*, *post-amended Act*, *pre-amended Act* and *relevant period*
- sections 5 to 24 and 32 to 35
- section 36, other than to the extent it inserts new sections 274 and 275.

'(3) Section 26, to the extent it inserts new section 142AL, commences on 1 April 2006.

'(4) The remaining provisions of this Act commence on 1 March 2006.'.

I table the explanatory notes.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 25, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26—

Ms KEECH (7.47 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 26—

At page 18, lines 7 to 9—

omit, insert—

'(b) that part of licensed premises that—

(i) is used principally for the residential accommodation of guests staying at the premises; or

(ii) is a detached bottle shop.'.

3 Clause 26—

At page 18, after line 35—

insert—

'(c) section 142AG does not apply to licensed premises or premises to which a permit relates during a trading period in which the premises are not open for business after 1a.m.'.

4 Clause 26—

At page 19, lines 18 to 21—

omit.

5 Clause 26—

At page 24, line 13, after 'prize'—

insert—

'for consumption on the premises'.

6 Clause 26—

At page 24, lines 22 to 33 and page 25, lines 1 and 2—

omit.

Mrs STUCKEY: At the beginning of the minister's summing up, she quite rightly suggested that the bill is all about responsibility. There are certainly strong indications of that, as I have discussed and as the minister has indicated. It does concern me that the government appears to be placing the majority of the responsibility onto licensees and staff without adequate support from transport systems. I realise, in speaking to this clause, that transport is not under the minister's portfolio, but it is hoped that other departments will be brought in to work in sync with this.

Clause 26 inserts proposed subsection 142AE, which discusses exemptions and exclusions to these amendments. The question I have is why are these conditions not imposed on all licensed venues including coffee shops? For example, Park Road presently enjoys a free reign to serve alcohol to anyone and everyone until the wee hours of the morning with no security or CCTV in sight. They also do not have house policies on display.

In that clause I would like to address section 142AG, crowd controllers. I do note and applaud the minister for the amendments that she has just put forward that address this to some extent. However, it would seem that there is a blanket policy in relation to crowd controllers. As I said earlier, some traders do have a problem with that. Demanding that there be crowd controllers, be they one, two or however many there are, at 8 o'clock for licensed venues trading past one is unnecessary and excessive in the

mind of some of the traders, not to mention commercially unviable. The odds of requiring these security services at 8 pm under normal circumstances are negligible as this is primarily dinner time with little or no entertainment activities.

The minister also says that she cannot see that there is a chronic shortage of crowd controllers. Only this evening on the news we again saw incidents on the Gold Coast. I do not think people would call these people crowd controllers; there would probably be another name for the behaviour that we saw. Perhaps we need to be looking at the licensing of these security providers in more detail. There is a genuine concern about the shortage in the industry of appropriate people.

When we talk about standardised ratios on patronage, there is a very big difference between a gathering of 100 young, robust uni students versus perhaps 100 teachers or 100 members of a seniors group that might be at a function celebrating something. We are asking for some flexibility in the consideration of that.

Ms KEECH: With respect to restaurants, the majority of restaurants, if not all restaurants, in the Brisbane City Council area do not trade after 1 am and, therefore, they would not be captured by these provisions.

We have had this discussion about crowd controllers before. I recognise that, as with a whole range of industries, there are shortages in this industry. The member is correct; we are doing a review of the Security Providers Act. We want to ensure that in Queensland we continue to have the most professional industry and the most scrutinised industry. Fortunately we are in a situation where we are not looking at some of the examples that have occurred in southern states. I certainly share with the honourable member an absolute abhorrence of what I saw, once again, in the repeat of that video clip from a Surfers Paradise nightclub where security providers went outside and basically bashed the patron. I understand that those providers were taken before the courts.

I make it very clear that I believe there is no place whatsoever for thugs who dress up in security guards' uniforms. Every provider in the industry would agree 100 per cent with me. In fact, I have said in the media, and I have said publicly, that I believe that licensees can no longer hide behind the fact that they contract security providers and they have a hands-off approach when it comes to security providers acting unprofessionally. I am very keen to see a connection between the conditions on licensees on the proviso of the employment of professional security providers.

This area of a shortage of crowd controllers is something that I can assure the honourable member the industry is working closely with the government on. It is a very strong industry. I am sure that when we eventually get the amendments to the security providers bill into parliament the professionalism of the industry will support the viability of the security providers industry.

Mrs STUCKEY: I thank the minister for that reply. To the first part of my question, regarding section 142AE, I notice that the minister said that the majority of other venues do not trade past 1 am. Do any of them trade around Park Road or coffee shops or other suburbs and, if so, is it not unfair that the same restrictions are not placed on them? With respect to security guards and the review that the minister discussed, when will the review be ready? I know the minister has mentioned that she will be looking at security guards and providers. Will the training actually be strong enough to filter out some of these thuggish types that we have seen in the past?

Ms KEECH: Was the member talking about the review of the Security Providers Act?

Mrs STUCKEY: That is correct, minister.

Ms KEECH: Thank you. With respect to the member's first question about restaurants and why they are exempt from the crowd controller ratio, it is considered that the primary purpose of a restaurant is not the sale of alcohol but is the sale of food. There is considered to be little evidence to suggest that restaurants significantly contribute to alcohol related violence.

The review of the Security Providers Act is progressing. As I said, the member for Noosa is the chair of the committee reviewing the bill, and that is progressing. It has actually finished its consultation. I have said before that the review of the Security Providers Act is one of my priorities. I hope that I will get that into the House next year. I will ensure that there is wide consultation on that, including with yourself as shadow minister.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 26, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 27 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—

Mrs STUCKEY (7.56 pm): Clause 30 deals with the provision of statutory powers to the CEO. This has the effect of removing decisions made under this power from the right of appeal to the judicial system. It appears that the commission may have had a number of decisions made in this area overturned by the courts. Perhaps a better way to address such matters is to clarify the grounds for action rather than to paper over by government fiat. The fact that this amendment action is being proposed is another reason for an immediate review by an all party parliamentary committee, rather

than the bureaucracy, of the regulation of the sale and consumption of alcohol in Queensland since, not surprisingly, the commission seems to be more interested in extending its authority and control than in addressing the broad community issues in terms of benefit and disadvantage. I would appreciate it if the minister would advise the House of the reason behind this amendment and its relevance to the issue being dealt with in this amendment of the act.

Ms KEECH: Just to clarify with the member, my reading of clause 30 is with respect to transitional issues regarding the approved training course. We are trying to work out exactly what clause the member's question is relating to.

Mrs STUCKEY: Can I have a moment?

Ms Keech: It is a very complicated bill, so the member can take her time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member for Currumbin has the call. She has five minutes.

Mr Reeves: We will not call a point of order on you either.

Mrs STUCKEY: I do not think you can if I am not saying anything.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is the member's five minutes.

Ms Keech: I am actually trying to help, but I cannot find it either.

Mrs STUCKEY: It would appear that my advice on clause 30 is very different to that of the minister. I have no comment on that.

Ms Keech: We can discuss it at another date.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 56, as read, agreed to.

Clause 57—

Ms KEECH (8.00 pm): I move the following amendments—

7 Clause 57—

At page 41, lines 13 to 15—

omit, insert—

'(a) by fax, but only if the documents mentioned in subparagraphs (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) are sent in the following order—'.

8 Clause 57—

At page 41, lines 21 to 23—

omit, insert—

'(iii) the relevant contract;

(iv) any other documents; and

(b) by electronic communication other than fax, if the electronic communication contains—'.

9 Clause 57—

At page 41, lines 28 and 29—

omit, insert—

'(ii) a single document, consisting only of the warning statement and the relevant contract, that is protected against'.

10 Clause 57—

At page 42, lines 12 to 14—

omit, insert—

'(a) by fax, but only if the documents mentioned in subparagraphs (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) are sent in the following order—'.

11 Clause 57—

At page 42, lines 21 to 23—

omit, insert—

'(iv) the relevant contract;

(v) any other documents; and

(b) by electronic communication other than fax, if the electronic communication contains—'.

12 Clause 57—

At page 42, lines 28 to 30—

omit, insert—

'(ii) a single document, consisting only of the warning statement, the information sheet and the relevant contract, that is protected against unauthorised change, with the'.

Mrs STUCKEY: I acknowledge the minister's amendments. It is another step in the right direction and I commend her for that. I have a question on section 365(2). In relation to this particular amendment, can the minister guarantee against unauthorised change in the electronic format, for example, protection from hackers?

Ms KEECH: I am advised that the purpose of the amendments is to ensure that real estate transactions can be emailed electronically. Safeguards regarding those electronic transmissions, particularly through email, would come under the Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 57, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 58 and 59, as read, agreed to.

Clause 60—

Ms KEECH (8.03 pm): I move the following amendments—

13 Clause 60—

At page 44, lines 17 to 32 and page 45, lines 1 to 13—

omit, insert—

'the seller or the seller's agent must, when faxing the proposed relevant contract, fax the documents mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) in the following order—

(a) a single cover page that includes a clear statement directing the proposed buyer's attention to the warning statement and the proposed relevant contract;

(b) the warning statement;

(c) the proposed relevant contract;

(d) any other documents.

'(3) If the proposed relevant contract does relate to a unit sale, the seller or the seller's agent must, when faxing the proposed relevant contract, fax the documents mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) in the following order—

(a) a single cover page that includes a clear statement directing the proposed buyer's attention to the warning statement, the information sheet, the proposed relevant contract and, if a disclosure statement has not already been given to the buyer or to the buyer's agent, the disclosure statement;

(b) the warning statement;

(c) the information sheet;

(d) the proposed relevant contract;

(e) if the disclosure statement has not already been given to the buyer or the buyer's agent, the disclosure statement;

(f) any other documents.'.

14 Clause 60—

At page 45, line 32, 'only'—

omit.

15 Clause 60—

At page 46, lines 4 and 5—

omit, insert—

'(b) a single document, consisting only of the warning statement and the proposed relevant contract, that is protected against'.

16 Clause 60—

At page 46, line 10, 'only'—

omit.

17 Clause 60—

At page 46, lines 17 to 19—

omit, insert—

'(b) a single document, consisting only of the warning statement, the information sheet and the proposed relevant contract, that is protected against unauthorised change, with the warning'.

18 Clause 60—

At page 46, lines 23 to 26—

omit, insert—

' '(4) Despite subsection (3)(b), the disclosure statement may form part of the single document mentioned in that provision if it does not appear before the information sheet.'.

Mrs STUCKEY: I refer to section 366A. The amendment would appear to have combined the warning and the contract into a single document. Again I ask: how can the electronic format be guaranteed against hackers? I imagine that the answer will be the same.

Ms KEECH: Yes. The member is correct.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 60, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 61 to 65, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill, as amended, read a third time.

SUGAR INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 8 November (see p.3742).

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (8.05 pm): For almost a century the Queensland sugar industry has had a single desk marketing system that has helped to achieve the best possible prices in the corrupted world market and has provided a stable and transparent income for canefarmers. Today signals the beginning of the end of the sugar industry's single desk marketing system, for reasons based purely on ideology and not economics, on possibilities and predictions rather than facts. We will be opposing this bill.

Essentially, the Beattie Labor government's arguments for introducing this legislation are threefold. They say that the single desk needs to be dismantled because the industry is facing an increasingly competitive market. They also claim that the laws need to be changed because it is what the sugar industry wants. Thirdly, Labor claims the single desk was going to be abolished anyway when the Sugar Industry Act was reviewed again for the purposes of national competition policy in 2006-07. In my speech today I will show that all of those arguments are flawed and dishonest, and that the single desk has helped and not hindered the Queensland sugar industry's ability to compete in a global market against international competitors that rely heavily on government subsidies.

The importance of the sugar industry's single desk has been demonstrated time and again by various reviews into the sugar industry. The one main organisation that has suggested otherwise is the Centre for International Economics, which has twice been paid by the state government to review sugar industry laws. Its first report, released in 2002 and entitled *Cleaning up the act,* was totally discredited and has not even been mentioned by the minister in the lead-up to this debate. It is only vaguely alluded to in the explanatory notes of the bill. The second CIE report, entitled *Unshackling Queensland sugar,* was provided to the state government in June 2005 but has never been released publicly and has been buried. That report provides plenty of rhetoric but no solid economic data assessing the costs and benefits of scrapping the single desk. That is because the risks involved in scrapping the single desk are many and the possible benefits are small and spurious at best.

It is flawed and misleading of Labor to claim that because two people involved with the sugar industry have signed a memorandum of understanding with the state government, thousands of farmers and mill workers in the sugar industry must therefore support these laws. Further, the assertion that this was going to happen anyway, through a national competition policy review, is merely a wild prediction that has no basis in fact.

A 1996 sugar industry competition policy review recommended the retention of the single desk—a recommendation that has been accepted by the National Competition Council ever since. Throughout this debate today, I will also demonstrate that the signing of the MOU and the Beattie government's whole approach to the dismantling of the single desk has been more about public relations and manipulating opinion than any altruistic aim to ensure that the sugar industry prospers into the future.

I will give some general information about the sugar industry. Australia is one of the world's largest and most reliable exporters of high quality raw sugar. Around 85 per cent of Australia's raw sugar production, most originating in Queensland, is exported each year. Although there are larger producers, Australia is one of the world's three largest exporters of raw sugar. In the 2004 season, we produced around 5.1 million tonnes of raw sugar, which generated industry income of $1.3 billion.

A fact sheet from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries web site points out that the sugar industry is a cornerstone of many Queensland regional communities, providing employment and livelihood for many Queensland families. Australia has no domestic price support, unlike most other countries which regulate prices often far above world market values. Our success has been built on world's best practice in production, handling and marketing.

Sugar is a hugely variable commodity. In the past 10 years prices have roller-coastered between US5c and US12c a pound, and the last few years have been categorised by a period of prolonged downturn. Prices have finally started to improve. The price outlook for the future is brighter, due largely to a shift in the international market in which demand is outweighing supply.

As a result of these low prices, coupled with poor weather conditions and disease, significant restructuring of the sugar industry has occurred in recent years. Canegrowers General Manager, Ian Ballantyne, recently provided an industry update. He pointed out—

> Over 1,000 growers have left the industry in recent years, leaving around 5,000 growers producing almost as much cane. There has been a clear aggregation of farms, resulting in an increase in average hectares farmed by growers. Harvesters have also taken up the gauntlet of reform to become more efficient, with fewer harvesting groups covering a greater area. At the farm gate, better farm management and business planning has assisted in boosting cane farm productivity, with more tons of cane being grown per hectare.

Despite the inevitable comments that I expect from south-east Queensland based Labor MPs, who will rail against farmers and criticise the sugar industry for not changing, in reality reform has been occurring and will continue to occur.

Currently, an industry owned company, Queensland Sugar Ltd, is the exclusive marketer of Queensland's annual raw sugar crop through its single desk operation. Its history dates back to the Sugar Acquisition Act 1915. The company's forerunner, the Sugar Board, was first established to market Queensland raw sugar in 1923. The sugar industry single desk is underpinned by legislation which vests all raw sugar in Queensland Sugar Ltd, that is, QSL compulsorily acquires the sugar. QSL makes progressive payments to mill owners, who then make payments to the cane suppliers. Sugar refiners purchase raw sugar from QSL both for sale domestically and for export.

A ministerial direction given to QSL by the state primary industries minister ensures that raw sugar purchased by domestic users is bought at export parity price. An exemption from vesting of sugar can be sought where it is to be used in the manufacture of an alternative product. Queensland Sugar states on its web site that it is a company limited by guarantee, owned by the growers and millers of Queensland. QSL states that it is accountable to the industry through its 35 members—10 mill owners, representatives of Queensland's 23 local mill suppliers committees and one representative each from the Australian Cane Farmers Association and the Canegrowers organisation.

I want to speak about the wheat single desk. In Australia, sugar is not the only commodity that is marketed through a single desk system. One of the most well-known and successful single desks is the wheat single desk, managed by the AWB. The AWB is one of the world's largest wheat exporters. It evolved from the Australian Wheat Board, which operated as a government statutory marketing authority for 60 years and is now publicly listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.

The AWB exports between 15 million and 18 million tonnes of wheat annually, worth between $4 billion and $5 billion—approximately three per cent of Australia's total export revenue. The federal government has legislated for a subsidiary of AWB Ltd—AWB International—to act as a single desk exporter for bulk wheat shipments. In fact sheets on its web site the AWB states—

The single desk captures value through price premiums, reducing supply chain costs, risk management and gives Australian wheat growers access to two billion consumers in over 50 countries around the world.

One face in international markets ensures price confidentiality and that Australian growers are not played off against each other in international markets.

Two Melbourne university professors undertook a study of the estimated impact of full-scale deregulation on wheat growers' returns and found—

The abolition of the current wheat marketing arrangements could see a reduction in grower returns of at least US $134 million and as much as US $563 million.

I table one of their fact sheets for the information of all members. In the fact sheet which I have just tabled, the AWB quotes Prime Minister John Howard as stating—

Over the years we have remained very strongly in favour of the single desk and that remains our policy and I have no intention of changing it.

In the same fact sheet, the AWB quotes the federal trade minister, Mark Vaile, as stating—

Our single desk arrangements, including on wheat and sugar, do not distort world trade, and they benefit Australian farmers.

This is an important point made by the trade minister. Our heavily subsidised international competitors know of the benefits of our single desk arrangements and constantly attack them. The federal government was under enormous pressure from the United States government and US agricultural industry to scrap Australia's single desk selling systems for both wheat and sugar during the free trade agreement negotiations. While it is very disappointing that the federal government was unable to negotiate to allow more of our sugar to be sold into the highly protected US market, the minister and the Australian negotiating team resisted the pressure on our single desk systems and these arrangements were maintained.

The question must be asked: if Australia's single desk arrangements, including sugar, do not distort world trade, benefit our farmers and have been maintained under free trade arrangements, why is the Beattie Labor government so hell-bent on getting rid of them?

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Mr HORAN: I think that interjection sums it up. The member for Mundingburra said that they do not like them. That is a pretty petty interjection on a serious subject like the single desk.

The Beattie government's deregulation agenda and its desire to remove itself from any involvement with the sugar industry have been widely known for years. Today we are debating a continuation of that agenda. In April 2004 the Beattie government passed the Sugar Industry Reform Bill 2004, which abolished a system of cane production areas in favour of a system of written contracts. It replaced compulsory bargaining with voluntary collective bargaining. It introduced the exemption from the domestic single desk for alternative products and bagged sugar for export.

This legislation followed the signing of a sugar industry reform called a heads of agreement by Premier Beattie, former Canegrowers chairman Mr Jim Pedersen and the Australian Sugar Milling Council chair, Mr Geoff Mitchell, on 1 March 2004. This agreement included a clause stating—

The industry will establish a working group to develop voluntary marketing arrangements as soon as possible. The objective of this working group is to work towards a new system for marketing of raw sugar prior to the requirement for review in 2006.

During 2004, a working group was established which included three representatives from the Canegrowers organisation, five milling representatives and two state government bureaucrats. This working group was told to operate on the basis that the Beattie government would repeal the Sugar Industry Act 1999 at some time in the future. Its report was presented to the state government in May 2005. Subsequently, in October, another memorandum of understanding on sugar industry reform was signed by the Premier and one representative each from the Canegrowers organisation and the Australian Sugar Milling Council, albeit after an earlier draft was rejected by the industry.

As part of the industry-government agreement signed prior to the introduction of this legislation, most mills have agreed to sign contracts to ensure that Queensland Sugar continues to market its raw sugar for export for the next three years. However, two mills, Mossman and Mulgrave, have refused to be a part of the new marketing system. This means that there is no single desk and it is highly likely that more mills will follow after the initial three-year transition period.

I turn now to the provisions of the bill. In a nutshell, this bill repeals the statutory vesting arrangements from the date of the bill's proclamation, which is aimed to be 1 January 2006. A ministerial direction that domestic raw sugar prices should be set at export parity price—that is, world raw sugar price—will cease. Raw sugar from the 2005 harvest that is vested prior to 31 December 2005 will continue to be the legal property of Queensland Sugar Ltd, and the bill makes provision for the finalisation of marketing of the 2005 crop.

Queensland Sugar Ltd will be authorised for the purposes of the Trade Practices Act 1974 to negotiate for three years commercial export contractual arrangements with millers for collective selling and uniform pool pricing. The bill also provides for QSL to fulfil obligations under pre-existing domestic contracts for the 2006 season. This legislation also dissolves the Sugar Authority, which is the statutory authority that was set up to overview the performance of Queensland Sugar Ltd in its role as the single desk marketing body.

The state government has claimed that this legislation has the support of industry and at various times has even tried to claim that it has been the industry that has driven this change and the state government is merely doing the industry's bidding. The fact that two people from the sugar industry have signed an MOU and three cane-growing representatives and five millers were involved in a working group seems to be the basic premise for the Beattie government's arguments. But just how much support does this marketing system have? Certainly, the millers representative group, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, is right behind this change and some of the hierarchy of Canegrowers has been deeply involved in the development of this new marketing system as evidenced by the chairman's decision to sign an MOU with the state government supporting this new system and its involvement in the working group.

In justifying its involvement, Canegrowers has made some statements that ceasing the compulsory acquisition of sugar does not mean the end of the single desk and that the single desk is preserved for the new voluntary system. But the single desk exists precisely and only because there are compulsory acquisition powers. Indeed, the involvement of Canegrowers with the state government has led many growers, particularly in the Burdekin, to blame the Canegrowers organisation for the introduction of the laws we are debating today. It is clear that there are some real mixed messages coming out of the Canegrowers organisation. On the one hand, there is this close involvement with the state government in the working group and its decision to sign an MOU and a previous heads of agreement. Effectively, the Canegrowers hierarchy has been involved in the development of this legislation from its inception and monitored it every step of the way, predominantly behind closed doors and away from the public glare.

On the other hand, in its media releases Canegrowers has been saying—

The marketing changes were prompted by the State Government's clear intention to withdraw from all intervention in the sugar industry.

That was Alf Cristaudo's, the chairman of Canegrowers, media release on 14 October this year. In the 31 October edition of *Australian Canegrower*, Canegrowers general manager Ian Ballantyne stated—

Canegrowers did not seek, nor have we ever supported, a move away from acquisition.

Similarly, in the 22 August 2005 edition of *Australian Canegrower* Mr Cristaudo states—

The pressure for marketing change is coming from the State Government, not us.

In the 19 September edition of *Australian Canegrower* Mr Ballantyne states—

Canegrowers does not, has not and will not advocate cessation of acquisition.

In the 3 October edition of *Australian Canegrower* Mr Ballantyne outlined a series of scenarios, and one of these scenarios, according to Mr Ballantyne, was that the government will move to repeal the legislation without further consultation or cooperation with industry. So essentially Mr Ballantyne was arguing that his organisation needed to be inside the tent with the state government to ensure that canefarmers did not suffer a worse fate.

Mr Ballantyne emailed the opposition office on 17 November to elaborate further on his position, and he has given me permission to quote from that email in the parliament. In his email Mr Ballantyne wrote the following—

In our opinion, we had nowhere to go.

He went on to say—

The view was not that we sought support for change, but that we sought that Government-initiated change support a reasonable transition.

Further, Mr Ballantyne wrote—

Canegrowers has never 'indicated positive support' to move away from vesting. We have argued and continue to argue for its retention, but similarly have attempted to plan for its demise. There was clear intention by Government to misrepresent our position and we clearly indicated to the Premier and Deputy Premier that we would not be used to shed blame by the Government.

Time will tell whether canefarmers, both those who are members of Canegrowers and those who are not, accept these arguments. Another grower representative organisation, the Australian Cane Farmers Association, has strongly condemned the state government's laws. ACFA is an organisation in which about a third of Queensland cane growers are members, along with a significant number of New South Wales cane growers. In media releases and correspondence, ACFA has raised a number of valid concerns about this legislation and the state government's agenda. In a media release issued on 8 November 2005, ACFA chairman Ross Walker stated—

Voluntary marketing structures have failed for other commodities with Australian sellers competing against other Australian sellers in the international market place, often with a negative impact on the price received by farmers.

In a media release issued on 1 November 2005, Mr Walker said that one of ACFA's primary concerns with the loss of the single desk was the threat to the transparency of the current payment scheme and the transfer of more risk on to the farmers. He said—

If a mill chooses to market their sugar themselves, it is most likely that farmers will be removed from the policy making process. Farmers will no longer know how much mills will receive from the sale of sugar and will therefore be further disadvantaged during cane supply contract negotiations.

They were the ones brought in in the 2004 changes in this parliament. He went on to say—

The proposed changes render Queensland Sugar Limited as a leaking tank. Farmers will wake up in three years time to learn the tank is empty and what they've lost is now ancient history.

In a media release issued on 20 October 2005, ACFA stated—

The single desk has served the industry well by presenting a united front in an international market corrupted by farm subsidies.

The single desk seller has built a reputation for reliability and quality. It has been able to provide technical and financial services to customers; to blend sugar to maintain brands and quality; and to drive down logistic costs.

Again on 14 October 2005, ACFA said—

Formation of a voluntary marketing body has no positives for Queensland farmers but will have a lot of negative consequences. The single desk system that we have is the envy of many sugar producing countries.

I noticed in a ministerial briefing note written on 28 July 2005—which I obtained through freedom of information—that the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries told the minister that it expected opposition 'from a small but vocal group of growers concentrated in the Burdekin region'. This so-called group is made up of more than 500 growers—not a small group but 500 growers, representing 80 per cent of the Burdekin region's growers who wrote to the minister opposing the dismantling of the single desk. So we see just for a start opposition to the loss of the single desk from Canegrowers, the ACFA and now some 500 letters from growers in the Burdekin region alone. It is interesting that, since that briefing note was written and the member for Burdekin, Mrs Rosemary Menkens, tabled those 500 letters in state parliament, the government rhetoric has changed, with the explanatory notes now acknowledging that a significant number of growers from the Burdekin area have expressed concern over this proposal, no longer saying a 'small but vocal group'.

The Canegrowers Burdekin organisation issued a media release on 6 October 2005 calling for—

... the state Labor government to drop their plans to scrap legislation covering raw sugar acquisition and single desk marketing arrangements.

In this media release, the Canegrowers Burdekin secretary, Mr Jim Collins, said—

Canegrowers fully endorses the benefits of the current single desk marketing arrangements which provide growers with a range of benefits including achievement of price premiums, secure cashflows, coordinated and efficient logistics, transparency of operations and confidence in the independence and capacity of Queensland Sugar Limited.

Mr Collins went on to state—

There is nothing in the commercial area the Labor Government can offer all growers and millers in our predominantly export industry that can match the benefits we have now.

The legislation drives export market stability to the benefit of our communities. Further it underpins the meagre ration of services we receive from the State to hold together what should otherwise be far more vibrant small communities.

Clearly, the cane-growing sector is deeply concerned about the legislative changes being made by the state government and Labor's claim of near unanimous industry support, which could not be further from the truth.

I now want to talk about the economics of this decision and some reports that have come through about single desk selling. As I said at the outset, the reason behind Labor's laws that we are debating tonight is ideology—not economics—and is based on unlikely possibilities rather than facts. Although the Beattie government seems to have disowned it, and the explanatory notes refer only to a review in 2002, the Centre for International Economics report titled 'Cleaning up the act' helped fuel Labor's desire to dismantle the single desk and give it the so-called independent backing that it sought.

Again, in 2005 the Beattie government has gone to its pet consultants to review its plans. Interestingly enough, this CIE report titled 'Unshackling Queensland sugar', which cost taxpayers $40,000, has never been released publicly and has instead been buried. I suspect that the Beattie government had initially planned to release the report when it signed an agreement with the Canegrowers organisation and the Australian Sugar Milling Council. The CIE report was referred to in an original draft heads of agreement that the Beattie government wanted industry representatives to sign in August this year. But that first draft was rejected by growers and millers and the reference to the CIE report was removed in the final MOU.

Basically, both CIE reports argue against the export single desk on the basis that Queensland Sugar does not have perfect information about the market, that the single desk hinders the development of commercial skills and a commercial culture at a regional level, and that it centralises commercial power in Brisbane. In both reports, CIE provided plenty of rhetoric, but gave no valid economic reasons to support its arguments. I call on the minister to provide in his reply some hard evidence of the economic benefits of scrapping the export single desk.

In late 2002 to early 2003 the Canegrowers organisation commissioned another independent economic consultant, the Boston Consulting Group, to examine sugar industry deregulation. Its report disagreed with the CIE's findings. Essentially, the Boston Consulting Group stated that the benefits of deregulating the single desk for exports are comparatively small and could be far outweighed by the risks. The Boston Consulting Group outlined that the single desk was able to extract a far-east premium—essentially from the markets in Korea, Malaysia and Japan—worth about $50 million. This premium is driven by undersupply, high freight costs for our competitors and Queensland's ability to meet their demand through exports. The Boston Consulting Group warned that multiple Queensland sellers could compete this premium away. I repeat that: the Boston Consulting Group warned that multiple Queensland sellers could compete this premium away.

The Boston Consulting Group also highlighted that abolishing the single desk may increase freight costs for individual mills. It refuted CIE's claims that deregulating the export single desk would promote the development of a commercial culture at a regional level by posing the question: how well will a single mill go against global trading houses? The Boston Consulting Group also noted that many other export-orientated agricultural industries have retained control over their export monopoly while deregulating domestic sales.

It is interesting to note that while on the one hand the Canegrowers organisation has signed an MOU with the state government and has been involved in a working group to set up new marketing arrangements, on the other hand, in a submission to the state government dated 29 January 2003, it stated—

> Canegrowers recognises the benefits accruing from single desk marketing arrangements. The premium captured by operation of the current marketing arrangements has been supported by the BCG analysis, which related specifically to the operation of the sugar single desk. CIE analysis in this area was generic, with diagrams and text copied directly from earlier reports and other commodities.

At that time Canegrowers also generally blasted the CIE report commissioned by the state government saying—

> The approach used for this report is sufficiently flawed as to skew its recommendations.

Canegrowers pointed out errors in relation to how growing and milling costs had been calculated. It stated further that CIE was wrong to assume that there was more land available for cane farm expansion when Queensland state government water and vegetation controls restrict the potential for expansion. Canegrowers also derided CIE's assumptions relating to links between the Sugar Industry Act and productivity improvements as 'fundamentally flawed.'

Similarly, in his independent assessment of the sugar industry for the federal government in 2002, Clive Hildebrand stated—

> It was evident to the Assessment that the establishment of Queensland Sugar Limited provided very substantial cost savings for Queensland farmers and millers.
>
> The Assessment could see that QSL provided a centre of highly professional management and marketing expertise. For a state that produces most of Australia's sugar and with the greatest exposure to the international market, this Queensland arrangement for marketing direct to customers with the benefit of averaging out specifications for customers appears to the assessor today to be highly logical and an effective and respected resource for the export of sugar.

In the wake of this assessment, on 25 September 2003 a memorandum of understanding was signed by industry representatives, then federal agriculture minister Warren Truss, then state development minister Tom Barton and then primary industries minister Henry Palaszczuk, which stated—

... the Governments agree that the operation of the single desk for exports of raw sugar should be retained.

Under the 2002 MOU, there was also a clause stating—

... the Governments agree that, notwithstanding any regulatory change that occurs as a result of this agreement, the review of the (Sugar Industry) Act will proceed in 2006 as scheduled.

The review is referred to in section 112 of the Sugar Industry Act, one of the many sections that is being scrapped by this bill. Clause 1 of this section states—

The Minister must appoint a person to review the effectiveness of, and the need for the continuation, alteration or abolition of, the sugar vesting scheme established under chapter 3.

This section of the act also provided for the review to be started no later than 1 December 2006 and completed no later than 31 December 2007. However, by introducing this legislation that is before the parliament today, the government has decided to pre-empt that planned review and has said that there is only one option, and that is abolition. The state government has decided that there will be no scrutiny of whether the sugar vesting scheme should continue or be altered as was provided for under section 112 of the Sugar Industry Act.

I now turn to the matter of the national competition policy. Basically, the Beattie government has claimed that it knows the outcomes of this planned NCP review before it even happens and that the outcome would be that the single desk would be abolished. However, it gives no evidence whatsoever to support that claim. In state parliament on 26 October 2005 state development minister Anna Bligh claimed that Queensland does not want to be in a position where the ACCC next year, as a result of a review, dismantles all of the current arrangements without any transitional arrangements being put in place. I am not sure whether the Premier's anointed successor misread her briefing note or whether she is genuinely unaware that it is the NCC—the National Competition Council—that assesses competition policy compliance, not the ACCC. If, as has been stated in the media, Ms Bligh's move to the portfolios of State Development and Finance was an attempt to boost her standing in the business community before she becomes top dog, she might like to learn the difference between the ACCC and the NCC.

For the minister's information, I point out that the ACCC is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority that basically administers and enforces the Trade Practices Act. In contrast, the NCC, the National Competition Council, was established by all Australian governments in 1995 to act as a policy advisory body to oversee the implementation of national competition policy. The NCC conducts regular assessments of governments' progress in implementing national competition policy reforms and makes recommendations on competition policy payments.

The 2004 National Competition Council assessment states—

The council previously determined that the relevant jurisdictions met their clause 4 obligations in relation to the Queensland Sugar Corporation—

which has since become Queensland Sugar Ltd. The NCC also stated—

Some reviews have found export single desks to be in the public interest, such as the 1996-97 review of Queensland's raw sugar single desk and the 1996 review of the rice single desk in New South Wales. These single desks have thus continued—

although I note there has been a change to the New South Wales rice single desk under the Labor government.

In 1996 a Sugar Industry Review Working Party conducted a major review of sugar industry laws for the state and federal governments essentially to address national competition policy requirements. Recommendation 3.1 of this report states—

Acquisition and single desk selling arrangements for Queensland raw sugar exports should be continued on a compulsory basis.

The working party found that the benefits of single desk selling are, firstly, that it enables the Queensland industry to build close customer relationships based on the ability to differentiate Queensland raw sugar from its competitors. Access to markets and control of the supply chain to end users represents a long-term strategic benefit for the sugar industry. Secondly, it enables the Queensland industry to influence regional price premiums by managing the export supply of raw sugar, a benefit estimated to be in the order of $30 million to $60 million per year to the industry and the Australian community. Finally, it enables the coordinated and integrated management of the industry's logistics with cost savings in the form of reduced freight charges and lowest cost bulk sugar terminal activities.

The working party went on to state that the current arrangements have a long history of success and it is under these arrangements that the industry has become internationally competitive. Further, the working party said—

Deregulated arrangements, including multiple sellers of raw sugar, could see currently available benefits dissipate.

Importantly, this report stated—

Maintenance of current arrangements for acquisition and single desk selling for export meet the Working Party's terms of reference to facilitate the sustainable development of an internationally competitive, export oriented Queensland raw sugar industry as well as meeting National Competition Policy requirements.

Elaborating on this point, the working party stated—

Scope exists for increasing returns from export supply and management through single desk selling compared with the NCP base case because of the nature of the raw sugar market and Australia's special position in it. The unquantified benefits and these additional revenues represent a contribution to Australia's public interest.

The Sugar Industry Review Working Party also made some interesting comments regarding voluntary single desk selling, which is essentially what is going to happen as a result of this legislation. The working party's report states—

Unless the voluntary export arrangements are supported by participants and monitored closely, there would be an incentive and a tendency for individual traders to divert their product away from the residual market towards the premium market. In this way, any premium existing in particular export markets for raw sugar from Australia would be lost through competition.

In the absence of legislatively supported single desk export selling, there would be reward for individual producers breaking the voluntary arrangement and diverting raw sugar shipments until the Far East market premium was dissipated.

The working party went on to state—

The Working Party considered that while the benefits flowing from single desk selling are assured under compulsory arrangements, there is a risk that these would be lost under a voluntary marketing structure.

The Working Party also considered the impact of a potentially unstable voluntary export marketing arrangement on existing industry structures. Under current arrangements, both cane growers and mill owners share in the monetary benefits from the sale of Queensland raw sugar, with cane growers obtaining about two-thirds of the revenue.

With a voluntary structure, both could still share in the benefits. However, a decision by a mill to withdraw from the arrangement in pursuit of higher returns would risk the premiums currently shared by both cane growers and mill owners. In other words, a decision made by a mill or coalition of mill owners to pursue alternative marketing options would risk cane growers' income as well as the mill owner's income.

So this report provides further evidence that the supposed benefits of scrapping the export single desk are small, if there are any at all, and the risks outweigh any of the supposed benefits.

There seems to be little doubt that Bundaberg Sugar will stop using Queensland Sugar as its marketer in the future. Bundaberg Sugar owns and operates six mills in Queensland—four in far-north Queensland and two in Bundaberg. The ministerial briefing notes obtained by the opposition through FOI reveal that Bundaberg Sugar's position on the new marketing system was 'very unclear' in early August, prompting the Premier to write to Finasucre, Bundaberg Sugar's parent company in Belgium. The state government was so concerned that Finasucre would baulk at the proposal that it was preparing to develop a fallback strategy.

Bundaberg Sugar's opposition to the single desk is not new. As far back as 1996, in a submission to the Sugar Industry Review Working Party, Bundaberg Sugar was calling for the end of compulsory marketing arrangements. The state government's document *Sugar: The way forward* released in April 2003 reveals on page 61—

Bundaberg Sugar recommended complete deregulation of marketing arrangements; that is the removal of vesting and single desk selling for both export and domestic.

As *Queensland Country Life* journalist Brad Cooper wrote on 17 November 2005—

The unconvincing support of Bundaberg Sugar and the continuing refusal of the Mossman and Mulgrave Mills to sign up to the deregulation plan, was also likely to fuel further speculation that united front was a facade, and could crumble as early as next season.

Documents obtained by the Queensland Nationals through freedom of information paint a picture of a government more obsessed with public relations and manipulating opinion than ensuring the sugar industry prospers into the future. I table a copy of these documents for the information of members.

While a lot of the information in these documents has been blacked out on the basis of cabinet and deliberative processes exemptions, the documents do reveal 'a communication strategy' was to be prepared to counter opposition and manipulate opinion on the new laws. The minister may like to enlighten the parliament on whether this is still going to happen, how much it is going to cost taxpayers and what exactly it will entail. The ministerial briefing notes reveal that the Queensland government will 'support a full communication strategy' that 'may include, if necessary, newspaper advertisements but would certainly extend to financial support for preparation of materials and direct-mailing of growers'.

The documents also reveal that 'all parties' to the recently signed memorandum of understanding agreed to keep the planned changes to the single desk 'confidential' until 15 September 2005. Obviously, this was seen as crucial in keeping a lid on opposition from growers at the grassroots level. However, the Beattie government's attempt to keep its single desk plan secret was blown out of the water when I questioned the minister in parliament on 9 August about the single desk submission that went to cabinet. The documents also show that the key reason the Beattie government wanted the three major milling groups—CSR, Bundaberg Sugar and Mackay Sugar—to sign contracts with QSL was essentially that it was 'vital in selling this change to growers'. It is also interesting that the opposition's FOI request revealed that the minister received four briefing notes on changes to the single desk during

his first two weeks as minister. We have to wonder why then he blundered his way through answering his very first question as primary industries minister and was forced to skulk back into parliament and make an embarrassing apology.

The Beattie government has a history of providing spin rather than substance to the sugar industry when we look at the number of failed sugar packages it has provided already. There have been a number of sugar reform packages in recent years which have been designed as sweeteners to soften the blow of the Beattie government's legislative changes. In 2000 the Premier promised $10 million in funding through the Sugar Industry Crop Replanting and Establishment Scheme, but only nine loans worth $60,308 were granted. Then, in 2002-03, the Beattie government spruiked about a $20 million sugar cane crop scheme. This, too, proved an abject failure, with just 17 loans granted at a value of $442,685—only about two per cent of the total allocation.

Then, to accompany the 2004 laws, the Beattie government announced a so-called $33 million sugar reform package, but what exactly did that package entail? The first element was a farm consolidation loans scheme. Despite two previous loan schemes failing, the Beattie government persisted with yet another scheme. The Beattie government loves to introduce rural loan schemes because it can claim that it will spend millions of dollars when it is doing nothing of the sort. Aside from the fact that the money provided is in the form of loans that have to be paid back, the former minister revealed during estimates that just eight farmers have taken up this latest sugar loans offer.

Then there is the $13 million Change Management Program. Five different departments, including Employment and Training and the Environmental Protection Agency, get a slice of this funding which they can use to fund projects that should have been funded out of their own budgets or other programs anyway. The DPI's component of this program is called FutureCane, with a $5.2 million allocation. This program has some admirable aims and 24 departmental staff work with farmers to assist them to increase their productivity and profitability. But the work these staff are doing is essentially extension work that was once just a normal part of their job.

The budget of the department of primary industries has been slashed from $381 million in 1997-98 to $313 million in 2005-06. As a result, for DPI staff to be able to do the regular work they used to do every day, such as extension work, it appears that there now needs to be a special budgetary allocation and a catchy marketing slogan.

Finally, there is the $10 million Sugar Industry Innovation Fund. While this fund does provide some worthwhile, although very limited, financial assistance to sugar industry participants, it, too, is likely to be underspent. In a briefing note obtained by the opposition through freedom of information, the department of primary industries reveals that as of 15 June 2005 a total of $2.4 million of the overall $10 million has been approved to date, with at the time only 12 months to run. Since 19 June 2005, the multidepartmental evaluation committee has obviously been working overtime approving grants valued at more than $1.7 million. Even taking into account this five-month flurry of funding, less than half of the $10 million allocated to the Sugar Industry Innovation Fund has been spent to date, and the program has only seven months left to run. So yet another state government program designed to assist the sugar industry will be massively underspent.

It is clear that the Beattie government's reasons for introducing this legislation are based on ideology, economics and spin rather than substance. The state government has offered no economic basis for these changes, only briefly alluding to a discredited report that it commissioned in 2002 and burying another report from the same consultant commissioned this year. Despite Labor's misleading claims that they are doing what the industry wants, a significant portion of the industry is adamantly opposed to dismantling the sugar industry's single desk selling arrangements.

Finally, Labor's assertion that this was going to happen anyway is merely a wild prediction that cannot be supported by any facts, especially as the single desk emerged from the last competition policy review unscathed.

Before I finish my speech, I want to thank members of the DPIF who provided me and some of my colleagues with a very professional briefing. The sugar industry is one of Queensland's most important primary industries, and its participants deserve some honesty from the Beattie government and some accountability for its actions. Predictions and possibilities without economic evidence will not convince Queensland's 5,000 cane growers that these laws are unnecessary. The National Party and the Liberal Party will not be supporting this bill.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (8.53 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 2005. I do so not out of some ideologically driven need to see the end of a single desk in the sugar industry but out of an absolute belief that this is the next logical step in moving a very important industry in this country forward. We will increase its opportunity for flexibility and competitiveness so that it will not just survive into the future—which just a few years ago seemed highly unlikely—but also thrive and provide a future for the children of those cane growers who are currently in the industry in places like Mackay and Proserpine, areas which I represent.

If there is an ideologically driven argument in this House tonight on this bill it comes from those opposite, who seem to be so rooted in the past that out of sheer bloody-mindedness they will oppose anything that offers change in the sugar industry. I think National Party members tonight are confirming their position as fossils in relation to Australia's modern primary industries sector. Despite all their objections to the contents of the bill before the House tonight, not one cane farmer or milling operator approached me in my electorate office, in a major sugar seat in this state, to lodge their objection to the bill that is being debated tonight—not one. I have not heard from any of my colleagues that we have been overwhelmed, by any stretch of the imagination, by industry members opposing what has been put forward tonight.

I also point out to members in the House that there is not one Liberal Party member on the speaking list tonight. I wonder if that is because we have just exposed yet another example of the enormous policy gulf that exists between the Nationals and the Liberals in their so-called marriage or coalition—this newly formed agreement that we are supposed to believe exists in this parliament.

I heard the member for Toowoomba South asserting that the elected members of these peak bodies—the cane farmers group and the milling groups—do not represent the members of their industry. Is that like saying that the Pope cannot speak on behalf of Catholics or that John Howard does not have any right to speak on behalf of the Liberal Party? I guess that is true to some extent, but we accept it because that is how peak bodies work. By the conventions of the democratic process, we accept that as being legitimate and we accept their right to act in many cases as elected representatives on behalf of their members.

The National Party seems to be opposed to changes to the single desk arrangements just because that is how it has always been. Never mind the fact that we actually have agreement on this issue with the peak bodies and their representatives—Canegrowers and the Australian Sugar Milling Council. This does not come out of the blue. This is the next logical step in a series of amendments that have been made that impact on the industry. I do not run away from the fact that the industry has had to deal with a great deal of change, but the sky has not fallen in. The sky did not fall in after the last amendments, despite the fact that we heard that was what was going to happen. It did not happen.

Part of the reforms included the Sugar Industry Reform Act 2004, which underpinned the provision of significant state moneys—some $33 million, as pointed out by the member for Toowoomba South, and some $444 million of federal money for restructuring and assistance programs. Both of those initiatives from both federal and state governments were predicated on the continuing reform process to ensure that the industry has long-term viability. This bill today, as I have said and I say again, is the next logical step that carries on that process.

I want to talk about some of the funding that has been attached to the reform process. I note that the member for Toowoomba South has gone through it and has been quite disparaging of it. I talked to my father, who is a grazier and a wheat grower. He said that nobody has offered him a handout. He has had some very tough times over the years. They have had nothing like what has been offered to the sugar industry of late to support the long-term viability of this industry. So let us not scoff at the money that has been put out there. Let us not say, 'Oh, well, all you ever do is offer low-interest loans.' I would not mind a low-interest loan on my mortgage. That would be pretty good. I wonder if the federal government might take pity on me and do that. These are significant amounts of money, and they are genuinely offered. They have been offered in a genuine sense of being supportive of a reform package that we know is not easy.

The Queensland government's $33 million sugar industry package was additional to our government agencies' services provided as core business. That comprises $10 million in funding for approved applicants for farm consolidation loans. We might not have seen a rush to do this, but I am sure that that will be what the people look to in the future as the reform process unfolds. There was $10 million for a Sugar Industry Innovation Fund. Innovate or die is the catchphrase. There are so many very clever farmers out there who are doing just that. There was $13 million towards the Change Management Program to assist in the mechanisms that are not always easy as people move through a reform program. $444 million of Commonwealth sugar industry rescue package money required the industry to undertake comprehensive reform and restructure. It was predicated upon that reform and restructure taking place. This is part of that process.

The 2004 heads of agreement provided for the industry to establish a high level working group. That is what we have seen. We have heard about how it has unfolded. It is a genuine process between industry representatives and government to look at developing a new system for marking raw sugar, especially in the export market. We cannot be sure what may have happened, but that was to keep one step ahead of what may have been imposed by the national competition policy review; in one fell swoop and without any preparation or contingency plan, the single desk might have been removed in any case. We do not know that for sure. We do not have a crystal ball and nor do they.

The industry very cleverly, conscientiously and sincerely—on behalf of their membership—sat down around the table and negotiated an outcome that everybody can live with that changes from a system of vesting to one of contractual arrangements for the next three years. Over that time I am sure

that competitiveness is going to be under the microscope of Queensland Sugar Ltd. There may be some changes ahead, but I am an optimist; I am a glass-half-full girl. I like to think that it is actually going to bring about improvements in the industry.

There are some great things happening out there at the on-farm level where we have innovations in the way people use their water, the way they irrigate and the way they now grow soya crops to reduce their use of fertilisers. The Proserpine milling cooperative is looking at the production of furfural. It is heading down that line. I am sure it is going to be successful. Innovation is happening all around us. I am a great optimist about the future of this industry, and I a great supporter of it in my electorate. I support the measures in the bill tonight, and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (9.03 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to support the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 2005. In relation to the sugar industry reform, as we have stated before, it is an agreement that has been reached between the Queensland government and the state's peak sugar industry representative bodies to progress new marketing arrangements for sugar produced in Queensland. It certainly requires amendments to be made to the Sugar Industry Act 1999.

It is a pleasure to rise to speak after the member for Whitsunday, who has such an obviously passionate commitment to the sugar industry, which is a major primary industry in her area. It is great to see that she has worked with the sugar industry and that she is very well across the issues and is there to help them through every step of the process. The member for Whitsunday touched very briefly on the particular funds that have been put aside to assist the farmers in this process. I want to talk briefly on the innovation and productivity issues that are contained within the bill.

The Queensland government assistance measures contain two particular initiatives to promote innovation and productivity—the $10 million Sugar Industry Innovation Fund and FutureCane. The Sugar Industry Innovation Fund provides funding to help sugar industry participants to adopt innovative technologies and management systems, increase production of value-added products and develop more efficient supply chains. This innovation fund is motivating sugar industry participants to adopt innovative management systems and technologies. It is also enabling increased production of value-added products from sugar and fostering the development of more efficient supply chains.

Quite frankly, this is the sort of thing that we see across all our primary industries. It is not just about producing the original product; it is about value adding. As we look at our primary industries portfolios we need to ensure that each industry is looking at how it can do things in a more innovative way and how we can get more out of each product that we produce.

The innovation fund grants to the end of October 2005 amount to nearly $4 million with some 38 projects approved. These grants have supported a wide range of innovative projects including best practice farming systems, minimum tillage farm machinery, precision guidance harvesting equipment, ethanol projects and business planning.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is investing $5.2 million over three years in the FutureCane program as its contribution to the $13 million Change Management Program. FutureCane is a multidisciplinary project with a strong emphasis on working with cane farmers to improve their productivity and profitability through promoting a sustainable and competitive cane-growing sector, ensuring that farmers have a clear view of what their direction should be financially and facilitating change by improving the value chain connections between growing, harvesting, transport and milling. FutureCane teams of agronomists, trade and business development officers, farm financial counsellors and economists are working with sugar cane farmers and BSES Ltd. This approach will ensure that findings from a wide range of research and development projects is shared across the state.

FutureCane, using 11 industry liaison officers, is working closely with farmers and farmer groups to explore options for improving productivity and profitability. It is estimated that those farmers who implement best practice farming systems expect to increase their productivity by some 15 per cent. Recent survey data from Canegrowers for the 2002 to 2005 period shows that productivity improvements are occurring. With a sense of optimism beginning to return, the state government will continue to work with the industry to secure its long-term future.

It was also interesting to hear the member for Whitsunday talk about her issues on the land and the sorts of things that are available to her father. I found the same thing with my father and my family when they were working the land as well. The issue to do with assistance in changing particular crops was not available 15 and 20 years ago. If someone wanted to change what they were producing they basically had to make that step on their own. While the department of primary industries was there to provide assistance and expertise, it was a financial venture that farmers had to take on their own. We tried all sorts of things like capsicum growing, which was interesting. Some of the crops were profitable for our family and some of them were not. It is really great to see that both the state and federal governments are putting their money where their mouth is. They are providing assistance to farmers to take that step further, to look at value adding to their product, but they are also looking at the way they farm currently and finding alternatives that may assist them. This is a very important bill. It needs to be supported by all in the House, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (9.08 pm): The sugar industry is a very important industry for Queensland because it contributes so much to our economy. Not only that, it creates many jobs up and down the coast of Queensland. In fact, there are very few industries that depend on a level of 85 per cent of their product to be delivered to export markets. That is exactly what happens with sugar.

Domestic prices are governed by the export price. Australian consumers have benefited considerably as a result of this. Very often we see that other countries and their producers have higher domestic prices. Europe is a classic example of that. It has a number of quotas such as A, B and C. An A quota is extremely high and helps offset the actual cost of production, B quota is slightly less and C quota is used for export.

Australian sugar does not benefit from anything like that, yet we are competing against that type of thing as 85 per cent of our raw sugar goes to world markets. The Queensland industry must depend on world's best practices and I can assure the House that we do exactly that. In the past 10 years, prices have varied from 5c a pound to US12c a pound. That is a massive variation that we do not see often in many other industries. Sugar has had to deal with such variations, and lately high world prices have been a benefit. However, over the past six years we have seen some terrible things happen in crop production. Poor weather and the high US dollar have greatly contributed to the difficult situation that growers have had to face.

Over the past three years, major rationalisation has occurred. Approximately 1,000 growers have left the industry, leaving only about 5,000 growers. There is an awareness that we have to get more productive and the areas have to get bigger. Of course, the get-big-and-get-out syndrome is alive and doing well. Governments are promoting that. To a certain degree a lot of industry people accept that if they are to continue in the race they will have to deal with the higher cost of production, and perhaps they will have to look at other methods of producing crops in order to compete. Perhaps they will have to look at cattle or whatever.

The international market is extremely corrupt. As I have said before, many countries around the world depend very heavily on subsidies. Some of Queensland's major competitors have much lower labour costs. For example, a country like Brazil clearly has lower production costs, lower labour costs and less demanding workplace health and safety issues. A delegation of members went to Brazil to investigate bringing ethanol plants back to Australia and found that to be so. Issues such as the thickness of the walls of the boilers, the lack of guard rails and so on are not addressed in a country like Brazil, but in Australia those issues would have to be addressed.

We also have environmental requirements. Much of the sugar industry stretches along the coast, and production could impact on areas such as the Great Barrier Reef. There is a major challenge for growers to comply with all the requirements that they have to meet, and they do it very well. There is a whole range of issues that I would like to go into, but I do not have the time to do so.

Queensland raw sugar has been vested in the legislation with QSL. To date, QSL compulsorily acquires all raw sugar. Changes to this legislation are extremely unwarranted. There is no necessity to move away from that particular situation. QSL seeks the best markets available for sale and arranges finance for millers and growers. It is extremely important that farmers can receive payments before the sale of the crop is complete. At the beginning of the harvesting process, no money comes in to the growers, millers, harvesters and all the other people involved in the industry. Of course, things like fertiliser, planting and so on have to be paid for during the very early stages of harvesting. Cash flow is extremely important at that time. QSL—and the Queensland Sugar Corporation as it was known before that—have done an excellent job in providing that necessary finance. However, it goes further than that.

Because QSL transacts sales of different brands of sugar, the appropriate markets have to be determined. Of course, QSL uses the futures markets and it does hedging. QSL performs a very complex role on behalf of the whole of the industry. Although at times people criticise what QSL does, I believe that it does an extremely good job.

Compulsory single desk selling ensures that mills are not competing against one another in a corrupt world market. Queensland Sugar says, 'We are going to sell the sugar in a block. We have certain brands that we can send into certain areas. We have some brands of sugar that are probably not quite as good, but we can still place them in markets.' Queensland Sugar does a great job.

Of course, the sugar terminals have limited storage. That range of facilities is worth in the order of $350 million. They allow for the storage of sugar in close proximity to shipping facilities, so that the sugar can then be sent to the appropriate markets.

Mr Malone: They can also mix sugars.

Mr ROWELL: A whole range of things go on as far as STL and QSL are concerned. Some harbours are not deep enough for the ship to carry a full load. Different brands can be mixed in a shipment and so on. Therefore, QSL plays a very important role in the industry. For no particular benefit, the Labor government is changing both the investment provided by STL and the role of QSL. That is extremely disappointing.

Having a single desk seller is very important to the growers. Some mills are a little reticent to sign agreements. The shadow minister has said that some 500 growers in the Burdekin were not supportive of the loss of the single desk. That represents about 10 per cent of the industry, which is 80 per cent of the Burdekin growers. If a poll was to be taken, I am sure that we would see a similar situation. We are saying that the government is taking steps to do away with the single desk, whereas if a poll was taken the users who depend on it probably would not be supportive of it. It is extremely interesting that Mulgrave and Mossman mills did not sign the heads of agreement. Bundaberg Sugar was supportive, although not very convincingly. The single desk will no longer be effective.

The minister wanted consensus to deregulate the single desk; individual cane growers did not ask for it. Of course, we have some options. We could deregulate, throw the whole thing out and forget about it. We could deregulate in an acrimonious way and limit the consultation with the industry. I refer to a DPI briefing paper that the opposition has obtained under FOI. It raises this issue of the MOU for the voluntary marketing agreement. It states—

To progress this issue, it was agreed by all parties that the MOU should be finalised, a communication strategy prepared and a public announcement made by 15 September 2005. The issue would remain confidential until that time.

Therefore, the whole industry had to make a decision about what it was doing and confidentiality had to be preserved. One could not say that the agreement was developed in an open manner; it was anything but. Added to that was the fact that at the end of December 2006 the national competition policy outcome might not allow for the single desk to continue. Why could not they have sought the view of the national competition council right now or six months ago? According to the outcome, the worst case scenario would have been that we could have gone ahead with the voluntary marketing arrangements.

When I read this briefing, which is also put out by DPIF, I became confused. Perhaps the minister can enlighten me. It states—

The National Competition Council had assessed in early 2002 that Queensland had substantially implemented the recommendations of the 1996 sugar industry working party review report and that it had met its national competition policy legislative review obligations.

In the 2002-03 annual assessment, released in December 2003, the National Competition Council assessed that the Queensland government had met its national competition policy obligations regarding the incorporation of the Queensland Sugar Corporation and Sugar Terminals Ltd.

Really, this is a big furphy. We could have had the National Competition Council to pass judgment on the current situation months and months ago—or last year. This process was started back in 2004. Why did we not go to the National Competition Council? There was no need to because in December 2003 it said quite clearly that we had met our obligations. Why were we worried about the National Competition Council saying to us in December 2006 that there could be an issue?

The whole issue in relation to Bundaberg Sugar is quite interesting. I think it was fairly damn reluctant. Issues are raised in this paper, which was produced under FOI. Finasucre had been approached to sign the agreement, but the paper states—

The participation of the three major millers (Bundaberg Sugar, CSR Ltd and Mackay Sugar Cooperative) is essential for the success of the National Marketing System.

What a nice buzz-word name—the national marketing system. It goes on—

Queensland Sugar Limited has advised that while CSR Ltd and Mackay Sugar Cooperative are 'onside' with the National Marketing System proposal (as are the next two biggest millers, Proserpine Sugar Cooperative and Tully Sugar Ltd) the position of Bundaberg Sugar is very unclear—hence, the need to get a clear indication from Brussels.

As the shadow minister said, we had to go over to Brussels and find out if Finasucre would get involved in our great new voluntary scheme. It has the capacity, because of its interests in sugar in the EC and the Belgian Congo, not to worry about being involved in a voluntary scheme in Australia. It was all right while there was a mandatory situation—the compulsory acquisition of sugar—but there probably was not any real need for it to get involved. It was a bit ambivalent about it, by the sounds of things. However, after the Premier approached the company and smiled at them—or whatever he does to entice people to do what he needs them to do—it seems that they reluctantly said yes.

I have some papers here in relation to the MOU. One states that all members of the Australian milling council remain committed to working with QSL. That is not quite true because Mulgrave and Mossman are not, and I do not know what happens with Maryborough, Isis and Rocky Point. I believe that they have some letters of understanding. When it suits them to use QSL, they use it. When they want to go somewhere else, they do so.

The sale of Queensland sugar is a real mixed bag. It is extremely disappointing that that situation has developed. There is no need, there is no positive gain and there is no benefit to the industry whatsoever and there are no impediments. Anyone can buy bagged sugar from QSL, send it over to Indonesia and hope to get paid for it. As far as QSL is concerned there is some guarantee that they will get paid, but there is no guarantee with some other countries that they will be paid. If people want to take the risk, that is their prerogative.

The shadow minister talked about wheat as a single desk. It has existed for some time and is worth $4 billion to $5 billion. It represents about three per cent of the export income for Australia. Sugar exports are worth $1 billion to $1.5 billion. That is quite significant. Will we throw all of the cards up in the air and hope that we will maintain that?

Other countries that export sugar will be applauding the government. They will be absolutely ecstatic. Over quite a period of time, many of them would have given their eye teeth to have a single desk. They would have been absolutely ecstatic to have a single desk. However, they have not been able to achieve that. We have done it for quite a period of time, but suddenly the Beattie government and the minister are smiling about the achievement of getting rid of the single desk. I do not believe it. This is a travesty, as far as I am concerned. There is no real benefit in it whatsoever.

Of course, there are some transparency issues. People involved in the voluntary marketing agreements might be okay. There are some doubts about at what point the sugar is actually sold, what you get for it and so on. That is the essence of it. Basically, about two-thirds goes to the growers and one-third goes to the millers.

Courtesy of the current government, we now have to sign some agreements with the millers. Very often, growers do not have the opportunity to go to a miller other than the one that is right at their back door because transportation costs of going to another mill are prohibitive. All of Burdekin will deal with CSR and all of Ingham will deal with CSR. Tully and the mills in the north, such as at Mulgrave, might deal with Bundaberg Sugar if a grower is really concerned about the deal he has with Tully, or vice-versa. That is the case with those mills. Only a very small percentage have the capacity to go elsewhere. Very few growers have an alternative to supplying a mill other than the mill at their back door. That is mainly because of transportation costs.

Let us look at what happened with Isis. That was great! They closed one of the Bundaberg sugar mills down. That is part of the process. Let us look at the costs of road transport and what it will cost the government to deal with roads. Who will pay for it? These are the things that one starts to think about when there are great, significant changes which are of very little benefit to anybody.

The growers also face the situation of being the unsecured creditors to the millers. In other words, if a mill goes bust or there are problems associated with payments and it is put in the hands of receivers, the growers would line up with the rest of the creditors. One can be sure that the banks and the rest of them would be taking their fair share.

One big issue is the storage of sugar. I did talk briefly about the capacity of STL. We have increased the size of the sheds so that we can move sugar at the most appropriate time. Industry has made some very big investments there and it is essential that we take advantage of them. With the situation that is now developing, I am not absolutely sure that we will get the major benefits that the industry hopes to get as a result. It is extremely disappointing.

I would like to very quickly outline what happened in the dairy industry. The government deregulated that and put $90 million into its pockets when the—

Time expired.

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (9.28 pm): A decade or so ago a favourite movie of mine was *Back to the Future*. I do not know if honourable members will recall it with Michael J Fox and the silver DeLorean. If TJ Ryan, the famous Labor Premier of the 1915 period, could jump in a DeLorean and be here now, he would say, 'Jeez, I'm back in the future again.' You see, it was the reformist Labor governments at the turn of last century that made our sugar industry great and it was the reformist Labor governments that built our sugar industry, much to the complaints of the conservatives opposite. If TJ Ryan could be sitting in this place now, he would be shaking his head saying, 'It's happening again.' Here we have the Tories again standing in the way of reforms for the sugar industry in order to build a strong sugar industry for the future.

I have told this place before that I am passionate about the sugar industry. I grew up in the sugar industry. I know how important it is to our economy, and that is why I am standing here tonight supporting these reforms. Unlike the National Party, I do not want to see it wither on the vine and die. Unlike the National Party, the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Burdekin and the member for Mirani, I will not stand idly by and see my friends lose their livelihoods. I am not standing by watching it happen. I am going to stand up here tonight and defend those people. I am going to work for the future of a great industry. That is why I am so cranky tonight to hear those opposite rambling on about back to the future, about standing in the way of change. That is why I am so cranky when they say, 'We're going to vote against it with the Liberal Party.' The other night in this place the member for Redcliffe said that we should stop the consumption of sugar. When I said, 'Don't attack the sugar industry. Leave the sugar industry alone,' he said, 'If we leave the sugar industry alone, we will reduce our size.' The Liberals do not care about sugar.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection from the member for Southport; they do not care about the Nationals either. It has been the Labor Party that has stood up for the sugar industry. It is the Labor

Party that is driving these changes to the sugar industry, changes that are needed. All we hear is the bleating of the members opposite—bleat, bleat, bleat. TJ Ryan in that DeLorean would be shaking his head. Here it is back to the future. The Labor Party is standing up for the sugar industry while members of the National Party are sitting on their backsides doing nothing.

Mr Choi interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take that interjection; doing nothing, absolutely nothing. These new marketing changes were agreed to by an industry working group comprised of representatives of Canegrowers, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and the Queensland government.

Mr Shine: How much fairer can you get?

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection of the member for Toowoomba North: how much fairer can you get? But again we hear the National Party saying, 'That's not good enough.' Whinge, whinge, whine, whine.

Mr Lawlor: They're dinosaurs.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection from the member for Southport; they are dinosaurs, and they want to see the destruction of that industry. Whinge, whinge, whine, whine. That is why these reforms are so important.

That report, which was agreed to by representatives of the industry and the government, recommended that compulsory vesting and marking of sugar in QSL should only operate for this season and new contractually based marketing arrangements should apply for next year and QSL should be transformed into a contractually based, export focused marketing company of choice for bulk raw sugar suppliers in Queensland. Well may those opposite laugh. Just look at them laughing over there. They do not care about the industry. They are giggling.

Mr ROWELL: I rise to a point of order. I believe that is offensive. It is not the case at all. I ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr WALLACE: I withdraw. If the member finds it offensive, I withdraw.

The report recommended transitional legislative arrangements to be introduced in 2005 to facilitate these changes. QSL is to be provided sufficient flexibility to implement the transformation in concert with suppliers, and rules relating to participation, entry and exit will be determined by QSL in consultation with suppliers and incorporated into supply contracts. The goal of the marketer is that supply should commit to 100 per cent of bulk raw sugar for export. The report also recommended that initial contract arrangements with suppliers should be finalised no later than 31 December 2005 and the initial term should be for three years, subject to any supplier agreed contractual obligation on QSL to meet defined milestones by due times. After the initial term, a rolling two-year period could be appropriate.

The report recommended further that, once commercial operations have commenced, QSL is to take appropriate steps to address its own ownership structure and there should be sufficient grower and miller representation on the board of QSL to ensure transparency and a number of independent directors to bring a depth of experience and diversity of skills and perspectives. Hopefully there will be no National Party members by the way they are behaving tonight. The report further recommended that the present composition and skill base would need to be flexible so as to ensure that the company is able to respond to a more standard business framework.

The report also recommended that initially Treasury, risk management and pooling functions would be similar to current arrangements but the marketer is expected to develop in the transition to standard business practice and more innovative arrangements, and bulk sugar terminals and storage operations would continue to be similar to current arrangements. The marketer, in conjunction with STL, will have to develop a third-party access protocol prior to the commencement of the 2006-07 season. The Queensland government has committed to support the recommendations by providing legislative amendments in the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 2005 to enable the introduction of the new marketing system. What the Queensland government is doing is giving the tools to the Queensland sugar industry to compete in this 21st century market, a market which I note members opposite say is extremely corrupt, and that is correct. Unless we are competitive in that market, our industry will die. Our industry will die. We need a market here that will respond to the needs and concerns of the market in this 21st century.

Unlike the National Party, this Labor government will continue to look after the sugar industry. Unlike the National Party, this Labor government covets and holds dear those changes that the Ryan government brought to this place 90 years ago. Unlike the National Party, we will stand up for the sugar industry. We will not go back to the future. We do not need a DeLorean to see where that future is. That is why I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (9.35 pm): I rise to support the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill before the House. As part of the signing of the heads of agreement between the sugar industry and the Queensland government in February 2004, the industry agreed to form a working group to investigate

voluntary alternatives to single desk marketing prior to the requirement for its statutory review in 2006 under the provisions of the Sugar Industry Act 1999. The premise of the working group was that at some future point in time the compulsory acquisition scheme authorised under the act would cease and that it was prudent to consider non-legislatively based marketing arrangements in advance of that review.

The industry working group progressed a framework for dealing with key issues and delivered its report to the government in July 2005. The working group recommended a new marketing system for the sugar industry through the transformation of Queensland Sugar Ltd, QSL, into a contractually based, export focused marketing company of choice for bulk raw sugar suppliers. The initial contractual term proposed was three years. After the initial term, subsequent rolling two-year contracts were proposed. On 13 October 2005 industry representative bodies such as Canegrowers and the Australian Sugar Milling Council, ASMC, signed a memorandum of understanding, known as an MOU, with government to progress the new marketing arrangements.

The MOU recognises that, while the Queensland government intends to pursue its policy to remove regulatory encumbrances from the sugar industry, it is committed to support an orderly transition from legislative to contractually based marketing arrangements for bulk export sales. All parties to the MOU agreed to actively support the new marketing system and each party made undertakings—namely, ASMC undertook to consult its member companies regarding the new marking systems and to support its introduction in 2006. ASMC acknowledged that all of its members remained committed to working with the QSL to assist QSL to remain the preferred marketer of suppliers and customers. ASMC further acknowledged that commitment by suppliers is a matter of negotiation between QSL and the individual suppliers.

Canegrowers reaffirmed its support for increased flexibility with the retention of benefits existing under the current export marketing arrangements and that it would communicate with its grower members on how the new marketing systems would operate. Canegrowers supported the introduction of the transition to a contractual basis for raw sugar marketing from 2006 on the provision of sufficient support from suppliers to successfully implement the recommendation of the working group.

The Queensland government undertook to prepare the amending legislation to remove the compulsory vesting prior to the commencement of the 2006 crushing season if it was possible and to support industry in communicating the new marketing system to customers and stakeholders. The MOU approach has enabled the government and the industry to work together to introduce a significant reform proposal, arguably the most significant in the history of the industry. This House needs to support this initiative and allow the industry to get on with the job of securing its future in an increasingly tough world marketing environment. I support this bill.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (9.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 2005. On behalf of the cane growers, the harvesters, the haulers, the planting contractors, the mill employees, the millers, small towns, businesses and industries in the sugar-producing areas of Queensland, I vigorously oppose the introduction of this bill. That the government has the gall to state that this bill and its provisions are supported by the Queensland sugar industry is nothing short of arrogant and in direct contrast to comments from the Canegrowers organisation and farmers themselves.

The explanatory notes to the bill state that its aim is to amend the Sugar Industry Act 1999 to remove statutory vesting and to provide transitional arrangements to facilitate the orderly marketing of the Queensland sugar crop. The MOU recognises that, although the Queensland government intends to pursue its policy to remove regulatory encumbrances from the sugar industry, it is committed to supporting an orderly transition from legislative to contractually based marketing arrangements for bulk export sales.

In one fell swoop this legislation removes one of the most important levers that the sugar industry has to ensure equity in export selling arrangements for Queensland cane farmers, but promises an orderly transition to a winner-take-all future. It will remove the surety and the predictability that farms in the Burdekin and elsewhere had in the past. The ability to forecast future income with some degree of certainty has prevented the industry going into free fall over the past couple of years and the industry commitment to the retention of the single desk policy has never been stronger or more vocal.

The absolute importance of the current arrangements is mentioned in the explanatory notes, which state that the government recognises the continuing benefits and synergies of presenting a coordinated face to Queensland's bulk raw sugar customers. I ask the minister: if it is so important that these arrangements continue during the transitory phase to a contract based system, why do they cease to be in the future?

I am determined to refute the minister's assertion that the industry is in favour of these new arrangements. As I have said before in this House, there was no negotiation or consultation with the industry over this bill, only intimidation. Industry representatives were railroaded into accepting the best of a bad deal. You cannot negotiate with a gun to your head. As recently as 8 November, Ian Ballantyne, General Manager of the Canegrowers organisation, expressed disappointment at the dismantling of Queensland's longstanding statutory sugar marketing system. While stating that they would now have to make the most of the new arrangements that have been forced upon them by this Labor government, he

specifically noted that they would try to retain the strengths of the existing marketing approach. That is the crux of the matter: the strengths of the existing marketing approach.

If the government needs further evidence of the opposition of the industry to the dismantling of the system of compulsory acquisition and the single desk arrangement that has served the industry so well, perhaps this further quote from Mr Ballantyne will prick a few consciences opposite—

This latest action is the final step in a process of government deregulation that has transformed the Queensland sugar industry over the past decade, not necessarily always for the better. Government has removed such landmark features as production quotas, price pooling, mandatory negotiating, arbitration, and compulsory grower representation. Marketing was always in the Government's sights.

The cane sector neither sought nor supported removal of acquisition because it has underpinned a whole of system approach that provided stability, security and substantial benefit to the community as well as the industry over many years.

That is the crux of it: the cane sector neither sought nor supported removal of acquisition.

Mr Ballantyne stated further—

However, wishing things were different doesn't make things better. If it is going to rain, you get an umbrella—our umbrella is the retention of the benefits of the single desk marketing system.

Can it be any clearer than that? The industry neither needs nor wants this change. Cane farmers across Queensland are vehemently opposed to this bill and they and their industry will be the worse for it. This morning members would have seen cane farmers holding up placards in front of Parliament House. They had travelled from the Burdekin, Herbert and further north.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: Yes, probably. These farmers have sent a message. There would have been many more, but, of course, they are busy working at the moment.

A government member interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: I think I might take that interjection. The industry has no choice but to use the temporary voluntary marketing arrangements that the government has termed 'transitory' and it will ultimately lose the only edge it had in competing in the corrupt world export market. Why the Premier thinks this change is necessary, especially in light of the difficulties that the industry is experiencing at the moment, is difficult to comprehend on any level. Instead of allowing the Queensland sugar producers and millers to compete on a more equitable basis in the world export market, this bill will pit miller against miller and farmer against farmer in negotiating export sale contracts. That is a real concern.

No-one can deny that the industry has to reform in order to remain competitive both domestically and overseas. Indeed, the improvements were recognised nationally with the release of the second tranche of productivity payments. These recognised improvements in productivity and business planning are a clear indication that the industry is ready and able to respond to market forces and remain viable and sustainable, despite the massive subsidies employed by its chief competitors. However, if Premier Beattie's government has its way, as of January next year Queensland cane farmers will lose one of the most important marketing and sale instruments available to it—an arrangement that was reviewed under national competition policy in 1996 and maintained, that is still thought to be intrinsic to the ability of wheat growers in the marketing and sale of wheat, and an arrangement that was fought for and retained in the recent discussions on the free trade agreement with the United States.

The 1996 sugar industry competition policy review recommended the retention of the single desk, a recommendation that has been accepted by the National Competition Council ever since. However, we are told in the explanatory notes that retaining the status quo would mean that a full-scale review of the act for the purposes of national competition policy would then need to be conducted in 2006-07 and that would subject the statutory arrangements of the act, notably vesting, to a public benefit test. In the interim, under the status quo option the existing regulated marketing arrangements for sugar would continue, at least until the NCP review. As it would be very difficult to justify the continuation of the current regulated arrangements in an open and transparent NCP review, the most likely outcome would be that the current arrangements would have to be dismantled following the review.

In whose opinion would the arrangements be dismantled? The furphy—and it is a furphy—being put around by this antifarmer Labor government that this arrangement is up for review and would have been jettisoned anyway is arrant nonsense. In short, if it ain't broke don't fix it.

Once again we see this government pre-empting in its own favour outcomes that are far from certain.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: I take those interjections. What about the IR legislation? Apparently the members opposite do not think that there should be any changes to the IR legislation. So who is looking back to the past?

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! The member for Burdekin has the call and I would like her to continue.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As noted further in the explanatory notes to the bill—

A government member interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: It is the same. As noted further in the explanatory notes to the bill, the significant majority of growers from the Burdekin area have voiced their complete and utter opposition to the loss of the single desk marketing arrangements. The fact that I tabled responses from over 500 growers—over 80 per cent of Burdekin cane farmers—here in parliament just over four weeks ago should be a clear indication to the minister that, with the introduction of this bill, he is going against the direct wishes and advice of the industry.

Mr Rowell: You'd think they would have got a single desk situation right across the industry if they had listened.

Mrs MENKENS: I have no doubt they would. I take that interjection. I have no doubt that they would have had the same right across the farming industry. The minister has already clearly demonstrated his complete ignorance of the workings, economics and intricacies of the sugar industry and displays his dismissive attitude to his portfolio by supporting the Premier's line in this matter. There are well over 600 cane-growing families in the Burdekin whose future livelihoods will be put at risk. May I add that it is not just the cane-growing families but also all the mill workers, all the business houses and the whole district that will be affected. Their livelihoods will be at risk not because of industry downturn—they are dealing with that—not because of adverse climate or an unwillingness to adopt new and innovative farming methods, not because of inadequate business planning or any other factor that is within their capacity to adapt to. No, they will be at risk because of this government's bloody-mindedness and antipathy to primary producers in this state.

This year the cane-farming families of the Burdekin will directly contribute over $200 million to the economy of the Burdekin and the state. They are used to being slugged with increasing taxes and fees from this government to support its spending spree in the south-east but, despite this, many still thought that the Premier afforded them some measure of respect for their valuable contribution to this state's economy and their part in attracting export dollars that benefited the whole state. It is the final insult to them to see legislation introduced into this parliament that not only goes against their wishes but also will be detrimental to the future of the industry.

At every meeting I have attended or had reports from in the Burdekin the loss of the single desk arrangement has been one of the main concerns. I firmly believe that, if allowed to compete on an equal basis with their subsidised competitors on the world market, Queensland cane farmers can be and are the most efficient and productive in the world. They have clearly demonstrated their willingness to value add to their product with their support for the expansion of the ethanol, bioplastics and fodder industries. Many growers in the Burdekin have trialled alternative crops including vegetables, corn, navy beans, pineapples, cotton, kenaf, and sorghum and lucerne hay—as well as opening up land to beef enterprises as a direct response to the poor return on sugar in the world market. The list of alternative crops and industries goes on, but uncertainty of markets and the difficulties of establishing consistency may well mean that sugar will remain the staple crop for many growers.

Cane farmers in the Burdekin are at the forefront of world's best practice in the areas of plant breeding, genetics, water usage, environmental sustainability and increasing productivity. Despite losing over 1,000 farmers in recent years, the state's raw sugar production has remained the same. The industry is well known for its proactive approach to environmental issues and has been recognised for its contribution to ensuring that its farming practices do not pose a threat to the reef or rainforest.

In fact, all levels of the industry have shown dramatic improvements in viability and sustainability, most often because of the continuing research and development programs and policies that lead the world in outcomes. Farmers are growing more cane per hectare and yielding more sugar per tonne of cane while continuing to reduce the cost of inputs. Cane harvesters and haulers are cutting and transporting more tonnes per litre of diesel while still improving efficiencies in the field and reducing compaction and other factors. Millers are extracting more sugar from the crushed cane at the same time as investigating value adding and through cogeneration projects actually adding to this state's power supplies.

Throughout coastal Queensland the economies of many of our towns are dependant for a large part on the profitability of the industry and its continued prosperity. The effect on towns and businesses is enormous when one considers that in 2004 the 5.1 million tonnes of raw sugar produced in Queensland generated over $1.3 billion directly into local businesses and ancillary industries. The indirect benefits are comparably massive and are a major factor in this state's prosperity.

But with this bill the Premier will be killing the goose that lays the golden egg. He and the minister will be throwing away one of the major reasons that this industry has contributed so much and denying farmers, contractors and millers a future. Burdekin growers and those in other districts are investing heavily in investigating alternative crops and value adding but need adequate time to ensure that the correct means and methods are identified and implemented.

Considerable resources are being allocated by private individuals, as well as larger companies, into planning for the future, but this can only continue if there is a future to plan for. While the majority of millers have signed up for a voluntary extension of the prevailing arrangements, this does not provide the necessary security needed by these investors. It is recognised by all parties that at the end of the three-year period, the impact of competition will transfer from a united front in dealing and trading with export buyers to competition between local interests for the very same markets. As my colleague the shadow minister for primary industries has said, 'Without the single desk, instead of fighting against subsidised international competitors, millers could end up fighting against each other for potential export customers, which does nothing to increase profitability in the Queensland sugar industry.'

We stand to lose an agreement that has been a part of and benefited the industry for many, many years and is arguably responsible for the continued growth and strength of the industry since the formation of the Sugar Board in 1923. It has enabled a semblance of equal competition in the face of corrupt world trading practices. It was fought for and included in the recent FTA with North America and recognised by all parties as non-discriminatory and within WTO guidelines. It is an arrangement that has lent clarity to returns received by farmers and contributed in no small part to industry unity and prosperity. We are being told that we will forgo industry strength and negotiating position for a legislated weakness that will remove bargaining power.

Queensland exports more than 85 per cent of its raw sugar and the single desk marketing system provides a stable and transparent income for cane growers and is no doubt responsible for higher export prices than would otherwise be available to farmers and millers. The Queensland Nationals did not support legislation, introduced by this government in 2004, because we were concerned it would disadvantage and adversely impact on more than 6,500 Queensland cane growers and their families as well as the 35,000 to 50,000 people who are directly and indirectly employed by the industry. And we will not support this legislation in 2005.

We cannot and will not willingly and knowingly be a part of removing a vital and necessary tool that allows a Queensland industry to compete fairly with overseas interests. That is the point: it is actually allowing the industry to compete fairly. We will not be responsible for the possible ruin of a dynamic and profitable industry because of ideological differences and a determination to bring primary producers to heel. The Queensland Nationals will not be held accountable for our industry's loss of its reputation for reliability and quality. We will not be behind Labor machinations to supposedly bring our producers in line with the rest of the world when in fact they will now have little or no defence against the increasingly corrupt practices of some of our major competitors in the world market. I can assure members of the House that we will continue to fight to get a fair deal for all of Queensland's farmers. I will firmly oppose this bill.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Menkens, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.58 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Industrial Relations

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.58 pm): Recently we have heard the Australian Labor Party, along with its minions in the union movement, crying poor over the Howard government's proposed industrial relations laws. Tonight I intend to reveal that the industrial relations model practised by the Australian Labor Party is much worse than that being proposed by the Howard government.

I would like to talk about the case of Marcia Courtice, who was recently sacked by the member for Bundaberg. Marcia Courtice had worked as an electorate officer for the member for Bundaberg for seven years and three months, and it seems that she has become the victim of a political witch-hunt. From my understanding, Mrs Courtice was given a week's notice that she was sacked from her position as electorate officer after losing a preselection battle for the—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I draw the member's attention to the fact that the employer is the parliament of Queensland, not the honourable member. There may well be a matter of privilege involved in this. The honourable member is not the employer. I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! I will seek advice from the Deputy Clerk. Having taken advice from the Deputy Clerk, I will allow the member to continue but I advise caution in his comments.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The unfair dismissal proposals that the Australian Labor Party and its union minions have protested about are the same ones that they practise in the electorate office of the member for Bundaberg. This is something that will embarrass government

members when they rise in this place to waffle at length about how their union comrades will be made redundant by the new laws.

I would like to inform the House of a bit more background to this story. I will begin with comments made on the public record by the member for Bundaberg. On 19 May this year the member for Bundaberg said—

Today I would like to place on record my thanks for the unwavering support of my electorate officer, Marcia Courtice, undoubtedly one of the best in Queensland ...

As I mentioned, it was not long ago that Mrs Courtice won preselection, with 60 per cent of the local vote to run for the Australian Labor Party in the seat of Bundaberg—something she was brave enough to do in the first place. Nonetheless, having won the support of her local comrades, Mrs Courtice was then shocked to find that the union heavies in Brisbane who play a heavy role in running the Australian Labor Party in this state had overturned the decision of Bundaberg Labor members and decided to install another candidate.

Why was the decision reversed? It is very simple: to install more cronies to help the member for South Brisbane cement her claim to the leadership of this state. The Premier confirmed on Channel 7 Wide Bay that Mrs Courtice was sacked because of the preselection woes. So where, may I ask, do workers stand under Beattie's WorkChoices? Smack bang out of work. The sad state of affairs has been compounded by the fact that Mrs Courtice has been sick through this whole course of events, requiring her to be in hospital for a whole week around the time of her termination. Yes, she has been sacked on the eve of going to hospital for an operation so she will now not be covered by sick leave.

I remind the House of the fear campaign recently engaged by trade unions, which wanted us to believe that under the Howard government's new laws workers would be fired if they fell ill. While that certainly will not be the case under the Howard government's industrial relations laws—

Time expired.

Dragon Boat Racing

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (10.02 pm): Recently I participated in a regatta and race day for the Burleigh Heads Dragon Boat Club. The Burleigh Fire Dragons received funding from the Gambling Benefit Community Fund to purchase two boats and were kind enough to invite me to launch them. I knew nothing about dragon boating until I attended, but I was charmed by the variety and enthusiasm of the participants, the intriguing history of the sport and the identified health benefits for breast cancer survivors.

The origins of the dragon boat festival date back over 2000 years. Originally a religious practice, it is now purely recreational. The dragon boat festival commemorates the death of the poet Qu Yuan, who drowned himself in the third century BC as a protest against a corrupt government. The legend is that the townspeople tried to protect him from being eaten by fish by beating drums and throwing rice into the water. The dragon is also traditionally regarded by the Chinese as having dominion over the waters and exercising control over rainfall.

The original Chinese dragon boats were constructed from teak planks, with camphor wood ornamental heads and tails. However, most modern dragon boats are constructed from fibreglass, with wooden benches and detachable fibreglass ornamental heads and tails. Modern dragon boats are powered by up to 22 paddlers sitting in pairs on benches, plus a sweep—who stands at the rear of the boat and steers it using a sweep oar—and a drummer seated at the front of the boat. The courses are generally either 250 metres or 500 metres in length.

Over recent years dragon boating has become very popular with breast cancer survivors. The Burleigh Fire Dragons included a 'Dragon's Abreast' challenge in their regatta, and two teams made up entirely of breast cancer survivors competed. Both teams were announced as winners—for obvious reasons. Lymphoedema is a common problem experienced by women post-treatment for breast cancer. It happens as a result of loss of capacity to cope with lymphatic fluid either because of radiation treatment and/or removal of lymph nodes.

Dr Don McKenzie, a sports medicine physician at the University of British Columbia, launched Abreast-in-a-Boat in 1996 to test the commonly held belief that repetitive upper-body exercise in women treated for breast cancer encouraged lymphoedema. Twenty-five women took part in dragon boating and the results were overwhelming. Almost all the women involved improved or failed to develop the condition at all. This has caused a revolution in treatment, and women are encouraged to take part in exercise, albeit carefully regulated, after breast cancer treatment.

Dragon boating can offer breast cancer survivors exactly the type of exercise they need along with social activity, fun and adventure. I would like to thank Marie and Bill of the Burleigh Fire Dragons for their kindness. I have been invited to try out for the team, being assured that my general lack of fitness and fear of the water will not be an obstacle. It looks like a great deal of fun and I will be found on the water in a dragon boat in the near future.

Home Hill State School

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (10.05 pm): Our professional talent and dedicated teachers are some of this state's most undervalued resources. The results that a good teacher can achieve for an individual student or for an entire class cannot be underestimated. I have ample evidence of this in my own electorate with the success enjoyed by the Home Hill State School over the past three years, due in no small part to the efforts of its teachers and staff and their dedication to excellence and innovation.

Because of their singular efforts in introducing the far-reaching and ambitious Home Hill Environmental Leadership Program into the Home Hill State School in 2002, the school has garnered state and national awards for this whole-of-school program combining civic values, environmental education, a supportive school environment and leadership training. This leadership program is modelled on the Westminster system and was used to set up the Home Hill State School student council. It provided students with a real-life opportunity to study our proud, democratic processes.

Day-to-day the students are living and working under the democratic system and, as a consequence, student behaviour is now owned by the whole upper school. This has contributed in no small way to the development of a very strong sense of school community and pride. Through this remarkable effort, the students' own version of Parliament House has hosted meetings of the local shire council and visits from state and federal politicians to see learning in action. This small regional school of approximately 355 students and just over 30 teachers and staff has been the recipient of the Lower Burdekin Landcare School Environmental Award in 2003, the Comalco Green and Healthy Schools North Queensland Eco Award in 2004, the Townsville District Showcase Award for Excellence in Innovation in 2005, and two of its teachers—Karen Sorbello and Raline Nielson—were recognised individually when they received the Australian College of Educators' Certificate of Recognition on International Teachers Day in 2004.

That the students have benefited there is no doubt, and this was recognised in 2003 when the Home Hill State School was judged as, firstly, the state and, secondly, the national winner of the Discovering Democracy Achievement Award—something I am sure that every member of this House would appreciate. This demonstration of what can be achieved by the truly professional teachers at Home Hill is a model for other schools regardless of circumstances, location or size. We owe it to our teachers to provide an environment where they can contribute fully to our children's education. The teachers and staff at Home Hill State School deserve our respect and support, and I acknowledge them as the true professionals that they are.

Bribie Island Surf Club Redevelopment

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.07 pm): As a current patron of the Sunshine Coast branch of the surf-lifesaving club and a long-time supporter of the Bribie Island surf-lifesaving club, I was delighted to officially open the clubhouse redevelopment on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Pat Purcell, last weekend. This club has been in operation since 1923 and has incredible support from the entire community. In fact, when the state government awarded the club a dollar-for-dollar $75,000 grant, many people volunteered countless hours to assist in building the extensions, and some of those people were not even directly associated with the club.

I was so moved by the response from the community that I organised, with the help of Mr Michael Hoogwaerts, the long-serving president of the club, an honours board which proudly displays everyone's name who contributed more than 20-plus hours of voluntary work with a separate list of outstanding volunteers who contributed much more. I seek leave to incorporate the names of the volunteers listed on the board, which is proudly displayed in the clubhouse redevelopment.

Leave granted.

Outstanding Contributors

Trent Brennan, Daniel Brown, Russell Chevins, David Cumner, George Cybulski, Doug Drew, Luke Durbidge, Anthony (Tony) Kippen, Jock McConnell, Kurt Miles, Gregory Smoothy, Smon Vonarx

Other Volunteers (20+ hours)

David Anthony, Barry, Brett and Dieter Ayres, Graeme Banks, Adam and Ryan Barry, Barry and Gavin Black, Andrew, Brendon and Peter Bolt, Bryan Box, Joseph Bozonie, Kain Brennan, Travers Brown, Geoffrey Buckman, Jason Burr, Jeff Butler, Benjamin and Scott Cavanagh, James (Jimmy) Chandler, Amy Clarke, Michael Cook, Corey and Hayden Cumner, Steven Cutts, Alex, Nadia and Rhonda Cybulski, David Daniel, Sam Durbidge, Mark Earner, David Edwards, Brian Fernley, Ted Fletcher, Ricky Freid, Wayne Gower, Eric and Ryan Grayson, Lauren and Trevor Healy, Brad Holt, Michael Hoogwaerts, Deslie and Mark Ingham, Rachael Kippen, James, Robert and Tony Leeds, Andrew Logan, Monica and Stuart Macarthur, Prue and Sam Masuino, Kay McFadyen, Anthony and Steve McMurdy, Michelle Mead, Dennis Miles, Peter Morey, Corrine Muller, Adam Myers, Michael O'Reilly, Brad Phillips, Lawrence Riddell, Neville (Nev) Roberts, Wiloe Robinson, Aaron Rodwell, Herbert Ryan, Brian Schilling, Jean Shaftoe, Noel Shipp, Nathan Slater, Steven Smith, Clifford (Cliff) Spong, Christopher and Jess Tanner, Chloe Vasicek, Kim Weinert, Anna Wells, Elton, Joseph and Shaun Williamson

Business Sponsors

A2Z Pty Ltd, AJC Electrical, All Building Waterproofing, Big Boys Bins, Big Gee Pty Ltd, Blackwoods, BP Plumbing Supplies, Brian English and Associates, Bribie Hire, Bribie's Finest Cabinets, Brisbane Sheet Metal (BSM), CEED program, C and M Craig, Colliers Crane Hire, Contrapac, Dossels Engineering, Doug Drew Builder, GJames Glass and Aluminium, GAR Electrical, Hanson Construction Materials, Ideal Electrical, Lazer Central, Local Concrete Pumping, Luke Durbidge Plumbing, Midway Metals, Nadray, Neumanns Steel, Northside Gyprock, Orrcon Steel, Polyflor Australia, Private Contractors Lyn Jenkins, Robbie Amor,

Anthony McMurdy, Russell Chevins, Qld Concrete and General Construction (QCGC), Qld Government Department of Sport and Recreation, Rob Lee Tiling, Slipsafe, Smorgan Steel, Sunstate Coatings, TheFastener Place, Tims Floor Stripping, Wattyl Australia, Zillmere Engineering

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: The club acknowledged and personally thanked the business sponsors who contributed many materials and labour free or heavily discounted, and their names are incorporated in the list with the volunteers. All business sponsors were presented with a framed certificate as a thankyou from the club. The effort of the volunteers and business sponsors shows the high regard in which the surf club is held in this area, particularly under Michael Hoogwaerts's leadership.

The surf club redevelopment is only stage 1. It includes an office, an increased area for storing equipment, a new juniors activities—nippers—storage shed, a large first-aid space and extra restrooms and showers. Our nippers will now be able to have a more structured training program in a more secure environment.

The Bribie Island Surf Life Saving Club has plans for stage 2, which is expected to cost around $200,000. The time frame to do this is two to five years, depending on the availability of funding. This second stage will include male and female storage rooms, a gym and combined lounge and a large training area. I will be happy to lend my support to those future extensions. Nothing beats living in a safe community, and the Bribie Island Surf Life Saving Club deserves our heartfelt thanks for making our community a safer and better place to live.

Maryborough Amateur Boxing Club

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (10.10 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the wonderful Maryborough amateur boxing club. That is a club I have been associated with for a long time. I have provided patronage to it, given trophies to it and attended a lot of tournaments. It is called the Dennis Well Beloved Memorial Boxing Club. Dennis was quite an icon in boxing in our area. In fact, he went on to become an Olympic coach. Sadly, he passed away a few years ago. The club is now named in his honour.

This club has existed for 30 years and has provided a wonderful service to the community of Maryborough. The club runs fitness classes and boxing lessons—it has some very skilled competitive boxers who compete under Olympic rules and regulations—along with weight-watching classes and programs for young people in Maryborough.

One of the things the club hopes to do is get together a multipurpose sport, health and fitness centre with very up-to-date equipment and support staff so that it becomes more than just a boxing club. The idea is to run a centre to which members of all ages of the community can come and train and maintain a healthy lifestyle through exercise and programs designed for each individual to meet their needs. Also, the centre envisaged would have qualified health and fitness trainers and counsellors along with programs especially designed for youth.

At present the Maryborough Amateur Boxing and Fitness Club runs those programs. However, it finds itself limited in the numbers it can have in each class due to the very small premises that it uses. It is very sad to have to turn away literally hundreds of young people who need help each year due to the fact that they train in a changing room at a soccer field. The club has had talks with the Wallaroos Junior Rugby League Club and some other local community sporting bodies. It feels that if these bodies all came together in an equal partnership there would be tremendous benefits to our community. They all have the same goals and the same drive along with the same passion to give the youth and all persons in Maryborough a much-needed service that will change many people's lives in a positive way through physical training, health education and other needed programs.

Eskdale Park is the perfect location for a project like this, as the park has ample room for a building of the size that would be needed. A lot of different sporting bodies already use these fields. Eskdale Park is pretty much in the centre of Maryborough. The grounds have been there for almost as long as Maryborough itself, and it is known by most people who live in or near the area.

The most supportive business for the project is probably the sports club, which gives the Maryborough Amateur Boxing and Fitness Club around $5,000 a year in sponsorship. It also gives a lot of capital support to many other sporting bodies such as Rugby League, hockey, touch football and so on. It is a wonderful organisation. I am very proud to be associated with it and with the sport of boxing. I commend the club and its aims to the House.

Caboolture Area Youth Service; Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (10.13 pm): This evening I rise to acknowledge the work done by 10 exceptional women. Earlier this year the Caboolture Area Youth Service received $119,000 in funding from the state government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative for another Community Jobs Plan project. The title of this project, Women on the Go, says it all. It conjures up a vision of women moving forward in life to achieve their goals. These women have had the drive and the determination to

help themselves while developing resources and conducting an event that has benefited other women in the community.

The October In the Know expo was a huge success, with over 350 people attending to take advantage of the information available at the 35 information stalls. It was a one-stop-shop of information services and support for the women of Caboolture and surrounding areas.

During their 15 weeks of paid work and training, they found sponsorship, did fundraising and media work and created an expo information and application kit. By doing these hands-on activities, these job seekers developed valuable skills in sales, marketing, clerical and administration work—skills that will help them advance their careers. I am pleased to tell the House tonight that for some this has already happened. So far, eight ladies have moved to the next stage of their working lives. That is an 80 per cent success rate. Five are now employed in the retail industry and three are going on to further training. This continues CAYS's excellent record in job outcomes. From its previous four Breaking the Unemployment Cycle projects, it has attained outcomes of between 70 per cent and 80 per cent.

All of the participants were unemployed when this project began, but they all had one thing in common—the desire to get back into the work force. This can be harder to achieve than it sounds. I offer my congratulations to Vicky Brooks, Renee Gibson, Barbara Wilson, Patricia Carnes, Trudy Hain, Vicki Hawes, Donna Heath, Kate Taddeucci, Elizabeth Tadman, Sunita Willelson and Karen Wilkinson. These women have broken through the barriers and have achieved personal success.

As we have all been discussing lately, John Howard and the Liberal Party are now ramming through parliament changes to Australia's industrial relations laws that are an attack on Queensland Workers. They are an attack on the pay and conditions of workers—an attack on young workers and women and an attack on all current workers and their job security. It is an attack on the Australian way of life. The Liberal and National parties' legislation will destroy a century of progress in protecting the rights of working people. Rights and conditions that have been won by successive generations of Australians can now be wiped out at the stroke of a pen. Labor will stand with working families against the government's plans to remove unfair dismissal rights, penalty rates, regular working hours, holidays and the right to bargain collectively.

How does this affect women? Women who are returning to work run the risk of having no conditions and penalty rates. John Howard has said that they should just consider themselves lucky to get a job. Well, I do not support that position. They deserve a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Under section 116B of the legislation, matters to be made nonallowable include 'transfers from one type of employment to another type of employment'. This is clearly aimed at casual to permanent conversion clauses. However, it would also catch women seeking to transfer from full-time work to part-time work or vice-versa, especially in relation to mothers returning from maternity leave. I will continue to fight against the injustices which are about to be perpetrated on the working families of Queensland, and I stand rock solid in my commitment to having that stopped.

Time expired.

Development Planning, Moranbah

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (10.16 pm): On 23 February 1995 the Belyando Shire Council planning scheme for the town of Moranbah was gazetted by the state government. This document and the underlying planning study identified the necessity to freeze coal resources to allow for residential development. It was also noted that the areas designated as future residential contained coal reserves.

In 1988 the Department of Natural Resources and Mines issued a miners development licence over future residential areas identified in the town plan. The local shire council had the foresight to approve the 350-residence development for the town to help solve the intolerable social, environmental and economic constraints that are experienced by the people.

Earlier this year the minister for local government and planning called in the 350-residence development approved by the council because there was a mining lease over the area. However, the mining lease was approved after the town plan was approved. Today I asked a question without notice of the minister for environment and planning asking if she could advise when the 2,000 residents of Moranbah who signed a petition calling on the minister to honour the council's current town-planning scheme would receive a positive response. While disappointed that Moranbah residents will still be left in limbo, I hope that the minister is true to her word when she says that she will be able to inform the people of Moranbah of good news in terms of their long-term future. We hope that this good news is to honour the residents of Moranbah by approving the development according to its town plan. We hope that the state government will ensure its long-term plan means that families can live in Moranbah and enjoy the quality of life it has to offer without being subjected to contaminated dust, airborne silicon, excess noise, lights and other health risks associated with 24-hour open-cut mining operations at their doorstep.

The Moranbah residents are not asking for much. What they are asking for is minuscule when compared to the millions of dollars that the community contributes each year to the state's coffers. The minister recently set a precedent by creating a restricted area to protect residents from the hazards of mining and by catering for residential development in the greater Springfield area. Why is Moranbah any different?

I remind the Premier and the Minister for Environment that Moranbah is not a cash register to fill the state Treasury coffers so that they can spend lavishly on foot bridges, multimillion dollar parklands, sports stadiums and car races in the south-east corner. Moranbah is a community where parents are raising their children and grandparents are retiring. It is a place they call home.

Liberal Party, Broadwater; Councillor Fay Barker

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (10.20 pm): It has taken just two weeks to confirm my prediction that the Liberal Party was amending its constitution to ruthlessly eliminate candidates that the ruling faction is not happy with. The Liberal Party received just two nominations for Broadwater—Jim Nicholls who stood against the member for Chatsworth for state president and who ran an anti-branch stacking campaign, and Christopher Stear who is the former managing director of Child Care Centres Australia and a former business partner of Michael Kroger.

The Liberal Party used its undemocratic and ruthless vetting rules to eliminate Mr Nicholls, even before the branch delegates could have their say. He was scratched before he got to the barrier. Allegations were made about the business record of Mr Stear. Who did the Liberal Party consult to check the allegations? None other than Michael Kroger, the national godfather of the faction that the member for Chatsworth belongs to. If Mr Nicholls deserved to be balloted out, then so did Mr Stear. However, Mr Stear has one advantage. He is backed by the Caltabiano faction.

I am told that even though there was just one candidate at the Liberal preselection, Mr Stear was almost defeated by the 'No' vote. He was unopposed, but he almost got beaten by nobody. In his glossy and expensive eight-page brochure that was sent out to rank and file Liberal members, under the heading 'Business experience' he mentions that he has an indepth understanding of the issues facing small and large businesses. That is probably because he was CEO of a large business and in no time at all he had turned it into a small business. Investors have been defrauded just as the rank and file Liberals of Broadwater have. He also does not mention that his previous electoral experience was when he stood as a democrat in the Victorian seat of Mallee against the Liberals. Fortunately, the disfranchised and disaffected Liberals of Broadwater have a real alternative in the hardworking and effective sitting member, Peta-Kaye Croft.

The rot in the Liberal Party is not confined to just south-east Queensland. Last week a Liberal Townsville city councillor, Fay Barker, was referred to the CMC for failing to declare a $10,000 contribution to Townsville's push for a V-8 Super Car race. Councillor Barker had previously voted in favour of the Townsville City Council financially supporting the event, even though she had a material interest in the result. This clearly breaches the provisions of the Local Government Act.

An email dated 3 May this year from a prominent Townsville businessman confirmed that Councillor Barker provided the $10,000 and expressed concerns from Councillor Barker that, 'There is no possibility of the money being repaid to her if the event does not proceed...'. Compare this to a statement in the *Townsville Bulletin* on 16 November, after which she was found out, that says, 'Whether the event proceeds has absolutely no bearing on whether this small personal loan to a friend is repaid.' Unlike the Liberals, I reckon that 10 grand is not a small amount. Ten grand is a decent sum of money and Councillor Barker should have declared the interest before voting.

Councillor Barker is again caught out telling fibs in the *Townsville Bulletin.* In the Magpie column published last Saturday, journo Malcolm Weatherup falls for Councillor Barker's lines when he states, '... the Magpie understands that the matter of the loan was openly entered into the Council's Pecuniary Interest Register, so it is hardly a secret.' One can imagine the surprise of Councillor Barker's fellow councillor John Robertson when yesterday he examined Councillor Barker's pecuniary interest register which contained not even the mention of the $10,000. That is another breach of the act.

Time expired.

Caloundra

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (10.23 pm): The state of public transport in Caloundra is, to say the least, deplorable. The services provided by Sunbus do not meet the needs of this community and the way that this government continues to ignore the problem is indicative of the arrogance it has adopted since it has been in government. One cannot expect people to support a regime that does not have any regard or vision for the future, and that applies very clearly in this case.

In addition to public transport, the issues are numerous and very important to those who live in or visit the City of Caloundra. This government has failed to address the CAMCOS rail corridor, which with Sunbus would improve greatly our public transport system. However, it is not to be completed until 2025-2026, which is a full 20 years away.

The city is undermanned by police officers who are stretched to the maximum and poorly resourced. Caloundra Hospital has been promised a $55 million upgrade, but based upon the Sippy Downs debacle that will need to be watched carefully to ensure that it is actually carried out.

There are numerous other issues, but there are two that the people of Caloundra need to address themselves. Caloundra's growth squarely raises the question of high rise development. I have spoken to many people and they are almost unanimous in condemning high rise. They are most ardent in opposing high rise along and close to the sea and waterways. They are right. Caloundra does not need high rise near the water. We need green open areas and gateways to our city, free of high-rise monoliths. Those open areas need to be kept for families, children and visitors to have picnics and barbecues. We do not need those green areas to be consumed by high rise, cluttered by concrete and destroyed by pollution. We need to look to the future, not just for two or three years but for many years to come.

The question of caravan parks is increasingly being raised as people see them disappear and being gobbled up for unit blocks. We cannot forget the thousands of people throughout Australia who have retired and who spend long periods of time travelling this great country and living in caravans. Caravan sites are disappearing, but they are critical for Caloundra as it is a tourist destination. Caloundra is still a family holiday destination and many families either want to holiday at a caravan park or cannot afford holiday tariffs. If we want to retain the feel and attract the tourist dollar, we need to protect those parks.

The challenge is very clear in front of us in Caloundra: those open areas and caravan parks provide enormous benefit to my city, to those who live there and to those who visit. To let those sites go would be a disaster. I make it clear that the people of Caloundra do not want to lose those areas nor see high rise throughout the city. It is their city, and is not owned by any one person. There is a battle looming on these points. It is a battle we residents cannot afford to loose.

Poker Machines

Hon. NITA CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (10.26 pm): Recently, many of us heard the sanctimonious bleating of National Party locals condemning this government's increase of the cap on poker machines, a cap that was introduced by the Beattie government but was nonexistent under the coalition. Ironically, many of those press releases were sent out on the Tuesday as those very same people were ducking down to the TAB or were off to the races for the Melbourne Cup. This year Australians spent some $140 million on that horse race.

As Christmas is fast approaching, I draw the attention of the House to a far greater social problem, particularly for young families. It is a social problem that is wrecking marriages and putting families out on the street. It is the overuse of credit cards and the too easy access to credit cards. Their close proximity to poker machines is a far bigger problem than extra machines.

The gambling machines may be a concern to some, but even worse is the fact that there are ATMs at those very venues. If someone has lost all their money, they just walk out and get some more and some more and some more. It is that easy. With the swipe of a card, they can use money that was being saved for something important or they can run up their family's debt to a level they cannot repay.

At the end of August 2005, credit card debt in Australia was $31.8 billion or, more accurately, $31,784 million and growing. It is mind boggling to imagine how high that debt will be after Christmas.

There are ATMs in every shopping centre. People are being offered more cards almost daily from banks, financial institutions and department stores. If you apply for one, they send three: one for you, one for your husband and one for your daughter as happened in my home recently. Limits can be increased almost at will and monthly repayments are as low as 1 per cent of the debt.

This is certainly a social problem of enormous magnitude. It is all very easy to take the moral high ground on issues, but if the opposition is genuine in its concerns about social problems, it should put pressure on its coalition partners in Canberra to put some controls in place. Perhaps it could put a cap on credit card debt as this government has responsibly done with the number of gaming machines allowed in Queensland.

I note that no National Party members are in the House tonight. Following the earlier speech of the member for Surfers Paradise, I challenge him and the member for Burnett to say outside this House what they have been saying about me in this House tonight.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.28 pm.