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WEEKLY HANSARD

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51ST PARLIAMENT

Subject Page

Thursday, 11 May 2006

BY AUTHORITY
L.J. OSMOND, CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER—2006

THURSDAY, 11 MAY 2006

Mr ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. J Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

JUVENILE DIABETES GROUP

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery members of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 43 young Queenslanders with juvenile diabetes, and their parents. It is 'Kids in the House' day today, and I welcome them all warmly.

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

Report

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that today I received from the chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission a report titled *Independence, influence and integrity in local government: a CMC inquiry into the 2004 Gold Coast City Council election*. I table the report.

MR ACTING SPEAKER'S RULINGS

E-Petitions

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I refer to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report No. 75 and the committee's conclusions and recommendations. I note that the noncompliance relates primarily to the method in which the e-petitions were compiled and not to the substance of the e-petitions. The committee found no evidence of fraud, inducement or that the signatories had not given their consent to be added to the e-petitions. Taking into account all the above matters, I have authorised the Clerk to present the e-petitions today.

PETITIONS

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

Montville Development

Mr Hobbs, two petitions, from 3,408 petitioners in total, requesting the House to endorse the Maroochy Council approval for the proposed Montville residential/golf course development

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Langbroek from 49 petitioners requesting the House to replace asbestos roofs in all schools throughout the Greenslopes electorate including the Cavendish Road State High School, Coorparoo State High School, Coorparoo Infant State School, Holland Park State High School, Marshall Road State School and Camp Hill State School.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (9.33 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of my recent trade mission to the United States and Canada.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Juvenile Diabetes

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.33 am): I acknowledge the representatives of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation who are in the gallery today. Type 1 diabetes is a chronic disease that cannot be prevented and is a serious health priority for Queenslanders. We have one of the highest incidences of type 1 diabetes in the world, with more and more cases occurring every year without us understanding why. Around 140,000 Australians suffer from

type 1 diabetes, including over 20,000 children and adults here in Queensland, and a diagnosis of type 1 diabetes affects whole families—the impact of this disease is extended to over 100,000 Queensland mothers, fathers, siblings and grandparents. But I could quote statistics all day and not have the impact that 43 young Queenslanders here today will have when they tell their personal stories of living life with the disease every day.

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, or JDRF, has brought these kids—aged between two and 17—here to remind us that our youth is all the reason we need to continue working towards a cure for type 1 diabetes. I want to make sure that every member knows that they are in the gallery and I want those in the gallery to know that they are most welcome to be here today.

JDRF was founded by passionate parents with a mission to find a cure for type 1 diabetes and its complications. It works with governments, parents, businesses and researchers to ensure the best research in the world is funded. JDRF funds over $10 million worth of diabetes research in Australia every year, including nearly $3 million over the past four years in Queensland, with some of the best researchers right here in the Smart State. Thanks to JDRF funded research, more than 600 people have achieved partial or complete insulin independence due to islet transplantation—an extremely promising cure for type 1 diabetes.

The children who are here today are the reason medical research is so important—they all have a disease through no fault of their own, which currently has no cure, has an enormous impact on their daily lives and holds the threat of serious health complications in the future. This is evidence of the importance of the disease to Queenslanders, and having them here today is evidence of this government's commitment to listening to and responding to the health priorities of our community. I commend the children and their parents for sharing their stories with us, and I thank the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for its commitment to supporting these children and finding a cure for this terrible disease.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast City Council, CMC Report

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.36 am): I can advise the House that at 9 am today the chair of the Crime and Misconduct Commission, Robert Needham, provided copies of the report into the Gold Coast City Council to you, Mr Acting Speaker, and you have tabled it in the House. The report makes a number of serious findings, and the government is now considering the report in detail. The report is, of course, comprehensive and I will require detailed legal advice on the government's initial response and any required action.

I and the Deputy Premier have met with the minister for local government and our legal advisers this morning. We are preparing a detailed response. The minister for local government will make a ministerial statement probably at 11.30 this morning to respond in detail.

We are seeking advice from the Crown Solicitor on the following three key issues: firstly, any implications for the operations of the council; secondly, proceedings involving six individuals; and, thirdly, broader legislative changes which may be necessary. We will take this report seriously. We will respond in detail. We will also act on the advice of the Crown Solicitor to ensure that transparency occurs and appropriate action is taken.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Supply

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.37 am): My government is undertaking a raft of initiatives to help address the vital issue of water security and supply. As part of a comprehensive water action plan we are better utilising and conserving the water already in existing dams, cutting waste and excess use and investigating new technologies including recycling and desalination. Of course, we have also made the largest commitment of any government in Australia to new water infrastructure including dams and weirs.

A key part of our strategy is the new Water Commission. The commission will have statutory responsibility for water supply and security planning, implementation and compliance in south-east Queensland. It will have three key roles: providing advice to government on achieving water security through supply options and demand management measures; preparing and enforcing operating rules for the water supply system; and facilitating new water infrastructure in certain circumstances.

Today I am pleased to announce the appointment of the three commission members:—Elizabeth Nosworthy, David Green and Jamie Quinn. These three people will be approved by Executive Council. I seek leave to incorporate more details of their CVs in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Elizabeth Nosworthy has been appointed Chairperson and both Jamie Quinn and David Green commissioners.

Ms Nosworthy has more than 20 years experience as a commercial lawyer working in Brisbane and extensively interstate.

Since leaving the law four years ago, she has worked full-time as a non-executive company director. Ms Nosworthy has considerable experience at Board level in both the public and private sector.

David Green is the Leader of the National Energy and Utilities Advisory group at Ernst and Young. He has extensive knowledge and experience with economic/regulatory and financial issues associated with the water reform process.

Jamie Quinn is a fellow of Local Government Managers Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has extensive experience in local government management in the role of Chief Executive Officer or Deputy Chief Executive Officer across a range of Councils.

I congratulate these three esteemed business community members on their appointment.

It is a big job but one that will be essential if we are to have a truly coordinated and authorative regional approach to water planning.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Health System

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.39 am): I gave a commitment following the Forster review into Queensland's health system that we would give clinicians a greater say in decision making to help find solutions for our health system. The health minister and I said that this commitment would involve the establishment of clinical advisory groups of senior doctors throughout Queensland to advise the government on reform and emergent clinical issues; the establishment of clinical networks of doctors or medical staff for hospital emergency departments; and the creation of four clinical CEO positions for senior doctors to manage and coordinate medical services at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Rockhampton Hospital and the Cairns Hospital.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have delivered on all three promises. The clinical networks and the advisory groups are operating and today, I am delighted—along with the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson—to announce the successful applicants for the clinical CEO positions at three of the four hospitals. Dr Thomas Ward will be the clinical CEO of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Dr David Theile AO will be the clinical CEO of the Princess Alexandra Hospital and Dr William Beresford will be the clinical CEO of the Rockhampton Hospital.

I should advise the House that Dr William Beresford will be accompanying me on my mission to Great Britain to recruit doctors. The fact that he has won this position indicates that he is an ideal person to accompany me on that visit.

Interviews for the clinical CEO position at Cairns Hospital will be conducted in the next few weeks. The appointment of a new clinical CEO has resulted from an extensive national and international recruitment process which attracted 30 applicants. The selection panel includes Uschi Schreiber, who is the Director-General of Queensland Health, and Dr Bill Glasson, who is also accompanying me on the doctor recruitment strategy to Great Britain. Dr Bill Glasson is a past president of the AMAQ. Also on the panel will be Professor Peter Brooks, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Queensland.

The three clinical CEOs that we have selected are outstanding appointees. Dr Ward is an internationally respected health care systems manager, strategist and planner. Originally a paediatrician, he has vast senior health management experience, including a long history in hospital management and health service reform. He is presently an affiliate at the Centre of Health Services Policy and Research at the University of British Columbia. He has adjunct professorships in Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria and the Faculties of Medicine and Health Administration at Dalhousie University.

Dr Theile is currently the Chair of the Division of Surgery at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. He is a well-respected surgeon and administrator. Dr Theile received his medical degrees with honours from the University of Queensland. He is a fellow of both the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Surgeons. He is a past president of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, the Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Queensland, and is an Officer of the Order of Australia—AO—for his services to surgery. I do not think we could get any better than that.

Dr Beresford is currently the Acting Director of Medical Services at Bundaberg Hospital. He gained his medical degree at Leeds University. He is a fellow of both the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators. He also holds a masters degree in science and community medicine.

From 2002 to 2005, Dr Beresford was the Area Executive Director of Clinical Services at the East Metropolitan Health Service in Perth, Western Australia. He has previously acted as chief executive officer of the King Edward Memorial Hospital, the Princess Margaret Hospital and the Royal Perth Hospital. He has a thorough knowledge of the health system, both in Australia and in the United Kingdom.

These appointments are further evidence of the Queensland government's commitment to give clinicians a greater say in decision making and to help find solutions for our health system. I look forward to supporting these three eminent men as they work with us to ensure that Queenslanders have the best possible health care.

I thank the Health Minister, Stephen Robertson, for continuing the implementation of the health action plan, which we are determined to implement as a government. I table for the information of the House the curriculum vitaes of the three gentlemen concerned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cyclone Larry, Recovery Assistance

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.43 am): I will be meeting briefly with General Cosgrove and the Cyclone Larry task force this morning. However, I will update members of the House about the latest programs of assistance to that community. The rebuilding and repair of housing in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry is one of the major tasks ahead for individuals and communities in Innisfail and surrounding districts. As we all know, thousands of homes have been affected. No doubt the rebuilding process will take some time to achieve.

The report deals with a number of matters which I think demonstrate that the work that we have set out to be done is being done. I make the point that the government has taken steps to increase the structural assistance grant from $9,300 to $17,000 for individuals and from $12,500 to $20,000 for couples and families to keep in line with current building prices.

Basically, this means that the government has been providing assistance to approximately 450 uninsured householders. Q-Build, at the direction of Minister Robert Schwarten, has substantially completed property assessments on all properties that were affected. The Department of Public Works will facilitate a project management role to ensure that those works which qualify for the structural hardship payment under the national disaster relief arrangements are completed efficiently and cost-effectively. For this reason, the government has taken steps to increase the structural assistance grant from $9,300 to $17,000 for individuals and from $12,500 to $20,000 for couples and families, to keep it in line with current building practices.

To assist members, I seek to incorporate the rest of the details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Led by General Cosgrove the Cyclone Larry task force are doing a terrific job and I once again thank them for their efforts.

In the seven weeks since the cyclone hit, I am pleased to advise that strong progress has been made with great cooperation between local communities and councils, government, insurance companies agencies and the private sector.

The early emergency effort in the region focussed on securing homes with tarps and other temporary waterproofing and assessing key structural safety thanks to the fantastic efforts of emergency services personnel, volunteers and local governments.

Over 250 households have been provided with immediate emergency accommodation by the Department of Housing and some 50 households are still receiving this service while they are awaiting repairs or alternative accommodation arrangements.

Over 20 of the 250 households have been offered medium term accommodation within Department of Housing properties within the region.

To manage the massive scale of the repair operation, within 3 weeks of the cyclone, the Building Services Authority had established the Building Coordination Centre.

The Centre has representatives from the Building Services Authority, two independent insurance advisers and input from Master Builders Queensland, Building Designers Association of Queensland, and Housing Industry Association.

The centre is handling over 70 inquiries a day providing a vital service to many across the community.

13,800 property and contents claims have been made totalling around $300 million.

Major insurers are looking to streamline the processes for customers to ensure work can be undertaken in the quickest possible time.

As an example, Suncorp recently appointed a large scale project manager—Bovis LendLease—to oversee the work stemming from over 5,000 property claims.

A similar approach is being adopted within Government.

The Department of Housing owns around 300 properties in the Cyclone area and by the end of week four, full property assessments by QBuild on all houses were complete.

The Government has also been providing assistance to approximately 450 uninsured householders.

QBuild has substantially completed property assessments on all properties affected.

The Department of Public Works will facilitate a project management role to ensure those works which qualify for the Structural hardship payment under the National Disaster Relief Arrangements are completed efficiently and cost effectively.

The Government has also taken steps to increase the Structural Assistance grant from $9,300 to $17,000 for individuals and $12,500 to $20,000 for couples/families, to keep it in line with current building prices.

The Department of Housing is implementing a temporary accommodation strategy for the region. Accommodation for over 100 people has been sourced and is being transported to the region and began arriving on 4 May.

This accommodation will be managed locally and cooperation from the local councils, community housing providers and accommodation providers has been critical to the success of this strategy.

In addition, all options for buildings within the region are being explored.

A great example of this is an agreement between Queensland Health and the Department of Housing for the conversion of a 22 bedroom disused Nurses Quarters in Babinda to temporary accommodation.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife has also provided two surplus properties in the Tinaroo Falls community for medium term accommodation for displaced households.

The Department of Housing is also considering the relocation of a small number of houses to the affected shires to add to the supply of long term rental stock.

Councils in Johnstone and Eacham Shires have established registers for those requiring temporary accommodation and these will be used to establish appropriate responses as the rebuilding effort continues.

Mr Speaker,

There is no doubt that the Cyclone Larry Relief Appeal will play a critical role in relieving the suffering and distress of those individuals who have lost so much in this devastating event.

Donations received now total just over $18M.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Animal Research Institute Site, Yeerongpilly

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.44 am): An extensive community sport and recreation hub will form part of an exciting development plan for the Animal Research Institute site at Yeerongpilly. The Coordinator-General has called for expressions of interest in redeveloping the site when it is vacated by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries at the end of the decade.

The Yeerongpilly land project presents the opportunity for a vibrant mix of development opportunities, including community, sport and recreation facilities. We envisage that it will include riverfront parkland, community, sport and recreation facilities, retail and commercial outlets, high-quality residential accommodation and affordable housing.

The final mix and layout of the site's facilities will be negotiated with the preferred developer. However, it will be required to complement and integrate the exciting Tennyson riverside development, which includes our new $60 million State Tennis Centre. It is expected to include artificial grass tennis courts to complement the State Tennis Centre. Other sports being considered for inclusion at the site are beach volleyball courts, squash courts, a gymnasium, a 25-metre indoor lap pool, and indoor and outdoor leisure water areas. A sports science research facility to support elite tennis development is also being incorporated.

While the Queensland government plans to retain ownership of the site, the developer will be responsible for the construction, operation and maintenance of facilities at no cost to government. We will establish a community liaison group to identify any issues that will need to be taken into consideration. This group will include local residents and businesses. Of course, the local member has been involved in this and I have no doubt that Simon will play—as he already has—a very strong role in ensuring that the community is involved in this and has participation. The closing date for expressions of interest to the Coordinator-General is Monday, 8 July 2006.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Death of Mr G McLennan

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.46 am): I pay tribute to a music icon who died last week, Grant McLennan, one of the songwriting duo from the veteran group the Go-Betweens. Mr McLennan's tragic death was sudden. As his former band mate Lindy Morrison said at the time, he was peaking professionally and personally.

One of three children, Grant McLennan was a native Queenslander. He was born in Rockhampton in 1958 and raised in far-north Queensland by his widowed mother. He formed the Go-Betweens with Robert Forster in 1977 while at university. They released their debut album in 1981. He was a great guy and a great Queenslander. I seek leave to incorporate a tribute to him in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The band went on to be a huge commercial success in the tough British market and US underground scene, and won an ARIA for their album Oceans Apart last year.

Amanda Brown, who joined the Go-Betweens on violin and clarinet in the mid 80s said "Grant's songs captured an Australia that was influenced by his love for contemporary American writers like Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and Patti Smith. They informed his images of Australia—from the landscapes tingled with nostalgia and loss, to suburban life, epic narratives and exquisite love songs."

McLennan's song Cattle and Cane was recently voted one of the 10 greatest Australian songs ever by the Australian Performing Rights Association and I proudly presented Go-Between CDs as dignitary gifts on official overseas trips.

Our condolences go to his mother, sister, brother, girlfriend Emma and band mates Robert Forster, Glenn Thompson and Adele Pickvance.

May he rest in peace.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australia TradeCoast

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.47 am): I am pleased to announce that a community cabinet meeting will be held at Australia TradeCoast later this month. The Australia TradeCoast encompasses 8,000 hectares at the mouth of the Brisbane River. It takes in Australia fastest growing airport and seaport. Launched in May 1999 by my government, it is a government-sponsored industry initiative to transform Brisbane's ports precinct into a major global trade and industry hub on the east coast of Australia. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

It provides businesses with ready access to interstate and overseas markets via road, rail, air and sea transport.

Companies located within the Australia TradeCoast zone include Virgin, Boeing, Volvo, Fisher & Paykel and Australia Post.

Mr Speaker,

Australia TradeCoast is an industrial and commercial precinct that's unique among other such centres in this country.

It's unique because it abuts both a major airport and a major seaport and it's closer to Asia than any such infrastructure to the south.

The precinct also has a standard gauge rail link with the south and first class road links with major highways along the eastern seaboard, from Cairns to Melbourne, to western Queensland and to north western New South Wales.

And of course, Australia TradeCoast will be a major beneficiary of the biggest road project in Queensland's history—the second Gateway Bridge.

The Community Cabinet meeting will allow Cabinet to view progress on the continuing development of the TradeCoast.

Since we were first elected we have always maintained a commitment to meet Queenslanders where they live and work.

Community Cabinets present a great opportunity for us to listen and respond to the local issues and concerns of the community first hand.

Mr Speaker,

The Australia TradeCoast Community Cabinet will be held at the visitors centre at the Port of Brisbane on May 29.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart State Research Fellowships

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (9.47 am): Today I am pleased to announce that two Smart State senior fellowships are being awarded for research projects that focus on the very important themes of environment and sustainability. The senior fellowships, valued at $100,000 a year for three years, will go to Dr Paul Meredith, who is developing new and advanced materials for a sustainable future, and Dr Stephen Williams, who is studying the impact of climate change on Queensland's environment.

Dr Meredith, who works out of the University of Queensland, is driven by a concern that our reliance on high environmental impact materials, such as silicone and other semiconductors, is unsustainable. The same goes for our reliance on energy and water intensive industrial processes.

Currently, to make solar cells and other hi-tech devices, we need to use substantial amounts of energy. However, there is a new generation of hi-tech materials that promise lower costs, environmentally friendly solar cells and other types of devices. They are less toxic and easier to produce. Dr Meredith and his team are aiming to develop these new materials to enhance current renewable energy technologies and to develop the next generation of low-cost technologies.

Meanwhile, Dr Williams from James Cook University is dedicated to establishing a world-leading multidisciplinary research centre to examine the impacts of climate change on our rainforests. It is now well accepted that climate change is the greatest single threat to two of Queensland's most precious natural assets: the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics tropical rainforest. The objective of Dr Williams and his research team is to monitor and mitigate climate change impacts on our natural environment. By protecting our environment we are also helping to protect related industries such as ecotourism and biodiscovery.

The Smart State Senior Fellowships are awarded through the Innovation Skills Fund, one of the funds under our $200 million Smart State Innovation Funding Program launched late last year. The senior fellowships awarded to Dr Meredith and Dr Williams follow a number of other announcements made last month, a total of just over $17 million to 51 different recipients via the Innovation Skills Fund, the Innovations Project Fund and university internships.

Medicine, biotechnology and agriculture are just some of the industries that will benefit from this fresh funding injection. These scholarships also include the Smart State Premier's Fellowship awarded this year for the first time. It amounts to $250,000 a year for five years. This year it has gone to the Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer, for his University of Queensland Centre for Immunology and Cancer Research at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

As members will know, Professor Frazer has already attracted international acclaim by developing the world's first vaccine for cervical cancer, a cancer that kills 270 women every year. We can all be very grateful that Professor Frazer is now turning his very considerable talent to the challenge of juvenile diabetes.

I join with others this morning in welcoming the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. I know that the Professor Frazer welcomed them here this morning. I thank them all very much for coming in. Can I give a very special thank you to one of their young ambassador's, Jack, who, along with his family, visited me in my electorate office last week and talked to me at some length about living with juvenile diabetes. It is great to have Jack here.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health Scientific Services Reform

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.49 am): I endorse the comments made by the Deputy Premier and Treasurer with respect to juvenile diabetes.

Last October, cabinet approved 71 reforms arising from a comprehensive review of forensic and scientific services operated by Queensland Health Scientific Services. The government is investing $11 million to implement these reforms and I am pleased to inform the House today that all of the reforms are on track. We are making good progress to date with 66 per cent of reforms completed within the first six months and the rest on track for completion during 2007.

Reform achievements to date include: the backlog of clandestine drug laboratory testing cases has nearly halved from 198 cases as at 30 June 2005 to 109 cases as at 31 March 2006; the time taken to test illegal drug labs has fallen to six months from the two years that was advised to courts in early 2005; legislative reforms to speed up prosecution of people engaging in illicit drug production have been enacted, including making possession of precursors and other chemicals for the production of an illicit drug an indictable offence; staffing in the DNA laboratory will have doubled to 100 scientific staff by mid-2006; automated analytical equipment to speed up DNA sample testing has been purchased and the DNA laboratory refurbished to accommodate extra scientists; throughput of samples in the DNA laboratory has increased 187 per cent over the last 12 months.

Queensland Health Scientific Services advises it is on track to eliminate the backlog of DNA samples by the end of 2007. The backlog of DNA cases increased slightly from 12,895 cases as at 31 October 2005 to 13,340 as at 31 March 2006. However, we are now processing an average of 476 cases each month compared to just 166 cases per month a year ago. We expect DNA testing performance to improve significantly from now on as a result of the extra scientists, the new automated testing equipment and the laboratory refurbishment.

In fact, Queensland Health Scientific Services expects the backlog of DNA cases to start falling significantly from mid-2006 and say it should be eliminated by the end of 2007. Progress to date has been good and I thank the staff at Queensland Health Scientific Services for their hard work and cooperation over the past six months. I table for the information of the House the six-month report card on Queensland Health Scientific Service reforms to date.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Aspley, Explosives

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.54 am): I want to thank the police and the people of Aspley for the way they responded to a situation on Tuesday night. Police acted very efficiently to ensure that members of the public were safe and unharmed.

A strong intelligence-based investigation by police had led to the discovery of explosives in a house in a residential street in Aspley. After a quick assessment by specialist police of the potential area that may be at risk 30 homes were evacuated. This assessment was done by the Explosive Ordnance Response Team, which is commonly referred to as the bomb squad.

After the evacuations had been made and those people provided with motel accommodation, police then began a painstaking search of the house. Police safely recovered all of the explosives and thereby contained the risk. At all stages of this operation the safety of the public was paramount. Yesterday morning, as a precaution, police decided to search a school where the alleged offender worked. No explosives were found at the school.

Investigations are continuing and a 40-year-old man appeared in court yesterday charged with fraud. He is due to re-appear in court today on further charges. With the matter now before the courts it is not appropriate for me to go into much detail. However, I do want to thank the people of Aspley and the police for their response to this situation. Police advise me that residents of Windrest Avenue were quick to respond to police directions to move out of their homes on Tuesday evening.

No criticisms were made of the way police handled the situation. In fact, a retired doctor from one street away rang police and was extremely appreciative of how they had contained the situation so quickly and their prompt and professional action in securing the potentially dangerous situation.

Throughout the entire event Queensland police continued to keep other state and federal authorities, such as the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, fully informed of the situation. On behalf of the government, I thank the specialist police officers and the general duties first response frontline police officers who, without a moment's thought for their own safety, risked their lives to resolve this situation and keep the residents of Aspley safe. Officers included those from the Metropolitan North Region, State Crime Operations Command, the bomb squad and Operations Support Command.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Juvenile Diabetes

Hon. LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.56 am): I draw to the attention of the House an injustice that is not criminal and cannot be solved by our legal system. However, it is one that carries a life sentence. It is the life sentence handed down to sufferers of type I or juvenile diabetes—a serious, chronic, metabolic disease that destroys the body's ability to make insulin. As we have heard this morning, type I diabetes affects around 20,000 Queenslanders, usually beginning in childhood or early adulthood. Unfortunately, we have one of the highest incidences of the disease in Australia.

Although our family is nothing special and we do not see ourselves as particularly different to other families, I do want to disclose that this devastating disease also affects the Lavarch family. In the Queensland Parliament today, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation is holding the first Kids in the House event. During today, 43 children from across Queensland with juvenile diabetes will share their life stories with us. They will highlight the importance of funding diabetes research, such as the islet transplantation program.

A graphic example of how the disease affects children's lives is on the Speaker's Green. It is the 1,400 syringes that each of these children will need each year to survive—but I am happy to tell members that the syringes are not really that big.

We are most fortunate to have with us today Professor Ian Frazer, the Australian of the Year and Chairman of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's islet transplantation program. We also have Mike Wilson, the foundation's CEO, who is also a very welcome guest to this parliament and I thank Mike and his team for organising today.

This event is the culmination of three months of contact between Queensland parliamentarians and young people with type I diabetes who have been writing and visiting MPs to urge them to support people with the disease. This morning I express my heartfelt thanks to all honourable members who have already spoken to some of the kids in this House or will do so throughout today. I recommend that members obtain a copy of the Kids in the House commemorative program; they might find their photo in there—especially you, Mr Acting Speaker.

I also make very special mention of 10-year-old Becky Adsett. Becky is the emcee for today's events. Queensland is the smart state, with world-class medical researchers such as Ian Frazer. We all hope that a cure for juvenile diabetes is eventually found, and it will be all the better still if it is found here in Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Community Housing

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (9.59 am): As the son of somebody who suffered for 60 years with diabetes, I wish the people in the gallery well in finding a cure for it.

Today I am launching a new directions statement for community and local government managed housing in Queensland. As members would be aware, on 1 January this year the first reforms of the one social housing system came into effect. Under the new system, Queensland will be the only state that has a single register of need, a common process to match people with the best housing assistance for their individual circumstances, consistent eligibility criteria, a broader based asset test and improved pathways from the social housing system into the private market.

This new system, once fully rolled out this year, will greatly improve the delivery of government funded resources and subsidies so that housing assistance is targeted to those in greatest need. This booklet *A new Direction for Community and Local Government Managed Housing in the Smart State* details the future for community and local government managed housing for the next five years. It contains significant reforms for the community housing sector and will today be sent to more than 450 registered community housing providers that manage around 6,500 properties across the state.

The new directions statement outlines how long-term community housing will play a specialised role in providing assistance to people in rural and remote Queensland and with specific housing needs such as people with disabilities. A number of important service delivery changes for providers are also contained in the statement including the introduction of standard eligibility criteria and new access, assessment and allocation arrangements.

One of the big reforms includes strategies to consolidate community housing providers. Currently, 85 per cent of community service providers each manage fewer than 20 dwellings and only three per cent manage more than 100 or more. This is not viable in the long term. By having larger community housing organisations, we will be able to provide more holistic support to people in housing crisis and address some of the causes for why they are in housing need. The new directions statement cements community and local government managed housing as an integral component of providing coordinated housing assistance in the future. I look forward to working with them to implement these changes.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Peninsula Development Road

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 am): I also welcome the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and particularly the kids who are here today. There would not be many of us in this House or our families who would not in one way or another be affected by juvenile diabetes. My cousin has it. He is not a juvenile anymore, but he got it when he was young. The more research that we can do to find out the cause and to look at prevention, the better.

In mid-April far-north Queensland felt the brunt of Cyclone Monica when it crossed Cape York, with flooding the worst it has been in 50 years. The Peninsula Development Road, particularly from Musgrave to Coen, and local access roads sustained enormous damage. Large sections of the road were washed out including culverts wide enough to drive a semitrailer through. Damage to the road was worse than experienced in a normal wet season. Main Roads is coordinating assistance efforts with the Army and the SES. Work is underway on repairing the road but recovery efforts are being hampered by continuing heavy rain.

On 2 May graders began working from Lakeland and Laura north. Graders are on standby at Weipa and will commence southwards from Weipa to Archer River as soon as the road dries. On 5 May Main Roads completed a four-wheel drive emergency access track between Musgrave and Coen, allowing some supplies to start getting through. I do not think people understand the nature of the electorate that the member for Cook represents here, why his job is so challenging and why he does such a good job.

The second stage will be to build sidetracks around exposed culverts to restore access around the road's entire length to four-wheel drive traffic and vehicles up to 10 tonnes. Barring more heavy rain, Main Roads then plans to carry out major culvert repairs which could continue until July or early August. Main Roads offered assistance to councils once it had fully reopened the Peninsula Development Road to traffic.

Queensland has not forgotten these roads and these communities but the federal government has. Canberra used to fund the Peninsula Development Road on a 50-50 basis with the state government but abandoned it under AusLink in 2004. Canberra has abandoned the most remote

communities in Australia. The federal government must ensure that the national disaster relief assistance funding to address the devastation in the short term is available as well as further substantial funding needed to assist with upgrades. We would love to have some more 50-50 funding with the federal government to deal with this important road. Main Roads staff are out there working to restore the cape road for local residents as soon as possible and to re-establish a level of access that will make some tourist access possible, which is vital for the cape's economy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Energy, Consumer Protection

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (10.05 am): The Queensland government is placing consumer protection measures at the forefront for small energy users following the introduction of full retail competition for electricity and gas from 1 July next year. The introduction of fully competitive markets will benefit consumers by allowing them to choose their preferred energy retailer, but best of all it will make retailers more responsive to customer needs and offer better deals on electricity bills to win customers.

There will be consumer benefits in going to an open competitive market, and we need clear and transparent rules of the game in place for both consumers and retailers. Today I am releasing an electricity competition committee consultation paper outlining proposed consumer protection rules to be in place once full retail competition starts in Queensland. The government has already stated that under FRC small electricity customers can choose to stay on the uniform tariff price set by the government under a standard sale contract, or they can shop around for a retail offering that better suits them. This will allow consumers to test out the market but retain the ability to revert back to the safety net of a standard contract and tariff rate.

The proposals include a cooling-off period, open price disclosure, specified marketing conduct and hassle-free customer transfers between retailers. The consultation paper outlines the minimum contract terms and conditions consumers can expect under a market contract with a retailer of their choice. Setting clear boundaries helps everyone in the market. It is good for small consumers—regular mums and dads—who may want a better deal on their electricity or gas bill. It is also good for retailers because consumers can have confidence in the market.

The consumer protection rules will be further developed in consultation with the Queensland Consumers Association, retailers and distributors, but we encourage everybody to have input. This process will ensure we have a system that efficiently delivers high-quality service to Queensland consumers at the best possible price.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Office of the Information Commissioner; Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

Hon. LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.07 am): I lay upon the table of the House the independent reviews of the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman. The reviews were completed by Mr Henry Smerdon. As required by the relevant legislation, the review reports will now be referred to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Young Athlete Assistance Program

Hon. TA BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport) (10.08 am): If you are a parent of a promising young sports competitor, the expense of getting them to major events can be a big drain on the family budget. It would be a great shame if a potential Libby Lenton, Jonathon Thurston or Pat Rafter slipped through the net because their family could not afford to keep them involved in top-level competition. That is why I am delighted to be able to talk about a new state government program to help school sports players meet their travel and accommodation expenses when selected to compete in major sporting events.

Run by Sport and Recreation Queensland, the Young Athlete Assistance Program has an annual budget of $500,000. It is aimed at junior competitors under the age of 18 who attend state, national and international events including school championships. What we have set up is a grants program based on the distance the young person has to travel. For a distance of 100 to 500 kilometres, the grant will be $500, increasing to $650 for 500 to 1,000 kilometres and $800 for distances above 1,000 kilometres.

As we all agree, our state has an enviable track record of developing young champions—a proud sporting tradition that the Beattie government is committed to preserving. The program will be particularly helpful to junior athletes in regional areas. However, it is open to all young Queenslanders who are registered members of a recognised sporting organisation at a local, regional or state level, or selected to compete at a state school championship. This is money very well spent—helping hundreds of aspiring young champions pursue their goals every year.

At a time when the government is focusing on how to combat rising levels of obesity, students can look up to high performing schoolmates who are being encouraged to gain the highest honours in the sport of their choice. Sport and Recreation Queensland is now promoting the program, and full details are currently available at the agency's web site or by phoning 1300656191.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (10.10 am): The federal budget offers nothing for the environment in Queensland. It has set aside $28 million in so-called secret funding. So maybe there is still some hope. There is no doubt that this $28 million should be spent protecting Queensland's spectacular natural environment.

I would like to recommend how that should be spent. It should be spent on three key areas where the Commonwealth has responsibility and where its investment is sorely lacking. Firstly, it could be spent on the day-to-day management of marine parks, which is a state and federal responsibility. Secondly, it could be spent on the acquisition of environmentally significant places. The state has more than $15 million set aside for acquisitions, including for Cape York and the Daintree. The Commonwealth used to contribute on a dollar-for-dollar basis but it has cut funding to a paltry $6 million annually Australia-wide. Thirdly, it could be spent on looking after our World Heritage icons. 1997 represented a funding high of around $7 million in Commonwealth assistance. This has been progressively slashed to just $3 million this year. Surely the Commonwealth can cough up more to protect icons, including Fraser Island, the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

Regarding women, the Commonwealth has been lauding its child-care changes but it has completely missed the point. Australia is facing a skills shortage and a labour shortage. At the same time we have thousands of skilled women staying at home because child care is not affordable or available. Yet the federal budget did nothing to increase long-day care places which is what women need if they are to put in a full week's work or even a few day's work a week.

Extending the family tax benefit is hardly an incentive for women to return to work given the average weekly cost of child care is about $180. Much of what they earn would be eaten up in child-care costs. The budget does not help our child-care workers who are poorly paid for a job that is arguably one of the most important in our society—caring for our children. The big boys in Canberra need to open their eyes. Women are part of the workforce now and their contribution should not be ignored.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Management Queensland; SES Recruitment Campaign

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.12 am): The coming week marks a big step forward for emergency management and services in Queensland. Firstly, from tomorrow key players such as the state's disaster managers, disaster mitigation planners, the State Emergency Service, state government rescue helicopters, the chem unit, emergency service units, cadets and volunteer marine organisations will be brought together under a new name within the Department of Emergency Services. From tomorrow, this division will be known as Emergency Management Queensland. They were previously under the banner of the Counter Disaster and Rescue Services. This name change will further enhance the public image of the state's disaster response capability, provide a readily identifiable identity and reflect the terminology used around the world. The swift and effective response to Cyclone Larry demonstrated that Queensland's emergency preparation and response services are in good shape and this name change will further reflect that.

Secondly, in the Department of Emergency Service there are almost 85,000 volunteers in the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Brigade, the Ambulance Service, emergency service units and cadets and the marine rescue organisations. Next week is National Volunteer Week and I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers in our state. To strengthen the ability of the SES to respond to emergencies and provide other essential services, next week I will launch a recruitment campaign to help attract more volunteers to the SES. The campaign will help individual SES groups recruit new members and involve press, cinema ads and postcards. It shows that ordinary people do extraordinary things when they are a volunteer with the SES. As a volunteer with the SES

people will not only be helping their community; they will also be getting world-class accredited training, making lifelong friendships and having some incredible adventures along the way. During National Volunteer Week and beyond the call is simple, 'Be your best, join the SES.'

I will comment on an article in today's *Courier-Mail.* I commend Trent Dalton for his words in that article. I let Trent know that I am going to use those words. They are marvellous. What he says about Lyle Dobbs and his wife Margaret is marvellous. Thank you, Margaret, for giving us Lyle Dobbs for 31 years. He is at the North Rockhampton shed. I say to the member for Rockhampton that I took the opportunity to look through that shed. It is a credit to SES people who are at that shed. I will quote Trent's words just in case members have not had an opportunity to read them. Trent states, 'You know why SES volunteers wear those big orange overalls?'

A government member: No.

Mr PURCELL: 'It's to hide their wings. And you know why they all wear hats on the job?'

A government member: No.

Mr PURCELL: 'That's right, to hide their halos.' No truer words have been said. Thank you very much Trent Dalton for those words.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ICT Industry

Hon. CP CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs) (10.15 am): They are our angels in orange, there is no doubt about that. Some 96 per cent of our local information and communication technology, ICT, industry is made up of either small or microbusinesses. That is why I am delighted today to announce the new small to medium enterprise, SME, participation scheme which will help local companies compete for Queensland government ICT projects.

The industry is already employing over 62,000 Queenslanders and generating annual sales of over $21 billion. This new scheme, which will come into effect on 1 July 2006, will increase opportunities for local SMEs to win business with the biggest ICT spender in Queensland, the state government. Our annual ICT spend is over $1 billion and access to that spend is seen as a way to leverage greater business opportunities for the Queensland ICT industry.

This new scheme is supported by industry and incorporates elements such as: requiring agencies to obtain quotes from SMEs, specifying how much of the content will be delivered by SMEs, and industry development questionnaires to improve our knowledge of the local industry's capabilities. It replaces the existing industry development statement scheme, which needs to be phased out because of Australia's entry into the Australia-United States free trade agreement. This new process is both accountable and transparent and complies with our international treaty obligations. The Beattie government wants to work with the Queensland ICT industry to create even more jobs and attract even more investment to Queensland, the Smart State.

The local industry has a healthy capacity to provide innovative, locally produced solutions for government agencies as well as local industries and the Beattie government wants to foster that capacity as much as possible. Queensland ICT firms are already making their mark both nationally and internationally, many in niche areas such as e-security, e-health, mining technology, wi-fi and content management. Together with the Premier and the minister for public works and housing, I am committed to ensuring the industry can take full advantage of any opportunities that will become available to them. This new scheme, together with our existing initiatives, will greatly expand those opportunities for our local information communication technology schemes.

In closing, the Attorney has requested I table a copy of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Kids in the House Queensland commemorative program from today. In doing so I would like to point out that the little boy on the front cover with the big red hat and a lovely big smile is Hayden Supple from my electorate on the Sunshine Coast. He is a very brave little boy. He attends the child-care centre where my wife works. Everyone should get the opportunity to talk to these children. Our thoughts and prayers go with them. We pray that one day there will be a cure for this terrible disease.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Health System

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.20 am): I also at the outset wish to join with other members of parliament who have paid tribute to and acknowledged the juvenile diabetes group this morning. As I gathered on the Speaker's Green with other MPs and interested people this morning, we could not help but be touched by what we saw there. These young people are so brave and endure so much; we cannot even imagine what they go through.

Today, as I understand it, the Premier leaves on an overseas trip particularly to England and Ireland in order, as he says, to recruit doctors into the Queensland health system. My challenge to the Premier is to do something about the doctors who have progressively left the Queensland public health system over the last three years. This government's own figures clearly state that 2,462 doctors left the Queensland public health system in the last three years. That is 2,462 doctors leaving right under the nose of the Premier.

It would be far better for this Premier to stay behind and do something about actively recruiting those doctors back into the Queensland health system. They were staff specialists, they were staff medical officers within the system and they were VMOs. If the government had done more to value those 2,462 doctors—which is two-thirds of the entire medical workforce in Queensland Health—we would not have the self-inflicted medical crisis that we see in Queensland. If those 2,462 doctors had not been driven out by the Beattie Labor government, then our hospital waiting lists would not be in the diabolical state that they are today and people would be getting their surgery on time. Instead of smokescreens and pretences from this Premier, he should be doing something about getting back those 2,462 doctors whom he has actively driven out of the Queensland health system in the last three years. That is the real challenge to the Premier.

Death of Mrs E McCall

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (10.22 am): On 27 April this year, the electorate of Mansfield lost a remarkable individual in the most tragic circumstances. Elizabeth McCall was tragically killed after being hit by a bus while walking to work. Elizabeth was an outstanding teacher at St Peter's Rochedale. Elizabeth was only 41. She was married to Mark with two lovely boys, Tom and Sam.

Elizabeth was involved in the whole St Peter's Catholic community whether it was in the church choir or as a member of the St Peter's Social Justice Group. Elizabeth was a very passionate person. One of her many passions was music, which was a central theme in Elizabeth's life. She loved to sing and bring joy to others. She was a lady of faith, with a rich Irish heritage of which she was very proud.

Elizabeth had a desire to create a better world for everyone. She had a strong awareness of social issues. The plight of Indigenous Australians and refugees, the exploitation of sweatshop workers, the poverty in Third World countries and the lack of adequate public housing were all issues very dear to Elizabeth's heart. Elizabeth was also a very strong and committed union activist. She was a proud member of the QIEU. She believed in the union's capacity for social justice and was a strong advocate for her colleagues.

Our community and Elizabeth's family are mourning. However, the community is a better place because of Elizabeth's contribution. I would also like to thank the community for rallying around to assist everyone. This bus accident was even more tragic because there were schoolchildren from local schools on the bus at the time of the accident. I would like to thank everyone who assisted, whether it was the Emergency Services workers, police, counsellors, teachers or parents. I know that the communities, particularly those from the suburbs of Rochedale and Rochedale South, are very appreciative.

To Mark and the boys and to the St Peter's community: our hearts go out to you all. I am sure Elizabeth will continue to play an important role in your lives, even if she cannot be there in person.

Cyclone Larry, Recovery Assistance

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.23 am): In the seven weeks since Cyclone Larry wreaked havoc, the power, phone and road corridors have mostly been fixed in my electorate but other concerns are beginning to appear. I wish to raise them so they can be addressed. The first is the number of ex-gratia payments of $1,000 which are being refused. I understand that thousands of families are now receiving letters advising them that they are being refused for claims which are similar to others made earlier and already paid out.

Also, the small business grant of $10,000 is becoming harder to access, with many applicants either being refused or asked to supply significantly more information to qualify than those who first received their grants. This is causing a great deal of angst to the thousands affected. They have genuinely suffered loss in this disaster and they have seen those around them receiving these same payments while in similar circumstances.

One example is that of a person who lost power for five days. He lost all his food in the fridge and freezer and had no hot water for a month. This person is a sole parent with a four-year-old child, yet the $1,000 ex-gratia payment was refused because he did not fit neatly within the criteria. Another resident was without power for 15 days. The neighbours around him received the $1,000 payment but he was refused. I believe there should be some consistency and compassion for these people who have just endured a natural disaster which was bigger than any other seen in the area for nearly a century.

As well, many people covered by insurance are becoming very frustrated because they cannot get the okay from insurers to make repairs, even when they can find a tradesman to do the job. One lady whose roof is still leaking through tarps has had a builder available for weeks but cannot get attention regarding insurance.

On a happier note, Tinaroo Falls Dam has been overflowing for some weeks now and it is a wonderful sight to see. The comparison with the dire situation here in the south-east is very stark. There is a blanket refusal to build new dams in the north, where massive quantities of water are simply running out to sea. Yet the lesson from the south-east is clear: if you do not build more dams in time, you wind up running out of water. We have to do better, both with the short-term issues like Cyclone Larry relief and with the long-term issues like building dams before we run dry.

Time expired.

Pacific Motorway Upgrade

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (10.25 am): The Pacific Motorway is the major gateway from the southern states to Queensland and the main transportation link between Brisbane and Sydney, carrying interstate freight, tourists and commuter traffic. The state government announced last July that planning and design had started on the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway from the Gateway Motorway to south of Nerang, and we put the dollars on the table.

Project reference groups of local residents and interested parties were established covering key areas of interest, such as community, environment, and pedestrian and cycle accessibility. Public displays of draft planning are out in the community. When the project team met with Logan City Council and councillors about the proposal, they were all in agreement. The state is proceeding with planning, design and community engagement, despite the federal government's lack of commitment to match the state government's funds—and that money still did not come in this week's federal budget.

Logan City residents need that funding now. We need that commitment. Who is behind the state government getting this fair share of road funding from the federal government? The Logan state members of parliament, the mayors of south-east Queensland, the RACQ, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Brisbane mayor and Gold Coast state members all need that commitment to provide money. The Logan City Council sent me a letter, and I want to read part of that letter. It states—

To this end Council seeks your support in lobbying the Federal Government to provide matching funds to the State Government under the Roads of National Importance (RONI) Program to ensure the Pacific Motorway Upgrade proceeds forthwith.

This is a very important issue for the residents who live in my electorate of Springwood. I, along with the Logan City Council, call on the federal government to support the people of Logan and get on board with this project. We need that upgrade now.

I also want to acknowledge Kirsten and her mum Hazel from Loganholme who are here today. Kirsten is a member of JDRF. I know what a brave little girl Kirsten is. I heard her story of diabetes the other day and it certainly is a pleasure to know her.

Elective Surgery Waiting Times

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (10.28 am): Last year 22 Queenslanders died while waiting for category 1 elective surgery. On 28 February this year, the Minister for Health attacked my statement that the majority of these patients would have died as a result of their condition and said that it was spurious and misleading. He quoted the example of a 98-year-old woman with skin cancer on the nose and claimed that all cancers were rated category 1 in terms of urgency for elective surgery. He subsequently had to apologise for misleading me in relation to that category 1 information.

There is a standard across Australia—and it is on the Queensland Health web site—that details what is an urgent category 1 elective surgical case. It is alarming to think that the Queensland Minister for Health does not know something so basic as what constitutes an urgent elective surgical case. But there is something even more alarming. On 28 February the minister attacked me and demanded that the opposition produce data in relation to these 22 deaths, but the minister has done nothing to find out how many of those 22 Queenslanders died directly as a result of Queensland Health's failure to deliver surgery on time.

It stands to reason that if people who are category 1 urgent elective surgery cases are overdue to receive that surgery and die—as occurred in the majority of those 22 cases—those deaths will be due to the condition for which they have been made urgent cases. Surely this places on the minister an obligation to get off his backside and go out and find out the details of these cases, find out how many people died because Queensland Health failed to deliver surgery on time and do something about it.

Aged Care

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (10.29 am): The Liberal led Commonwealth government has failed to deliver the aged-care services that are needed for our ageing population. The provision for aged care falls squarely with the Liberal led Commonwealth government and it has fallen short of its own target for residential aged-care beds on the Sunshine Coast by more than 500 places.

There are hundreds of frail elderly who cannot find a nursing home bed because of the Liberals' failure to ensure that the promised aged-care beds are built. Our sitting Liberal representatives have done just that: they have sat back while the aged-care bed shortage on the Sunshine Coast has become the worst in the state. With elections looming, we can expect to hear a lot about this issue, but the time for talk is over. It is now time for action. Our aged people put their faith in the Howard led Commonwealth government, but they have been let down continually by little action on the Sunshine Coast. It is simply not good enough.

The Howard Liberal government has still not faced up to the aged-care crisis in Australia. I hear from families who are desperate to access an aged-care bed for their loved one. The waiting lists, especially for high care, are getting longer and longer. When the Howard Liberal government came into office there was a target of 90 residential aged-care beds for every 1,000 people aged 70 years and over. My research indicates that as at June 2005 nationally there was a shortage of 9,725 aged-care beds.

Instead of fixing the problem and meeting this target, the Liberal Commonwealth government quietly lowered the target to 88 residential aged-care beds for every 1,000 people aged 70 years and over. Even against its own reduced target, there is still a shortage of 5,500 aged-care beds across the country.

People are waiting longer to access a residential aged-care bed. The Productivity Commission has reported that in 2005, 30 per cent of people needing nursing home care have to wait more than three months to get a bed, which is an increase on the 15 per cent of people needing nursing home care in 2000.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Leader of the Opposition, I welcome to the public gallery teachers and students from Ferny Hills State School in the electorate of Ferny Grove, represented here by the honourable Geoff Wilson.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. The minister made a statement in this House on 22 November last year in relation to his government's appointment of nurse Virginia Hancl to a senior position at a major unit at Prince Charles Hospital and to the disciplinary action taken by his government against whistleblower Dr Chris Davis. I table that record. The minister said that the appointment of the nurse had been extensively reviewed by his government. The minister said that the reviews found that the appointment process was appropriate and in line with the government's policies. The minister said that the nurse was fully registered in Queensland and possessed qualifications appropriate to that position. Does the minister stand by the statement that he made to the House in November of last year?

Mr ROBERTSON: The matter that the Leader of the Opposition refers to is largely about an appointment process. I am advised that the appointment process was formally reviewed twice and found to be consistent with relevant guidelines from Queensland Health and the Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity. The OPSME issues directives which govern the recruitment and appointment processes in the Queensland government, including Queensland Health. Queensland Health's policies are consistent with the OPSME directives. That is the advice that is consistent with the advice that I provided to this House in November last year. Nevertheless, given what has occurred in terms of further information that was provided recently to my director-general and to me, I have asked my director-general to discuss with the Public Service Commissioner whether the OPSME directives or Queensland Health guidelines need adjustment as a result of the particulars of this case.

Upon receiving advice only two weeks ago in the lead-up to a hearing in the Industrial Relations Commission, both my director-general and I acted decisively. It became clear that, in terms of the evidence that was provided to us, we needed to meet as quickly as possible with the relevant doctor and with the AMA, explain the circumstances and apologise for what had gone on over the preceding almost 12 months. I was more than happy to offer my personal apology to that doctor. I think that is the appropriate thing to do. In doing so, I believe both my director-general and I have demonstrated leadership in relation to this issue and sent a message to our department that in relation to cases such as this where evidence is provided that changes the position we acknowledge those changes and act decisively and, in cases such as this, apologise.

Yesterday I made a detailed ministerial statement with respect to what occurred. I also indicated that the doctor has been provided with whistleblower status, that his legal expenses to date will be reimbursed and that we will be taking a number of other measures in relation to putting right the situation that arose. That demonstrates that we are committed to the new Queensland Health. We are committed to righting the wrongs that have been found.

We have not covered up this matter. We have been open and honest. Upon receiving the information—the new evidence—we acted decisively and transparently. We stand by those actions taken to date.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Mr Reynolds: You're behind the times, Lawrence.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The minister is so rude.

A government member: You talk!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Do not add to it. The Leader of the Opposition has the floor. Let us hear him.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also to the Minister for Health. In a statement to this parliament on 22 November last year surrounding the appointment of nurse Virginia Hancl the minister said that his government's appointment panel for Nurse Hancl conducted appropriate referee checks. The minister said that the nurse was fully qualified for the position that she held. Is it not a fact that this nurse was appointed on the basis of a fake master's degree in public administration from the University of Tasmania?

Mr ROBERTSON: As I have mentioned before, the advice that was provided to me was that the appointment process was formally reviewed twice and found to be consistent with relevant guidelines from Queensland Health and OPSME. That was the advice that was provided to me by the department in November last year, hence my statement to the House based on the information that was provided to me.

As a result of further evidence being provided to us in the past couple of weeks, we have taken decisive action to right the situation that has arisen as a result of the presentation of that evidence. That is part of our commitment.

Dr Flegg: You spent a year covering it up.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take offence at that comment. There is no evidence that I did anything to cover it up. I take objection to that unsubstantiated allegation. Once again, the member gets in the gutter without any evidence to back up that claim.

In terms of the advice provided to me, I have not misled this parliament, but when we received new information and evidence that qualifications or information provided was not correct we acted decisively. We apologised to that doctor, we gave him whistleblower status and we will be paying his legal expenses to date.

This is what reform is all about. This is what the change agenda is all about in Queensland Health. It is about being honest. The opposition has been calling on this government to be more open and more transparent with respect to Queensland Health. This demonstrates that we are actually delivering on our commitment to do so.

Queensland Health, Recruitment

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Premier. The state government is working hard to build a better public health system in Queensland. Can the Premier advise how his overseas trip will help meet this challenge?

Mr BEATTIE: I can. The trip will be to Great Britain but it will also include Ireland. I know that the honourable member for Stafford has been very supportive of our links with Ireland. This afternoon I will head overseas on a very important trip to launch the latest stage of the Queensland government's campaign to recruit doctors and nurses. Queensland Health needs to recruit foreign trained professionals because the federal government has admitted that it has not been training enough Australian doctors and there is a massive shortage of trained nurses. I initiated a recruitment campaign in the United Kingdom in September last year with a series of advertisements and functions which attracted 649 expressions of interest from a wide variety of health professionals in Britain. So far 34 doctors have started work for us or are being appointed. Another 126 are being considered for appointments. As well, 44 nurses, dentists and allied health workers are going through the same process. While the recruitment drive is long term, it is working and the initial evidence of that is the success of my last trip.

The purpose of this trip is to launch the next phase of a long-term campaign to attract doctors to come to work for Queensland Health, to be followed up in a couple of months by the health minister. Tomorrow at 11.30 am UK time, I will hold a news conference in London at Queensland House. That conference will be to launch an advertising campaign in Britain to attract doctors here. We will be using weather as a particular advantage. I will then visit the Embankment station, one of the underground stations where recruitment advertisements have been placed.

On Tuesday, at the General Medical Council offices in London, I and Jim O'Dempsey, the executive officer of the Medical Board of Queensland, will meet the president and CEO of the General Medical Council to talk about eliminating registration delays when doctors move from the UK to Queensland. On Wednesday, I will officially open the renovated Queensland House with a reception for business leaders. Between 12 May and 17 May, I will also hold functions in Dublin, Birmingham, Leeds, Cambridge and London to meet doctors and nurses who have expressed an interest in working in Queensland public hospitals. I will also be visiting hospitals which have developed skilling initiatives to deal with the shortage of specialists.

The Leader of the Opposition made some reference this morning to doctor numbers. He claimed that 2,462 doctors have left Queensland Health over the past three years. What he did not say is that during the same period Queensland Health achieved a net increase in the number of doctors it employs, up from 3,785 to the current 4,788. What he did not say is that Queensland public hospitals today have 1,003 more doctors than they did three years ago. So the Leader of the Opposition should tell the truth.

In fact, a recent analysis by Queensland Health of doctor resignations showed that 77 per cent are resident medical officers, registrars and principal house officer doctors who leave training positions. So that is why 70 per cent of them leave. They do not leave under any particular government. A further 10 per cent of doctors are over 55 years of age and are retiring. So 80 per cent of them are leaving for sensible reasons. The other 20 per cent are as well.

Time expired.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's appointment of Nurse Virginia Hancl and the disciplinary action the minister took against one of the state's most senior and respected clinicians when he and the staff of his unit brought to his attention the incompetent and dangerous actions of this nurse. Can the minister confirm that the only check the government undertook of this nurse was to call her referee, who was also, in fact, her boyfriend?

Mr ROBERTSON: One of the things that we did upon becoming aware of certain facts in terms of acting decisively in relation to this matter was have the matter referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. That reference has been made and I would hope that the CMC will undertake an appropriate investigation in relation to this matter. But I can only reiterate that the actions taken to date by this government have been swift and decisive, which is part of our commitment to ensuring that Queensland Health is the most transparent organisation and that our employees are treated fairly. I think we can demonstrate that as a result of the actions taken to date in relation to this particular case.

Water Supply

Mr LEE: My question without notice is to the Premier. The government is undertaking a raft of exciting initiatives to address the important issue of water security and supply. I am very excited about this, as is my community. We are about to celebrate this at the Oxley Creek Water Festival on 17 July. Is the Premier aware of the opposition's policy on water?

Mr BEATTIE: Basically the opposition does not have one. It is called flip-flop. Opposition members oppose whatever we do. They either whinge about it or they oppose it. There is no in-between. They either whinge about it or they oppose it and they do it at the same time. So they whinge and then they oppose.

Every Queenslander knows how important the issue of water security and supply is to our great state. I have just met, along with the minister for water Henry Palaszczuk and the Deputy Premier, the three new water commissioners who we have appointed today, and they will be getting on with the job.

When the tough decisions need to be made, it appears that the opposition has gone to water on water. The opposition wanted dams; we are building dams. How typical of this opposition that as soon as any decision is made the whingeing and the carping begins. No matter where we put a dam it will be unpopular. Opposition members know that, so they are out there trying to win votes.

There is no doubt that drought and climate change have severely affected our available water supplies. If we do nothing we will run out of water in the future. It is that simple. A sign of good government is the ability to govern for all and for the greater good, not as the opposition seems to believe: simply for a single constituency or for political grandstanding.

Opposition members say one thing in here and then they say another thing elsewhere. The member for Cunningham questioned the use of a project being undertaken by the Toowoomba City Council to introduce recycled water into Toowoomba's drinking water supplies. Yet less than 12 months ago what did he say? He said—

I'm aware that the water situation in Toowoomba is reaching a critical point, and I commend the council for taking this proactive initiative and responsible approach to meet this challenge. Indeed, I believe this project will be the forerunner of many similar projects through the nation once it is successfully implemented.

My advice to the member for Cunningham and the opposition is that when the tough decisions have to be made they have to have the courage of their convictions. He cannot deny it, because here is his release. So what does he do? He comes in here and opposes recycling water. We all know, as the member for Indooroopilly does, of the importance of recycling water. He is committed to it and so are we. The member for Cunningham comes in here and opposes recycling in Toowoomba but then he says to the council, 'Good on you, mate. Well done, digger. Well done.'

Mr Schwarten: Hypocrite.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, hypocrites. They cannot make up their minds about what they are doing about anything. All I say to opposition members is that they should get on board and support us and then they will be supporting a sound policy that will deliver water to south-east Queensland and all of Queensland.

I did not finish what I was saying before about doctors. This leaves only 20 per cent of doctors who leave for other and mostly unspecified reasons. Our policy is good.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the appointment to a very senior position of Nurse Virginia Hancl at Prince Charles Hospital. Isn't it true that whistleblower Dr Chris Davis actually undertook a Google search in relation to this nurse? Isn't it true that the Google search revealed that her previous employment was actually only as an aged-care nurse in a nursing home in Tasmania? Isn't it true that this previous employer was never even contacted by the government about her qualifications or experience?

Mr ROBERTSON: Over the last 24 hours, I have outlined the facts of this particular case and what we have done to undertake actions decisively and swiftly in relation to this particular matter—decisively and swiftly.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is typical of this opposition to carry on this way. We have demonstrated our commitment to a new, open and transparent Queensland Health, something that I thought members opposite would have welcomed. I thought they would have actually acknowledged that this is a very positive sign that Queensland Health has turned a corner in terms of the organisation.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr ROBERTSON: When presented with evidence that a wrong has been done, we face up to it, we apologise, we make reparation, we undertake independent investigations and we get on with it. That is exactly what we have done and what we will continue to do.

The failure of the opposition to recognise that we have turned a corner, that we are making these very positive steps to demonstrate that the new Queensland Health is up and running, is a shame on them and continues the dishonesty that we have seen. We have already seen this morning, when the Premier was speaking, their carry-on about the allegation relating to the number of doctors who have resigned over the last number of years. Yet we have a study which demonstrates that 70 per cent of those resignations are because doctors in the public health system have finished their training and have moved into the private sector, general practice et cetera. Ten per cent of them are actually retirees. Only 20 per cent of that number could have any association with what has been claimed.

These kinds of facts need to be put on the table in order to have informed debate, not the political debate that the opposition carries on with, not a spinning of information and an ignoring of facts.The openness and transparency of Queensland Health is on the table today, and we will continue to deliver.

Gold Coast City Council, CMC Report

Mr LAWLOR: I direct my question to the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women. This morning, the minister received the CMC report on the Gold Coast City Council election. What action will the minister now take?

Ms BOYLE: As members are aware, this morning the CMC has handed to the parliament the report on its inquiry into the Gold Coast City Council election. We have had the report for less than two hours and need more time to consider it thoroughly.

However, the key findings are serious. In the chairman's own words, this report reveals secrecy, deceit and misinformation. The report recommends that my department consider prosecutions under the Local Government Act against six people. Two of them are sitting councillors. A total of six charges are to be considered. The Crown Solicitor has advised me that the recommendations in the report do not provide grounds, however, to dissolve the Gold Coast City Council. The charges being considered are serious and could result in a sitting councillor losing office. However, this is a matter for the court's discretion.

We have been asked to consider that deputy mayor, councillor David Power, face a charge for allegedly not lodging returns after the election for some gifts received. We have also been asked to consider that councillor Grant Pforr, businessman Lionel Barden, failed candidates Roxanne Scott and Brian Rowe be prosecuted for allegedly providing false or misleading returns in relation to funds or gifts received. Lastly, we have been asked to consider that Gold Coast lawyer Tony Hickey be considered for prosecution for allegedly giving Mr Barden false or misleading information in relation to his third-party return.

It is important that we allow due process and are mindful that no-one has yet been found guilty by a court of law. There will be calls for sitting councillors facing prosecution to stand down. However, under current law, the government has no power to force them to stand aside. I say to them that this is a matter for their serious consideration and for their conscience.

In relation to the possible prosecutions, briefs of evidence have been delivered to my department this morning and will be immediately referred to the Crown Law office, with instructions to assess the evidence and to take the necessary action.

On the wider issue of reform, my department will study the CMC's 19 recommendations for changes to the Local Government Act. I will consider all of these recommendations.

The public has already made it clear to me that changes are necessary to require councils to be more open, accountable and transparent in their decision making. The CMC has supported this view and recommended considerable strengthening of the Local Government Act.

The whole issue of donations by developers to candidates in local government elections raises in the public mind whether councillors are able to make independent decisions. That comes to a head in relation to development applications which are considered by a councillor who has received a donation from the developer or companies associated with the developer. I assure the House—

Mrs Pratt: Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I will allow a bit of latitude for the minister to finish that answer. The chair has some discretion and I think it is an answer that is important to the parliament.

Ms BOYLE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will call you, member for Nanango, when the minister has finished. Minister, take into account that you must not take too long.

Ms BOYLE: I assure the House and especially the residents of the Gold Coast that the CMC's recommendations will be studied in full and as quickly as possible. I will report to the public at an early date on the government's response.

The people of the Gold Coast will expect changes as a result of this report and they will get them. I will be working to ensure that the CMC's findings lead to the reform of one of the state's largest councils and, in fact, local government across the state of Queensland. Certainly the people of the Gold Coast deserve nothing less.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member for Nanango for her patience.

Jimna Fire Tower

Mrs PRATT: I direct my question to the minister for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. The Queensland government recently commissioned an extensive survey to identify buildings or structures of significant heritage value. The Jimna fire tower was believed to be so unique that it was heritage listed in July 1999. The Jimna fire tower is the tallest man-made wooden tower in the Southern Hemisphere. There is no finer example of this type of tower in such close proximity to Queensland's metropolitan areas.

Will the minister have the demolition order lifted and do everything within his power to assist the people of Jimna to preserve this icon? Will he release the two reports by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and Incode Pty Ltd pertaining to the tower?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, I welcome to the public gallery a second group from the Ferny Hills State School in the electorate of Ferny Grove, which is represented here by Mr Wilson.

Mr MULHERIN: I thank the honourable member for Nanango for her question. In late 2004, the Jimna fire tower was inspected by timber specialists from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and, subsequently, by independent forensic and consulting engineers Incode Pty Ltd. Both reported that the tower had serious structural degradation in the supporting tower legs and bracing members, such that the structure could be dangerous during strong winds. Consequently, this necessitated the denial of public access and consideration of the future of the structure.

The report from Incode Pty Ltd stated that there were no viable remedial measures which would allow certification of the structure as being compliant with Australian standards other than complete reconstruction. At an estimated reconstruction cost of $450,000, it is not considered commercially viable for Forestry Plantation Queensland to reconstruct the tower in timber. Further, it is problematic as to whether suitable logs can even be sourced for the reconstruction. Ongoing fire surveillance and radio communication antennae can be provided from nearby using the latest camera and communication technology at a fraction of the reconstruction cost.

The future of the existing structure and associated site has been subject to detailed consideration, including ongoing consultation with the Kilcoy Shire Council. I understand that the Kilcoy Shire Council has discussed the matter at the council meetings and has provided a proposal to Forestry Plantation Queensland in relation to its future management of the recreational facility. Neither Forestry Plantation Queensland nor Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service wish to be involved with recreational management of the site.

The Kilcoy Shire Council has indicated an interest in managing the existing recreational facilities. It would like the cabin to be relocated to ground level and appropriate memorabilia to be placed in the cabin for tourist viewing. If it is not possible to relocate the cabin intact, Forestry Plantation Queensland could build a replica, as the original plans are still held.

The tower is listed on the Queensland Heritage register. An application has been made to the Queensland Heritage Council to demolish the tower. A response is still awaited.

Queensland Future Growth Fund

Mr HOOLIHAN: I direct my question without notice to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. In recent weeks there has been some interesting news regarding the Queensland Future Growth Fund, and I personally thank the Deputy Premier for her far-sighted decision. The reporting has included allegations that a previous fund never eventuated. Are those allegations correct or are they just an attempt at a media-grabbing stunt?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know he has a very keen interest in this fund because of some critical water issues that he has been advocating for on behalf of his electorate and I am happy to keep working with him on them.

I am very pleased to report to the parliament. As members know, we have introduced the legislation and I do not intend to discuss the fund. However, in discussions about this new fund attention has been drawn to previous funds that the government has put in place. In fact, in a *Courier-Mail* article of a week ago the opposition leader is quoted as saying in relation to the Smart State Building Fund—which others members will recall was announced in December 2003—'The Smart State Building Fund was flawed from the start and has now been exposed as a stunt.' He went further to say that the decision had been made not to go ahead with that Smart State Building Fund. Let us have a look at what happened in relation to the Smart State Building Fund that was announced by the Premier in December 2003.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I presume the minister is talking about a different fund from the one in relation to which legislation was introduced yesterday.

Ms BLIGH: A completely different fund, yes; this one was announced in December.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: That is good, because the minister cannot talk about legislation that is currently before the House.

Mr Quinn: Funds everywhere!

Ms BLIGH: That is right. We have such great economic management that we have funds everywhere. I cannot think of a better place to start talking about the Smart State Building Fund than in the electorate of Southern Downs. One of the promises that the Premier made in December 2003 was for a very large allocation of funds to Stanthorpe State High School to construct a new College of Wine Industry Tourism.

Late last year the Premier and the Minister for Education actually flew out to Stanthorpe and opened that College of Wine Industry Tourism. I am not sure whether the local member, the member for Southern Downs, was present at the opening, but he must drive past it every day. Day in, day out he must be driving past this so-called media stunt that we never went ahead with! There are similar schools all around his electorate—Inglewood, Stanthorpe, Killarney, Goondiwindi and Warwick West state schools—that he must drive past regularly that all received money from this fund.

The Premier announced in December 2003 that the fund was to be derived from borrowings. Our economy and our budget have been so strong that we have not needed to borrow for any of the commitments that were made in the fund. That is the only difference between the announcement and the execution of this fund. We have funded off-budget because we have had such a strong bottom line.

The member for Callide knows this because he extensively questioned the former Treasurer in subsequent estimates hearings. The member for Callide and the member for Southern Downs should talk a bit more because the member for Callide would be able to tell him that this fund is going ahead. He is the only one paying attention. He probably drives through the electorate of Southern Downs and sees what is going on.

Mr Seeney: I love it when you pick on me.

Ms BLIGH: No, no, I am praising you for paying attention.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! This love-in has gone on long enough.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Mr COPELAND: My question is to the Minister for Health. When whistleblower Dr Chris Davis was forced to defend himself against the government's harsh persecution in an Industrial Court hearing, is it not true that Dr Davis revealed that when he contacted the aged care home in Tasmania, Nurse Virginia Hancl's previous employer said that they were surprised that nobody from the government had previously contacted them, that they were pleased to see her and her partner leave their employment and that because of her lack of nursing skills she had been removed from patient care?

Mr ROBERTSON: I can only reiterate the response provided in previous answers, that upon being made aware of certain information we acted decisively, including referring this matter to the Crime and Misconduct Commission for independent investigation. Included with our response was an apology to the said doctor for what had occurred and the repayment of any legal expenses incurred to date. At all times we have acted openly, transparently and swiftly in relation to this matter and we will continue to do so.

Health Hotline

Mr REEVES: My question is also to the Minister for Health. As the minister will be aware, the government's new 24-hour health hotline became available to all Queenslanders on 24 April. I ask: can the minister inform the House whether 13HEALTH has proven a great hit with Queensland mums and dads?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Mansfield for the question. Along with the member for Algester, he joined me in a visit to the 13HEALTH call centre just last week to see the wonderful work they are doing. 13HEALTH is proving a runaway success, with Queenslanders flocking to use the health advisory service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The feedback we are receiving proves that there is both a community need and a community demand for 13HEALTH.

During its first two weeks of operation since going statewide on 24 April 13HEALTH has taken 9,666 calls. That is an average of 690 calls per day. This is a phenomenal response when one considers that 13HEALTH received only 16,000 calls over two months in north Queensland. As a result of this level of demand we have recruited our third intake of nurses with training to commence next week. They will be taking calls from later this month to ensure that we can answer the growing number of calls to 13HEALTH in a timely fashion.

What do the public think about the service? One appreciative caller indicated that as a result of the advice received from 13HEALTH she attended an emergency department where a mild stroke was diagnosed. The caller reported she probably would not have sought any medical treatment but just 'taken two aspirin and gone to bed' if not for the advice she received.

Another endorsement came from a caller who rang 13HEALTH after his son had been badly scalded. He was quite distressed at the time of the call but later rang back to thank the nurse for calming him and providing the right advice as to what to do. He said that he was very pleased with the service. Another lady who rang regarding her sick mother said that the information from the nurse was invaluable and helped her mother tremendously.

I do not know why the opposition would continue to attack 13HEALTH. The hotline is designed to provide accurate clinical advice to callers 24 hours a day, seven days a week and help ease the pressure on our busy hospital emergency departments.

The fact that 20 per cent of callers to 13HEALTH may ultimately end up in an emergency department misses the point. Many of the 9,666 callers would most probably have telephoned a hospital emergency department for advice if 13HEALTH did not exist and that means emergency department nurses would have been answering phone calls instead of doing what they are trained to do and that is

to help treat patients. 13HEALTH allows them to get on with the job while experienced registered nurses staffing the hotline provide clinical advice to callers about whether they should go to hospital, see their GP or self-manage their health issue.

Queenslanders think that this is a great idea and they are indicating their support for 13HEALTH by using this valuable health service in their thousands.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. The minister claimed this morning in the parliament that he has not covered up anything in regard to the issue of Nurse Hancl. However, it has become obvious that the minister did not tell us about her false degree; he did not tell us about her dodgy referee; he did not tell us that Queensland Health had made no attempt to contact her previous employer; and he did not tell us that for 12 months Queensland Health persecuted the doctor who blew the whistle. Hasn't Queensland Health handled this issue in exactly the same way as it handled the Dr Patel case, that is, it has persecuted the whistleblower and tried to cover it up?

Mr ROBERTSON: The purpose of referring this matter to the Crime and Misconduct Commission is so that this matter can be fully and openly investigated by an independent body with the powers of a royal commission. I cannot think of any more decisive action that we could take than to go down that path and have the independent watchdog trawl over everything that has gone on in relation to this matter.

That is why in referring this matter to the CMC—the independent watchdog—I was the first, along with my director-general, to invite the doctor into my office, along with the AMA, to apologise to him for what had gone on; to offer reparation in terms of legal expenses incurred by the doctor thus far; and also to work with him into the future to ensure that the services that he provides are valued and appropriately resourced.

What we have done in relation to this matter, upon receiving evidence in relation to it, has been decisive and transparent. We stand by that action. It is indicative of the new Queensland Health.

Ipswich, Transport Infrastructure

Ms NOLAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The greater Ipswich area is one of the fastest growing areas in Queensland and indeed Australia. Infrastructure, and in particular transport infrastructure, will be instrumental in meeting this growth which is both happening now and forecast into the future. Can the minister please inform the House about what is being planned in terms of transport for this exciting growth area?

Mr LUCAS: I have to admit a bias here. I am a bit of a fan of Ipswich. It is an area that has wonderful potential for the future and a great history.

Mr Caltabiano interjected.

Mr LUCAS: We know you hate Ipswich; I like Ipswich. That is the difference. For members of the Liberal Party, anywhere west of St Lucia is in Western Australia as far they are concerned.

Dr Flegg: Moggill is west of St Lucia.

Mr Welford: Kenmore.

Mr LUCAS: Kenmore, sorry. The member for Moggill corrected me: he is only interested in that side of the river and nothing else. Provided that no bridges go over that side of the river, he is happy.

I will say this about our Ipswich members: they are dynamic, and we have a very dynamic Ipswich council as well. Under the South East Queensland Regional Plan, there will be very large population development in Ipswich in the future—not only in Springfield but in Ipswich generally in that western corridor. Its population could reach 318,000 by 2026, an increase of 177,000 or 126 per cent on the current population.

We are working very closely with the Ipswich City Council on a number of projects and with the Brisbane City Council because of the area that leads into Ipswich. I am pleased to remind the House that it was this government that made the commitment not only to the ultimate duplication of the Centenary Highway to Springfield but also to its extension from Springfield to Yamanto. We have commenced work with the Ipswich City Council to look to the future as to where a rail corridor might go beyond Springfield. There is only a commitment at the moment to go to Springfield, but one of the things we want to do in this House, unlike the federal government, is plan for the future. We want to keep our options open. We are going to talk to the Ipswich community about not only the possibility of taking the rail line to Ripley but also the possibility of taking it all the way around and back in a loop to Ipswich. How would that be for the local economy and local community to loop the line back there? I want to make this clear: this is about the future. There is not a commitment at this point in time to build a rail line beyond Springfield but we want to do the planning.

Mr Quinn interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I know the member does not want to do that. Then he wants to complain when houses are resumed. It is wonderful that the member for Robina is talking about it, because Liberal Party planning is the 1965 closure of the Gold Coast rail line and selling the right of way. He probably wants us to sell the right of way. The member for Robina ought to quit while he is ahead after his disgraceful defence of the federal government's lack of funding for the Gold Coast motorway. Now he wants us to adopt Liberal Party planning rules, which are to pull up rail lines and sell the right of way. How intelligent is that?

We are working with the Brisbane City Council on the Boundary Road-Keliher Road intersection. We will be making provisions for the rail line there. There is also the $320 million Darra to Wacol part of the Ipswich Motorway.

Time expired.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. With regard to the review of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, which several months ago the minister advised would be done to consider increased costs such as petrol prices to patients, who is doing the review and when will it be completed?

Mr ROBERTSON: The review is ongoing. It has to be acknowledged, however, that our current Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme is the most generous in Australia. That needs to be acknowledged, but it is a very expensive scheme. Obviously to change it would require a significant increase in funds in that regard. That is not to say that we cannot do better. That is why I asked for that review to be undertaken. In a state as diverse as Queensland, the need to provide appropriate assistance to people, particularly those living in regional and rural Queensland, is important. But it has to be affordable and it has to be sustainable. That is why I had that review undertaken. That review is ongoing, but I would hope to be in a position in the next number of weeks or months to finalise that review and report accordingly.

Cyclone Larry, Schools

Dr LESLEY CLARK: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts. In the wake of Cyclone Larry, there was tremendous support from schools and students all over Australia to help families in the region. Can the minister please advise the House about the level of that support and the current status of schools in the cyclone affected area?

Mr WELFORD: Mr Acting Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WELFORD: Well, I can tell you this: it wasn't a dorothy dixer! I thank the honourable member for her question. As the honourable member and other members in the north are aware, the government has been very quick to respond to the needs of schools in the region. The schools in Innisfail and the schools further north were affected severely by Cyclone Larry and the subsequent bad weather in that region. The education department quickly moved to ensure that new classrooms were taken into the region, in particular for the most severely damaged school, Innisfail State High School. I am pleased to report to the parliament today that all students who are wanting to return to school and who still live in the region have been able to return to school in the region. That is good news for students whose education was temporarily disrupted by the cyclone.

At other schools, students were able to return to school much more quickly. The main impediments were not so much damage to the school infrastructure or buildings but access to schools across blocked roads or rivers and creeks. That has now subsided in terms of any difficulties on that front. I would like, however, to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the dedicated staff of those schools and, in particular, the regional staff of Education Queensland who really went beyond the call of duty and worked beyond normal hours to address the needs not only of students in that area but also of their families. That just shows that when the chips are down, when there is a real crisis, our dedicated servants of the public in our government agencies—not just Education Queensland but also Emergency Services, Health, Tourism and a number of other agencies—all pulled together to make sure that the communities affected by those devastating events were able to return to normal as quickly as possible.

So far as the schools are concerned, as I say, all students have now been able to return to school. There are facilities in place to ensure that not only the buildings but also the equipment, such as laptops and so forth, have been delivered to those schools. We will be continuing to look at what other infrastructure improvements and requirements are necessary, particularly in the Innisfail region.

Queensland Health, Appointments

Miss SIMPSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Is it not the case that as a result of the appointment of nurse Virginia Hancl and the subsequent bullying of medical and nursing staff who tried to blow the whistle, 18 of whom tried to go to Commissioner Davies, the minister's actions have severely damaged a major 100-bed unit in a teaching hospital with 75 per cent of consultants leaving the unit due to this bungled cover-up?

Mr ROBERTSON: During the meeting that I and my director-general had with the doctor and the AMA—

Dr Flegg: Are you going to apologise?

Mr ROBERTSON:—in terms of, one, apologising to him, two, offering to pay any legal expenses incurred by the doctor and, three, advising that the matter had been referred to the CMC, I also listened to what the doctor had to say with respect to the service that he is a part of.

As a result of that conversation, I have asked my department to provide me with the information in relation to what has happened over the last 12 months with respect to that service, and what we need to do should there be a reduction in services as a result of staff leaving to make reparation in that respect. I await that report from my department. I indicated to the doctor that I would do whatever I could possibly do to ensure that any service that had been reduced would be brought back up to scratch at the earliest possible opportunity.

Drink Driving, Watercraft

Ms CROFT: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I understand the police have recently concluded a water safety operation targeting drink-driving and safety offences on our waterways. What were the results of this operation? How many boaties were caught driving under the influence?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for Broadwater for the question. She has one of the highest percentage of boat users in Australia in her electorate. I am sure that the member for Broadwater, like other members of this parliament, is aware of Operation Summer Safe which has been going on since December last year. It is an operation being conducted by the Queensland water police and Queensland water safety officers. They have had heightened patrols over the last five months to check boaties all the way from the Gold Coast to Thursday Island. I am also sure that members are aware of the slogan that they have been promoting amongst boaties during Operation Summer Safe which is 'Be smart, go easy on the drink this summer'.

I am pleased to report to the House this morning some of the results of Operation Summer Safe. During this five-month period the water police have checked 7,922 recreational vessels and 433 commercial vessels that have been intercepted for breath testing and safety checks. As a result of these checks, 34 recreational skippers and five commercial skippers have been charged with drink-driving related offences. The worst offender was a commercial skipper in Townsville who recorded a blood alcohol limit of .20 or four times the legal limit.

I am sure all members are aware that the laws on the water are no different to the laws on the road. It is a .05 blood alcohol limit. Drinking on the water can be just as much of a killer as drinking on the road. It is disgraceful that a commercial skipper in Townsville should be found to be four times over the legal limit and live to tell the story.

Besides those drink-driving offences, 1,278 marine infringement notices were issued for offences ranging from speeding, driving unlicensed, unsafe activities and unregistered vessels. Police found the most common offence was failing to carry the prescribed safety equipment with 458 notices issued to boaties who did not have the correct safety equipment on their vessels. That is also disgraceful. Some 221 notices were issued statewide for inappropriate jet ski activities and 193 of these, or 87 per cent of them, were on the Gold Coast. Although we have done a lot and the water police have certainly been very active, we still have a long way to go in this state in convincing our boaties that they should not be drinking while they are in charge of vessels and they should be carrying the correct safety equipment.

Fire Ants

Mr HORAN: My question is to the honourable the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries. Fire ant staff have been warned that some contracts will not be renewed at the end of June and have been told that field staff numbers will be slashed by 130, leaving only 98. Why is the minister dramatically cutting staff when they are finding more fire ants this year than last year?

Mr MULHERIN: The national fire ant eradication program is progressing very well. We are now into the fifth year of a six-year program. This financial year the Fire Ant Control Centre will be bait treating approximately 7½ thousand hectares in south-east Queensland. This includes an extra 1,500 hectares as a result of the recent Greenslopes and Thornlands detections. This is a substantial

reduction from the estimated 28½ thousand hectares in 2004-05 and the 72,600 hectares that required bait treatments in 2003-05. Areas that have received their full complement of bait treatment are now being surveyed to ensure that there are no remaining fire ant colonies.

The Fire Ant Control Centre has implemented an intensive passive surveillance program involving community engagement and active surveillance around Greenslopes and Thornlands to identify whether the colonies are isolated infestations or part of a larger area infestation. Ants from the Gladstone detections have been identified as red imported fire ants. This is based on DNA testing. Further tests are currently being conducted in an attempt to further determine the scope. A one-kilometre buffer zone around the industrial site has been surveyed including a Queensland Rail container depot. The only additional find has been a small colony about one kilometre north of a secondary industrial site. Surveillance of the port of Gladstone public lands and areas within the town has failed to detect any fire ants.

The national consultative committee for the fire ant eradication program has agreed in principle to an eradication plan for the Gladstone infestation that involves treatment of a two-kilometre buffer around the original infested site with a further two-kilometre surveillance area beyond the treatment area. This will add up to 1,200 hectares to the treatment task this year. Funding for this program will come from the existing budget with further discussions about the Gladstone program and its budget due to occur with the national consultative committee before June 2006 where options will be examined.

The Fire Ant Control Centre has widely acknowledged that, despite the overall success of the program, given treatment activities to date it is expected that maybe fire ant colonies are yet to be found. That is why we implemented the current 'find the last fire ant' public campaign to help ensure the community continues to support and work with government right to the very end of the program.

Since 2001 the national fire ant eradication program has massively reduced the threat posed by fire ants to our social, economic and ecological system. It is under control. The reduction in the number of people involved in the program reflects the success of the program.

Department of Emergency Services, Release of Information

Mr ENGLISH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Liberal candidate for Redlands recently put out a media statement saying that the Department of Emergency Services was withholding documents. Is the minister aware of the comments by the candidate? If so, what is his response?

Mr PURCELL: I thank the member for Redlands for his question. May I also thank the member for Redlands for the marvellous and ongoing support he gives Emergency Services personnel in his electorate. I would also like to thank him for the invitation to the Redland Bay Ambulance Station. I met his local LAC.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PURCELL: I know he would like me to do that. I also visited his SES unit which sent people to help after Cyclone Larry. They are a great group of people in the SES in the Redlands. They really gave great support when Cyclone Larry was at its worst. I thank him for his support of those people.

I come back to the Liberal candidate. I am aware of his comments. He has accused the Department of Emergency Services of blocking his bid to have documents publicly released. He says that the department is withholding important information about the fire service in Redlands. He made these comments after the department asked him to pay $405.40 for the time it would take to have certain documents relating to his FOI request released.

The candidate's comments show a remarkable ignorance of the most basic bureaucratic process. The department has a constant, logical and accessible FOI system. As is standard for assessing information that is not the individual's own file, a fee is charged. Far from covering up the information the department was willing to release all of it. It is just that the Liberal Party is required to pay a fee for it, just as other applicants are. If the Liberal candidate does not understand the basic bureaucratic process, it goes to show that he is plainly not ready to be in this place and ready to serve anybody.

The candidate has also alleged that the response times for the fire service in the Redlands are inadequate. Let me be very clear about this. The response times of Queensland Fire and Rescue are within the benchmark. For the candidate to say that residents are receiving 'second-rate services' is just scaremongering and is denigrating the firefighters that he says he wants to represent in that area. He is saying that they cannot do their job. Nothing could be further from the truth. The member for Redlands and I back the firies in his electorate 100 per cent. What a great job they do and will continue to do. The inadequate knowledge and information that the Liberal candidate is putting out just shows that he does not really understand what Emergency Services is about.

Cooroy-Curra Bypass

Mr CALTABIANO: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Since the announcement of the Traveston Dam site on the Mary River, the Premier in a desperate attempt to be seen to be doing something about the water crisis has now rendered two of the five proposed routes for the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway submarine only and has also flooded nine kilometres of the existing Bruce Highway, meaning it will be barge-only access. Given that the federal government has funded the investigation and community consultation of the alternative routes for this Cooroy to Curra upgrade, this $4.3 million of federal money has now effectively been wasted. Does the minister regret having wasted $4.3 million of federal funding to upgrade our highway network? Does this mean that the taxpayers of Queensland are going to have to foot the bill to revisit the Premier's ill-conceived 'submarine only' highway proposal? What delay will there now be to the upgrade of this crucial piece of Bruce Highway as a consequence of the minister's desperate announcement?

Mr LUCAS: My regret is that the shadow minister did not say anything about the fact that the federal government provided no money for the Bruce Highway through Gympie, no money for the Pacific Motorway, no money for the Ipswich Motorway and no money for roads in Queensland beyond Cairns to Townsville. I will make this clear: the federal government commitment—

Mr Quinn: Do you want to be the minister for submarines?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, this is the last question. Just one more minute, please.

Mr LUCAS: I will make this clear: There is no money from the federal government to fix the Bruce Highway through Gympie besides planning money. The three routes—A, B, northern, southern and central—and the varieties of them were junked by Warren Truss in November last year. He launched them and as soon as the community reacted negatively to them, he said, 'We're not going to use them.' So do not talk to me about wasting money. Why doesn't the shadow minister speak to Cameron Thompson about a $10 million study for a half northern bypass that nobody wants, that no member of the Liberal Party wants except Cameron Thompson? Don't you talk to me, brother, about wasting money.

I will say this: the routes south of Gympie were junked by Warren Truss towards the end of last year shortly after he launched them. If opposition members want to talk to anyone about the Bruce Highway through Gympie, they should talk to the federal government about the fact that they did not allocate one cent for its construction. If they want to start with the upgrade, give me the money. There are plenty of parts we can start on now, but there is no money.

The Liberal Party never, ever criticises the federal government. The Liberals never, ever put the pressure on the federal government. Campbell Newman does it. Vaughan Johnson did it. Other people do it. But the Liberal Party never, ever stands up for Queensland against the federal government. That is the great tragedy. Even if the route were announced, the Liberal members would not be lobbying for the money because they never do.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: That is a good way to finish question time.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 10 May (see p. 1653).

Hon. TA BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport) (11.33 am), continuing in reply: I rise to respond to the comments that have been made in the debate on the Workplace Health and Safety and Other Acts Amendment Bill to date. I firstly want to thank the government members who spoke in the debate because they know exactly what this is about. They all spoke very clearly and concisely about why we are taking these steps.

Sadly, not everybody else on the other side of the parliament had such a clear understanding or a clear view. It is sad that the shadow minister for employment, training and industrial relations was not here because he had been well briefed and, from the indications I had, he understands precisely what we are seeking to do. It seems that, without him to round up the sheep, the rest of the sheep got lost.

I want to particularly thank the member for Nicklin, who indicated support for the bill. He also spoke concisely and clearly about why he believed it was necessary for this legislation to be supported, and I thank him for his comments. Similarly, the member for Gladstone, another of the Independents, spoke in support of the bill, and I will make several other comments while I am thanking her.

It is very clear that the member for Gladstone understands that we are seeking to carry through powers that union officials have always had. That is one of the other points that needs to be made, not just in response to the member for Gladstone's comments. We are seeking to carry on powers that

union officials have always had to enter workplaces to look after the interests of their members and potential members on occupational health and safety issues. This is not something new or something out of the blue; this is something that has been there for as long as there have been unions in workplaces. For as long as there have been industrial relations laws, union officials have taken that step in the interests of employees. Some of the rhetoric we saw from the official opposition was really sad because they were attempting to indicate that we are bringing in something all whole and new.

The member for Gladstone raised whether the powers would apply to union officials only or whether other authorised people who had skills in this area could have the same powers. Fundamentally, I am not opposed to that. In fact when I was a union official I would sometimes bring experts in with me. They were experts from the workers' health centre or from universities who had particular knowledge on, for example, the impacts of fumes from welding or on asbestos—which was a great concern to us at that time—and who could look at what was occurring in individual workplaces and give us a hand.

We are not seeking to do that on this occasion because this legislation is designed to include union officials who have the discipline of being officers of unions that are registered. The provisions of WorkChoices allow union officials to enter workplaces for occupational health and safety reasons. They do not forbid that or interfere with the occupational health and safety end, but they provide disciplines for union officials if they were to do what some members of the opposition were saying. I also want to thank the government members who spoke in support of the bill and particularly the Independent members for Nicklin and Gladstone. I make those comments about the questions that they raised.

I want to make the point that the National Party in particular did not seem to know what the line was; they seemed to be all over the place. But I want to thank the member for Gregory—and I am sorry he has just left the chamber—for his comments and indicate that he was spot-on in much of what he said. Some of it was probably not directly related to the bill, but he was absolutely spot-on when it came to how we get good industrial relations between employers and employees. I cannot say that I agreed with everything he said, but I do agree fundamentally about those broad issues. I thank him for those comments, because if that did occur in our workplaces, and if his federal Liberal colleagues understood that, we would not have the difficulties we have in the state at this time as a result of the impact of the WorkChoices legislation.

I also want to make a few comments about the Leader of the Opposition's contribution. Some of his comments, frankly, were offensive. He talked about the trade union movement and he failed to understand some of the provisions and then he foreshadowed some of his amendments. It has always been my understanding that members do not discuss amendments in a second reading debate but rather wait until the amendments are formally on the floor of the parliament. But we do have the amendments in front of us and I will talk about them in some detail when we get to them.

Mr Springborg: You would criticise me if I didn't circulate them.

Mr BARTON: No, I am not criticising the Leader of the Opposition for circulating them. I am simply saying that I will cover the content of the amendments in greater detail when we get to them. I must admit that I have been pulled up before by Speakers and Chairs when I have sought to comment on amendments in a second reading debate, so I will do it in a general sense.

One of the points that the Leader of the Opposition made in relation to his amendments that have been circulated was that we have not had consultation with employers on this matter. I want to put that one to bed straight up. There has been consultation with the major employer groups that are affected by this legislation on this matter. In this state, we do have an occupational health and safety board that has broad employer representation on it.

There was detailed discussion at that board level on the proposals that were contained in the bill. As a result of those discussions, a number of amendments were made to the draft bill. That was the first step. So when the Leader of the Opposition says that there was no consultation—and I know that he has been fed this mischief by at least one employer organisation—I want to make it very clear that there was consultation between the government and a high-level board on occupational health and safety in this state.

Subsequent to that a number of the major employer organisations sought negotiations with my department and me. The Leader of the Opposition, who is a former minister, would understand that a minister cannot be at every negotiation that their department is having or at every consultation, because there are so many things that the departments are consulting on at any one time. As an indication of how seriously we took this matter, the meeting between the chief executives and senior industrial people of those peak employer bodies in this state was conducted by my director-general of industrial relations and by my chief of staff, who, along with the director-general, is also one of the most experienced industrial relations practitioners in this state.

I also want to make the point to the parliament, and particularly to the Leader of the Opposition, that as a result of those consultations further changes were made to the bill to accommodate the concerns that had been raised by the employers about issues. One of those concerns related to the

central issue that emerged in the debate on this bill last night. The opposition said that this particular employer group—the Master Builders Association—does not like the provisions that relate to reasonable suspicion. In fact, we had inserted a slightly differently worded provision in that bill that I must say I thought was a little tighter. But instead we put in the bill the exact words that the Master Builders Association wanted so as to make the legislation consistent with the legislation in Victoria and New South Wales. Frankly, I find it quite galling that the Master Builders Association has started a campaign on this issue. Clearly, it has convinced the opposition that there is something dreadfully outrageous with that provision in the bill. But I changed the draft bill to accommodate what it asked for.

The opposition leader made the point that some of the organisations that raised concerns were ones that this government has a good relationship with. I must say that, overall, we have a very good relationship with the Queensland Master Builders Association. But like in every relationship, including in my own marriage, sometimes you disagree on some aspects.

Mr Springborg: And you always lose the argument.

Mr BARTON: You always lose the argument. My four-year-old granddaughter is living at my place at the moment and I even lose the argument with her.

I make the point that the government has a very good relationship with bodies such as the Australian Industry Group and the other bodies that were mentioned. Believe it or not, when it comes to industrial relations and workplace safety consultations we even have a professional relationship at a departmental level with Commerce Queensland. I usually do not get involved in all of those consultations on these issues, including matters relating to training, but my department talks to these people on a regular basis. So although it has been stated that there was no consultation or little consultation—and it has been described as no consultation and inadequate consultation—I want to make the point that there has been very detailed consultation. Yes, it certainly happened over a fairly short period, but when some people say that there has been inadequate consultation I am afraid that is another example of people saying, 'You didn't agree with me on absolutely everything so you have not had adequate consultation with me.' It takes two to tango.

These provisions relate to both employers and employees. In our consultations with the trade union movement it was not 100 per cent happy, either. It would have liked us to make the legislation even more advantageous to its officials and members on a whole raft of other matters. We did not go all the way to where it wanted it, in the same way we have not given the employers everything they wanted. We think we have struck a fair balance as a result of talking to all of these parties. I also want to make the point that after we had done all of that consultation we introduced the bill into the House.

I know the gentleman from the Queensland Master Builders Association who started the campaign. I have had a very good working relationship with him. I have known him for something like 25 years, since he was a young graduate who came to work in the industrial relations field in this state. For whatever reason, he has lost the plot on this matter and has conducted a campaign that basically does not relate to his concerns or to the fact that there has been consultation. As recently as last Monday night, at the request of both the Queensland Master Builders Association and the Australian Industry Group, I met with their chief executives and the safety executive of the Queensland Master Builders Association who geared up the campaign to talk to them about their concerns. I table a copy of letters that I forwarded late yesterday afternoon, before we started to debate this bill, to both the Queensland Master Builders Association and the Australian Industry Group. That demonstrates very clearly my response to them about their concerns which, I must say, are almost lineball with the concerns that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition. So I know that his homework was done by the Queensland Master Builders Association and fed to him.

I make the point that I have now gone through detailed consultations on three occasions with these people and I have made concessions to them. If members read those letters and the attachments to them they will see the concessions that have been made. They will also see that their concerns about matters such as 'the employers face penalties but the unions do not' are, in fact, baseless.

One of the other major assertions made particularly by the opposition in the debate was that there was an unfairness in this legislation in that the employers can be fined but the unions cannot. Very clearly, the unions can be fined under WorkChoices. I know that the Leader of the Opposition might have a misunderstanding about this. Under this legislation, if it is passed by this parliament, the unions have to have a state permit and a federal permit. If they do some things that employers and the opposition have expressed concern about, they can face very severe penalties under WorkChoices, and not just the loss under the state system of their permits to enter premises.

Mr Springborg: What about employers? Do they face penalties as well under WorkChoices?

Mr BARTON: Under certain circumstances. It is our view that the balance is right. We should not have not only double jeopardy but also triple jeopardy, which is what we could potentially have in the circumstances of a union official, acting in good faith but doing the wrong thing, not only losing their right of entry but also being fined under WorkChoices and also being fined under separate procedures contained in our state legislation. We believe that if the union official does the wrong thing it is totally

adequate for that union official to be fined under WorkChoices and to lose their right of access under this legislation. There is still an element of double jeopardy without placing on top of that another layer of proceedings under the state law.

We think we have struck the right balance. I do not want to belabour those points, but it is very important to note that we think we have struck the correct balance in the bill as presented to the parliament. The other point I make is that this is all about simply carrying on rights of entry that union officials have had ever since there have been unions in the workplace.

Mr Wilson: Maintaining the status quo.

Mr BARTON: Yes. In fact, it does not completely maintain the status quo because WorkChoices still puts up barriers that were not there before—the fact that they can be penalised and they have to have a federal permit before they can get a state permit.

There was an enormous amount of offensive material in speeches by some members of the opposition last night. I have a whole page of notes from one member. It is a complete list—thuggery, no respect, legalised bullies, blackmail, payback, radical action. I think that is totally unnecessary. We have the best industrial relations in the country in this state. We have the lowest levels of disputes—about a third of the national average; certainly half of Victoria's. It is quite offensive for people to generalise that union officials are all thugs, bullies and payback merchants. I know that there might be one or two out there who occasionally get carried away and do the wrong thing, and they get dealt with when that happens. That is just as inappropriate as generalising employers. I am about to use unparliamentary language, but I will take a punt. I have dealt with people who have had the view that all bosses are bastards. I do not think that is true. But there are a very small number of employers who do the wrong thing from time to time or on a regular basis, just as there are a very small number of union officials who occasionally do the wrong thing.

Mr Wilson: Employer associations.

Mr BARTON: And, similarly, employer associations. It is wrong to generalise that union officials will go into the workplace and suddenly create all this mayhem and disruption, because that is not the history in this state. It is quite inappropriate, in my view, for the opposition to generalise and say that union officials should not be allowed to maintain rights of entry that they have always had—even though there are now more restrictions than there have ever been—simply because some of them may do the wrong thing. I do not want them doing the wrong thing either, any more than I want that very small percentage of employers doing the wrong thing and sacking people inappropriately and not having safe workplaces. But that is not most employers, and I would never generalise in that way about all employers because it would be inappropriate.

This legislation is about maintaining the status quo. Sadly, the WorkChoices legislation overrides a whole range of issues that have been the norm in workplaces in this state. Yes, we are challenging WorkChoices. We still have a legal challenge before the High Court right now. My BlackBerry goes off about it every two hours and gives me the latest update from our people in the High Court. The future will take care of whether WorkChoices survives or not and, if so, in what form. But for now it is the law of the nation.

We are very firm that we want to maintain the status quo—excellent relationships between unions and employers in this state and between employers and employees—as best we can for the positive aspects of unions being able to go into workplaces to look after the interests of their members and potential members. That is precisely what this legislation does. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr SPRINGBORG (11.53 am): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 4—

At page 11, lines 3 to 7—

omit, insert—

'(c) a worker working at the place makes a particular complaint about a contravention of the Act involving workplace health and safety to the employee organisation.'.

I have five amendments to move to this clause, but because they are quite different in what they seek to achieve I will not be moving them en bloc. Yesterday, in my speech on the second reading, I indicated that I would be tabling for the benefit of members of the House the draft sections from the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Bill of the New South Wales government that relate to certain matters which restrain or penalise authorised representatives from conducting themselves in certain ways—the same sort of provisions currently in Victoria under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

I took on board what the minister had to say in summarising the second reading debate. He would recollect that when I spoke in the second reading debate I said that the principle of this bill was commendable. It is extremely difficult for anyone to argue against the principle of the bill. However, we did have some concerns about the practical implementation of it and the need to ensure that appropriate checks and balances are enunciated in the legislation so that it cannot be abused by anyone or, if it is abused, then there is a significant deterrent and penalty for those who would seek to do that.

As the minister would also know, I am on record in this place in the past as saying—and I will say again today—that, by and large, I appreciate extraordinarily the work that the union movement does in Queensland. A number of my colleagues who spoke last night indicated their appreciation as well. What we do not stand for—the same as an employee representative might say that they do not stand for from an employer organisation—is those people who seek in some way to use their position of power to give them an advantage in the workplace or who seek to make a nuisance of themselves to abuse that position. There have been examples of that.

It is also true that Queensland has enjoyed a harmonious industrial relations environment. I have said that in this place. In comparison with other jurisdictions, that is certainly the case. We have to make sure that we preserve that industrial harmony insofar as we possibly can given the legislative responsibilities this parliament has every day of the week when we amend or bring legislation before the parliament.

That is why we were most concerned when we were contacted by employer organisations and individuals who expressed some concern about the lack of checks and balances in this legislation. Amendment No. 1 circulated in my name deals with the matter of authorised representatives accessing a workplace on the grounds of reasonable suspicion. I mentioned in my speech in the second reading that I felt that that was an extremely broad term which was open to potential abuse. If people were acting in good faith on all occasions, I think you could say that, yes, the way it is drafted would be fine and would not be abused.

As the Cole royal commission pointed out to us quite significantly, in its deliberations reasonable suspicion of workplace health and safety breaches was used over and over by certain more militant sections of the union movement in order to exact industrial relations disputation, to nitpick and to disrupt workplaces in general. They might not have been able to enter on any other grounds, but they used the grounds of reasonable suspicion of something happening in the workplace in order to enter a workplace for what were covert purposes other than workplace health and safety.

I took note of what the member for Gladstone said yesterday in her contribution. I do have an innate sense of understanding of that argument and a fair amount of appreciation for it. I wish it were possible to draft an amendment which would be halfway between the legislation we currently have and the amendment I am suggesting here. But we have to try to quantify it as much as we can and put checks and balances in place. It is true, as the member for Gladstone said, that an unfair power relationship can exist between the employer and the employee. I appreciate that, and I understand that. That is certainly true. Arguably, that relationship can be abused the other way around.

However, from my perception, it is important that people act on something concrete. 'Reasonable suspicion' is a definition that can be abused and will be abused by some authorised representatives who want access to a workplace for matters other than workplace health and safety. The amendment I have moved basically seeks to ensure that a worker in a workplace makes a particular complaint about a contravention of the act involving workplace health and safety to the employee organisation.

If there was a way to draft an amendment that sat somewhere between my proposal and what the government has put forward to accommodate the concerns of the honourable member for Gladstone, I would do that. Her arguments have an element of validity. My concern is that the power balance is being shifted too far by what the government has proposed and that we should work on what we know to be the case, not open it up to reasonable suspicion.

Given the findings of the Cole inquiry, frankly, I think it will be used and abused by a minority of individuals to disrupt workplaces or to enter workplaces for reasons other than workplace health and safety. The coalition has moved this amendment to ensure appropriate checks. I table my explanatory notes.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I heard the comments of the member for Southern Downs and his recognition of my comments during the second reading debate. I understand the reasons for his amendment.

I ask the minister to provide an outline of the test of reasonableness. It would be unsatisfactory if authorised representatives were entering workplaces for mischievous purposes. However, I stand by my comments made during the second reading debate. Many workers—young workers, in particular—are in an environment or workplace that is vindictive. To see this we have only to look—no disrespect is intended—at the incidents that occurred at Bundaberg Hospital. People were unable to progress complaints through the normal management process. They appear to have been vilified if they went outside that process. However, there were valid reasons for their concerns to be not only expressed but also examined.

If this clause is applied to that situation, an appropriate person could enter the workplace and investigate a complaint on the basis of reasonable suspicion, whereas under the amendment moved by the member for Southern Downs a person would have to articulate a complaint and be identifiable. I ask the minister to outline the test that he envisages will be available to employers in terms of reasonable suspicion.

Mr BARTON: I will try to answer both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Gladstone. I must admit that when I was on my feet earlier I omitted to table a copy of my response to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. I table that now. It asked, basically, for the parliament to determine whether they were appropriate.

Let me deal, firstly, with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition about the Cole inquiry. To the best of my knowledge, no-one in Queensland has been charged as a result of the Cole inquiry. The harsh findings of the Cole inquiry related to interstate, not Queensland. I am not trying to say that everybody in the building industry in this state is a perfect angel—

An honourable member: Including the employers.

Mr BARTON: Including the employers. However, to my knowledge, the examples that people regularly quote from the Cole inquiry are interstate examples, not Queensland examples. People want to say that certain things will happen, but that has not been happening in this state.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the power balance has shifted too far. We think it has, too. That is why we are returning the power balance to where it has been historically, in terms of union officials' appropriate right of entry to look after the interests of their members on occupational health and safety issues, because that has not been an issue in this state.

Again, I take the point. People ask how we define a 'reasonable suspicion'. The term 'reasonable suspicion' is well known in legal circles, certainly in policing. The definitions 'reasonable suspicion' and 'reasonable belief' are well identified and well experienced. The courts understand the terminology and the precedents pertaining to the terminology. In many senses, that flows over into the industrial jurisdiction as well. Those parties well understand the difference between having a reasonable belief or a reasonable suspicion.

Again I stress that the reasonable suspicion test was placed in this legislation because the Queensland Master Builders Association, in particular, wanted it there. They have now been to the Leader of the Opposition and back to me and to other people saying that they do not like that anymore. However, we had consultations with them in the first two rounds. Their person was at our occupational health and safety board meeting, where it was considered. There were consultations conducted directly by my director-general and chief of staff. That test was asked to be put in in that manner. My advice is that they wanted that test in there in that manner to have consistency with New South Wales and Victoria, so that everybody would have the same test, so that everybody would have the surety of knowing what it meant.

Somewhere along the line they changed their minds. It is not my fault if they have changed their minds. I find it unhelpful and, to some degree, unacceptable. I am an old believer that when you do a deal, you do a deal. A deal is a deal. You do not then run a campaign against the deal. I find it quite offensive, frankly, that the people from the Queensland Master Builders Association have done that. I told them so in no uncertain terms in my boardroom on Monday night. It has not destroyed the relationship, but on this one we disagree.

I come back to the comments of the member for Gladstone. Her comments are very, very true. If the amendment of the opposition was to be put forward, an individual would have to put their head up in an environment where they may have one of those very small percentage of employers who is doing the wrong thing, including on occupational health and safety issues. It happens. My department prosecutes a number of people every year who do the wrong thing by their employees on occupational health and safety issues. The person involved would not have anonymity. The changes in the WorkChoices legislation allow people to be dismissed without access to an independent industrial tribunal to have their dismissal tested. It could be that the employer would be able to say—if they know they are doing the wrong thing—'Well, Jack Smith has put his head up. I have had a union official ring me and say that they want to come into my factory and have a look at this complaint by Jack Smith.' The employer, if he is one of those employers who does not do the right thing, in this current era could simply say, 'Well, Jack Smith is rocking my boat, so Jack Smith does not have a job anymore.' That is why the government and I cannot accept the amendment just moved by the opposition leader.

I make the point that we think there is an appropriate balance. The union would need to have a reasonable suspicion that something is going wrong. That could be a phone call from an employee to say that they have a real problem and would like a union official to come and look at it. That is typically how union officials enter workplaces. They are not all roaming around with nothing to do. I know from my era as a union official that it was a bit like being a politician. There was always more work to do than hours in the day. Therefore, you did not create mischief for the sake of creating mischief. However, when a member rang and said that they had a problem and asked if I could come and help, you made a

value judgement about whether they really did have a problem and you went and helped them. Sometimes you had to leave the minor problems because you were too busy fixing up major problems. It is the same value judgement that we make regularly as politicians.

There are sanctions in this legislation and there are sanctions in the WorkChoices legislation that would apply. A union official who misuses the reasonable suspicion test in the way that the opposition leader fears would simply be dealt with. They could face very severe financial penalties under WorkChoices for any breach. If they were not there as a result of occupational health and safety concerns and they were running some other mischief, they could face a severe financial penalty under WorkChoices. They could lose their federal permit to visit workplaces, as well as lose their state permit to visit workplaces. We think that those sanctions are appropriate and that they are a balanced response. We cannot accept the Leader of the Opposition's amendment because of the very real concerns that the member for Gladstone has also expressed: it would put people who are at risk right out there in the open and could cause them to lose their job or be even more severely disadvantaged.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: Minister, if a dispute arises between an authorised representative and a representative of the workplace, is there an independent arbiter in that situation and what are the rights of appeal on both sides? In addition, I would like to table a non-conforming petition and some documents requested yesterday by the Premier in relation to Traveston Dam.

Leave granted

Mr BARTON: It would have been nice to have it all on the table at once. What is wrong with WorkChoices is that it rubs the independent arbiter out. If there is a disagreement between the union representative who went in and the employer representative about whether it was a legitimate safety issue, they would then ring my department and we would get one of our occupational health and safety inspectors out there to determine what should be done about that safety issue.

I dare say that because there is a penalty, in-as-much as a union official's permit could be withdrawn, if the employer still felt very strongly that the union official was overstepping the mark and running, let us say, an industrial relations issue, a wages issue or making mischief for mischief's sake using safety as the vehicle, then that employer would make a complaint to our state Industrial Relations Commission and the state Industrial Relations Commission's registrar would make a decision on whether that employee's permit should be withdrawn or not. I am not suggesting I like this, but it is open to the employer to make a complaint through WorkChoices to the federal authorities and, if the union official is found to have acted in that way, they could be severely fined and lose their federal permit as well. So there are sanctions and penalties. I find the letter-writing campaign of the QMBA and some of the comments by opposition members last night quite offensive when they say that there are no sanctions and it is all one sided. That is not the case.

Mr WELLINGTON: I would like to speak to the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I make my comments in the context of submissions that have been made to me over a number of years by a number of casual employees who have specifically approached me in relation to alleged workplace breaches by employers. I put on the record that these people have approached me on the condition that their identity was not revealed. They said 'Peter, we know what has happened in this business. People who have complained about activities going on have had their ongoing employment terminated.' They were all casual employees and they were no longer wanted in the workplace. It is a business in my electorate. It continues to employ a lot of casual workers from the Sunshine Coast. But I certainly will not reveal its identity here. The minister's office staff would be aware of the business I am talking about. There is no way in the world that I am going to stand here as the member for Nicklin representing my constituents and the people on the Sunshine Coast who work in this business and support an amendment that is going to mean that they will no longer be able to make a complaint without revealing their identity. They know what will happen once the employer knows who has complained to the member for Nicklin and who has quietly raised an issue with industrial inspectors; their services will no longer be required.

The Leader of the Opposition has told all Queenslanders that he intends to overturn a local council and state government endorsed planning scheme in relation to the Links development on the Sunshine Coast if he happens to lead the next government. Before we vote on this and divide—and I hope that we do divide—will the Leader of the Opposition tell Queenslanders whether he will introduce an amendment to the legislation to introduce the very amendment that he is proposing today. I want to tell my constituents what the alternative is. The alternative is simply, as the minister has said, requiring an authorised officer to have to have a reasonable suspicion. As the minister has said, there is case history after case history after case history of what is required to demonstrate a reasonable suspicion. The courts are full of precedents from a whole range of areas of law. The proposal is to throw that away and require that anyone making a complaint has to reveal their identity. I think that is a backward step and I think all Queenslanders need to know what the alternative is when we go to the election, whenever that might be.

For the record, I cannot support this amendment. I think it is a backward step. I shudder to think where we may end up if this amendment were to succeed.

Mr SPRINGBORG: This is quite simply an issue of the government believing that our amendment goes too far one way and us believing that its amendment goes too far the other way. That is simply where we rest. As I said earlier with regard to the overall issue, I have some sympathy for the balanced argument put forward by the member for Gladstone—not the orbital argument we have heard in other contributions—that there may be a better way to ensure that there is a balance which is somewhere in the middle. I have tried to exercise my mind—

Mrs Reilly: What's the answer?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is pretty obvious; we are moving an amendment here. Goodness me! To seek to confuse a whole range of issues because there is something exercising someone's mind and they feel aggrieved is not appropriate. I indicated a moment ago the reason we put forward this amendment. I say to the member for Nicklin that I have had people come into my office in the time that I have been in this place—over 16 and a half years—saying that they could not get their union to do something when they have lodged complaints and I have gone straight to workplace health and safety or an industrial inspector. The minister is probably aware of those sorts of allegations being made.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! The member for Ferny Grove will cease interjecting.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am just saying that having an authorised representative who is going to solve everyone's problems is not necessarily appropriate. We have a more balanced industrial relations environment in Queensland that is more harmonious than in other places. It is true that the Cole inquiry was reflecting generally on situations that happen elsewhere. Everyone knows that. The point is that we do not know what is going to happen as a result of the industrial relations environment that is emerging. Because of an industrial environment that may or may not emerge, current practices may become far more adversarial. I hope that that is not the case. People or unions who would otherwise be somewhat balanced may find loopholes in order to seek to prosecute matters other than genuine workplace health and safety matters.

The government sees the balance one way; we see it being the other way. Maybe there is something in the middle that could accommodate concerns held on both sides, but I have not been able to exercise my mind on it.

Question—That Mr Springborg's amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 20—Caltabiano, Copeland, Douglas, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Quinn, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stuckey. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

NOES, 54—Attwood, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, E Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Lavarch, Lawlor, Livingstone, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, E Roberts, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Nolan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 4—

At page 12, lines 2 to 16—
omit, insert—
'employment of a worker relating to any of the following matters—
(a) hours of work;
(b) overtime;
(c) employee qualifications;
(d) another matter involving workplace health and safety at the workplace.'.

This relates to the information an authorised officer may be able to seek when they enter a workplace, particularly with regard to the records. I would like to point out again that the opposition does not have any principle objection to this legislation. Our concern is with the practical effects and opening it up into extraordinary areas which are outside of what would traditionally be considered genuine workplace health and safety matters for consideration. Let us look at what proposed section 90I(5) provides. It states—

... *employment records* means a record relating to the employment of a worker—

(a) setting out the type of industrial instrument regulating the employment of the worker; or

(b) relating to any of the following matters—

(i) hours of work;

(ii) overtime;

(iii) remuneration or other benefits;

(iv) leave;

(v) superannuation contributions;

(vi) termination of employment;

(vii) type of employment, including whether the employment is permanent, temporary, casual, full-time or part-time;

(viii) personal details of the worker;

(ix) another matter prescribed under a regulation.

For the life of me, I cannot understand how a number of those provisions have anything to do with workplace health and safety, particularly the more broad industrial matters. The amendment which I am moving seeks to prescribe it and contain it to the following matters, and I think that is the nub of workplace health and safety. The amendment says that it should relate to the hours of work, overtime, employee qualifications or another matter involving workplace health and safety at the workplace.

Everyone can understand that there would be genuine workplace health and safety issues if a person was forced to work longer than what they should work. Everyone would understand that overtime can be a significant issue affecting the workplace health and safety environment not only of the worker but also of their coworkers. Everyone can also understand that employee qualifications are important to ensuring appropriate workplace health and safety. Proposed paragraph (d) in the amendment relates to another matter involving workplace health and safety.

Again, I ask how remuneration or other benefits could in any way relate to workplace health and safety. How can leave relate to workplace health and safety? We have superannuation contributions and termination of employment. What we have is a broad clause which goes above and beyond what people would expect would be reasonable workplace health and safety issues. If the government wants to address those particular matters, if there are concerns about whether an employer is appropriately dealing with the issues of remuneration or other benefits, leave, superannuation contributions and termination of employment, an industrial inspector can do that under another instrument. That is my concern. This has broadened way beyond what people would legitimately think matters of workplace health and safety should properly entail. That is why the coalition is moving this amendment, which seeks to ensure that genuine workplace health and safety matters are considered by the authorised representative, not a whole range of extraneous matters which are more properly industrial relations issues than workplace health and safety issues.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I want to express a couple of concerns in relation to the minister's bill. I had some concerns about access to superannuation contributions, but when I gave it some thought I realised that there are employers who are recalcitrant in making superannuation contributions for their employees. My main concern about the list of materials or records which a representative can have access to is specifically having access to the personal details of the worker. I cannot see any reason why an authorised representative should have unfettered access to employees' records. I cannot see where the employee has to give permission for that access prior to the authorised representative effectively accessing all of his or her employment record.

I would be interested in the minister's reply. At this stage, whilst I would have liked to have seen several other matters in the member for Southern Downs's list like superannuation and termination, I am concerned about what appears to be the unfettered access to the personal details of workers. I would be interested in the minister's response to that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Male): Order! Before I call the honourable minister can I welcome to the gallery staff and students from the Tullawong State High School which is represented by me, the member for Glasshouse and Acting Deputy Speaker. Welcome to the gallery.

Mr WELLINGTON: I, too, have some reservations about the inclusion of the personal details of workers. I raise this issue given the experience of some of my constituents who have tried to access information from some of our departments. Family members have tried to access information from some of our departments. The departments, especially the Department of Child Safety, are so rigid in their requirement for privacy. People cannot access information.

I am yet to be convinced and I am very interested to hear the minister's response as to why it is so essential to include the requirement for personal details of the worker to be included in the definition of employment records. I believe the legislation could still proceed and the intent of the legislation could still be achieved without including the provision relating to the personal details of the worker. Unless the minister can convince me otherwise, can I say that I believe the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition appears more reasonable. I do not believe it would drastically effect the intent of the legislation. I would be very interested in hearing the minister's response to the amendment.

Mr BARTON: The fundamentals of this are really quite simple. I would make one comment without going through every single item in the bill. The Leader of the Opposition has said that in many cases he can see why the records need to be made available. If we are talking about whether someone can do something safely it can be tied to their qualifications and skill level. We would need their remuneration record to see whether they are qualified to do that particular function.

Even that is not the fundamental reason that that list is as it is in this bill. Whether I like it or not—and I must admit that I do not like it—the WorkChoices legislation is currently a fact of life unless the Attorney-General's lawyers and mine continue to do the sterling job they are doing and we win our appeal and the legislation is knocked over. At the moment the WorkChoices legislation is a fact of life. It is in place.

It has definitions on what is to be made available for workplace health and safety purposes. What we have done is deliberately match the definitions list in this bill with that in the WorkChoices legislation simply to avoid confusion. If we are successful in the High Court and the WorkChoices legislation is either totally knocked over or needs to be amended, if it finds that some of it is not constitutional, it may well be that we have to come back and make some subsequent amendments. For ease of reference, for the ease of people working with it and for a level of security we have simply matched our list with that which is in the WorkChoices legislation. I find it a little bit funny that the opposition is opposing what is in the WorkChoices legislation in this regard.

Mr WELLINGTON: I would urge the minister to either move the adjournment of this debate and wait for the outcome of the current High Court challenge or challenge the federal government. Let us take them on. My understanding of the constitutional law is that if there is a conflict between a federal law and a state law and they cover the same issue the federal law will override the state law. Let us let the federal government say that it is going to override this condition of the Queensland legislation.

Let us clearly tell all employees, all employers and all Queenslanders that it is the federal government, it is Mr Howard, that is requiring that the personal details of workers have to be provided. I urge the minister to take the line, support the opposition and let us have the personal details requirement excluded. Let us not just roll over and say, 'Because the federal government has this definition in its legislation then for consistency and to void confusion we will adopt its definition.'

I urge the minister to take the federal government on. Let us just let the High Court challenge have its day. Let us see the outcome of that. Let us tell all Queenslanders that if this definition has to be adopted according to the federal government requirements it is the federal government's fault, not ours.

Mr BARTON: I will be brief because I think we have properly said almost all that needs to be said. It would be unconstitutional for us as a state parliament to carry a law that is unlawful. Whether we like it or not that is the law. When the member for Nicklin—and I agree with him—says to take them on I point out that that is exactly what we are doing. That is why we are down there. There is a team of something like 27 QCs in the High Court at this point in time.

Mrs Lavarch: Not all from Queensland.

Mr BARTON: They are not all from Queensland, but there are about 27 QCs down there arguing the whole issue of WorkChoices. I think two of them are ours with other supporting lawyers, so we have a quite substantial team and a very good team down there led by the Solicitor-General. We have taken them on and we are seeking to overturn their legislation. Our advice is that the earliest we are likely to get a decision from the High Court is September and it will more likely be closer to the end of the year. In those circumstances, we think it would be unreasonable to not allow a continuation of union access to workplaces for safety reasons for the rest of this year. That is why we are in here now.

I can assure the member for Nicklin that we are taking them on, but it would be invalid for us to bring forward legislation that we knew would be illegal because of the very point that he raised. If there is a federal law and a state law, under section 109 of the Constitution—that is, the inconsistency provision—the federal law prevails. The federal government to some degree has relied on that with WorkChoices. We are saying that they are clearly in breach of the Constitution. The corporations power under the Constitution does not give them the power to do what they are doing because section 51 of the Constitution provides IR powers to the states. So there is a clear conflict. We need the seven wise judges to resolve that for us. We are doing our level best to have that resolved at this point, but we do not want to wait for them because the issue is too important.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I do not wish to protract the debate too long, but the minister stated that he used this definition because it is the definition in the WorkChoices legislation. Could the minister clarify why this definition needs to be transferred across by giving me the context of this definition in WorkChoices? What are we answering in WorkChoices to have this same quite intrusive definition? In WorkChoices, are workplace health and safety officers specifically excluded from these areas and are we therefore giving them inclusion? What is the context?

Mr BARTON: I have just checked with the officers. As we all know, the WorkChoices legislation runs to some 800 pages and the regulations are even bigger than that. I have not got my copies of WorkChoices and the regulations with me, but I am advised by my departmental officers that there is a clear definition that says they can only be accessed for occupational health and safety purposes. That is the definition in the WorkChoices legislation and it is far tidier for us to be consistent with the WorkChoices legislation. I cannot add anymore to it than that.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I suspect something has been made up on the spot. I have seen no evidence or advice. If advice exists that the minister did this because there would be a conflict with superior federal legislation, then I suggest it should be tabled here. Quite frankly, this only becomes an issue if there is some demonstrable conflict, and I cannot see anything here. My amendment seeks to basically condense it down from here and leave out extraneous industrial relations matters.

I have the same concerns as the members for Nicklin and Gladstone with regards to the personal details of the worker. The member for Nicklin raised an excellent point. We all find it galling that if we ring Telstra to try to help someone in our electorate with an issue, we cannot do anything under the Privacy Act. If we try to do something with child safety, we cannot do a single thing. I had an issue with the Legal Services Commissioner the other day, and I was told, 'No, we can't provide the details.' I had exactly the same thing with the local district manager of health. Sometimes someone new comes along who wants to really push the issue of what they can provide to us if we do not have a good personal relationship with the person we are trying to help. Frankly, I am not prepared to take the minister on spec on this. I think he has made this up. I do not believe there is any evidence whatsoever that there is a conflict.

The other thing is that WorkChoices applies to only a certain number of businesses in Queensland. It applies to those that seek to transfer or are transferred as a consequence of the Corporations Law powers which the Commonwealth is going to use. So a number of employees in Queensland whose small businesses are not companies or who are not covered under the Corporations Law will be automatically taken under this and will still be subject to the Queensland workplace health and safety legislation.

This is an absolute furphy and the minister knows it is a furphy. Even if the minister's argument were right, we maintain that a significant number of businesses in Queensland will be subject to the state workplace health and safety legislation and the industrial relations legislation, and the minister knows that. I think the minister has disingenuously degraded his own argument by putting that furphy in here without any evidence whatsoever.

Mr BARTON: I came close to jumping up and saying that the Leader of the Opposition's words were offensive and I wanted them withdrawn, and I do find them offensive. I find the Leader of the Opposition offensive with his comments about making it up. I have been very up-front about the fact that we have put this in to be consistent with the WorkChoices legislation. To do otherwise would create the uncertainty and confusion that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. Whether we would be technically illegal is the very reason we are down in the High Court now arguing these issues. Courts will make these decisions, not me, and certainly not the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition said that this will suddenly apply to all of the small businesses that are not corporations and covered by WorkChoices. Yes, it will but it does not need to because they already have access. Let us get it through the leader's head: under our state industrial relations legislation, union officials already have access to go into those small businesses and look at occupational health and safety issues—whether this bill gets carried or not. The Leader of the Opposition is the one who does not know what he is talking about.

Mr Springborg: Table your advice.

Mr BARTON: Be real. In terms of the federal government tabling its advice and talking to us, the net result of consultation with us was that the federal minister, Kevin Andrews, said to me and the other industrial relations ministers, 'I presume you're not going to hand your state powers over to me.' When we said, 'That's right,' he said, 'Well, let's move on to the next agenda item.' The Leader of the Opposition asked me to table advice, but there was no consultation with us and no advice given to us. We have had it inflicted on us and we are working within it to the best of our ability with our own very good advice. The day I start giving you my formal legal advice, Sunshine, it will be black all day.

Question—That Mr Springborg's amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 24—Caltabiano, Copeland, Douglas, Foley, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

NOES, 51—Attwood, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, E Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Lavarch, Lawlor, Livingstone, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, E Roberts, N Roberts, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Nolan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 4—

At page 13, lines 11 to 14—

omit, insert—

'(b) otherwise—immediately after the entry.

'(3) For entry in any case, the authorised representative must, immediately after entry, tell the occupier of his or her presence.'.

This amendment is self-explanatory. It seeks to ensure that the authorised representative informs the occupier of that workplace, or the owner of that workplace, or the one in charge of that workplace, of the presence of that authorised representative as soon as that authorised representative sets foot on that workplace. I think this amendment is important. I do not think that anyone would like someone traipsing around on their business premises. We understand that people have to have certain rights of access but also people have the right to privacy and to know what is going on in their business. That is an important consideration.

Basically, this amendment is replacing the terminology 'as soon as practicable', and ensures that that authorised representative goes straight to the occupier of that business and indicates to them their presence. I think that is reasonable.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I have one question. I know in other legislation the term 'as soon as practicable' after entry is used. Those words have been inserted not to allow the person who enters the premises time to do things surreptitiously or otherwise but to allow for circumstances such as the occupier of the premises not being on site at the time or, for other practical reasons, where the authorised representatives cannot immediately—and time is an issue—advise the occupier.

I would be interested in the minister's clarification that 'as soon as practicable' applies to the ability of the authorised representative entering the premises being able to talk to the occupier rather than allowing the authorised representative to do a series of activities that would be perhaps detrimental to the workplace and detrimental to the occupier. Or are the words 'as soon as practicable' inserted into the bill to allow for an authorised representative who enters the premises to make necessary investigation before they could perhaps be obstructed by the occupier of the premises?

Mr WELLINGTON: I seek clarification from the mover of the amendment and also from the minister. When I spoke to an earlier amendment I referred to a company on the Sunshine Coast which employs many, many casual people. I am concerned that if the legislation required the authorised representative to give the occupier of the place written notice of the entry and the reasons for the entry immediately after the entry, there would be an opportunity for the employer or management to take immediate steps to ensure that the very issue relating to workplace health and safety that the people were concerned about would not be available for inspection or discovery by the authorised representative or the inspectors. I certainly have some concerns about the requirement of the immediacy. I would be very interested in hearing further clarification from the mover of the amendment, the Leader of the Opposition, and also comments from the minister in relation to the use of the words 'as soon as practicable'. I understand that the words 'as soon as practicable' appear quite frequently in other legislation.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I say to the honourable member for Nicklin that the reason for moving this amendment is fairly self-evident. New subsection 90K(1) explains what this new section is for. New subsection 90K(2) states that the notice has to be in writing. By way of this amendment, I am preserving the need for the notice to be in writing but doing away with the term 'as soon as practicable'.

If a complaint has been made and the reason for the complaint has been given, the authorised representative provides that information to the person in charge of that business when they walk through the door. This new subsection states that entry under certain conditions has to be notified within 24 hours before the entry. My amendment relates to new subsection 90K(2)(b) and new subsection 90K(3). This amendment takes out the words 'as soon as practicable' and replaces them with the words 'as soon as it has been entered'.

We accept the provisions to give notice in writing. All we are doing is changing the methodology of notification from 'as soon as practicable' to immediately after entry so that people know what is going on.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr BARTON: The harsh reality of this debate is that the legislation says that a union official who exercises the right to enter a workplace on occupational health and safety grounds has to give the employer notice 'as soon as practicable'. I think that is the wording in section 91K. The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition effectively says that the notice has to be given immediately. I have heard other people in other debates say that it should be given immediately, if not prior to entry. I think the Leader of the Opposition's amendment is running the risk of maybe being a little pedantic by saying that notice has to be given immediately because 'as soon as practicable' means immediately if it is possible.

It may well be that the employer is not physically there at the time. So if an authorised representative comes on site or wants to advise the employer that he or she is on site, they would not be capable of telling the employer immediately if the employer was physically not there and therefore not immediately available. I have been in and out of a lot of workplaces over the years in various capacities—as an employee visiting other workplaces, as a union official for many years and as a politician. My experience, and the experience of all the union officials I have worked with, has been that the first thing I do when I go to someone's workplace is, as soon as practicable, let them know I am there. We all do that as politicians. We do not just wander into someone's factory or workplace. We go up to the front counter or wherever the visitors sign tells us to report to.

Mr Schwarten: It's a health and safety requirement.

Mr BARTON: It is a health and safety requirement. Depending on the nature of the workplace, say, on entering a plant or a yard, a sign might say, 'Would visitor's report to the foreman's office.

My expectation of the legislation—and I know in our discussions that the union movement understands this—is that it is not appropriate for visiting union officials to sail into the bosses' factory and do whatever they want without letting the employer know they are there. They would have to advise the employer that they are there. The manager or owner may not be physically in their office at that time. They might not be at the workplace at all; they could be downtown or they could be conducting business elsewhere or they could be in the factory somewhere. But the visiting official would advise someone that they are there. Having advised a foreman or someone else that they were there to look at an issue and they proceeded to do so, if we accept the Leader of the Opposition's amendment then their presence would be illegal as they had not immediately reported to the owner because the owner was not physically there to report to.

To come back to the issues raised, particularly by the member for Nicklin, if that were to occur and a union official reported to someone else and said, 'I'm here to look at an issue,' and the boss was not there so the union official left and when the boss came back someone said, 'Oh, Tommy Barton from that union was here and he wants to look at this issue,' the employer might then disadvantage the employees before the union official could go back to the workplace to speak to them and look at the issue.

I do not want to be too harsh about this. In the opposition's desire to stiffen up this legislation—and I dare say the desire of those people who put him up to this who have a view that they want absolute control—

Mr Rickuss: What about hygiene issues?

Mr BARTON: If the member wants to speak, I suggest he gets on the speaking list. We think it is appropriate for notice to be given 'as soon as practicable', because in reality that means immediately if it can be done practically. We accept that people cannot track into workplaces without letting people know that they are there.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I will not labour the point. I have outlined the reasons before. Our concern is to ensure that the authorised representatives report as soon as they set foot on the premises. The owner of the business may not be there—and the minister referred to this. But the wording of the government's legislation is 'occupier'. All we are doing is amending a section to say that as soon as the authorised representative turns up at that workplace they have to notify the occupier. In proposed new section 90K(2) the authorised representative must notify the occupier—the occupier being the person in charge at the time. If the employer is not there then the person to notify would be their delegate or someone with a certain amount of authority. That is how these things work. So an authorised representative has to give notice at the time and that is the person whom they give the notice to. It is about making sure that the representative has an obligation to notify the person who is in charge of the business or their delegate so that they are aware of what is going on.

Question—That the Leader of the Opposition's amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 21—Caltabiano, Copeland, Douglas, Flegg, Hobbs, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Quinn, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stuckey. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

NOES, 54—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, E Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Male, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pratt, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T Sullivan, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Divisions, Lifts

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (2.43 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member for Stafford.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: A matter has been brought to my attention by one of the members. It appears that during the last division, someone pressed a large number of buttons in the lift such that the lift stopped at a range of floors. I ask if that could be checked through the BCO. I believe the records of the lift can be checked to see if somebody is playing games with the lifts during divisions.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will report that back through Mr Speaker and the Clerk.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumption of Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 1698 on clause 4—

Mr SPRINGBORG (2.45 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 4—
At page 14, after line 24—
insert—
'Maximum penalty—40 penalty units.
'(1A) An authorised representative for an employee organisation must not use or disclose information acquired at a place under this part other than for a purpose relating to the workplace health and safety of an eligible member of the employee organisation.
Maximum penalty—40 penalty units.
Example of information—
information from employment records'.

As members will recollect, yesterday I raised issues on the substantive bill about the lack of penalty provisions for an authorised representative if that authorised representative engaged in unbecoming conduct or conduct outside of what is expected of them. I again raise that point.

The bill contains significant penalty provisions for occupiers of businesses who seek to interfere in any way with the role of an authorised representative and their workplace health and safety obligations. However, when it comes to anything that an authorised representative might do which is outside their role or is in some way a breach, the only recourse is a suspension or cancellation of the authorised representative's appointment or an amendment of the conditions of appointment. This amendment is about ensuring that a deterrent or penalty exists for an authorised representative who, conceivably, does the wrong thing; that is, acts outside their authorisation.

I refer members to the document that I tabled earlier this morning, which is an extract from Victorian legislation. A penalty exists for an authorised representative who, under their Occupational Health and Safety Act, does the wrong thing. I also indicate that under New South Wales legislation which will be presented shortly—the draft of the section has been circulated—a penalty provision exists for an authorised representative who does not do the right thing.

I listened with interest to the minister as he responded to this during the course of his summing-up. He said that he does not want double jeopardy or triple jeopardy or something else. I interjected and indicated to the minister that if it was true that other provisions existed, including under the federal industrial relations act, concerned with double penalisation, then surely that would apply to the employer as well. The employer would certainly have obligations and punitive sanctions under federal law. If I recollect rightly, the minister implied that that was certainly the case.

I do not buy into this so-called double jeopardy. We are talking here, on my reading of it, about workplace health and safety legislation in Queensland that stands on its own to ensure safety in our workplaces. Why do New South Wales legislators, who are about to present legislation, not have the same concerns regarding the federal workplace relations laws? Why do they not have the same concerns? Why do they feel it is necessary to maintain—

Mr Hoolihan interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The member cannot have both arguments. On the one hand, the minister says that we have national legislation and, therefore, we do not want these double punitive provisions—even if what he says is right—yet, on the other hand, his colleagues of the same political ilk in other states do not see it as any real issue. I suspect that some of these arguments have basically been designed on the spot.

We are talking about legislation which stands on its own. It is workplace health and safety legislation for Queensland which is designed to ensure safe workplaces, appropriate conduct and compliance, in my mind, not only for the occupier of a business but also for an authorised representative.

Victorian legislators have not rushed in and changed their legislation. I understand that there may have been some ceding of that legislation or ceding of industrial relations matters to the Commonwealth in the past. However, they certainly maintain occupational health and safety legislation in Victoria, which is about maintaining safe workplaces. They feel the need for a penalty provision for an authorised representative who may go outside of what has been consented to. The same thing will happen in New South Wales.

My view is this: what is the government scared of? If somebody does not do the right thing, what is wrong with putting in place penalty provisions? If it is good enough for an employer—which is fair enough, to my mind—to be held responsible for ensuring compliance with their obligations under this act, then the same should apply for an authorised representative who goes into workplaces to ensure safety on behalf of the workers.

Mr BARTON: I again make the point that we believe it is an appropriate penalty. The opposition leader has referred to the comments that I made in my summing-up earlier today, but let me also make the point that the penalty that we think is appropriate in this bill is, in fact, taking away the right of entry of the relevant union official. That is a pretty severe penalty. If they lose their right of entry permit they cannot, in effect, do their job—not just in that workplace but in any other workplace.

In relation to balance, we cannot have the equivalent penalty for employers. We cannot have a penalty that says that an employer who does the wrong thing by his or her workforce, or the wrong thing by the union official who is exercising a right to enter the workforce in the interests of looking after the employees, cannot enter their own workplace. It is one or the other. We think that the balance is appropriate, knowing full well that there are penalties in the federal WorkChoices regulation as well as a capacity for the federal permit to be revoked. Even if our registrar does not take the step to revoke the state permit, if the complaint was made to the federal body and they took away the federal permit then the official would not be able to retain the state permit, because a precondition of having the state permit is that you have to have the federal permit.

It is one or the other. We think it is an appropriate balance. I guess it is another one of these issues that the opposition leader spoke about before lunch where we think one thing and the opposition thinks the other. I guess we are never going to convince each other on this. We have consulted fairly widely, despite what has been put to the Leader of the Opposition by some people, and this is an instance where we think the balance is appropriate. A particular employer organisation has got a bee in its bonnet about it. We think that the balance is correct.

The Leader of the Opposition states that New South Wales has an exposure bill or a draft bill which contains a penalty. I did not know that the Leader of the Opposition was running the New South Wales government. I am taking it a little bit lightly because we in some ways have modelled our position on what has already been previous access. Prior to WorkChoices there were these types of provisions in New South Wales and Victoria. We have not lined them up exactly but in the broad sense we have. It may well be that when New South Wales makes the amendments that it is talking about it puts a penalty in or it may well be that it does not because it is still in the process of consulting, as I understand.

What can I say about the Victorians and their position? I am happy that they have joined us in the High Court for the challenge against the federal legislation, but I would have been a lot happier had they taken steps to take back their state rights which they have a right to do. They are leaving the large number of people who work for corporations there.

I am not saying that the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the parliament, but I am a little bit dubious of accepting that New South Wales is definitely going to put a penalty in when in reality it is in consultation at this point. It may or it may not. That is up to them, not us. I repeat that my view is that we have an appropriate balance here and in those circumstances, having consulted and looked at it, we are not prepared to accept that amendment

Mr SPRINGBORG: The minister is right: they believe that and we believe this and never the twain shall meet. I make the point again that I do not believe that a suspension or cancellation of the authorised representative's appointment or an amendment to the conditions of the appointment is a sufficient enough deterrent or penalty. If they are suspended someone else is found to do the job. Unless there is an individual punitive capacity then it does not necessarily always relate to people. If that was the case we would suspend people's licences to drive for doing the wrong thing, we would not actually apply a fine to them. It does not make sense. Some people will just say, 'So what?' They might not necessarily want to do it anyway. Someone else can do it. There is no real personal comeback on the representative.

From the time that we are little until the time that we are no longer here the majority of us have a respect for the law and we are very much concerned about the individual consequences of our actions. If people have to pay for their actions financially then that makes them think twice about the sorts of things they might do if they have a propensity to break the law in the first place or not comply with a particular regulation.

My contention is that it is not enough. The minister may be right and the New South Wales government will run away and decide that it is going to change its exposure draft, but keep in mind that this exposure draft is dated 2006. It is talking about penalty provisions of 100 penalty units in their language, whatever that adds up to, and it would have considered the new WorkChoices legislation which is supposed to be uniform legislation for those business that are tied up in it across the Australian continent.

The minister is right: the government believes that and we believe this. I do not believe that suspending or amending the conditions of employment is in any way a deterrent for wrongful activity for those people who have a propensity to do the wrong thing in the first place.

Mr WELLINGTON: I support the Leader of the Opposition in relation to this amendment. I think it is appropriate that there are a range of options of penalties that would be open for prosecution against

the relevant person. On that issue the opposition has my support and I look forward to having a division and moving on to the next one as soon as possible.

Mr BARTON: Before we have the division I make the point—and this might change the mind of the member for Nicklin—that it is not a light thing to lose your licence. An electrician who loses their electrical licence cannot work as an electrician. A plumber who loses their plumbers and drainers licence cannot work. In relation to a union official who loses his or her permit I would suggest that it is not as straightforward as, 'Oh, well, we'll just get somebody else to do it', because there is not an endless supply of union officials. Sooner or later the union cannot function in that role on behalf of its members and/or potential members because it does not have anybody to do it.

I have just been reminded by my staff that it is deeper than that in terms of the federal legislation applicable to their permits. The permit can not only be removed from the individual, it can also be removed in totality from the union. If there was a pattern where one union was doing what the Leader of the Opposition said—putting someone in, getting thrown out, losing their permit, then putting someone else in, getting thrown out, losing their permit—one would pretty rapidly see the entire organisation lose its right of entry permit and once that happens it is all but out of business.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I understand what the minister has said, but I would expect the offence—for want of a better word—that resulted in an authorised representative losing their capacity to enter a workplace and having their licence cancelled would have to be a relatively serious offence. In my mind, the inclusion of maximum penalty units allows for minor breaches, but ones which are detrimental to the workplace, to the occupier or to the workers would allow for a sliding scale of penalties, not the heavy-handed suspension or cancellation of a licence. It would allow the relevant parties who will administer this act to say, 'What you did was wrong. It does not warrant suspension or relinquishing of your licence, but it does warrant some punitive measure and we will allocate 10 penalty units.' I think it will give a broader range of options to those who have to make decisions on breaches to be able to administer—for want of a better word—justice without the suspension or penalisation in more minor matters. But it will at least allow for justice to be done and to be seen to be done.

Question—That the Leader of the Opposition's amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

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

NOES, 51—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Nolan, T Sullivan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 4—

At page 14, lines 29 to 33 and page 15, lines 1 to 9—

omit, insert—

'(3) If an authorised representative for an employee organisation finds evidence of a contravention of the Act involving workplace health and safety at a place, the authorised representative must immediately report the finding to the employer, occupier or a workplace health and safety representative of the place.'.

I am not sure the government will be able to see too many spooks in this, because in my view it is about strengthening the legislation that is currently before the parliament. If members read the proposed section, which is page 14 of the bill and runs from lines 29 through, they will note that there does not appear to be a great enough onus or obligation on the authorised representative to report contraventions of established workplace health and safety. The amendment which I have moved on behalf of the coalition seeks to place an absolute obligation on the authorised representative to report any breaches immediately. We believe that is something that will enhance the intent of this bill. It will make sure that that particular discrepancy is addressed immediately to ensure that the workplace is made much safer for employees. Our amendment states—

If an authorised representative for an employee organisation finds evidence of a contravention of the Act involving workplace health and safety at a place, the authorised representative must immediately report the finding to the employer, occupier or a workplace health and safety representative of the place.

If we look at what currently exists, the bill states—

Also, an authorised representative for an employee organisation may use or disclose information acquired at a place under this part only ...

It says 'may use'. What we are saying is that they must do it; they must report. If we read the remainder of the current provisions in the government's bill, that puts it into context but it is not as strong as the amendment which the coalition is proposing. I say again that our amendment places an absolute obligation on the authorised representative to report and to say, 'We want this issue dealt with.' We believe that is a better outcome for employees in ensuring that there is a safe workplace.

If this legislation is about providing a safer workplace health and safety environment for employees, then how can the government argue against an amendment which, at its very core, says that that representative must ensure that any breaches are reported? That will set off a chain of events which will ensure that those obligations are met by the employer of that particular business.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I do not have any concerns in relation to the amendment that the member for Southern Downs wishes to make. I do, however, have concerns with the omission that he proposes, because he proposes to omit the use to which the information may be put. The amendment proposes to omit the obligation on the authorised representative to use the information only for a purpose relating to the workplace health and safety of an eligible member of an employee organisation or with the consent of the person to whom the information relates. I assume that is to catch those employees who are not members of the union but for whom, I would hope, an authorised representative, if there was a breach of workplace health and safety, would have the generosity of spirit and obligation within the workplace to take action, irrespective of whether the employee is a member of a union or not.

Whilst I do not have a problem with the inclusion of the amendment, per se—I hope the minister will clarify that an authorised representative has an obligation under some other statute to advise the employer—I do have problems with the fact that this amendment excludes the disclosure of the uses of the information gathered by the authorised representative, and on that basis I cannot support the amendment. I would be interested in a comment from the minister as to the obligation on the authorised representative to advise the employer or occupier of the workplace and whether the authorised representative will use information gathered to also assist those employees who may not be part of the union.

Mr BARTON: We think this one is superfluous. The bill does specifically provide that an authorised representative must give the occupier a written notice specifying the likely contravention of the act. It is reasonable to expect that the union representative and the employer would discuss the issues and work through the methods for resolving the safety issue while the representative was there because, quite frankly, that is the reason that person is going there.

I think this is probably using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut. If the union representative gives written advice saying, 'I am going in to look at this. Here is what I reasonably suspect to be wrong,' and then goes in, the employer already has a very good indication of where it is suspected there is a problem. If there is a problem I would hope that the employer would be having a look at it. Under our principal occupational health and safety legislation it is a primary obligation of an employer to provide a safe workplace.

We are not asking that people maintain a right that they have basically had for a hundred years to go into workplaces on occupational health and safety matters. They had that pre WorkChoices. The reason they are going in is to look for a suspected bad workplace safety issue. Naturally the expectation is that they would discuss it with the employer.

In circumstances where they could not reach any successful and satisfactory conclusion on that issue with the employer, I expect that they would notify my department so that an occupational health and safety inspector could go and follow through on that. We think this proposal is unnecessary. I am unable to support the amendment.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Can I make the point very quickly that it is the view of the coalition that it actually strengthens the obligation not only of the authorised representatives but also of the occupier of that workplace. Our view is that it could do no harm if we have a provision in there that strengthens occupational workplace health and safety obligations.

Question—That Mr Springborg's amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 23—Caltabiano, Copeland, Douglas, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Quinn, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stuckey. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

NOES, 54—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, E Cunningham, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pratt, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, C Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T Sullivan, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (3.22 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 2 be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 April (see p. 1366).

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (3.22 pm): I rise to address the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. This is a very important piece of legislation in the eyes of the opposition, and I have to say from the outset that the opposition will be supporting the legislation before the House today. This bill is a consequence of a review of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. The review considered a significant number of proposals from the Queensland Police Service and was conducted by a review committee that received submissions from the CMC, the Public Interest Monitor and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties.

The legislation proposes these principal amendments. It extends the powers of police to enter a pharmacy without warrant to inspect the register regarding drugs. This power relates to monitoring the supply of pseudoephedrine. The bill provides police with additional circumstances for searching persons without a warrant for offences like wilful damage or destruction—for example, graffiti or scratching a vehicle with an implement. Safeguards include the need for pre-existing reasonable suspicion, protecting the dignity of persons, supplying of police officer details and the recording of information in a register. The bill gives police the ability to obtain a warrant to obtain decryption for evidence that may be contained on computers, mobile phones and similar equipment, particularly where an alleged offender refuses to provide access details.

More importantly, this legislation finally provides for the extension of move-on powers to all public places. As members will be aware, this power will be particularly useful in addressing the ongoing problem of gatecrashers at parties, and we recently witnessed an example of this with that horrible event in Toowoomba. Existing safeguards under the PPRA requiring the recording of the use of these powers will remain. I will specifically address these powers later in my contribution.

The bill enables police to obtain the name and address of persons reasonably suspected of committing extradition offences in another jurisdiction. Also, search powers are provided in relation to a place where a deceased person is located to protect evidence. This will apply when there is insufficient evidence to establish a crime scene but the death did not apparently occur from natural causes—for example, where a body has been located with tablets in the vicinity.

Vehicle forfeiters are provided similar to existing hoon legislation for offences involving attempts to evade police. While this provision is welcome, any suggestion that this offence will in itself deter high-speed police chases is naive. A reverse owner onus is proposed as part of the evade police offences, which is similar to other serious traffic offences. A vehicle owner is to declare who the operator was at the time of an offence, otherwise the owner may be liable for the evade police offence. It is, of course, a defence to prove on the balance of probabilities that the owner was not the operator at the time of the offence. This is a very good piece of legislation because there are a lot of people out there who have been trying to hoodwink the police for a long time in relation to this matter and that will finally come to an end.

There is a retrospective validation of certain covert activities. There is apparently an internal conflict between sections 163 and 190 of the existing act, and this amendment will establish that previous activities were lawful. Provision is also made for evidence to be contested if the activity was not properly conducted or outside the scope of written authorisation. Multiple covert meetings are permitted if the identity of the suspect is not known. This overcomes a tactic being used by criminals who systematically abandon any first meeting as prosecution is not possible from any subsequent meeting. Covert activities are to be established by regulation rather than by amendment of the act—a matter referred to by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee.

Another provision that the opposition particularly welcomes is the creation of a specific offence for serious assault of police officers. Again, this is a matter the opposition raised some time ago only to be rubbished by the government as being unnecessary. This is a very, very important part of this legislation and I congratulate the minister on it today. It will certainly give police added protection in their workplace environment. Unfortunately, in our society today, our police officers are too often subjected to abuse on the front line as they go about protecting the 99.9 per cent of the community who want to be protected.

The coalition proposes to support this legislation. However, I shall raise a number of matters which I will also ask the minister to respond to. The first matter I would like to address is the extension of the move-on powers. This is a power that police officers have been seeking for some time, as they know it is the most effective way of controlling any number of antisocial activities that are significantly impacting on the daily lives of Queensland citizens.

It is a fact that there are elements in our society who are only too keen to take advantage of the latest communication advances to cause mayhem, such as the use of short messaging technology—better known as SMS—and the internet to organise the gatecrashing of parties and other assemblies. I mentioned earlier the recent fiasco in Toowoomba. Private homes are being invaded by louts who want to dismiss the law and have no respect for the law. It is absolutely paramount that we totally support the police in this endeavour and give them these move-on powers that they need to bring these types of activities to a halt.

It is common sense that when these problems occur the police should be given the appropriate tools by which to address them. As I mentioned earlier, the opposition has been suggesting for a while that these powers be put in place to address problems such as gatecrashing. I was even more surprised to learn of the opposition to these move-on powers by a number of government members, particularly when the Vice-President of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, Terry O'Gorman, supported the policy. He told the media that he supported the proposal as long as police were accountable for the use of move-on powers and that people who were validly at a party were not ejected.

Terry O'Gorman certainly highlights issues that affect the community and makes us think about them. But I do not care who is involved, they must respect the law. Police officers are not to be abused or assaulted. I refer to an article written by Terry O'Gorman that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on 9 May in which he states—

> We accept that move-on powers have a role to play in dealing with the gatecrashing of teenage parties and to deal with groups outside licensed premises who are acting aggressively.

He states further—

> Frontline legal aid organisations increasingly are getting complaints that the young, the black, the homeless and otherwise marginalised Queenslanders are being given move-on directions in circumstances where a direction is unjustified.

I say to Terry O'Gorman that this issue is not about identifying anybody in particular. All Queenslanders, regardless of who they are, should uphold the law. If a person is having a private party at their place, somebody should not come to that party and create havoc, vandalise the house and wreck the evening. Certainly, police should not be called to parties and have their lives put in danger. I have referred to what happened in Toowoomba. Such actions cannot be condoned in our society. I congratulate the minister because this is very important legislation. The bulk of Queenslanders are saying, 'Enough is enough. Give the police the tools by which they can make our society safer.' That is exactly what this legislation is all about.

Mr O'Gorman stated further in the article—

> We have passed on to the Police Minister various research that has been done by community groups in Queensland showing that the move-on power is being significantly abused.

Terry O'Gorman has referred to a very small section of the community. I think that is unfortunate. We can all blame our past, we can all think about the hard times that we have endured, but nobody has a God-given right to abuse the police or break the law. That is exactly why this legislation has been introduced. A couple of days ago in Tasmania a lout shot a policeman in the face and then a couple of times in the back. Fortunately, the police have caught that bloke. If we do not have respect for our police in our society, how in the name of God are we going to have a society free of this element?

The minister has been talking about increasing the capacity of jails and what have you. I think that a lot of this crime stems from behavioural problems that start in the home. A lot of people blame the kids; it is about time they blamed the parents. I believe that our police do a good job. If we have to increase their powers so that they can make our society safer, so be it.

Some ALP operatives, particularly Young Labor, are up in arms about the extension of the move-on powers. One has to ask why. Is it because they do not trust the minister's recommendations? Is it because they do not trust the accountability mechanisms that are in place to oversee the operations of the Police Service? Perhaps they do not trust the administration of the Police Service. If there are members of this House who oppose these powers, I challenge them to come into this House and say their piece. They should explain why they oppose these powers and have the intestinal fortitude to vote against this bill.

This is a very important bill. It does not apply only to south-east Queensland; it applies to every town right across Queensland. Regardless of where we live, we should be able to live in a safe environment and not have to tolerate the misbehaviour of these idiots and louts who want to go out there and create havoc. Enough is enough. I say again: good on the minister for giving the police these powers to be able to bring some sanity and safety into our communities in question.

Mr Lawlor: What do the Young Nationals think of this, Vaughan? Have you got any?

Mr JOHNSON: The Young Nationals think the same way as I do about this legislation.

Mr Lawlor: You might be one of them.

Mr JOHNSON: I tell the member now that a lot of them think the same way as me. They would not be game to think any other way. In the member's party, they have 25 different ideas.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I will give the member the mail: if I ever get to sit in the seat that the minister is sitting in today, a few of them will be sorry.

This bill contains a provision to make it an offence to evade the police. The opposition agrees that that is appropriate. It also welcomes the provisions relating to the impounding of vehicles. I think it is appropriate to remind the House that on 12 April 1998, as the then minister for transport and main roads, I proposed the impounding of vehicles for hooning offences. I table a copy of an article that appeared in the *Sunday Mail* on that date saying exactly that.

I am concerned about the nonsense being spoken by the minister about how making it an offence to evade the police will address the problem of high-speed car chases. The simple fact of the matter is that if a driver is prepared to risk his or her life and that of innocent road users or police officers by evading the police, how on earth can the minister seriously suggest that this legislation is going to stop them? I also remind the minister that all too often the vehicles used in high-speed car chases are stolen. So to suggest that the fear of having the vehicle involved in the car chase being confiscated will deter these people is laughable. If I was naive I would be laughing. The police will say that nine out of 10 of these vehicles involved in such car chases are stolen and on most occasions it is stolen by somebody who has been trying to evade the police for a long while, or the police have had them in their sights and they have not been able to catch them.

Another simple fact that the minister appears to have overlooked in the formulation of this proposed legislation is that before the police charge anyone, they have to catch them. That is the root of the problem. Unfortunately, the government does not understand that. Let me tell the minister that someone who understands this simple fact is the driver of the vehicle involved in the car chase. I point out to those members opposite that that is the simple reason they are avoiding the police in the first instance.

Another group of people who understand this quite basic fact is police officers. I remind the parliament of an article that appeared in the media earlier this week in which senior police officers again called for a police helicopter after the police had to use a media helicopter to track a person escaping in a vehicle. The minister can persist with her flat-earth approach, but just about every police force in the developed world uses helicopters to deter high-speed car chases. I ask: are all the other states who have police helicopters in the wrong? I think it is only fair that we give our police the tools they need to apprehend criminals and to work in a safe environment.

It was only just yesterday, Madam Deputy Speaker Barry, when the police did a marvellous job in your electorate—and the minister referred to it this morning—in relation to seizing illegal equipment such as detonators and the like. We have to make absolutely certain that the technology available to our police is the best available, and in the House this morning the minister referred to the way other agencies and interstate agencies have been notified about what is going on. I think the police are doing a magnificent job trying to keep the community safe. I can imagine the angst in your neighbourhood, Madam Deputy Speaker, when they found out it was happening in the suburb of Aspley.

We do not know what is going on. The police are working long and hard to apprehend criminals and put some of these people where they belong, but they are risking their own lives in doing so. I hope before too long the minister will say that the helicopter concept was a good idea and we will see it listed in the budget papers for purchase by the Queensland Police Service.

Ms Spence: It is a good idea. It's just not a priority.

Mr JOHNSON: I take that interjection. I know the minister and the commissioner have discussed this before, but priorities change on a daily basis. We are now seeing times changing. Terrorism legislation has been put in place by the federal government, legislation which we have paralleled here and other jurisdictions have as well. Our population is increasing at the rate of between 1,000 and 1,500 people a week. We have an explosion in more ways than one. That is taxing on resources whether it be water, power, education, hospitals, roads—the whole bit. It is also taxing on police resources—our law and order resources.

Fortunately, so far we have not had anything like what has happened in Sydney with the Cronulla riots. Please, God, may we never have that happen in our state. I hope we can have a tolerant society and that that element does not creep into our society. At the same time, our police have to be resourced, to have the tools and mechanisms to work in an environment where these things can crop up at any time. It might not be a priority, as the minister said, but I think it is becoming increasingly more of a priority.

The only thing that will deter car chases is the perceived risk of apprehension and, for as long as this government fails to understand that we have to improve the chances of catching these criminals, then the current problems will persist and lives will be put in danger. More importantly, we do not need to put the lives of police officers and innocent citizens in danger.

Let me respond to some of the other myths that are being peddled about the use of helicopters by the government. The first is that the chases are too short for helicopters to respond. The reason chases are as short as they are is that they are called off because of the danger to the public, as I have just said. Just because the chase is called off does not mean the offence of evading police is over. Simply have a look at the number of accidents that occur after the chase has been abandoned.

The second is the myth that because of the short duration of the chases there will not be enough time for the helicopter to be put into the air. Quite simply, the idea is to have the aircraft in the air doing patrols, not sitting on the ground waiting for a call. This simplistic criticism by the Premier totally overlooks the value of these helicopters doing the patrols to deter chases, not just apprehend offenders. Unfortunately, this response is just a symptom of the prevailing culture of this government to only respond to crime rather than take positive steps to prevent it. This is a strategy best demonstrated by the overreliance upon speed cameras to detect offences rather than prevent them.

I know the government has been criticised for revenue raising and placing speed cameras where they are hidden. If people want to blame anyone I am the bloke who introduced speed cameras into Queensland with my colleague the then minister for police, Russell Cooper, and that is something I do not apologise for. I believe that speed cameras are a tool that have given the Queensland public a somewhat safer road environment. I noticed just last night outside the House a couple of hoons taking off from the QUT on bikes. They would not know if someone were crossing the road to the car park in the dark; they would get cleaned up.

At the end of the day, speed cameras are going to stop that sort of nonsense on our roads. It is important that pedestrians—elderly people, families with little kids—can cross the roads and that kids can play in their backstreets without being worried about some idiot trying his car out. If he wants to become a Niki Lauda or Jack Brabham or whoever, he can do that on the racetrack. With the population exploding here in south-east Queensland—on the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and greater Brisbane—there is no room for that type of behaviour. We all pay our registration and we all pay for our driver's licence. I think we are given that courtesy if we uphold the law.

Before I am labelled as just being negative because of the valid criticisms of aspects of this legislation, I again congratulate the minister on the measures in this legislation that simplify procedures regarding the administration of provisions of domestic violence. Clause 52, for example, does away with the present requirements for the police officer to be the one to serve a domestic violence order if that officer was more than likely the police prosecutor running the matter. It is not practical for that officer to then serve the notice, and this bill permits another officer to serve the notice. This will save valuable time for prosecutors. Similarly, clause 101 enables offenders to be detained in a holding cell rather than being transported to a watch-house. In the city this can save hours of police time but in regional and remote Queensland the savings can be even more significant.

The minister will be aware, however, that I am still concerned about instances of the domestic violence legislation being used vindictively. I am constrained from adding much more here, but one case involved a professional roo shooter in my electorate being denied his right to earn a living because a domestic violence matter deprived him of a licence to possess a firearm. In another matter, a person who was facing deportation was informed that one way of deferring the deportation order was that an unresolved matter like domestic violence was in place and very shortly thereafter a complaint was lodged. Some of these domestic violence orders are totally out of order.

In my own electorate over the last five or six years probably 15 or 20 kangaroo shooters have been faced with this problem. I know that blokes will go to the bar and have a bit of a drink and someone might get a tap on the ear or a smack in the mouth. I have had a few of them myself. But, at the end of the day, if those people lose their firearm licence—because with domestic violence there is automatic retrospectivity and their record of the last five years is taken into account—then we have a situation because those people cannot go about their work. In the workplace those people are damn good blokes. They are out there earning an honest quid with their roo shooting abilities. It costs a lot of money to put a roo shooting outfit together today. I have spoken to the minister and the Attorney-General about this. It is a draconian piece of legislation and certainly has to be revisited. I know of one case where the spouse committed perjury but because a DVO was issued the person accused cannot work as a professional in their chosen field. This is an unfortunate situation.

There will always be people who use legal provisions to get square and, unfortunately, we see that regularly in the Family Court and in other family matters. It is a sad condemnation of our society, but we owe it to those who are being victimised to get the system right. That is precisely what I am saying here today.

The coalition also welcomes police officers being freed from administrative duties by the civilianisation of certain watch-house personnel. That is coalition policy. I again applaud the minister.

This is about getting police officers back on the beat, getting police officers out where they should be—out in public—so we can deter criminal activity. I seek the minister's assurance regarding the training of these people to ensure that the safety of staff, prisoners and the general public is protected.

Similarly, we welcome the creation of a specific offence regarding the serious assault of a police officer. As I mentioned earlier, the opposition proposed such legislation some time ago but was rubbished by the government who claimed that no such legislation was needed. I am pleased to see that with this legislation the minister recognises the validity of the coalition's proposal.

This bill addresses a number of other amendments including giving effect to the confiscation of motorbikes after motorcycle noise offences, with provisions that mirror the hoon legislation. It also fixes the anomaly of not providing powers in relation to carrying out enforcement for riders of animals previously provided under the Traffic Act. It facilitates arrangements to permit minor drug offenders to be assessed for a drug diversion program.

Time is moving on and the afternoon is drawing to a close. I do not intend to speak for too much longer now; I will canvass a couple of issues during consideration in detail. I thank the minister for the courtesy extended to me by providing me and my personnel with a briefing by her officers. I place on record that every time I have been briefed by staff from the minister's office I have found them to be nothing but professional. I mention Simon Tutt, Greg Thomas and Michael Webb, who are members of the minister's staff. I again indicate that there are a number of matters on which I shall be seeking further information during consideration in detail.

The work of our police on a daily basis is becoming increasingly difficult. They are subject to criticism and are subject to being reported to the CMC for little things that may go wrong in the execution of their duty. There are people who are vindictive towards the police and who want to dob them in to the CMC or somewhere else because they have erred in the execution of their duty. Those sorts of people make it increasingly difficult for police to operate.

Young people should be encouraged to join the Queensland Police Service. I hope the minister takes on board the idea of putting in place an education program to encourage young people across rural and remote Queensland into the Police Service. It could educate them about the great work that police do, the great career path that the Police Service offers and how they can become a very integral part of that great organisation.

The young men and women who are sworn in as police officers in this state—and I have been to a couple of ceremonies at Chandler with the minister—are fiercely proud of their uniform and are fiercely proud of what they intend to do. Their badge reads 'with honour we serve'. I say on behalf of the opposition—and I think I speak on behalf of the whole Queensland parliament—that they do a damn good job.

I know that a couple of them make mistakes from time to time, but we are all only human. We all make mistakes. It is about time the general public got behind our police officers and helped instead of hindered them in their duties. Then we can have a safer environment and we can have a state that is proud of its law and order enforcers.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (3.52 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to contribute to the debate of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. As the shadow spokesperson has already mentioned, this bill is extremely wide-ranging. I do not intend to touch on all 100-plus clauses contained in this bill; however, I will touch on a few that I feel are extremely significant, particularly given my 13 years as a serving Queensland police officer.

I refer to the provisions that will provide police with the ability to demand from a person their encryption details. I know from personal experience that both the Queensland Police Service and the CMC have extremely good forensic computer analysts. Most of the time they are able to crack any encryptions on a computer or a telephone. However, it is very time consuming and resource intensive to undertake this sort of forensic computer analysis. I am glad that the police will have the power to direct the handing over of encryption details, and an offence is created by the legislation.

In the past, when police have seized a computer that may contain encrypted files—lawfully obtained via search warrant—it may have then taken them many weeks or months to actually crack the encryption. This is a mechanism to circumvent that waste of time and, also, to penalise suspects if they are not prepared to hand over encryption details. I agree with the honourable member's comment that if a person has nothing to hide they have no reason to not hand over the encryption details. I am very pleased to see this provision in the bill.

I was a member of the safe parties task force established by the minister which looked at the issue of youth parties that sometimes get out of control and tried to determine what could be done to minimise this occurrence and improve the community's response to this problem. We made a number of very broad-ranging recommendations about education and engagement. A number of strategies were mentioned in our report. One was to examine the broadening of move-on powers. Lo and behold, very quickly the minister and the government have delivered.

The honourable shadow minister referred to concerns within Young Labor about this extension to the move-on powers. I will read into *Hansard* a motion passed by Queensland Young Labor on 27 April 2006. The motion states—

1. Queensland Young Labor acknowledges that the State Labor Cabinet and the State Parliamentary Caucus have resolved the State Labor Government's position on Move On Powers.
2. Queensland Young Labor accepts the position taken by the Premier, the Police Minister Judy Spence, the Cabinet and the Caucus.
3. Queensland Young Labor supports the Beattie Labor Government on the position it has taken.
4. Queensland Young Labor expresses its disappointment that an internal statement by Young Labor was leaked.
5. Queensland Young Labor believes that policy debate is an important part of the Labor Party; however, these debates are internal matters. Queensland Young Labor regrets that its view has been compromised.
6. Queensland Young Labor calls on all ALP members to rally behind the Premier, the Police Minister and the State Labor Parliamentary Caucus and support the position undertaken by the State ALP.

It is important to understand that the Labor Party is very broad based and its members disagree on occasions. However, through discussion with the minister and through broad debate, our colleagues in Young Labor have come to understand the protections that will be put in place and the way that increasing police move-on powers will actually try to divert people from ending up in jail or before the courts by allowing them to desist from their behaviour and move on, rather than forcing police to take other legislative action against them.

I will clarify what the move-on power is about. Under current legislation, police have the power to issue a move-on direction only in certain locations, such as outside schools, at ATMs and at certain sporting events. The locations at which these powers can be used are actually very limited and are prescribed. Local governments can apply to have parts of their shire designated as an area in which police can use these powers. However, even when police are in these declared zones, they still cannot issue a move-on direction to someone who is just sitting down and doing nothing wrong.

These details are contained in sections 37 and 38 of the current Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. I will summarise by saying that the person's behaviour must be causing some concern or some threat or disrupting the peaceable behaviour of that area. In some cases, the person's mere presence is sufficient to cause concern. Some member of the public must be concerned about a person's behaviour or presence before the police can even consider using their move-on powers. There is no proposal to change that. We are just expanding the zones in which police can utilise their power effectively to the entire state of Queensland.

I know that some people have issues with how a person's mere presence can threaten or intimidate someone. I ask them to get out in the real world. I speak with a number of seniors groups and if there are 10 Hell's Angels sitting outside an ATM at nine o'clock at night when a little old lady is going down to withdraw some money, I strongly suspect that the presence of those 10 Hell's Angels could very well intimidate. Should that lady receive protection? Yes, absolutely.

Some people are concerned in relation to the assessment of whether the person's presence is disorderly, interfering with trade or business or disrupting the peace and orderly conduct of an event. These are very subjective judgements, I do agree. We give our Queensland police officers a Glock 40-calibre handgun, we give them capsicum spray, we give them batons. Do I trust them to be able to make these kinds of decisions? Absolutely! I have faith in the decision-making ability of our Queensland police officers.

Under other legislation Queensland police officers are required to make similar decisions. If a complaint is made under the noise abatement powers in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act police are required to turn up and make a subjective decision as to whether the noise that is emanating from the party or the gathering is excessive. There are no strict dBA limits and it would be insane to introduce some. Mowing the lawn at midday is quite okay; mowing the lawn at 2 am is not okay. These are subjective issues and we should not try to be too prescriptive. I trust Queensland police officers in their ability to make these subjective decisions.

As always, if someone is given a direction and fails to comply then they will have their day in court. The issue of whether the direction given by that officer was lawful will be tested before an independent court and so it should be. The basic tenet of our legal system is that police and other agencies charge and prosecute; the independent court makes the decision on guilt or innocence, not the Queensland Police Service. I support that continuing.

There will be additions to section 340 of the Criminal Code where the offence of biting, spitting or wilfully exposing a police officer to bodily fluids or faeces will automatically be deemed a serious assault. I believe that for too long we have seen a number of decisions of courts that have given the impression that police should be punching bags and be able to cop a certain level of abuse through their job. Police officers are workers and should have the protection that all other workers have not to be subject to too much violence or too much intimidation in their workplace.

I do not think that anyone could consider that being spat on, being bitten or being wilfully exposed to bodily fluids or faeces should be deemed anything other than a serious assault. Unfortunately, in this day and age, with the number of infectious diseases in the community, these types of attacks cause great psychological stress on the officer and the officer's family. Six months down the track the police officer may be cleared through medical tests, but in the meantime the officer, his family and loved ones have gone through absolute hell before they get that clearance. Mandating that these types of attacks are serious assaults will result in the offenders being subject to the types of penalties that I believe they should be.

All Queensland police officers will welcome the new offence of evade police. It does not mean that police will not be involved in high-speed pursuits in the future. It means that if the police do make the decision to terminate then there is some mechanism to try to identify the driver of the vehicle at the time and take enforcement action against them. This section will not stop pursuits. It is not intended to stop police from exercising their discretion to pursue fleeing offenders; it gives them an option. I am certainly in favour of providing police with a range of options to allow them to make the best tactical decision possible at the time.

I understand the intent behind the shadow minister's call for a police helicopter. However, I must agree with the minister and Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson, for whom I have the highest regard, that it should not be a priority in the foreseeable future for a couple of reasons: most helicopters cost between $5 million and $15 million depending on the aircraft and the electronic fit-out. I would prefer to see that money used on training and equipping more general duties police to get out there on the road and enforce a range of laws, not just looking for speeding motorists.

Secondly, these aircraft require servicing, again depending on the type of aircraft, between every 15 hours of operation and maybe a longer duration of 50 hours of operation. The honourable shadow minister had a go at the Premier's position on this, but the Premier's position is sound. If you have one aircraft and it flies for eight hours in one day and eight hours the next day, then within two hours on the third day it has to land, be closed down, packed up and serviced. The aircraft will be out of service for a number of days while that service is done. That is only flying eight hours per day. There is another 16 hours in the day. That is why there is a good chance that, even given one aircraft, the majority of the time when the helicopter is needed it is going to be on the ground, not in the air. That is a reasonable assessment to make.

The shadow minister might say that we need a helicopter in the air 24/7. We would then have to buy three, four, five aircraft. There would need to be 50 crew to staff them. I would prefer the 50 officers to be out on the street rather than crewing helicopters and flying around. In an ideal world, if we had a couple of hundred million dollars, let us do it. However, in this world we do not have the spare change.

The police do have access to Queensland Emergency Service helicopters. My brother crews on the Queensland Emergency Service helicopters. They are regularly used by police in their enforcement operations. Given that the police have access to helicopters and given the immense cost and questionable value owing to the fact that the helicopter might be in the air when it is needed, I agree with the minister and commissioner that this should not be a priority of this government.

I congratulate the minister, her staff and the department on the amount of work involved in putting together such a broad-ranging bill and certainly commend the bill to the House.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (4.08 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill, which provides a number of amendments to police powers to address current issues and challenges in community policing. Whilst there are many amendments contained in the bill I will touch briefly on a few and then address one aspect in more detail.

Firstly, measures contained in this bill to provide police with a better ability to target the supply of pseudoephedrine address an important aspect of drug enforcement laws in our community. Pseudoephedrine is being used in illegal drug labs to produce amphetamine, a drug that many young people experiment with and some unfortunately find themselves dependent on. Indeed, many of our drug related deaths can be attributed to impurities that are added in the preparation of these drugs in backyard laboratories. The provisions of this bill will make it easier for police to tackle the activities of suppliers and purchasers of large quantities of legal drugs that are used in the manufacture of illegal and dangerous drugs.

The bill also implements an offence of evading police, resulting in an offence being committed where a driver of a motor vehicle fails to comply with a police direction. This amendment enables police to not engage in, or withdraw from the pursuit of, an offending vehicle once they have obtained the registration number of the vehicle.

The provisions do implement a reversal of onus and will require balance of probability determinations where an owner of a vehicle notifies that they were not the driver of the offending vehicle. Whilst this may result in some difficulties in proving some cases, there is great benefit in reducing the likelihood of high-speed police pursuits. Residents in my electorate, and particularly those

living around Beaudesert Road, are familiar with high-speed driving on local roads. In recent times there have been fatalities on this road due to high-speed driving and illegal street racing. High-speed pursuits are dangerous and can result in joy-riding young people with little or no experience losing their lives as they seek to evade police.

Incidents of domestic violence in our community are too high and all too often result in tragic circumstances. The issuing of domestic violence orders enables police to intervene in these matters and provide protection to people under threat of violence. Often those most at risk in domestic violence incidents are children. The provisions in this bill remove restrictions on the serving of domestic violence orders, improving rapid response to incidents of domestic violence, and I welcome these amendments.

I turn now to the area I particularly wish to make comment on, and that is the section of the bill that addresses move-on laws. Laws relating to move-on directions have received considerable community attention, and I have been consulted by several people regarding this section of the law. I have met with people who oppose move-on laws and who seek to have these laws completely repealed. I have discussed usage of these directions with members of the police force, and I have had several conversations with the minister regarding the application of move-on directions. I thank the minister for the opportunity she has provided to meet with me and to discuss concerns raised by my constituents and others regarding move-on laws.

The issue that is most regularly raised with me relates to concerns about the potential for misuse of move-on laws and the need for a stringent review of how these laws are enforced, the nature of directions given and whether particular segments of the community are disproportionately affected by the powers of move-on. I shall comment on those matters further but, firstly, I address the aspect of move-on powers that this bill addresses directly. Currently, move-on powers apply on a limited basis, affecting areas around shops, child-care and preschool centres, schools, licensed premises, railway stations, malls, the corporation area of South Bank, automatic teller machines and war memorials. Many of the people I have spoken to who have indicated opposition to move-on powers acknowledge the need to ensure community safety within these areas. Indeed, constituents in my own electorate often tell me of their need to feel safe around banks, schools and railway stations. It needs to be acknowledged in this debate that perceptions of both safety and freedom in public areas are important to the peaceful enjoyment of our communities and neighbourhoods.

The other areas where move-on directions apply are in notified areas where a government or local government entity has applied to have a stated area notified for the application of move-on powers. These sections of the current act applying to where move-on directions are able to be given are the relevant sections this bill addresses. The bill we debate today replaces the limitations on where move-on directions can be given to provide statewide coverage. The bill is not about the merits or otherwise of police having move-on powers. It is fundamentally about where those powers apply. In effect, what this bill does is remove the process that entities must go through to establish a notified area and then have that area determined by a decision of the minister.

The problem with the current provisions is that notified areas are not generally known by the community and can result in differing police powers applying on different sides of the same street. Under the current laws, there are notified areas confined to certain parks or civic squares. Burleigh Heads, for example, has two notified parks, while Cairns has as notified areas the library and The Esplanade. In Brisbane, there are notified areas at South Bank, the CBD and, recently, in parks in West End and New Farm. It cannot be expected that users of public space will know where police have move-on powers and where they do not. It is central to the amendment this bill provides and an important protection that certainty about enforceable laws is provided to both the community and the police.

Much of the concern about move-on powers that has been raised with me relates to the potential for misuse of these powers. Move-on laws provide police with the power to direct a person to leave a public space if they are causing anxiety to another person. Definitions such as this provide great potential for people who are peacefully using public space to be asked to be moved on because they are deemed arbitrarily to be causing anxiety. It is quite reasonable for there to be community concern about this. The fabric of a free society is reliant upon the free ability for people to move peacefully around public areas without the law enforcement arm of the state being able to interfere unreasonably with this ability.

Much of the discussion regarding move-on powers has also related to the ability to use directions to move on as an alternative to arrest. Of the people who spoke with me about their concerns regarding move-on powers, there were several who recognised this as a potential benefit of the powers. Move-on powers can be used as a tool of passive community policing, with a move-on direction issued rather than arrest in order to resolve local situations. Most recently, this has been recognised by the safe youth parties task force and the government's response to address community safety at neighbourhood parties.

Concern regarding the use of move-on powers frequently comes back to the recording of the use of the powers. Current provisions require move-on directions to be registered, and I have had the opportunity to view some of the figures indicating use of move-on direction. In round figures, of about

the 2,000 directions given in the nine months to December 2005, in some 1,300 cases directions were complied with and approximately 700 directions resulted in arrest. The problem is that it is difficult to interpret these figures with any certainty. One interpretation may be that there were 1,300 cases of a move-on direction avoiding the need to arrest. Another may be that the move-on direction resulted in 700 arrests where arrests may not have been justified in the first instance.

Many people have also spoken with me about there being sufficient police powers without the need for move-on powers. Advocates of this position present compelling arguments. In my view, however, the basis of this is the same debate about whether move-on powers are a true alternative to arrest and whether the powers can be misused.

Following my discussions with the minister, I welcome future review of the use of move-on powers by the CMC. Such a review is important in light of community concerns, and I believe the review should not only consider whether move-on powers are currently being used appropriately but also should recommend on necessary additional protections which may come with the investigation of such things as the method of reporting move-on directions, a requirement to record the reasons for a move-on direction, whether move-on laws are being disproportionately applied to certain groups in the community including young people, homeless and Indigenous people, and the issuing of a warning before a move-on direction is given. I also believe that such a review of move-on laws should include opportunities for public submission.

It is important to note in my contribution to this debate that, whilst I have heard a number of anecdotal accounts of trigger-happy use of move-on directions, I have not been presented with any evidence of current widespread misuse of the powers. We do have a good Police Service in Queensland and the officers whom I have spoken to about the issue and those whom I work with on a regular basis in my local area are good officers who have the safety and the peaceful enjoyment of our community by all as the basis of their approach to policing and community service.

It is important that we provide police with the tools they need to ensure community safety. It is similarly important, particularly in current times where we see increasing powers of law enforcement agencies through security legislation and government responses to intolerance, that we provide essential community protections. It is incumbent on representative governments when developing appropriate police powers to strike a balance between powers of law enforcement agencies with a need to maintain the freedom, peace, individual rights and tolerance that has underpinned the development of the Australian way of life and defines the peaceful enjoyment of public and community space.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (4.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. It is a rather large bill and, as previous speakers have said, there are some important parts that need to be debated. The pseudoephedrine problem really has to be brought under control. Unfortunately, the sale of drugs in the community such as speed has become a real problem. Talking to local police has revealed that that is one of the big issues which they are starting to struggle with, especially these mobile drug labs. Unfortunately, some of the additives they need to manufacture these drugs are able to be bought from pharmacies. So I do support this legislation.

I know that pseudoephedrine is currently classed as S4. I whether we should be looking at tightening up the requirement to get S4 drugs. It is probably a federal issue that is dealt with through the pharmaceutical legislation. I think we could tighten up the legislation relating to S4 drugs to make it bit harder for people to get them. I have had it put to me by one of my local GPs that maybe it should be prescription only. I do not know whether we need to go that far. Speed labs are becoming a major problem. As other speakers have mentioned, it is the additives that make these drugs dangerous for our young people of today.

Another provision relates to searching a person or vehicles for spray paint or screwdrivers. In her second reading speech the minister stated that this provision relates to actions such as paint being used to spray graffiti on a fence or a screwdriver being used to scratch the side of a vehicle. That sounds a bit broad. The bill does not say that. The minister has been a bit more definitive than the bill. I think it is a bit tough to arrest people for having a screwdriver in their car.

Mr English: You have to be able to prove the element of the offence, so you have to prove the intended use.

Mr RICKUSS: That is what I am saying. Most people have screwdrivers in their cars somewhere. Maybe the minister was a bit overzealous in using that as an example in her second reading speech. Cans of spray paint would be—

Mr Lee: They might be spray-painting their bicycle.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right; they could be. I understand what the minister means with that provision, but it must be taken the way it is written.

The bill provides for warrants to be issued to obtain encryption details from a person. That is a good provision. I must admit that I struggle remembering mine at times, so that could be a bit of problem. Technology keeps moving on. Some 20 years ago things like encryption details were not

required. We now require them. It is good to update these requirements. They need to be brought into the legislation. I am sure this will assist the police with some of their policing. I notice that this provision for issuing warrants to obtain this sort of information is subject to judicial oversight. The checks and balances seem to be in place.

The bill provides for the extension of move-on powers to all public places for up to 24 hours. This has been mentioned by the shadow minister and is something that the member for Toowoomba South raised in the House last year when there was quite a large disturbance at a party in Toowoomba. I know that down the coast there have been quite a lot of parties that have almost turned into riots in the street. The police have to be able to act in these situations to move the young offender on—it is mostly young offenders. It really does create some problems. With texting and mobile phones, people can advise a lot of people of a party and people can arrive very quickly. I think the move-on powers are very good.

There is a provision relating to evading police in high-speed pursuits. I support the shadow minister in this regard. I feel that a helicopter would be advantageous for the police force. I know that there are arguments for and against it. Early this year there was quite a dangerous situation whereby one of the news helicopters was acting as the pursuit helicopter.

Mr English: The offender still got away, though.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. There were no police there to arrest them. Did they ever arrest those offenders? The minister might be able to tell us whether they caught those offenders.

Ms Spence: I will find out for you.

Mr RICKUSS: I thank the Minister. The bill provides for the establishment of the identity of the owner of a thing in question. This could be a real problem. I do not know whether the police minister is fully aware, but I have been told that some of the bikie gangs have a shelf company that actually registers all of their motorbikes. The bike would not actually be registered in Ian Rickuss's name or Mike Horan's name; it would be registered in the name of the shelf company. Those people do not lose licence demerit points if they are caught by speed cameras because the company pays the fine. If someone is willing to pay the extra money they can actually get around a lot of these issues.

I actually like motorbikes and have ridden them for years. Even when I was a young bloke the bikie gangs were very hard to police because they would say that they were not riding their bike. They would say, 'Joe Bloggs had it. I do not know who he was. He loaned it for the day.' The issuing of tickets was very hard. It is hard to police people who are just blatantly abusing the law. The bikie gangs do that. Unfortunately, they are also involved very heavily with speed, steroids and those sorts of things. I think the minister should look very seriously at how we actually police some of those things. The shelf companies make it very hard to confiscate the bikes. The bike is not owned by a person. Could the minister explain in her summing-up whether that is covered by this legislation?

The legislation places the onus on the owner of the vehicle to provide the name of the driver. One of the truck owners in my area faced a situation whereby the bloke who was driving his truck when it was caught by a speed camera was overseas and he could not contact him. There are flaws that I think need to be tidied up. He signed a statutory declaration and all that sort of thing. The driver was overseas and he could not sign it. I do not know whether it is the police or the transport department that should look into that. It is a issue of fines.

In the minister's second reading speech there is mention of a defence of probabilities. This is where the bikie gangs will come into it. The probability is that they will never be the owner of the bike or never be riding the bike. It could be hard to enforce the penalties.

The amendment to section 340 of the Criminal Code relates to the serious assault of a police officer—spitting at, biting or throwing bodily fluids at police. They risk getting hepatitis and HIV. The bill provides for a seven-year maximum term of imprisonment. Has the minister spoken to the Attorney-General about this? Will there be a minimum term? This involves the serious assault of police, most of whom are family people. If this happens to them, they do not know for months whether they have contracted hepatitis C or AIDS. It puts a lot of stress on young police men and women with young families. I honestly feel that we should have a minimum sentence set down in the legislation. It is a real problem otherwise. There is nothing more vile than someone spitting in a police officer's face or biting them as they are trying to arrest them. It is really unacceptable in this day and age, particularly given transmittable diseases such as hepatitis C and AIDS.

It is nice to see that the minister is making some effort to tidy up and speed up processes related to domestic violence. Unfortunately, police officers are always in a no-win situation in relation to domestic violence complaints. I know that they are hesitant to go to domestic violence incidents because they are difficult issues. I have actually witnessed a domestic violence incident. The husband was nearly bashing the wife's brains out and the police officers interfered, so the wife got stuck into the police as well and opened up one of the police officer's eyes. It is not an easy situation. It is good to see that police can handle these issues quickly now by locking offenders up locally.

I turn to the civilian watch-house officer's functions and powers. The amendments make a lot of sense, as a lot of the major prisons are run by people who are not sworn police officers. That seems to make a lot of sense.

There is a provision in the legislation relating to towing away the confiscated vehicles of hoons. I thought I saw somewhere that it was costing the government a lot of money. Has some thought been put into making that not too expensive for the government? It would be nice if the minister could explain that in her summing-up.

The stock held by the police is another provision. The voluntary surrender of animals could entail quite a cost to the police or owners. If the police had to hold half a dozen head of stock it would be costly. It is probably the small amounts that are a real issue. The owners can yard them cheaply on their properties, but if they have to be held in a small police yard and feed has to be supplied then it becomes expensive, especially if they are held for a long time. I think common sense has to be used with regard to those issues. I know that country police do that. It is an interesting issue at times.

Clause 24 provides the power to regulate animal traffic. I actually thought the police already had that power; I did not realise they did not have that. Like the minister said, that power is included in another act and has been moved into this legislation. Most times I have been at situations which involve cattle on the road, when the police have arrived they have taken charge and everything works out all right. I have some queries about motorbike noise, and I would like the police minister to advise me if the motorcycle noise legislation that was passed last year is in place and working yet.

Ms Spence: 1 July.

Mr RICKUSS: So it will come into place on 1 July. Has the minister just tidied it up after realising there were a couple of flaws in the legislation?

Ms Spence: We had to train the police officers.

Mr RICKUSS: That is good to know because a couple of people have rung my office asking when it was going to be legislated because the local police have been struggling. The police knew about the law but they were not implementing it yet.

The work of our police is much more difficult these days so I fully support the local police. I must admit I have a couple of really good police sergeants in my electorate: Sergeant Mick Brennan of Gatton and Sergeant Jim McDonald of Laidley. They do a great job with their team of officers and they help me out whenever they can.

I encourage the minister to support my local stations by keeping their facilities and equipment to a high standard. We would particularly like to get the driver testing out of the Gatton Police Station. It is actually a real bugbear at Gatton because the police station is cramped. I know this is an issue for the transport minister, and I am still working on him to try to get that shifted and I am sure we will get that done. The local police do a great job and I fully support them, but I encourage the police minister to support them by providing them with the highest standard of resources and facilities. I support the bill.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (4.32 pm): It is my great pleasure to support the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. I would particularly like to support the amendment of section 20 of the existing act which will enable police officers to monitor excessive sales of pseudoephedrine through pharmacies. Most pharmacists are very professional and would not be involved in the trade of drugs like sudafed. Pseudoephedrine is often converted into the drug known as ephedrine which is used to make amphetamines such as speed. The result of people using amphetamines is absolutely shocking. For example, people who take amphetamines regularly could have a dependent lifestyle. Some of them are methamphetamines, which is known as ice.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: They call them recreation drugs.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, they are called recreation drugs; that is quite right. In relation to the dependent lifestyle, some of these people go on a roller-coaster ride over many weeks. They have three to four days where they might be awake all day and all night, they become highly stimulated and then they go on a three- to four-day downer. They tend to not eat during this time and their hygiene is very bad. They also tend to be unsafe injectors and they live for their next dole payments. It is a really bad lifestyle that they live.

Some of these people who are dependent become more aggressive and they are more prone to risk-taking behaviour, which means they come to the attention of the police more often. They also become noticeable to our Queensland health staff because they tend to go into drug-induced psychoses as well. These particular patients are extremely difficult to manage by both Queensland health professionals and Queensland police officers. Some of them also have dental problems. For example, when they are as high as kites, they tend to grind their teeth and some grind their teeth to the extent that their teeth actually break, which is quite a concern.

I would now like to turn to the amendment which allows a police officer to search a suspect in a vehicle without a warrant to seize evidence for prosecution for wilful damage and destruction offences. I would like to comment particularly in relation to graffiti offences because, unfortunately, we have had

more graffiti in my electorate of late. We have had graffiti not only on walls but also on street signs. We have even had some graffiti on garages, and this is quite a problem in new housing estates. These vandals wait until garage doors go on the houses, which gives them a lovely white or cream canvas, and then they spray their tags on them.

These vandals have also set up a web site on which they put photos of their graffiti. Unfortunately for them, they have not worked out that the police are on to them and they include photos of themselves with their graffiti tags so the police know who they are. Some of them have actually not changed out of their school uniform so the police can actually apprehend them because they know which school they go to.

Ms Spence: They're making it easy for the police.

Mrs MILLER: They are making it very easy for the police. Maybe, Minister, we should encourage the use of this web site so we can continue that connection.

I would also like to talk briefly about extending the move-on powers in relation to youths who invade family parties. This is not a particular problem in my electorate because not many people can afford these parties, but can I say that there is a gang mentality associated with this. They tend to text each other and then they text everyone else and it does become an issue, but it is certainly not as prevalent in my electorate as it is in some of the other areas of Brisbane. I think it is predominantly in the western suburbs where they have a lot more money than we do in my neck of the woods.

I would also like to talk briefly about police pursuits. The police officers I know certainly do not like police pursuits, and I am very pleased that there is a provision to make it an offence for a person to evade police by failing to stop their vehicle when directed to do so by police officers. That is very important. For subsequent offences, the vehicle can be forfeited to the state. I am pleased that these particular offenders will be using our public transport system more because they will be using trains, buses and taxies if they actually get caught.

In relation to the serious assault of police officers—which is the amendment to section 340 of the Criminal Code—the police officers in my electorate, particularly those at Goodna, are in absolute support of this provision. They know what it is like to be spat on by offenders; that is an absolutely disgusting offence. This does not just affect them in their role as police officers; it is also a concern for their families because they have to go through all sorts of tests for hepatitis and HIV through Queensland Health, and this becomes a cost to the health system. The police officers at Goodna have certainly asked me to express their support for this provision.

In relation to domestic violence matters, the police in my area have always said to me that filling out the forms in relation to domestic violence takes them hour after hour after hour, so I am very pleased that the police will be permitted to commence a domestic violence application by a notice to appear. This will effectively save them many, many hours of police time.

In fact, tomorrow I will be launching the Queensland police and Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence and the Tofa Mamao A Samoa 'Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence Program'. This is an excellent program which will be launched at the Goodna Cultural Centre tomorrow morning, and the whole event will be held over three Fridays. They will look at domestic and family violence prevention strategies.

This year, the theme is 'Domestic and family violence, see the signs, be the solution'. The clear message is that domestic and family violence is not acceptable and it aims to reinforce the message that every person in our community is responsible for reducing the issue collectively.

I will be launching the event tomorrow, 12 May, and it will continue on Friday, 19 May, and Friday, 26 May. It will include workshops with women addressing domestic and family violence. On the second day there will be a movie screening which will present a family who has openly addressed the issue of domestic and family violence within their own family. That will be followed by an open discussion. In the evening, there will be a dance for young people hosted by the Nu Generation.

On the final day there will be a talent show and a dance music workshop for young people who attend the local high schools. I would like to thank Chelsea Malinas-Barba from the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence and Filipo Laufutu. Filipo Laufutu is a Samoan police liaison officer. He is also an elder in the Samoan community. He is the most wonderful police liaison officer. I am sure he would be welcome in any community throughout Queensland. He does an excellent job on behalf of the Queensland Police Service.

I would also like to thank Amy Stockwell of the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence, Itaotema Patu, Pepe Tanuvasu and Tauline Virtue. They do a wonderful job in my community. I am always pleased to be asked to work with them in relation to domestic violence issues. Domestic violence crosses cultures. It also crosses the socioeconomic divisions in the community.

In conclusion, I strongly support the police in the electorate of Bundamba. There are police beats and shopfronts in Riverview, Redbank, Redbank Plains, Goodna and Springfield as well as a 24-hour police station at Goodna. I would particularly like to place on record my appreciation for Andy

Ballantyne, Chris Booth and Rodney Ward who are sergeants in the area and who do an absolutely fantastic job in the community. Constable Kirrilie is expectant with twins. I understand that the people of Riverview are awaiting the birth of these babies. The community fully supports the police in my area. We are right behind them. They do a great job. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (4.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Before I refer to the bill, I would like to ask the minister to consider building a new station for the Kingaroy area. I know that recently the station received a new coat of paint but, as they say, a coat of paint covers a multitude of sins. The area is growing rapidly and the station is bursting at the seams. They and I would appreciate the minister rectifying that situation.

I have no major issues in relation to this bill. Each year I am confronted with the frustration of police officers who take their job seriously and passionately. Although we get the occasional officer who can be a bit overzealous and can at times cause a lot of animosity between the police and the general public, the majority of police officers have the interests of their community at heart. I find it very sad that, because of the actions of one police officer, a member of the public reacts by becoming vitriolic to all police. The police must ensure that their actions are appropriate to the situation they are dealing with. I know that at times that is not an easy task, but they should not regard their job as a power trip. As I said, members of the public are not always easy to deal with, but nor are they always in the wrong.

However, when the general public come to me about what they consider to be an injustice to them on the part of the police, I have found all the police in my electorate to be very cooperative. They have listened with patience to any queries that I have had. They have corrected the situation if it needed to be addressed. But the general public should not have to come to me or any other member in this House just to be listened to. I think that issue needs to be addressed at a local level.

This bill covers a wide spectrum. Over the years, after listening to constituents and others about their experiences, I have come to the conclusion that the majority of people will have to forgo some rights or be subjected to what a minority might describe as an intrusion on their liberties to achieve what was once taken for granted, and that is a peaceful existence. It is getting harder and harder for people to live peacefully like their parents and their grandparents did. Unfortunately, it is a bitter pill to swallow, but hard measures have to be put in place. The judiciary has to come on board and back the police when they apprehend these people. They have to stop sending them back out into the community time after time after time. There are people who are still out on the street after committing 20 or 30 offences such as driving under the influence. It is just a joke. Does someone have to get killed because the judiciary has not imposed an appropriate sentence after giving these people all of these warnings? The public get frustrated and they say things like, 'Why the heck should we complain to the police? Nothing happens. They just go to court and they get let out again.' The police and the judiciary have to work together to try to solve the problem. One cannot do it without the support of the other.

I have to say that I do not mind the move-on powers at all. We have to control the unruly elements in the community. Someone sees a party happening, they send text messages about it to heaps of people in an instant and the next minute people are congregating on a street they have probably never heard of or been to before. That often occurs with parties. People who want to have a party with their friends—say an 18th or 21st birthday party—now have to be almost secretive about when the event is on for fear that someone might spread the word and then the party is gatecrashed with the ensuing damage and noise and the upsetting of the neighbours. A lot of people do not think that it is worth while holding parties anymore. The fact that people who wish to hold parties have to hire security guards shows that this element of society has got totally out of control. Text messaging is a great way to communicate, but the abuse of text messaging can result in actions like the recent riots that we saw in Cronulla. That is an adverse reflection on society as a whole.

I know that the civil libertarians are going to snivel at this bill. They will oppose it and say that it can be open to abuse by the police. But if people are acting in a way that draws the attention of the police to them, perhaps it is time they looked at themselves and their behaviour. What might seem like a bit of fun to them could be seen as really aggressive behaviour by anyone else. It is time they stopped blaming everyone else for the fact that they have drawn undue attention to themselves. Mouthing off at police is not acceptable. Abusing people when they walk past is unacceptable. Physically abusing or spitting at police is not acceptable. I have even heard of one instance where a fellow cut himself and threatened police with the blood dripping from his hand. In this day and age, that is unacceptable behaviour.

Unfortunately, we cannot always control the actions of idiots. Because of those idiots police powers are being increased to the disadvantage of the majority. But I believe that the majority want to live in a good, calm and peaceful society and will willingly accept these increased powers into their lives if they have to. Generally, I think that the majority of people accept that the police have a job to do and they are happy for them to be doing it. Police need to be able to stop trouble occurring at the earliest opportunity. In terms of the increased police powers contained in this bill, I think erring on the side of caution is probably the better way to go.

This bill allows police officers to monitor excessive sales of pseudoephedrine through pharmacies. The evolution of the drug industry has seen an abuse of this particular drug and, therefore, there is a need for the police to be very careful about the way in which it is used and distributed. I have no problem with the police being given the power to go into pharmacies and inspect their registers in order to compare their entries relating to the sale of pseudoephedrine and their stock on hand. Unfortunately, that is a sign of the times. I think a previous speaker said that such a drug is referred to as a recreational drug. There is no such thing as a recreational drug. Young people regard recreation as fun, as adventure and as probably doing something that their parents do not want them to do. Therefore, to them, taking recreational drugs is one of the best things that they can possibly do. Unfortunately, that is often how kids think. It is a bit of a thrill for them to buck the system. Quite frankly, we have to come down very hard on any abuses of pseudoephedrine or any other drug.

Under this bill, searching a person's vehicle without a warrant for an offence involving wilful damage will be permissible but—and I really hope this is correct—only where there is a reasonable suspicion. This also will upset civil libertarians. But, again, people have nothing to fear if they have not done the wrong thing and there is suspicion, as the average person would not object to their car or themselves being searched to a reasonable extent, as long as it is not too intrusive.

One thing that really appals me is graffiti that appears overnight. I do not care what anyone says: it is not a work of art to the owner of the premises, regardless of what the person who did it thinks. They are vandals. They are destroying someone's property. There is no other word for it. If they want to spray-paint their artwork on their own walls, I have absolutely no problem with that. Let them go ahead. Fill your boots, guys. If you want to spray-paint your own gear, that is fine. Just do not do it to anyone else's. If they spray-paint public property or railway carriages or anything like that, let them wear a just penalty for that. As far as I am concerned, on top of the penalty, they should be given a toothbrush and asked to scrub every inch of whatever surface they sprayed just for good measure.

When I hear about paedophile activity, which is a regular occurrence—in fact, it is getting to the point where we hear about it so often that it does not have the impact it used to a few years ago—and the bombs that were found, which was on the media last night and probably had a greater impact, then, quite frankly, I have no qualms in supporting the provisions in this bill for the power whereby a suspect is required to provide their password or their de-encryption code. Those acts are reprehensible, so I am happy to support the giving of more power to police to make sure that those offenders are brought into line.

There is a lot in this bill. Although I would like to comment further on the bill, overall I have no major qualms about it, as I have said. As technology evolves, so too do criminals find new ways to cover up their tracks and therefore new methods and powers must evolve to meet them. Threatening people or police with blood-filled syringes is more frightening for many today than a knife or a gun. No-one would ever have dreamt of that scenario a few years ago. But that is the reality today. As such crimes become extreme, so, unfortunately, must the responses to them be.

I will finish on that note. If no-one minds, I table this petition requesting a pedestrian crossing. There are a lot of things to do with police, pedestrian crossings and cars in the bill. It is a non-conforming petition.

Ms Male: You will need to seek leave.

Mrs PRATT: I was told I did not have to seek leave. I am just tabling it. I congratulate the minister on the bill and I hope the police come down really hard on the offences covered by this legislation.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.53 pm): I am pleased to rise today to support the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I would like to confine my remarks to aspects of the bill which relate to amendments to move-on powers, the sale of pseudoephedrine, police searches, domestic violence matters and police powers to search vehicles and persons.

Firstly, with regard to police move-on powers in public places, they will be extended to ensure that people using any public place lawfully feels safe to do so. At the moment the powers do not apply to all of the areas. A 'move-on' power is defined as the ability of a police officer to direct a person to move from a particular public place or area in certain instances and for a period of time up to 24 hours. For example, there have been a number of incidents where the public have not felt safe recently; namely, private parties that have spilled out onto the streets because of disturbances and gatecrashers. I note that the member for Nanango, who spoke prior to me, had a lot to say about this. My thoughts are that if you are concerned in any way do what my husband and I did recently when we helped our daughter Tai celebrate her 18th birthday: we felt that hiring security guards was the best and simplest option. And we had no trouble. In fact, the party was a huge success and everyone had a great time.

Mr Johnson: How sad, though, that you had to do that to celebrate a birthday.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: It is a sign of the times and we just have to move on.

Mr Johnson: You shouldn't have to do that.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: The member has a valid point but we cannot dwell on the past. We have to move on and deal with the situations as they arise. Yes, it is a bit sad, but we felt that we had to do it. And, yes, it was at some cost to us but we did not want to take any unnecessary risks. At the end of the day, we felt it was the right decision and our private function was not interrupted, and there were no complaints. In fact, everyone had a great time, including me.

The bill not only addresses those people who invade a private party and cause disruption but those people who illegally prey on people using public areas. Advocates of move-on powers will argue strongly that the general public should be entitled to use any public space without fear of any kind of disruption, and anyone who does disrupt should be able to be moved on. Safety and public order for people has to be paramount. If used correctly, these enhanced powers will give police the opportunity to deal with a situation without needing to charge or arrest someone.

The amendments to section 20 of the PPRA will enable the police to monitor, for the first time, excessive sales of pseudoephedrine through pharmacies. Pseudoephedrine is a safe and effective nasal decongestant used in the relief of symptoms of colds, flu and allergies. I am fairly certain that everybody here has had to use pseudoephedrine at times. However, the diversion of pseudoephedrine and pseudoephedrine-containing medicines for the illicit production of methylamphetamines, or speed, is a growing problem within communities. Illicit drug dealers use many methods to buy bulk supplies of pseudoephedrine. I heard recently—and I am not sure I believe this—that drug dealers hire elderly retired people and send them down south. They hire them a car and they drive back visiting every pharmacy along the way, and when they reach their destination they have a boot full of medicine containing pseudoephedrine.

Mr Lawlor: Sounds like a good job to me.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: You would wonder where your grandmother had been if she went on a long trip.

Mr Lawlor: Or grandfather.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: Or grandfather. As a long time antidrug campaigner and honorary president of the Caboolture drug awareness team, which provides a drug awareness and prevention program to primary school children, I support any measure that will help rid our streets of these so-called recreation drugs. People have the opinion, or at least some of the people who take these pills have the opinion, that if you do not shoot up you are not a druggy. These pills are very dangerous and there have been several reports of people overdosing on them and dying. We really have to change that attitude because these so-called recreation drugs are just that: they are a drug and they are dangerous.

The member for Glass House, Carolyn Male—and I acknowledge her in the chamber—and I attended a remembrance day recently as part of domestic and family violence week where we lit a candle for those who had died as a direct result of domestic violence. The state government has provided extra funding to expand the antidomestic awareness campaign 'See the signs. Be the solution.' But everyone needs to do more because domestic violence offences are on the rise. Police statistics in some areas show that 60 per cent of their time is taken up on domestic violence issues. This is disgraceful and not acceptable and the amendments introduced here today are positive in addressing domestic violence in terms of rapid response to victims and acknowledging the needs of those victims.

At present, a domestic violence application by police needs the prerequisite step of arrest or the service of a summons, and these processes take time. However, the amendments will allow police to start a domestic violence application by a notice to appear, which will fast-track the process and save police time. Also, if a detention for a cooling-off period is to be used, a police officer may use a holding cell at a police station rather than having to transport a respondent to a watch-house, which will also potentially save valuable police time. They are steps in the right direction, but it is up to all of us to do what we can to prevent domestic and family violence.

Vandalism, including wilful damage and graffiti, costs the community many thousands of dollars each year. I joined the bipartisan parliamentary graffiti task force to look at solutions to this problem, and I successfully lobbied for a graffiti trailer in the Pumicestone electorate, which also services the Glass House electorate. I am pleased that all the areas we have painted over, which had obscene and offensive graffiti, have actually not been attacked by vandals again. I do not know whether that is good luck or good management. However, at least it has improved the outlook of those areas.

The amendment in the bill that covers wilful damage and graffiti prescribes additional lawful circumstances that have been identified as necessary to investigate and, in some cases, prevent crime. It allows a police officer, who holds a reasonable suspicion, to search a suspect and a suspect's vehicle without a warrant in order to seize evidence which may lead to a successful prosecution for a wilful damage or destruction offence. This will contribute to the protection of individuals and private and public properties, particularly trains and schools.

The potential impact of new police powers on the rights and liberties of individuals is recognised, but it is outweighed by the benefit to the community in terms of reducing crime and apprehending criminals. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (5.00 pm): It is a real pleasure to speak to this bill, which provides a lot of extra protection and assistance to the Police Service and the public. As the shadow minister said, it mirrors many of the coalition's policy principles.

I want to cover a number of issues. Firstly, I would like to comment on high-speed pursuits. The legislation is eminently sensible and echoes what the public have been saying for a long time. Why continue with dangerous pursuits if there is a real risk of injury to the people who are being pursued, to other drivers—who could be hit in a head-on collision or some such thing—to pedestrians on the side of the road or to the police themselves.

Of course, the inherent problem with this is that people might think they can just jump in a car and escape the police or the attention of the police simply by driving away at high speed because there is no longer the threat or risk of being chased. As this bill outlines, the police are able to note the numberplate. In a number of cases, that will identify the owner. On some occasions the owner may not be the driver. In those instances the police can pursue details of the driver through the owner.

Of course, the issue of stolen cars stands out as being an extremely difficult one. On some occasions the police will know that a car is stolen because a description has come through their communications system. I think we can rely on the comprehensive training provided to police at the academy, and the further training and experience that they gain through the system, to enable them to make a decision in those cases. I agree with this part of the legislation. I think the only difficulty will be in relation to stolen cars. We need to create the impression and the correct perception in the community that if you steal a car you cannot simply evade police who try to follow you by driving off at high speed. That is probably the only area of difficulty. Overall, the safety of police officers and other citizens is important, and this fits in with public feeling on this issue.

I fully agree with stiffer penalties for serious assaults on police. I have commented on that in relation to my own electorate. We are seeing a change in society. In the past, someone who might have had a bit too much ink on board might take a swing at police officers after being at a nightclub, or something like that. Today, when it comes to syringes and spitting and all sorts of other acts—and I commend the minister on her use of the word 'vile' in her second reading speech—we must develop a standard where people have fear and trepidation and know that there are serious consequences if they attack police.

Police are often referred to as the thin blue line. A history of the Queensland Police Service is contained in a book called *The Thin Blue Line*. They are the thin blue line. They are the front line of law and order and safety in our society. They face very difficult and dangerous situations and we must give them the protection that they need. This legislation certainly does that, and I commend that. In particular, it provides safeguards for the families of police officers. The concern that they face as a result of incidents involving syringes or spitting is extreme. It is a real worry when family members have to undertake various tests for hepatitis, AIDS and so forth.

I have strong personal feelings about this. My father and grandfather served their whole careers in the Police Service. My father was twice awarded the George Medal for bravery in disarming an offender. One incident occurred in the police minister's electorate of Mount Gravatt during an armed siege. My grandfather looked after the kanakas in north Queensland as a mounted trooper and he was injured in riots. Policing has been in the family. I remember my mother's concern when my father went out on night duty, and those sorts of things. As a result of personal family experience, I have the strongest of beliefs in the protection of police. I commend the minister, because we must protect them. We must send the strongest message possible to the community that if someone attacks a police officer in any way, shape or form it is a serious offence and the consequences are serious.

I want to speak about a very serious incident that happened in one of Toowoomba's south-western suburbs in February this year. We hear about these parties that go wrong and turn into riots. This was very serious. It involved a couple of hundred people. The police were called five or six times during the night. On that particular night, during a certain period of time, the police received some 60 calls. An incident was reported virtually every four minutes. Some of those incidents may have involved domestic violence. I know that there was an armed robbery, or a hold-up, and those sorts of things. But this was a major incident, a serious example of a party gone wrong, typical of what we see and hear about these days. Gangs were roaming the streets and when the police arrived, they went and hid in the backyards of houses. Some elderly women were terrified. A couple of fellows in their late 20s intervened to try to help people who were being bashed on the street by 10 fellows kicking the hell out of them. One bloke who intervened suffered a broken nose; he copped a fence paling across the face. That is how serious this incident was. Some very serious bashings occurred during this event.

The police said to the citizens during the evening, 'We can't do anything because we haven't got the powers. We haven't got the powers to move these people on.' I have made comments before and since about these matters. The police must have the power to move people on. I think the average citizen believes that the police have that power. People think that they can ring the police if there are 200 people going berserk in the street, with bashings and kickings and everything else. However, as

soon as a police car turns up, they stop or they run and hide in backyards. People think that the police can come and get rid of these offenders—and rightly so, because that is what needs to happen and that is what should happen.

Another thing that many people do not understand—because it is the first time they have come up against something like this—is that, in the aftermath of these events, someone has to lay charges. If no-one lays a charge, the police do not necessarily arrest someone unless they have actually witnessed the event happening themselves.

The extension of these move-on powers is commendable and it is what I have been calling for. When these move-on powers were first introduced in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act in 1997, the then police commissioner, Russell Cooper, went to a lot of trouble in relation to it because it was quite a new concept. It was actually an attempt to formalise something that had probably just happened generally in the past. However, because of modern times, it needed to be formalised. The police needed clear guidelines and legislative support for what they had to do. Russell Cooper went to see Terry O'Gorman and tried to get the relevant checks and balances and so forth.

Since then we have had the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, and there have been a number of additions and extensions to that. We have seen the police move-on power gradually expanded to the point where, prior to this bill, it was extended to prescribed places such as banks, teller machines, schools and so on. They basically had to be prescribed places, and that was the problem for police at this suburban riot; they believed that they did not have the power to do anything.

Some people would say that there is a difference between common law and the statutory law or rules that the police apply in determining whether they can act. Police can certainly move people on currently under common law if they believe they are in a dangerous situation, but they cannot, as I understand it, tell them to move on if they think that they might do something to someone else. That is where the move-on powers that we are introducing in this bill will add to the array of actions that the police are able to undertake.

I believe this is a very good part of the legislation because the police must be able to do this. The community expect it. The example I have just given is the perfect example. It is virtually a riot in the streets. When a party gets out of control—when there are bashings, more trouble occurring, grog everywhere and fuelled up gangs roaming the streets—that is when police need to move people on and get them out of the area because there is only one thing that will happen, and that is an escalation and further trouble.

I contacted the police after the incident. I would like to thank them sincerely because they went to a lot of effort to meet a number of people who had contacted my office and the Toowoomba *Chronicle* which was very concerned about people not being charged, and that comes back to someone laying a charge. People were very concerned about the lack of move-on powers and that the police would come around and be virtually impotent and unable to do anything. I sincerely thank the police in Toowoomba because they went around and saw all those people and went through the whole issue. People were relatively satisfied. What people do want to see is these move-on powers so that that type of incident can never happen again and the police have the wherewithal to be able to deal with these situations and stop them.

Members only have to look at what happened in Cronulla to see how that festered over a couple of years. I knew someone down there who told me a week before the incident occurred that something was going to happen. People were going to the beach and kicking a soccer ball into families until they had to get up and move. The police did not seem to have any power to prevent this festering into what actually happened.

Domestic violence is one of the major tasks that police attend to, along with drug induced crime. I am a supporter of the safety that is provided to mostly women in relation to domestic violence. But there are cases of marriage or relationship breakdowns where people are put on domestic violence orders and when they are challenged it is found to be nothing more than a legal manoeuvre by one side against the other for future proceedings. There should be a system where that DVO that did not stack up can be taken off the record. I think that would be fair. That would mean that the more serious, genuine cases would be brought before the police for their action and it might relieve some of the workload that they are being given which may not be a true domestic violence situation.

It is a good idea to have civilians in watch-houses to allow operational police to be out on the streets doing police work. This bill is providing regulations so that civilians can undertake tasks in the watch-house. One of the major tasks of police is attending to drug-induced crime. People on speed have a target in their mind and are driven to do something; they are totally focused and unable to stop. If someone is high on speed and they go to attack someone it is virtually impossible to stop them. If they have decided that they are going to commit a break and enter they will do that regardless because speed focuses and drives them to do it. It is one of the real issues for our Police Service. If we can make the supply of these drugs more difficult it will reduce the amount of crime that these people undertake, which will help our Police Service greatly.

Our shadow minister brought up the need for the Queensland Police Service to have phone tapping powers. In this modern age of technology our Police Service has its hands handcuffed behind its back because it does not have phone tapping services. With proper systems of monitoring, such as the Public Interest Monitor, which is involved with covert operations that the police undertake, we can ensure that the checks and balances are there. In Queensland people can use their mobile phones to do drug deals knowing that there is very little chance that their call will ever be intercepted. It is a relatively safe way that they can conduct these drug deals.

The only way that phone tapping is able to be used by our police is in conjunction with the CMC and it is mainly only when it comes to a major crime ring that is being investigated; the day-to-day issues of trying to catch someone make it very difficult. I believe that we have to give our police the equivalent technology and the equivalent means to solve crime that the perpetrators have at their disposal to undertake that crime.

In a modern police service with a big metropolis area like south-east Queensland, when one looks at what other police services around the world have, surely a helicopter that is on standby—not flying eight hours a day as a member for the other side said—available for use when accidents or incidents occur and time is of the essence would be of invaluable service. Members will recall that big crash last year that occurred in peak hour traffic on the Ipswich Motorway. Everything was held up for four or five hours. People were not seriously injured. The police found it difficult to get to the event because of the traffic jams. The police need a chopper that can come, assess the situation, carry out the initial investigation quickly, get the vehicles off the road if no-one has been seriously injured and they have been extracted, and then be able to get the traffic moving again. It would be of use in sieges and searches where time is of the essence and specialised people need to be brought in quickly. I think a helicopter would be of invaluable service to our Police Service.

Whilst talking about the police, I want to commend the Police Citizens Youth Club system. It is one of the most marvellous things that the police do in Toowoomba. I would like to commend Sergeant. Cam Crisp for the work that he has done and the tradition he has carried on—all the volunteers and the young people who are trained to be leaders. The membership in Toowoomba is in the order of 3,000, off the top of my head. It is a wonderful service providing training in boxing, gymnastics or youth leadership. It is a great club which provides another side to policing—that is, that the policeman is your friend. Young people can grow up knowing that the police are there for them. They are the pillars of our society. The volunteer police officers who help run the blue light disco and are on the committee of the PCYC and help in various aspects of the PCYC are something that we should always maintain. It is a very important part of the police service.

There is one issue that I wanted to bring up that the minister might be able to address if he has time in his summing up. Someone from Toowoomba approached me about a person they know who went to Brisbane for a party. It was substantial pre-wedding party one Saturday night. This person went home in a cab. The next day he wanted to drive home to Toowoomba and wanted to be absolutely sure that he was right to drive home in terms of blood alcohol content. He went to two hotels. One did not have one of those breathalyser machines and the other one had one that was broken down. He went to a large police station on the north side of Brisbane and asked if he could do a breathalyser test and was told no. I can understand that people could queue up at the police station wanting a breathalyser test. Members can imagine on a Friday night that there could be 100 people lined up wanting to know whether they can drive their car home. It is worthwhile considering. He said he was prepared to pay $20 because to him it was important when driving two hours home to Toowoomba to do it correctly and it was important to him to be sure. It may not be a major matter, but it is worthwhile looking at because I know a lot of people would like to be sure that they are doing the right thing.

In conclusion, I commend the government for this legislation. We are giving it our full support. The part that I feel very strongly about is the protection of our police from accident, injury or attack. I also feel that the move-on powers are absolutely essential. We are hearing about these parties and riots all the time and the police must have the power to deal with them. We must have confidence in our police that they will make the right judgement calls in doing this.

My final issue concerns investigations that police carry out into their own members who are under the purview of the CMC. Those investigations are worthwhile. I agree with the police doing the investigations, because often it is the same district investigating their own people after complaints have been made. The CMC needs to provide to the people who have made a complaint a summary of what has happened so they can feel confident there has been that purview or oversight. I certainly agree that for minor matters the police, and not the CMC, should be investigating themselves. I think that would make the whole system more complete for those who make a complaint. If the answer does not satisfy them, at least they know that justice has not only been done but has been seen to be done.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (5.20 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. This bill contains good initiatives for a modern police force that reflects today's society. I am going to speak to a number of amendments—firstly, to the amendment of section 340 of the Criminal Code, which concerns serious assault of a police

officer. Today upholding law and order is a tough job for our police force, and assaults on police officers are more common. Spitting, hitting, kicking, biting and bashing a cop have become all too easy. It is very disappointing for a police officer to have an offender's assault not regarded as serious and then have very little in the way of a penalty given to that offender. It does not deter this type of behaviour.

What other type of employment would accept these types of actions as not serious? Police officers accept that in their day-to-day job they will get into situations where they are hit or are put in physical danger. However, should we as a community accept assaulting a police officer as just part of their job? I do not believe we should. Today police officers face more than just a bruise or cleaning up some spit from their clothing. Today they face harm to their health through the possibility of transmission of disease—the possibility of contracting hepatitis or HIV. Police officers who have had to endure such an experience have told me of the anguish and great anxiety that waiting and not knowing causes to them and their families—testing, retesting, six months of the unknown and disruption to their life. To be subjected to all of that and then have a small fine thrown at the offender, one can only imagine their disappointment.

For years they have felt there has been no appropriate justice. So I am pleased to say in this House today that this amendment demonstrates government and community support for our police officers. I only hope that the justice system also gives that support by applying appropriate sentencing to deliver justice and to serve as a deterrent.

Mr Johnson: Hear, hear! That is a big problem.

Ms STONE: That is right. Police officers want to see this backed up. They deserve that and they deserve our support.

I now want to address the extension of move-on powers. Being on the Safe Youth Parties Task Force, I heard firsthand the concerns from residents, parents, young people, ambulance officers, teachers, licensed venue managers and police from around the state. Their concerns were for public safety, for the health of our community members, especially our young people, and for the antisocial behaviour that is becoming more common in public places. A lot were very concerned about the lack of parental responsibility. All are legitimate concerns that need to be addressed.

In the Springwood electorate the peak times for parties that are at risk of becoming out of control is from September through to schoolies and the January holiday period, so I am pleased to say at this point in time that there is a lull in those parties. They can take place at private residences or in parks or in any other public places. I, like the people in the Springwood community, am concerned about the increasing number of incidents where young people at parties have been involved in activities that cause distress and fear for parents, neighbours and other members of the public.

The report from the task force has provided practical, educational, social and law enforcement solutions. The recommendations are not about stopping or preventing young people enjoying themselves; they are workable and safe solutions for enjoyable parties and, most of all, they are about community safety. I want to thank the officers at Loganholme Police Station for their assistance in the problems we have had in the Shailer Park area with parties getting out of control. After hearing the member for Toowoomba South, I must say I am very pleased indeed that we have not had parties quite like his.

Mr Shine interjected.

Ms STONE: No, it was not the member's party but it was in his area. I will correct that. I am sure he does not throw wild parties.

I also want to thank the police officers at Loganholme for their assistance in promoting the Party Safe Program. I suggest to the member for Pumicestone that next time she gets on the Party Safe Program. That will help with her next big party at home.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: I don't plan to have another one!

Ms STONE: I am sure she will. I want to thank the police for their assistance in promoting the Party Safe Program, along with officers from Slacks Creek Police Station and the Springwood police beat. Recently I, along with my parliamentary colleagues the member for Woodridge and the member for Logan, the Minister for Energy and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, hosted a barbecue for Neighbourhood Watch coordinators from our electorates and also local police officers who assist those Neighbourhood Watch groups.

The minister for police addressed that gathering. I know that the Neighbourhood Watch groups were very interested in the Party Safe Program. In particular, they asked how they could assist in getting the message out into the community. They were also very pleased with the extension of move-on powers to assist police in ensuring community safety for everyone to enjoy spaces, particularly with regard to parties in residential areas where gatecrashers have taken on this gang mentality behaviour in suburban streets, causing distress and fear to residents. Once again, they are asking whether they can assist in getting this message out into our community and in trying to deter this type of behaviour.

I wanted to inform the minister that the feedback I received about that evening was extremely positive. The email I received from Senior Sergeant Scott Lacey of Loganholme Police Station summed it up. He said—

It was a great evening and I am very pleased particularly for the people from our neighbourhood watch to receive such recognition. They are a hardworking and loyal group of volunteers in our community that achieve some excellent outcomes and provide great support to the Police Service. Thank you for your hospitality. It was an excellent night and initiative for neighbourhood watch in the Logan District.

I now move on to the domestic violence amendments. These are excellent changes that will free up time for police officers while still acknowledging the needs of the victims. That is very important. We must never forget the victims and we must always provide the support they need for those people in this situation. I know that the police officers in Logan City have a lot of time taken up completing administrative tasks, getting signatures on warrants and driving around to serve summons—all due to domestic violence matters. So this bill will allow police to issue a notice to appear, and that will certainly be less time consuming. Officers have told me that they welcome this excellent change.

Another change that gives police more time back on the beat is the change to watch-house officers. This scheme provides powers for civilian watch-house officers to perform duties currently performed by sworn police officers in watch-houses. These watch-house officers will only be appointed after appropriate training and instruction, and many watch-house officers may have had previous experience in the management of prisoners as former police officers and Corrective Services officers. Watch-house officers will have the power to use force and search prisoners, similar to the powers of police officers and Corrective Services officers. They will also have the power to conduct various security checks similar to the powers of state government security officers.

It is important to note that watch-house officers are staff members under the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and will be subject to similar disciplinary processes as police officers. They will remain under the supervision of a police officer watch-house manager. This initiative will allow more police officers to perform operational duties on the beat and in patrol cars to keep the community safe.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the life of Elizabeth McCall, whom we heard the member for Mansfield speak about this morning, and the tragic accident that took the life of this wonderful person. Elizabeth was a loved teacher at St Peters, a local Catholic school. I know how much she was loved by all and how much she is missed by all because she is a family member of my electorate secretary, Margaret Young. I pass on my condolences to Elizabeth's family and to the St Peters community. I also pass on my sympathies to the St Martin school community, where Elizabeth's husband is a teacher.

Many of the schoolchildren on the bus involved in the accident came from schools in the Springwood electorate, and I thank the principals and the education department for their assistance to the students involved. I also want to thank the police, emergency services officers and all other community members who assisted at the accident scene. This has been very hard for our community and I know that all of those people feel for the family and feel a lot of pain about this accident.

The bill before the House provides additional powers to keep the community safe, reduces paperwork and frees up time to put police back on the beat. It is something that the community and police officers have asked for. It demonstrates support to the Queensland Police Service to ensure they are leaders in policing, which in turn keeps our state safe. It certainly reflects what I am hearing out there in the community and from police officers.

I commend the minister for bringing legislation before this House that ensures we keep up to date with law enforcement, reflects today's society and provides support to police officers in order for them to effectively perform their duties. The police officers in my electorate are very dedicated and committed. They work very hard and I thank them for that work. I thank them for protecting those in the Springwood electorate. With that I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (5.29 pm): I am pleased to speak in the debate on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. As the shadow minister said, there are a lot of good things in this bill. I commend the minister for the consultation and on the general concept of the bill. There are a number of issues in the bill that I will cover.

There is a provision in the bill relating to the monitoring of the excessive sale of pseudoephedrine. The amount of speed out there in the community is an issue of great concern to everybody. The volume of drugs that these people can obtain through pharmacies is quite amazing. It never ceases to amaze me that pharmacists think that they can get away with it. It seems as though there are a few who do. I suppose if a lot of people buy a few boxes each time it adds up. I know that pharmacies keep a register now. I thought there was a process whereby that register could be inspected. I was not aware that there was not a law allowing the police to go in and have a good look at the register.

We certainly have a problem in relation to drug use. We are seeing this more and more in relation to driving. The sorts of things that people get up to when they have drugs in them and then have grog as well is amazing. It is extraordinary what people turn into in these situations. I think there needs to be a

lot more done in relation to the drug testing of drivers. At present I do not think there is an adequate drug-testing process that will solve that problem. There are a lot of people out there who are probably a damn sight worse under the influence of drugs than they are under the influence of alcohol.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr HOBBS: That is right, sometimes they are. The bill provides for the searching of persons and vehicles without a warrant for an offence involving wilful damage. Obviously this is a sensible amendment. The amendment will allow a police officer holding a reasonable suspicion to search a suspect and the suspect's vehicle without a warrant in order to seize evidence which may lead to a successful prosecution for an offence of wilful damage or destruction. It is very practical and has to happen.

The bill provides for a warrant to be issued to obtain encryption details from a person. In many instances it is difficult to get a conviction. It could be quite simple if the police could get access to a person's mobile phone and computer. I have not read what the penalty is if they do not give the information. There is probably a serious penalty in the bill. Apart from putting the watch-house grip on them, I am not sure how the police could get it out of them. I suppose there are penalties in the bill to make sure they can get it. I think they should provide that information.

There is a provision to extend the move-on power to all public places. This is essential. The member for Toowoomba South talked a while ago about parties that are gatecrashed. Gatecrashers make an absolute nuisance of themselves and damage property. The hurt that this causes the families involved, the people who hold the parties and the kids, is amazing. In many instances people suffer serious injuries or die. It is amazing to see the photographs in the paper of people who have been injured seriously at these types of events. It is incredible that human beings can do this to each other.

A new provision has been introduced aimed at reducing high-speed pursuits that may result in injury to persons or damage to property. This has been an ongoing problem. I suppose this is the only way to go. We will see how it works. Although police may not pursue the vehicle at that time because of safety concerns, the vehicle's registration number can be taken and the owner interviewed at a later time to establish the identity of the driver. The problem here is that if the owner of the vehicle genuinely has no knowledge of who was driving it at the time there can be serious problems.

I note from the legislation that a defence will be provided if the owner of the vehicle raises on the balance of probabilities that he or she did not commit the evading police offence or was not aware who committed the offence. If the person is genuine then it is difficult to put them through this. I suppose it is the only way we can do it. I think it is a matter of suck it and see—that is, see how it works.

I turn now to the serious assault of police officers. That has been happening for so long now. The number of instances we hear of people spitting on police officers or threatening to throw blood, faeces and so forth on them is increasing. It is a dreadful thing. Those police have families and so forth. They are concerned about disease and such like.

Mr Reeves: Do you think it is happening more or do we just hear about it more?

Mr HOBBS: I think it is happening more. They are probably off their brain when they do that. Domestic violence is a nightmare for police. Police are called to domestic violence situations and in many instances there are serious consequences, even the death of a police officer. They are very volatile situations. These changes certainly may make some improvements.

I want to talk about a couple of other police matters. One relates to the police academy and the training of police officers. What I have noticed—I am not sure whether others have as well; probably we see it more in the smaller communities—is that the police coming out of the academy now do not seem to be able to mix in as well. They do not integrate into the community. It seems to be a bit of a 'them and us' situation. I do not know what it is. Maybe we have had a bit of a bad run. There does not seem to be that integration into the community. They do not mix in with the various groups in town and tend to feel a bit shunned.

Once there is division between the community and the police it is very difficult to break it down. Then there is mistrust. The situation gets worse. I think we need to seriously look at this to make sure that the police academy recruits can mix well with the community. It is important. They have to be able to do their job; we accept that, but they also have to live in the community and have people respect them. The trend is changing, I am sure of that. It is not a good situation. Overall, I have some really good police in my electorate. Probably some of the newer ones need a bit of help in that regard.

The member for Gregory and the member for Toowoomba South talked about the need for a police helicopter. I support that. I think that would be a common-sense approach. The member for Redlands talked about the issue of the hours that it can fly in a day. I think we can get around that. I am sure we could with a number of different pilots and different helicopters. We would not necessarily be restricted to one helicopter. There could be one on standby or there could be a hire arrangement. If one cannot operate there should be one on standby somewhere that could be used. I think we need to broadly look at how this could work. We have a big state. I think we have to be able to utilise helicopters, particularly in areas where there is a big population. We need to get around quickly. In many instances it would probably be better to use a helicopter than to drive, given the traffic in peak hour.

Telephone intercept powers are essential. We do not have them but we need them. Every other state in Australia has got them but we do not. There is no way in the world the police can do their job without those telephone intercept powers. I know we can get them and occasionally the Federal Police become involved and they do it. There is a process in place now, but I believe we need a responsible process we can use and we need to get those powers in the legislation.

It is often pretty hard to get enough police at the stations in our smaller towns. Sometimes when they are sufficiently manned the police do not have the crimes to investigate and the criminals to chase—crime is not there all the time—so the police go out and chase the locals. I have heard instances where locals have been breath-tested day after day after day or even four, five or six times on the same day by the same officer. In the end, surely the police would recognise the car or see that it is mum going to pick up the kids.

That is getting a bit of out of hand. We need to ensure that, when things do get quiet in these communities, the police are out patrolling and not actually harassing people. I know it is a bit of a borderline situation; they have to be on the streets, but I do not think they have to be out there exercising their authority every second of the day.

There is another interesting provision in the legislation. The police minister is not in the chamber at the moment, but the Minister for Emergency Services is. Part 3 includes 'stopping animals for prescribed purposes'. The bill states—

A police officer may require the person in control of an animal, whether or not the animal is pulling a vehicle, to stop the animal for a prescribed purpose.

A prescribed purpose includes—

... to check whether the vehicle the animal is pulling or the person in control of the animal is complying with a transport Act.

I thought about Ernie and the fastest milk cart in the west; I could just imagine the minister at the helm. I suppose we need these sorts of rules, but I do wonder why they need to be changed. Surely, they could catch the old horse. The bill also says—

... if the animal is pulling a vehicle—enter the vehicle and remain in it for the time reasonably necessary for the purpose;

and—

... search anything on the animal or in the vehicle.

What a dangerous situation to be in! Also—

... take samples of anything on the animal or in the vehicle.

I suppose there must be a reason for this. I presume it is something to do with people getting around with horses and carts. We do not see very many of them today, but I guess there is a good reason for including it in the bill. Overall, this legislation will benefit citizens of Queensland, and I support the legislation.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.42 pm): I rise in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006, most of which resulted from the PPRA committee's review of police legislation. The Minister for Police and Corrective Services established this community and government based PPRA Review Committee to consider the proposals from the department of police and make recommendations to the minister.

Written submissions from the Crime and Misconduct Commission—the CMC—and the Public Interest Monitor—the PIM—and oral submissions from the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties were considered at committee meetings. The proposals, together with the committee's recommendations, were considered by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Other recommendations in this bill have been made by the Queensland Police Service, unions and local and state governments.

The main objective of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006 is to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to ensure police officers continue to perform their duties effectively by utilising legislation that is well balanced and reflective of community requirements. As the local member for the Mount Ommaney electorate, I visit a number of Neighbourhood Watch groups regularly and talk to community members about their law and order issues. There is usually a representative from the Queensland Police Service there to advise on crime in the area and to assist community members regarding any safety or security issues that arise. Members of the group appreciate having access to these police officers who strive to meet the needs of their local community. Police at a recent Neighbourhood Watch meeting commented to me that they were appreciative of the recommendations of the Safe Youth Parties Task Force in their attempts to make their job of law enforcement a little easier in the longer term.

Since the passage of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 1997, police powers legislation has been subjected to ongoing review and provides the majority of powers used by police officers to enforce the laws of Queensland. It is important that the act also contains safeguards with which police officers must comply when powers are used to preserve the legal rights of an individual.

This bill provides police officers with the ability to demand from a person encryption details relating to anything seized from that person in accordance with a search warrant. It is proposed to amend the PPRA to allow a magistrate issuing a search warrant to make an order requiring a person

to provide encryption details the person may have. This will allow a police officer to access, copy or convert data from a computer, mobile phone or other electronic storage device on the premises. These amendments ensure police officers have the power to investigate persons who engage in criminal activities, such as paedophiles, drug traffickers and identity fraudsters.

In many instances, access to information stored on a suspect's computer, electronic teledex, mobile phone or similar electronic device is protected by a password or the information is encrypted. In the absence of a password or decryption code, it is often impossible to obtain suitable evidence to prosecute an offender. The requirement to provide the password or decryption code to a computer or mobile phone is not a telecommunication interception, as access will only be available to data that has already been downloaded or received. The common law principles of legal professional privilege will not be affected, and existing protocols for paper documents will apply.

A number of years ago, I helped set up the anti-graffiti group in my electorate in an attempt to decrease the incidence of unsightly graffiti in the western suburbs, particularly on noise barriers along the Centenary Highway. Ann and Anthony Lanza have been working together with other community members and the local Rotary club to remove over 70,000 tags in this area. Anthony believes that removing graffiti as soon as it appears deters vandals from further graffiti in that area. The message that graffiti vandals try to portray is lost when it is immediately removed. It is important that police have the ability to catch offenders who generally operate in the small hours of the morning and are sometimes quite elusive.

Some members from Neighbourhood Watch groups at Corinda and Oxley and the local beat officer at the Oxley beat have formed an action group regarding the increasing graffiti on the QR side of noise barriers from Sherwood to Darra. I have written to the minister for police and the minister for transport asking for support to enable this group to remove this unsightly graffiti. It is proposed to amend section 28(a) of the PPRA by inserting a new subsection that expands the prescribed circumstances for searching a person without a warrant to include wilful damage and graffiti offences.

As the chair of the Safe Youth Parties Task Force last year, I had the opportunity to investigate the problems of young people's parties getting out of control. There were a number of stabbings reported in the local papers caused by alcohol-induced young people gatecrashing parties. One of the recommendations of the task force was to improve move-on powers to allow police to move on young people attending outside parties before a situation gets out of control. The task force found that police did not have the authority to move people on in these circumstances.

This bill amends the definition of a prescribed place to provide that move-on powers apply in any public place. The minister considered that extending move-on powers to all public places in Queensland would remove the time consuming application process for councils, which also involves having to engage in public advertising and receiving and making submissions. Existing safeguards will be maintained and the laws will not interfere with the right of peaceful assembly unless reasonably necessary in the interests of public safety, public order or the protection of the rights and freedoms of other persons. Police will still be required to record their use of the power as currently occurs.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Attwood, adjourned.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (5.48 pm): I advise honourable members that the House can continue to meet past 7.30 pm this day. The House can break for dinner at 6.30 pm and resume its sitting at 7.30 pm. The order of business shall then be government business, followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Aspley, Explosives

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (5.48 pm), by leave: I want to inform the House of a dramatic turn of events in the Aspley explosives case this afternoon. I have just been advised that police have charged a 40-year-old man with three terrorism related charges. The man was arrested yesterday on a charge of fraud and had been earlier remanded in custody on that charge. However, late this afternoon police have charged him with an act done in preparation for terrorist acts, using a communications carriage service to make a threat and using a carriage service to make a hoax threat. This will be the first use in Queensland of the new national terrorism legislation. The man is due to reappear tomorrow morning before the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

These new charges relate to a significant quantity of explosives being found at a residence in Aspley on Tuesday night. The explosives were allegedly purchased using fraudulent documentation. Police believe all explosives that this man obtained have been accounted for. Queensland police have set up a task force called Operation Echo Mine under Detective Superintendent Gayle Hogan of the State Crime Operations Command. The task force comprising 40 detectives, including Federal Police, will continue to investigate the matter.

The ideal situation in any terrorist act is prevention. All agencies involved should be congratulated on their good work. However, unfortunately, we fully recognise that in the world we live in today public safety is one issue that is ongoing and requires constant vigilance, activity and observation. We as a government and the Queensland Police Service will continue to do our best in that regard. Public awareness and alertness in providing any information on something they think is suspicious, no matter how small, is a vital part of the ongoing effort to ensure our community's protection and safety.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 1725.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (5.51 pm): Policing matters and the way in which local police respond to criminal activities is of great interest to the people of my electorate. My electorate has a number of active Neighbourhood Watch groups that meet regularly and there is a police consultative committee that is attended by representatives of various community organisations such as Rotary, the Progress Association, and the management of two major shopping centres. Police officers are held in high regard by my community. In my dealings with the Runaway Bay Police Station, under the stewardship of Senior Sergeant Murray Underwood, an efficient and effective service has always been provided to the residents and the business community of my electorate.

I rise to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. The act was reviewed in 2003 by a committee and many of the changes that this legislation makes are as a result of the recommendations of that committee. The bill also includes some recommendations that were made by the QPS, the union, local government and this government.

Other speakers have and will continue to address the many changes that are contained within the bill—all of which I, too, support. However, I wish to place on record my support for a number of changes that relate to matters that were raised by residents through my office. In particular, I would like to talk briefly about the new offence of evading police. This initiative will save the lives of Queenslanders. Police pursuits result in the death of offenders, police and innocent bystanders. To minimise such deaths, it is necessary to minimise police pursuits. If police do not pursue under any circumstances, another problem is created for the community through the inability of the police to enforce the traffic and criminal laws.

Although in most cases police policy will prohibit pursuits, a scheme is necessary to deter offenders from evading the police and to give police the ability to investigate and prosecute people who fail to stop. The problem is one of identity. If police do not know who was driving the car, it is difficult to prosecute the offender, even if the registration number of the vehicle is known. Therefore, the scheme involves a limited reversal of the onus of proof. Where an owner or a nominated person is served with an evasion notice and does not make a declaration as to who was using the vehicle, the owner or person named by the owner will be taken to have been driving the car. It is a defence for a person to prove on the balance of probabilities that they were not the driver of the motor vehicle when the offence was committed.

These provisions involve proper police investigation and are not automatic in their application, as is the case with camera-detected offences. Whether a person actually evaded the police, as opposed to a person who is merely inattentive, is a question of fact to be investigated by the police and, ultimately, to be determined by the court in all the circumstances of the case.

The scheme makes provision for the impoundment and forfeiture of an offender's vehicle upon conviction and at the discretion of the court. Impoundment and forfeiture is in addition to any penalty otherwise imposed by the sentencing court. In principle, the provisions are similar to the road hoon car impoundment and forfeiture provisions.

I am confident that residents in my electorate will be pleased with these provisions. I am also confident that they will be pleased that the bill amends the assaulting police offence by creating a circumstance of aggravation for spitting on, biting or wilfully exposing a police officer to bodily fluids. This bill proposes that such crimes will be punishable by seven years imprisonment. It is also proposed that the election for dealing with the crime by indictment or summarily will rest with the prosecution. I believe that most people in my electorate will agree that this amendment meets the community's expectations. They highly respect our police officers.

I would also like to touch on the fact that the bill contains some amendments to the domestic violence legislation. These amendments allow any officer to be able to serve a domestic violence order. Previously, only a specific officer was able to serve an order. I am sure that that amendment will enable the apprehension and prosecution process of offenders to go through more smoothly.

I also want to mention the amendments that this bill makes to the powers for watch-house assistants. These changes will effectively provide police powers to appropriately trained civilians in the context of watch-house duties. This change will release sworn police officers from watch-house duties.

I am very pleased that these amendments that I have mentioned are included in this bill. Every day people I speak to tell me that they feel very strongly about the need to have practical measures that will ensure the better use of policing resources and will further deter inappropriate behaviour towards our hardworking law enforcement officers. I commend the committee for the work that they did in reviewing the very lengthy police powers and responsibilities legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.57 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. There would not be a member in this House who is not thankful for the work carried out by the dedicated members of the Queensland Police Service. We have the utmost respect for the work that they do in keeping law and order in our electorates. I am particularly lucky to have some of the best police officers working in the electorate of Surfers Paradise, which is a particularly challenging destination for police. This electorate hosts one of the most highly concentrated nightclub and entertainment districts in the country and plays host to some of the biggest social and sport events including, of course, the annual pilgrimage of Indy supporters and schoolies.

But the Gold Coast will only retain its reputation as being a desirable tourist destination if tourists and residents alike feel safe. The recent omission of the Gold Coast from tourist publications such as *Lonely Planet* are not encouraging. More police officers at the Surfers Paradise Police Station would undoubtedly help mend the electorate's seemingly blemished law and order reputation.

With that said, the relatively smooth running of events such as schoolies and the Indy is testament to the work that our police officers do and the respect their work is shown by the majority of residents and visitors to the Gold Coast's glitter strip. I commend the efforts of Assistant Commissioner David Melville, Superintendent Brett Pointing and the other senior staff who I often see when I attend Surfers Paradise community consultative committee meetings. In particular, since Assistant Commissioner David Melville has come to the Gold Coast, he has really turned things around and put his own stamp on proceedings in a very quiet but firm way.

It comes as quite a shock when we hear that our police are not being shown the respect they deserve. In recent times one of the most highly publicised and frightening examples of this was an alleged assault against two officers in the suburb of Helensvale on the Gold Coast. Two Coomera based officers were reported to have copped a 12-minute beating after being called to a disturbance in early March. The officers called for backup but were forced to fend for themselves as the closest crew was almost a quarter of an hour away at Mudgeeraba.

Despite the dedicated service our police officers accept as their duty, those sorts of attacks demonstrate that respect for police is not held by all, albeit a small minority. Assaults, be they verbal or physical, should not be tolerated. If we tolerate or ignore those sorts of incidents and do not properly protect our police against them, they will be seen and accepted by some members of the community as commonplace and without serious consequence, and the risk is that they could increase.

In the same way, knowledge within the criminal community that our police force is stretched and cannot necessarily come to the aid of attacked officers is a matter requiring immediate attention. Amending the Criminal Code to include more crimes against people who assault police officers to show that such attacks will not be tolerated is a welcome but necessary change.

In this respect, clause 89 of this bill will amend section 340 of the Criminal Code, making it a crime for a person to spit at, bite or throw bodily fluids or faeces at a police officer, amongst other assaults. This is a welcome provision, but I suggest that it is only one prong in the two-pronged strategy that is required for my electorate specifically. I continue my request for the second prong, that being for more police officers to be placed at Surfers Paradise Police Station in recognition of the high-density population of tourists and locals, the need to keep those people safe for the ongoing success of our tourists, events and entertainment industries, and further empowering our police officers.

I turn to the bill's effects on the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, which is the main objective of the bill. In her second reading speech the minister indicated that the extension of move-on powers was spurred by a number of gatecrashing incidents and the changes were said to address those who choose to illegally prey upon Queenslanders using public places. Let me say from the outset that I accept the approach of move-on powers as a good one. Indeed, this side of the House suggested specific gatecrasher move-on powers, and I do welcome further consideration to move-on powers.

Currently, police officers are authorised to give people whose behaviour or presence at or near a prescribed area or notified area causes anxiety, interference with trade or business, disruption or other

specified adverse affects a move-on direction. The current definitions of prescribed and notified areas will be replaced with the new concept of regulated places, effectively extending the application of move-on laws to all public places and not just types of public places.

However, the problem that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee found with the extension of move-on powers is the balance struck between the need to empower our police with these powers and the rights of the community. I believe that a balance between these extended move-on powers and the community's rights is fine but that an imbalance exists elsewhere in the current act in regard to regulating traffic. Unfortunately, the latest bill has not addressed that imbalance.

The practical effect of unbalanced powers has prompted a number of Surfers Paradise constituents to contact me in frustration about traffic regulation powers being used in the Surfers Paradise business centre; namely, blockading access to Cavill and Orchid avenues where many of the nightclubs, pubs, entertainment and food outlets are located. Currently, part 6 of the PPR act allows police to regulate traffic and stop vehicles for prescribed purposes, and gives them other vehicle related powers. The current bill makes amendments to those powers at clauses 13 through 17, but these amendments are just clarification and wording changes. They do not rectify practical problems with the traffic powers. They have not found a balance between empowering police to prevent crime and the rights of access of local residents, tourists and business operators, as evidenced by the amount of correspondence that I have received.

Section 50 of the act, which will be amended by this bill to be titled 'Power for regulating traffic' states that a police officer may give to a driver of a vehicle or to a pedestrian on or about to enter a road any direction the police officer reasonably considers necessary for the safe and effective regulation of traffic on the road. Subsection (3) effectively extends this power, stating that a police officer may act if he or she reasonably suspects an emergency exists or it is otherwise necessary to temporarily prohibit, divert or direct traffic and pedestrians.

In practical effect, for some time now police officers can and have been blocking entry into Cavill and, thus, Orchid avenues. Of course, the safety of pedestrians in this area is not to be lightly forgotten. Police should have a discretionary power to regulate traffic in certain circumstances where the safety of people is potentially at risk, but currently the rights of the community are not being considered as a mitigating factor when a blanket traffic regulation measure, such as blocking all traffic access, is administered.

I turn to the correspondence that I have received. It should be noted that, as well as contacting me at my electorate office, many of these people have also attended and brought their concerns up at the local police consultative community committee meetings. Nightclubs, pubs and restaurants line Cavill and Orchid avenues, and other businesses such as motel operators and residential apartments are located on this road. When blockades into the avenues are put up, people get extremely frustrated that they are not provided access in or out of the area. They say that no consideration is given to them. People cannot get out or in and, due to the immediacy of their power, the police give no notice to residents and tourists staying in the motels and apartments when blockades are to be put up, sometimes at 10.30 or 11 o'clock at night.

It is very annoying for residents to be told by police that they are ignoring a direction of a Queensland police officer and that they have to move on, when they are just trying to get home. There are some hundreds of residents in this particular block. Often women and workers finishing late have nowhere to park. Even if, as in Schoolies Week, parking is provided in the Bruce Bishop car park, those people do not want to have to park some distance from their homes, leave their vehicles in a car park and walk home. Local residents and tourists frequenting the apartments are treated like all other drivers and are often very frustrated. The problem is that it is now happening on other occasions and not just Saturday nights or Schoolies Week, raising the ire of residents, hotel managers and tourists who get plonked down at the entrance to Cavill Avenue and told to walk to their accommodation.

There is no local or resident pass system, despite the suggestion that that could be done. The residents have even formulated a new strategy to give them access to the avenue from the less busy northern end. People who have contacted me from the Orchid Hotel, Top of the Mark Apartments, San Tropez Apartments and the Cosmopolitan Building have all made it clear that they are aware that they have placed themselves in an area that has to be regulated more than most, but they feel that the police, especially those on the ground, are insensitive to their situation.

It is unreasonable to restrict people's access to their vehicles and properties without any consideration or provision for exceptions for local non-threatening people, in particular, when the power can be invoked at different times on different nights. The manager of the Orchid Hotel has said that she is not confident that tourists will return to the hotel after being locked out of the street and denied access to the secure car park under the hotel. After being contacted by so many members of the community concerning these powers, the discretionary power to regulate traffic should be changed to provide a better balance between the need to keep people safe and empower people to this aim with the access rights of locals.

With regard to Surfers Paradise where people invoke the traffic regulation section more than in other parts of the state, the minister should either give direction to the police as to suggested alternatives like other entry points to the area for residents or provide exceptions for business owners, locals and identified visitors if safety will not reasonably be put at risk. I only ask this of the minister because in practise the current power, which is meant to be discretionary, is being employed without reasonable consideration of the rights of the local community. Unlike the extended move-on powers in this bill, which do strike a good balance, in practice the traffic regulations are off balance.

I welcome the introduction of provisions about evading police officers, making it an offence for the driver of a vehicle to fail to stop when directed to do so by a police officer. However, section 443ZD does not appear to expressly require that the driver of the vehicle receiving a direction from a police officer be aware of the fact that the direction has been given. This may affect its practical application.

It was seemingly poor drafting that produced legal anomalies in the original antihooning legislation. This bill recognises that and has done well in addressing some of the shortcomings in the original act's drafting, and the extension of move-on powers and the Criminal Code is a welcome change. However, the practical operation of some of those powers remain in balance and, unfortunately, these draw criticism upon the admirable work that our police officers do for our community.

The police in the Surfers Paradise electorate do a super job. They are understaffed but they do a super job. Extending move-on powers—effectively, the coalition's gatecrasher policies—is a move that contemplates the practice of this super work. Imbalance remains where the practical operations of powers has not properly been contemplated. With those thoughts, I support this bill.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to support the bill before the House. I intend to speak about one aspect of the bill; namely, how move-on powers will affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Other members may comment on the law's effect on young people or homeless people and, no doubt, many of their arguments will be similar to my own.

I am concerned that the proposed laws will have an overly adverse effect on Indigenous Queenslanders. Indigenous Queenslanders, quite obviously, are different from other Queenslanders. Their language is different, their values and priorities are different, and the way they use public space is different. Indigenous people from my electorate travel to Cairns, other provincial cities and Brisbane for any number of reasons—hospital, court and family matters to name a few. Some end up living rough; some choose to live rough.

Some people find the way Indigenous people use public space intimidating and unacceptable. I certainly do not condone drunken or violent behaviour. Aboriginal people, in particular, love to gather in large numbers to talk, laugh and argue. Many non-Indigenous people have a difficulty with that.

We must accept that racism remains a prevalent issue within our society. I believe that some complaints made to police about groups of Aboriginal people using public space will be made on that basis. Of course, I am not so naive as to suggest that most complaints will not be legitimate or will be racist. However, an unnecessary fear certainly exists of large numbers of Indigenous people gathered in public spaces that is not necessarily based on racism. Of course, I trust Queensland police to make judgements about the appropriateness of the complaint. I also understand that they will be under some pressure to move people on and make the complainant go away. Sometimes it will be easier to move people on than to defend their human rights to enjoy public space. That is the crux of my concern. In these conservative times in which we live, it is not as trendy to stand up for human rights as opposed to individual rights. Hopefully, in time, people's views will come back around.

I am not attempting to take the high moral ground in this debate. I confess that I find compelling the arguments of the minister for police and the Premier that the laws have the effect of reducing the incarceration rates of Indigenous people. That is why I support these provisions in the bill.

I welcome the provisions in the bill to enable the community to monitor the use of these widened police powers. Published statistics on the use of move-on powers will enable an assessment of any possible abuses as they relate to Indigenous people. I will closely monitor the use of these powers as they relate to Indigenous people and other Queenslanders. I will speak out if I believe that move-on powers are being abused.

There has been the suggestion from a number of quarters that a warning should be given before a direction to move on is ordered. When the laws are reviewed, I think this worthwhile suggestion should be given serious consideration. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—NPA) (6.13 pm): I fully endorse the bill. This is good policy. It is National-Liberal coalition policy. Queensland police need these powers. It is, indeed, appropriate to modify police powers. Types of offences evolve over time. The speed of change of offence occurs at a faster rate than the penalties and powers of police evolve. The bill seems to be approaching the major issues of today, and that is commendable. I acknowledge the highlights outlined by the police minister. I believe that her speech on the bill was excellent.

Specifically, the sale of pseudoephedrine continues to be a major problem. The recurrent issue is that it constitutes the major ingredient in home-bake amphetamine. The current estimate—and this is guesswork—is that it is about 30 per cent of the total supply. It is declining a little, but it remains significant. The sale of pseudoephedrine remains a problem. Both chemists and doctors within the community are very concerned about it. Chemists are still the major supplier. Equally, chemists remain positive and trustful of the community, and are attempting to manage that very well. Unfortunately, a register is required. I do not know whether that will be the entire answer, but it is a reasonable first step.

I would like to make sure that this product is never sold in supermarkets. A case could be made for this drug to be reclassified from S4 to S8 and for a move, over time, to replace it. I believe that that would be the best end result for us all. I also ask the minister to consider adding hypnodorm, the date rape drug, to the list. I do not know whether that has been considered.

Tragically, during the election campaign in Gaven, an extraordinary case of multiple shootings and stabbings occurred at a major hotel on the Gold Coast where a kick-boxing event was underway. Two rival bikie gangs were involved. Really, it was a turf war over the control of drug related crime. Two major groups have been identified. One is the Finks, a home-grown gang, and the other is the Hell's Angels, a group with American links to organised crime.

There are proven to be direct links between bikies and the drug trade, especially in amphetamines. However, steroids, in particular, are the major generator of income for the group on the Gold Coast. I was actually accused of festering this problem because of the National Party's gun policy. It was incredible. However, not only did it prompt us to raise the fact that it was untrue; it also prompted us to highlight the problem that in fact what was going on was that bikies were engaging in open-ended trading. The figure of $10 million in profits is commonly ascribed to the trade in steroids on the Gold Coast alone. The new laws will specifically address these issues. The police need significant powers in this area.

Search powers have been well discussed by previous speakers. It is important to reflect the changes in offenders' behaviour. I will confine my remarks mainly to the drug trade—the quantities of drugs, the amounts of money involved, the difficulty of working out what substances are involved, and particularly the dangers of the drugs that are involved. I would like to highlight the incidence of ketamine use and the events at Coco's nightclub, where 15 young people were admitted to ICUs in Ipswich, Brisbane, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast. They had to be air-lifted all around the south-east to make sure that we had enough ICU beds. They were all young people in respiratory arrest.

Also, a number of people have been affected by impure GHB. Deaths have occurred in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. Most of them have been discussed in the media. Recently, a case occurred south of the border which remains to be solved. People need to realise that the powers that police need in these areas, particularly search powers in relation to drugs, are most important.

I turn to move-on powers. These are obvious and relate to young people, particularly, I would say. The member for Cook discussed how the legislation might affect Aboriginal people, and I believe that his comments were particularly relevant.

However, move-on powers are required by the police, particularly on the Gold Coast. Those powers are needed to deal with these parties where the numbers turn up on SMS and organised groups are involved. The youth gangs involved are actually identified by different names. The common one on the Gold Coast that has caused lots of problems is the Barmy Army. They have gained great notoriety from the fact that they cause lots of trouble. They are very organised and they are very difficult to deal with. Basically, they do things that the police need these new powers to deal with. They cause mass destruction of property and difficulties for property owners. These new laws reflect the changes required by police.

I commend the changes in relation to evidence of assumed identities. This represents a major progression in police powers. In fact, as the member for Gregory highlighted, today's *Courier-Mail* carries a story under the heading 'Fake ID'. Then the minister came into the House and said there had been progress in that case. It is quite incredible. People have to realise that this is a major problem. There has been an issue for some time regarding patients attending a general practice—in my case—who use multiple Medicare cards. It has gone on for a long time. The people involved go to elaborate lengths.

These changes reflect the fact that people use fake birth certificates and fake marriage documents. If any document can be faked, people are doing it. It is not new and the police have not had the powers to deal with it. It is entirely appropriate that this activity be covered by a criminal provision. It has serious implications for the orderly management of most activities, and most of these people end up in the criminal ambit.

The issue of high-speed police pursuits, again, has been discussed in great detail during this debate. I have had some difficulty with people's failure to acknowledge the judgement that police have to make with regard to pursuing people. It is always a difficult decision. It really relates to the professionalism of police. I believe that they need these significant powers. It enables them to address

the issues that have come to the fore these days of faster cars, faster motorcycles and the fact that roads are built like racetracks. I believe that the minister's approach of getting tough is entirely appropriate. It is highlighted in her speech. In relation to high-speed driving, she made great note of vehicle impounding, fines, identity checks and coercive powers as potential life savers. I commend the minister's actions on those issues.

In relation to the issue of police assaults, it goes without saying that this legislation is entirely appropriate and the new powers reflect the fact that the police need to be protected from the public to some extent.

The issue of domestic violence is an ongoing scourge in our community. It represents a significant part of most people's portfolios, including that of the police and, in my case, my last 20 years as a general practitioner. On the Gold Coast it now represents probably 50 per cent of all after-hours call-outs for police. I agree with previous speakers that clause 98 is entirely appropriate. Subsection (9) is the best solution. So often the events are not clear at the time and police officers need discretionary powers which the bill gives them. I also commend the idea of the cooling-off period and the issue of the notice to appear qualification. This is sensible and is an entirely appropriate approach.

My major concern in our local community, particularly in Nerang, is that after hours the police roster is so bad that often two women officers may be paired for the graveyard shift. This is grossly unsatisfactory and dangerous, particularly as most of the callouts relate to domestic violence. The offenders involved are usually in trades whereby they are significantly stronger than those police officers. It is inappropriate; I do not think that people want their wives, daughters or friends going out and having to confront these people. Often they are drunken, drug affected and violent. Often they are repeat offenders. We need significant police numbers to address those issues.

I also highlight that Pacific Pines, Helensvale, and Coomera to the north are massive growth areas which have virtually no after-hours policing because there is no 24-hour police station. It was said during the by-election campaign that one is coming to the Coomera area, and I implore the government to get started on that straight away. I would ask that the police beat be moved to a full 24-hour police station in Helensvale.

For 15 years I have been a VMO at the Corrective Services Department at Numinbah. I do know quite a bit about the issue of managing people in corrective environments. It is good to see that the government is moving to a corrective service model in relation to watch-houses. I believe that the intention of the bill is to create a new class of watch-house, and that is commendable. My preferred option would be to approve Corrective Services officers or officers with corrective services experience. I note this is indicated in the minister's note and that is commendable, but I think that largely they should have corrective services experience.

I understand that they need to be approved and under the direction of the police. That is mandatory. If the police require that they need to be police directed then that probably is the best way to go. It reflects the nature of persons who may well come into contact with the watch-house. Eighty per cent of all offenders are there for drug related offences. It is higher in females and lower in males. Many are recidivists—in other words, they are repeat offenders. Many are young. Assaults are too common in the watch-house. Most offenders spend too much time in the watch-house and then on remand. This seems to be a major obstacle. Most require detox to begin immediately when taken into custody. Experienced staff are required. This bill reflects some of the requirements. I would ask that the minister look at further changes in this area because not all these are reflected in the bill and they need to be. I suggest that this area also needs to be constantly monitored and updated for change, and I would ask that the minister do so.

In conclusion, this bill, while short on some of the items that I as a doctor would wish, particularly with regard to illicit drugs for sale and the management thereof, does address many of the practical problems police have in protecting themselves and the public. We are indeed fortunate that we have many people still applying for entry into the police. This bill addresses some of the modern needs that they will have in the management of their duties. The watch-house changes are progressive, the search powers are enhanced and the fake identity powers have come into force today. I believe that if the changes had come in a little earlier it may have made things easier for police.

The difficulty that we have in Gaven is that we do not have enough police, yet we are one of the fastest growing areas. If we are to have these sorts of changes, I implore the government to give us the police to implement them.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (6.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. It might come as a surprise to some people who know that I was a lawyer when I entered parliament that in a previous life before becoming a lawyer I worked for 18 years in the court system. I worked very closely with the police in terms of their requirements to ensure that we have a safe society. For many years there was a grave deficiency in acts of parliament that gave police powers to protect the average citizen. It is only in recent times, through the continual review of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, that the police force has had a full arsenal of powers to protect citizens.

There are a plethora of small amendments in this bill and, ultimately, I will only speak directly about three parts of it. There will be people who will speak out against some of the extensions to move-on powers, and I will deal with that part of my speech later. Rockhampton, in particular, has had move-on powers for a period of time. They work very well and are accepted by the community. We do have a large Indigenous community who come in from Woorabinda, and that has, in fact, resulted in tolerance being shown by the Indigenous community and police because the members of the Indigenous community were not being locked up as there were other options. The police have accepted that course of action and have taken appropriate steps to ensure that they use the powers sensibly.

There are two new offences created. One is the offence of evading police. There is a reverse onus provision in that particular offence. I note that it has been reported that it is not in accordance with fundamental legislative principles, but there is similar motor vehicle legislation in other states, and even in Queensland, for speeding or parking offences where the owner has to dob in who is doing the driving once the police can establish who the owner of the car was. In terms of cutting out some of the dangers to the community of high-speed chases and foolish driving of motor vehicles, I believe that that is a sensible and reasonable approach to the legislation. If we can cut down on those high-speed chases and the danger to the community in terms of the motor vehicle exceeding the speed limit without the police being required to endeavour to catch that vehicle, then society succeeds in providing safety.

In relation to the new offence that is created under the Criminal Code, I believe that that is necessary and should have been given to the police some time ago. The media recently reported that a police officer who had been bitten by a prostitute on the Gold Coast received $4,500. The woman will subsequently receive a fair swag of money for some information that was given to the police to apprehend a convicted criminal. She really received no punishment for inflicting that sort of injury on our police.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hoolihan, adjourned.

WATER AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 10 May (see p. 1589).

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (7.30 pm): I will continue from where I left off—

Mr Reeves: That seems like a long time ago!

Mrs MENKENS: Absolutely. The problem is not, as stated in proposed section 346, that water is a scarce resource. The real problem is the lack of well-designed, well-placed water impoundment schemes to catch and reticulate the water that is currently being lost every time it rains.

This bill contains a few more nasties that will send shivers down the spine of many local water scheme operators. It provides harsh penalties for those schemes that the commission identifies as having failed to meet system operating plans. The fact that the scheme in question may have had no input into the drafting or viability or practicality of the scheme makes little difference, it would seem. That they may have had unreasonable costs or operating conditions imposed upon them will not be a factor in their defence. The fact that local supply schemes in my electorate—for example, the South Burdekin Water Board and the North Burdekin Water Board—already operate more efficiently and economically than SunWater ever can will carry no weight. The idea that the commission, with absolutely no requirement to liaise or consult with bodies such as water boards, can impose and inflict requirements on them is surely central control gone mad. This is what this bill has the ability to put into place. The fact is that the commission will become judge and jury and the minister the de facto executioner of any who find it difficult or impossible to comply with their mandated requirements.

Proposed section 346 also says that the commission must have specific regard to several principles, among them that water supply operations should maximise efficient use of water. No problems there whatsoever, one would think, until one reads further and finds that the definition of 'efficient use of water' in section 10, part 3 of the act includes 'measures that achieve permanent and reliable reductions in demand for water'. It is one small provision among many but it is one that truly indicates this government's direction and attitude. Do not plan for growth, do not plan for expansion, close the borders and put up the 'house full' sign, because this Labor government will not and cannot guarantee that there will be enough for all.

Instead of building capacity and infrastructure the minister plans to tell people to drink less, businesses to do less, farmers and irrigators to grow less and councils to supply less. If that is not enough, we find that we are not even to be given this advice and direction free and gratis. No, in the much-treasured way of this government, we are to be charged for this service. There is no mention of exactly who and how much, of course; that will come later. But we have no doubt that eventually each and every Queenslander will find they will have to part with more to be served with less.

An interesting provision, again contained within proposed section 346, is that cost sharing and pricing should be shared among users who benefit directly and indirectly from the water source. This will come as very welcome news to those water users in the Burdekin River irrigation area who, through a not very subtle introduction by this government of legislation designed to circumvent the judicial process, are forced to pay full rates of return on their supply. It will also be welcomed by those potential users of the water from the Bowen scheme who will, I gather, no longer have to bear the full cost of the scheme entirely on their own. Can I now look forward to the Premier's coming announcement of the new measures that he will put in place so that all who benefit from the scheme will pay, not just those first in line?

Several other parts of this bill worry me. Proposed section 355 says that the commission may conduct its business in the way that it considers appropriate. Are there to be no checks and balances? Is there to be no oversight? Will it truly be answerable and responsible to no-one? I think the Premier may have to amend this section in the interests of probity, if nothing else. Proposed section 360B states that the commission may utilise through secondments the services of officers or employees of state government departments, local councils or other units of public administration. Proposed section 360C states further that it may establish advisory bodies it considers appropriate but that these bodies will be advisory only. That is the interesting part. These bodies will be advisory only. Fair enough, one would think, until we remember that proposed section 360F provides for an as yet undetermined annual levy on water service providers so that the commission, and presumably its secondment and advisory bodies, can be funded. Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know about you but I do not know of too many suppliers who will give anyone a blank cheque, let alone a quango established by this government with such loose terms of reference.

Proposed section 360D provides that the minister may publish a notice in the gazette designating a region for which the commission is to perform its function. Is the Premier worried that news about the commission's operations may be so worrying to suppliers and users alike that it must operate under a veil of secrecy? Why can the commission not operate candidly and openly so that we may all be aware of just what it is doing? Proposed section 360J provides that the commission must address numerous issues of just what water service providers will be required to do under the new legislation. Apart from dictating just how they will operate without needing to consult with providers, it inserts a new definition concerning demand management. Essentially, it states that it will involve measures to reduce overall water use. Surely this is a misprint. Instead of determining ways to increase our present woeful water storage capacity to allow the state to grow, the Premier is arguing that the state should instead be allowed to stagnate like the remaining water in these near-empty dams. Are we seriously expected to accept that the way through this self-imposed crisis is not to increase capacity but to reduce consumption?

Ensuring water efficiency is admirable, and it is necessary and we must do it, but it entirely misses the point. This government has failed to cater for growth, and it still cannot recognise the urgent need for increasing available water supplies. Proposed section 360Q is somewhat more worrisome for those under the increasingly inefficient and overly bureaucratic reign of SunWater. It provides for the designation of a preferred entity for the purpose of constructing or carrying out water supply works subject to a regional water security program. Will this allow the government to nominate SunWater as its preferred entity and take over existing schemes? Will it mean that the commission, acting in isolation and without oversight, may proclaim a water security scheme and then the government could automatically assume control? If this is not the intent, I would suggest that significant amendments are needed to negate this possibility. As this bill is read, that is a distinct possibility.

Proposed section 360S, as it stands, will allow the commission to conduct reviews of regional water supply schemes as and when it sees fit. There is no requirement for mandatory views, much less a set format or time frame. This only reinforces the view that the commission will be unaccountable and responsible to absolutely no-one. Section 360W gives the commission carte blanche to override already existing schemes and authorities and impose its own version of system operator plans and rules for any particular region's water supply system. This is again going to be without any need to refer to or to consult local authorities, users and suppliers.

The really dangerous part of the section—I repeat: the really dangerous part of this section—is that it is clearly stated that section 360W in no way limits what may be included in a plan. So we will potentially be faced with an autocratic, unaccountable and unelected body that will have complete and overall say on how water is to be managed across the state with no checks and plans and no need to ever review its operations. Unless and until this bill is brought before the House in a workable fashion we have a potential nightmare on our hands.

There can be no doubt that the water supply situation in the south-east is in desperate need of solutions. There is also no doubt that the blame lies squarely at the feet of this government and not the weather gods. The establishment of a commission to oversee and determine the infrastructure needed to guarantee future water supply is one small, late and inadequate but necessary step in fixing this government's monumental blunders. To be in charge of the most prosperous state in Australia, with its massive potential, and to fail to plan even in the most rudimentary way is to fail its people.

Along with accountability goes responsibility. The government has shown itself to be lacking in one and denying the other. This bill, while necessary, is flawed. It would be the height of irresponsibility to let it proceed, without the necessary amendments, in order to secure another one of the Premier's quick fixes. The present government has brought us to this state in eight long years. I really do not think Queensland can afford another three.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (7.42 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the debate on the Water Amendment Bill 2006. The Labor government has been in control of this state for 16 years. There were two short years of the Borbidge-Sheldon government. For 16 long years the government has stood in this place and boasted about the number of people who are moving to Queensland on a daily and yearly basis. I think 1,500 people a week are moving to this state. It has boasted that this great state can provide for that. There was no thought whatsoever given to how we were going to supply the essential road and water infrastructure and all the other things that are needed when that huge number of people are moving into this state.

The first thing this government did almost 16 years ago was cancel the proposed dam that would service the needs of the south-east corner of Queensland. The person who is in the seat today, the person in charge of water today was the instigator in cancelling the building of the dam that would have saved the south-east corner of Queensland. How ridiculous is that?

Mr Palaszczuk: So I stopped the dam?

Mr MALONE: You did. Some 16 years ago a decision was made to cancel the building of a dam that would have supplied water to the south-east corner of Queensland up until now. We are now seeing the results of no planning, no strategy. We are continuing to see spin doctoring.

I paint for members the picture of what would have happened two or three weeks ago in cabinet in Brisbane. The Premier would have stood to his feet and said, 'We have turned the health crisis around. We have spent $1.6 billion refining and turning the corner in terms of health, but I think there is a little bit of a problem with water. We could be on stage 3, stage 4 or even stage 5 water restrictions in Brisbane by the end of the year. Our dams will run dry. We need to throw some money at this problem. A couple of billion dollars and we will fix it. Firstly, we have to find a couple of dam sites that we can announce. We will never build the dams. We do not need a viable option. We need to be seen to be doing something. So we will talk about the Beaudesert Dam and the Mary River Dam. They are great projects. The Mary River Dam is a great project and it will hold a lot of water. We can do the survey work in six weeks, no worries at all.'

The reality is that to build a dam years and years of work needs to be done to make sure that it will be viable. As a farmer I have built a few dams over the years, not necessarily the size of this one. The first thing we have to do is find out whether the soil can hold the water. My understanding is that there is 60 or 80 feet of sand under the Mary River. I am not sure how a dam can be built on that, but it is certainly going to be costly.

The next thing to do is decide whether the water should be deep or shallow and how much the dam will hold. Nowadays with dam building there is a recognition that the dam needs to hold a depth of water so that not so much is lost by evaporation. My understanding is that the dam on the Mary River would hold some deep water but most of it would be shallow. Global warming will mean that there will certainly be a huge amount of evaporation of that dam water. The supply of water from the dam will be reduced by a very considerable amount.

The other thing we have to look at in terms of the site that has been selected is the quality of the soil et cetera that the water will go over. As I have said before, a lot of the country is deep sand. This is probably some of the best country in Queensland. Most of the properties there are bringing in between $8,000 and $10,000 a acre. As I understand it, most of the land that would be covered by water is undulating and is very viable grazing land.

I am not quite sure who has selected the dam site—I think it was the Premier. The building of the infrastructure and the acquiring of the land could cost in the vicinity of $1 billion or perhaps a little more. At the end of the day, we will have isolated a couple of townships and covered a section of the highway with water. By the time the dam is built there will not be any water left in Brisbane. I am quite amazed that this stunt has been perpetrated on the people of Queensland and that the government assumes that people will believe it is actually doing something.

We have seen the very same tactic used in the health department. Those opposite throw a heap of money at it and run around like made ratbags. They fly overseas to recruit more staff. They have sacked 2,500 staff anyway. The reality is that the solution to the problem is at hand.

Quite frankly there has been no real attempt to develop alternative water strategies in Queensland. We have a situation where we have intermittent, heavy falls of rain, particularly in the south-east corner of Queensland—storms. There have been no real incentives from the council or the state government to look at the storage of water in rainwater tanks on people's properties. I would suggest to members that if the government is keen on spending the amounts of money that are being suggested be spent on dams it would be possible to very effectively subsidise people's requirement to supply their own water.

In most country areas of Queensland, people are storing water on a regular basis. In the bush, they actually have the ability to store their own water, and there is no reason why other people of Queensland cannot do that also.

The other issue is recycling water. There has been no real attempt—and certainly I have to say that local governments have been at the cornerstone of that—to develop plans to reuse water from showers, dishwashers et cetera in sewerage systems and for gardening. Recycling that reasonably clean water back through our own houses seems to be a real no-no. If we had good technology for those measures, there would be a real chance that we could quite substantially reduce the amount of water the average household uses.

I did some quick calculations—and they are easily done—and discovered that filling a 10,000-gallon or 50,000-litre water tank, which is probably the size required to almost disconnect a house from the water mains, would require about four inches or 100 millimetres of rain. My understanding is that the south-east corner of Brisbane would well and truly receive that amount in the storms we have each year. That would certainly go a long way towards modifying and supplementing the water that is available in the south-east corner of Brisbane right now.

Desalination and the other issues are on the horizon—they have to be looked at in the longer term—but we have to look more broadly at the way we supply water in Queensland. One of the obvious ways is using canals or pipelines to relocate water from north Queensland into the south-east corner of Queensland. If we are absolutely satisfied that the south-east corner of Queensland is going through a rain shadow and that climate change will affect the ability of the south-east corner to be self-sufficient with water in the longer term, we need to look at relocating water from the more water-affluent areas back into the south-east corner of Queensland.

For $200 million or $300 million, we could actually build the second stage of the Burdekin Dam. In my own area, the Urannah Dam, which is a lot closer, could be built for about $150 million. We are actually using $340 million of mining companies' money to build a pipeline from the Burdekin Dam into the Bowen Basin, which in the long term will not supply urban water to Moranbah, Coppabella, Saraji or Middlemount.

The reality is that one of these days we are going to have to use a bit of vision and look at ways and means of making this state water sustainable. I suggest to the minister that the worst thing we could do would be sacrifice some of the best grazing and cropping land in Queensland for a scheme that has not really been looked at that carefully. I assume that the department has done the surveys et cetera. I am not sure if it has done the geotech design, but I do think there are some real problems with it.

No other group of people will advocate the building of water storages in Queensland more than those on this side of the parliament, but they have to be built in the right places and they have to be the right design. As an example, if we actually built the second stage of the Burdekin Dam, the land to be covered by water is currently of minimal agricultural value. There is probably slightly better quality land at the Connors River Dam site, and the Urannah Dam site is in a fairly barren area as well.

Mr Palaszczuk: Which would be the better of those locations—Urannah or Mt Bridget?

Mr MALONE: In terms of getting the water to the south-east corner, the Connors River Dam will flow directly into the Fitzroy Basin so you have two or three choices there: Nathan Dam, the Connors River Dam or Urannah. There are a number of dam sites in that area and there are probably others between Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast that also could supply water.

All I am saying is that it is not smart to make a quick decision on something that may in the longer term not be that smart. At the end of the day, as I said, the reality is that by the time that dam is finished, all the dams in the south-east corner of Queensland will be dry anyway. We need to take the longer view in any case, so the reality is that maybe we should look at something further afield.

From my perspective, we have huge water resources in central Queensland and north Queensland. The cost of actually transferring the water is quite expensive. It has to be done by either a canal or large pipes, but that would be a very viable initiative. Certainly, the real cost of the Mary River Dam could be in the vicinity of $2 billion to $2½ billion. That is a lot of money and, at the end of the day, the best dairy and agricultural country in the Mary Valley would have been wiped out.

The bill is designed to create a Water Commission. The Water Commission will have various roles but, at the end of the day, it will only be an advisory body to the minister and will never build a dam. It is another smokescreen to make the government appear like it is doing something. One of the most important things the Water Commission will do is set water restrictions. That is part and parcel of water management, but I strongly believe it must be the government that makes the decisions about the visionary projects that are necessary to ensure that the south-east corner of Queensland copes with the number of people who are flowing in on a continuous basis.

I was fortunate enough to travel to Cleveland Bay, Wellington Point and Victoria Point. There are huge amounts of land down there where houses are being built, as there are at Springwood and on the north coast. The number of people moving into the south-east corner of Queensland continues to grow.

We really need to understand that, unless we make those dwellings self-sufficient and waterwise, there will be a huge impact on the amount of water that is used in the south-east corner. Quite frankly, unless we are able to get a project that is sustainable and visionary, we will certainly be in a situation where we run out of water. With those few words, I support the legislation.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (7.59 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Water Amendment Bill 2006. I realise it is now nearly 8 pm and there are many other matters that this House wants to get through before we rise tonight, so I will be brief. I do not intend to repeat many of the matters that have been raised by speakers on both sides of the House on this bill. I will try to keep my comments as concise as possible.

I note that the primary purpose of the bill is to establish a Queensland Water Commission to assist the state government to better ensure a future reliable supply of water to south-east Queensland. I do believe the creation of a Water Commission will provide a better method of coordinating a regional response to south-east Queensland's water needs than the current way. While saying this, I also put on the record my appreciation of the good work that the Sunshine Coast councils have been doing over many years in managing the water needs of our rapidly growing region. I am informed that on 26 April the Maroochy Shire Council passed the following resolution—

1. Council strenuously objects to any SEQ drought contingency project to release water from the Sunshine Coast to the Brisbane/Wivenhoe sub-region because it potentially compromises the security of water supplies for the Sunshine Coast and it devalues the effective long term water planning that the Sunshine Coast Councils have achieved over several decades:

Specifically:

   a. Council objects to any State Government proposal to introduce water restrictions on the Sunshine Coast to free up water to redress the obvious water planning deficiencies in the southern part of the region; and,

   b. Council objects to any State Government proposal to connect the Sunshine Coast water supplies to the southern part of the region as a drought contingency project.

2. Council calls upon the State Government to urgently move from the desktop phase of planning for future water sources (particularly surface storages) to on-ground preliminary and detailed design because the prolonged delay in this progress will compromise the security of water supply for both the Sunshine Coast and the SEQ region as a whole.

3. In recognition of the efforts of local government to respond and partner the water reform process, the State Government and in particular its institutional arrangements steering committee needs to tangibly demonstrate its consideration of local government's position including timely responses and statements of reason where local government's position is not embraced.

In the minister's second reading speech he stated—

The commission's planning activities will be conducted on a technical expertise basis. In carrying out its activities the commission will focus on the security of the region as a whole.

The minister stated further that included in the commissioner's activities will be the role of providing advice to the minister on options for new infrastructure necessary to achieve regional water security. I am very pleased that the minister has clarified that, except in relation to emergency situations, the commission will have a recommendatory role rather than a determinative role. I also note that in the minister's second reading speech he stated specifically—

The commission will not be an asset owner or operator.

The minister provided an assurance to this parliament and all Queenslanders that there is nothing in this bill that would allow a state takeover of non-government water assets. I think that is very important, because when the Water Commission was first mooted a number of local councillors said that they would not support in any way, shape or form a takeover of their assets. But I am pleased to read in the minister's second reading speech these commitments and assurances. Further, the minister stated—

The Water Commission will be formally constituted as a new statutory authority within the portfolio of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water.

As such, this new commission will need to ensure proper compliance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977.

I believe that the government must ensure that this new statutory body always remains focused on being a small enterprise and is not allowed to grow into a small empire, top heavy with too many staff providing support duties to the core work that this bill requires from the commission. I am certainly looking forward to this bill progressing to consideration in detail so that we can consider the clauses in more detail and also consider the amendments proposed to this bill.

I note that while speaking to this bill a number of members have used the opportunity to speak about existing or projected dams for Queensland. I will also take that opportunity. Before doing so, I advise all members that I have taken advice from the Clerk and advise that, although my wife and I do not own any land that is identified to be included in the Traveston Dam investigation area, on Tuesday of this week I discovered for the first time that a small part of my parents' property is included in the investigation area. Accordingly, I make this statement so as to allay any concern of a possible conflict of interest. Should it eventuate that I may be placed in a conflict of interest situation because of that and not able to represent my constituents' views on this proposed dam, my Independent colleagues the

member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham; the member for Nanango, Dolly Pratt; the member for Gympie, Elisa Roberts; and the member for Maryborough, Chris Foley have advised that they will be able to assist. I take this opportunity to thank them for their support.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate that I do not support a dam in the Obi Obi Valley or the Mary Valley. I believe that the dam should be built on land already owned by the state government at Amamoor. This land was purchased specifically by a previous state government for the very purpose of building a dam.

I also believe that all Queenslanders should play a part in water conservation and I again call on the state government to follow the lead of other state governments and some of our progressive local councils in Queensland and provide in this year's budget, which is only a few months away, a rainwater tank rebate or incentive package to encourage better water conservation efforts in urban areas. I am informed that, by using a 3,000 litre rainwater tank to provide water for flushing the toilet, washing the clothes, watering the garden and filling the hot-water system, the average household could reduce its annual use of mains water by 30 to 40 per cent. I commend the bill and look forward to it proceeding to consideration in detail so we can further consider the clauses and the proposed amendments.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (8.05 pm): I rise to speak very briefly in support of the bill which establishes a Water Commission. I think that other members have canvassed the issues broadly. All I want to say is that I am tremendously pleased to hear that the government, I understand under the leadership of Minister Palaszczuk, has decided to appoint Jamie Quinn to the Water Commission. Although I had no role in that appointment, I can say that I know Jamie well. I have known him for a long time. Recently Jamie retired as the longstanding CEO of the Ipswich City Council. That was a role in which he was enormously well regarded not just in Ipswich but also in local government circles more broadly. Jamie is a very wise and gracious man. He came from relatively humble beginnings in Ipswich and has—

Mrs Miller: In Dinmore.

Ms NOLAN: And what is more, at River Road. Jamie had a long career in local government both in city and country areas. He very much learned the ropes from the bottom up. He is the best strategic thinker I have ever known. Jamie has an extraordinary ability to see the big picture in issues. The other thing I very much admire about Jamie—and, indeed, anyone else who has it—is his ability to not grandstand, to keep his counsel and to influence decisions strategically.

Jamie will bring all the parties together through this process. He will act independently and make a very good contribution by, as I said, bringing everyone together and working in the interests of all. I very much commend Jamie's appointment. I am really thrilled to hear of it.

Hon. H PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water) (8.08 pm), in reply: Owing to the time, I will not take the time to refer to every member's contribution. All I will say is that I thank all honourable members who participated in the debate and I will concentrate on two issues that I believe are of substance to the opposition. These two issues relate to the levy on water service providers to fund the commission and the penalties applying for noncompliance. These issues were discussed with local government.

The member for Callide referred to the joint letter to the Premier from the Council of Mayors of South East Queensland and the Local Government Association of Queensland. I believe that point 4 of this letter addresses the issues of concern to the honourable member. With respect to the sections dealing with penalties it states—

With respect to the sections dealing with penalties, there needs to be recognition that the legislation may eventually apply to smaller water providers outside SEQ. This should be acknowledged by having a scale of penalties, based on size, and in the process developed to fund the ongoing operation of the Commission and the sharing of costs between water service providers.

The honourable member for Callide referred to comments from the Brisbane Lord Mayor's spokesperson as reported in the *Courier-Mail*. However, I am referring to a letter that was signed by the Lord Mayor. The proposed penalties are consistent with the level of penalties in the rest of the Water Act and other acts, including the Integrated Planning Act.

In terms of the levy on water service providers, honourable members should understand that this approach means greater accountability and transparency in the commission's operation. It will not do the government's bidding. It will work as intended, as a regional planning authority. Therefore, in closing, I table an erratum to the explanatory notes. The erratum is necessary to correct some errors in the explanatory notes to ensure that the notes reflect the content of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Copeland): Order! There are 22 clauses. I propose to call the clauses. With the leave of the House I propose to put clauses 1 to 22 en bloc and allow members to move their amendments to those clauses en bloc.

Leave granted.

Clauses 1 to 22—

Mr SEENEY (8.11 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 **Clause 9—**

At page 18, lines 1 to 10—

omit.

3 **Clause 9—**

At page 20, after line 15—

insert—

‘ ‘(3) The Minister must table the advice in the Legislative Assembly within 7 sitting days after receiving it.

‘(4) Before making the report and program the Minister must comply with subsections (5) to (8).

‘(5) The Minister must—

(a) prepare drafts of the report and program; and

(b) publish a notice about the drafts in the gazette and a newspaper circulating generally in the region.

‘(6) The notice must state that—

(a) the drafts may be inspected on the department’s website on the internet; and

(b) any member of the public may make written comments to the Minister about the drafts within a stated period.

‘(7) The stated period must be at least 20 business days after the notice is published.

‘(8) The Minister must—

(a) take reasonable steps to ensure the drafts are published on the website from when the notice is published to the end of the stated period; and

(b) consider any written comments about the drafts received by the Minister within the stated period.’.

4 **Clause 9—**

At page 24, line 20, ‘make reasonable endeavours to’—

omit.

5 **Clause 9—**

At page 24, lines 22 and 23—

omit.

I move those four amendments to be considered en bloc. While they amend the same clause, they deal with a number of issues that a range of speakers debated extensively in the second reading debate on the bill.

The first amendment at page 18, lines 1 to 10, omits the section that deals with the annual levy. In his summing up, the minister quite erroneously said that this issue was covered by the letter that he referred to. That is quite wrong. It is not covered by the letter at all and the minister is stretching the bow a very long way to suggest that it is.

A number of councils within the Water Commission’s area have expressed a significant amount of dissatisfaction at the amount of consultation that has occurred regarding this levy. There are some very different interpretations of the agreements that have been reached in regard to that levy.

I do not believe that the opinions that have been expressed by local government should determine this issue so much as a considered decision on whether this is a state government responsibility or a local government responsibility. I contend that regional planning at this level is the undisputed responsibility of the state government. I contend that one of the core responsibilities of a state government is to carry out this type of planning. For that reason, more so than any twisted interpretation of a document that the minister might have or some discussion that may or may not have been properly understood by both parties, this House should vote to exclude this particular section from the bill to ensure that the state government meets its obligation and pays the cost of operating the Water Commission so that it can fulfil the roles that have been given to it.

In a broader sense, over a long period there has been a tendency for the state government to pass responsibility to local governments. I know that it is an almost unanimous view of local governments that the cost of that responsibility has been unfairly borne at a local government level. I visit local governments within my electorate and across the state and, as part of our discussions, I will ask them what are the main issues for their councils. Almost without exception the issue of cost shifting comes up.

More often than not, local governments do not object overly to the fact that responsibility is being passed to them. They object to the fact that they are getting that responsibility without being given the financial resources to carry it out and they have to source those financial sources from their ratepayers. It is a cost-shifting exercise and it has happened over a number of years. It is an accumulative thing. Because it has happened on a number of occasions, its accumulative effect is impacting greatly on local governments. The section of the clause that we are considering will only add to the accumulative effect on local governments.

I believe members should consider that element when making their decision to support my first amendment. I would say that, fundamentally, the amendment should be supported because it is right and proper that state governments meet their responsibilities to fund planning at a regional level, which is how the Water Commission will work. I commend that amendment to the House.

The second amendment that we are considering as part of this block of amendments states that, within seven days of receiving advice from the Water Commission, the minister must table that advice in the Legislative Assembly. This is an accountability mechanism to ensure that, as elected representatives, we are aware of the advice that is given to the minister and there is no misinterpretation of the advice that the Water Commission has prepared for the minister. It also means that the minister cannot misconstrue anything in his reporting on the decision-making processes that consequently follow.

There is no downside to this suggestion. It is part and parcel of the responsibility of this Legislative Assembly. We should be able to access this information. It is part and parcel of the accountability process that, in the future, ministers should have to table, as a matter of course, the advice that is given to them to ensure that members of this Assembly, as the elected representatives of the people of Queensland, have an automatic right of access to that advice. In that way, the people who elect us can judge the appropriateness of the minister's response to the advice that he or she has been given.

The third amendment omits, at page 25, the words 'make reasonable endeavours to'. That clause requires the minister to consult with water providers and local authorities in the area covered by the Water Commission. The line that talks about consultation is worded rather strangely. It says that the minister must 'make reasonable endeavours to consult'. There is no reason for those words to be there. The minister should consult. I do not know why on earth the drafters of this bill wanted to give the minister an out by inserting the words 'make reasonable endeavours to consult'.

My third amendment simply removes the words 'makes reasonable endeavours to'. The line would then say simply that the minister must consult. At this level of administration of such an essential service, it is right and proper that the minister consult with the councils and the water providers.

The last amendment in the block removes lines 22 and 23 from clause 9 on page 24. I will quote them accurately, but they suggest that the minister's decision is not made null and void by the fact that he or she did not consult. Lines 22 and 23 state, 'A failure to comply with subsection (1) does not invalidate or otherwise affect the plan.' Those two lines state that, if the minister does not consult, the decision that is made in regard to the plan remains valid. There is no need for a minister—not the current minister, of course, but any future minister—who may not exercise their moral right to consult with other stakeholders in this business to be allowed that type of out.

In a nutshell, the first amendment ensures that the government meets its obligation to meet the costs of the Water Commission. The other amendments ensure that the government meets its obligation to consult with water providers and other stakeholders in the whole process. They are fair and reasonable amendments and I commend them to the House.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The government rejects each of the amendments moved by the opposition. I will briefly explain the government's position.

On the issue of the levy, the reason for doing it this way is two-fold. I can give members some examples of a levy being imposed in other jurisdictions. That is the way the national electricity market regulator works. It is also the system used by the office of the water regulator in the United Kingdom. We believe that this is best practice accountable regulation, and that is why it was not objected to by the council of mayors and the Local Government Association of Queensland. If one looks at the proposed model, it is based on the size of the business: the smaller the local government water business, the smaller the levy.

We believe that imposing this levy, rather than the government providing funds, provides a level of accountability for the commission's activities. It will have to forward plan and budget and account directly for its activities to those being regulated. We believe that this will stop it from growing like topsy into an unaccountable bureaucracy, as we all know sometimes happens within government. In relation to the tabling and publication of commission advice, I will give the House an example of why we believe this is an unnecessary and the reasons why it is an impractical process.

Let us say that advice is received by the commission on 1 June. The department and the minister then put together a draft report and a draft program within one month of receipt, which takes us to 1 July. As minister, I must then advertise that draft report and provide a consultation period of 20 business days, which takes us to 1 August. Then I must consider comments received on the report, which takes us to 1 September. Then I must publish the final report, which takes us to 1 October, to fall within that four-month period. This example clearly shows that it would be impossible to come up with a draft program and consider comments on that program within a four-month period.

Mr SEENEY: I struggle to understand the legitimacy of the minister's response. In response to what he said, I will start with the last issue that he focused on. I am not sure which amendment he has read. Obviously, it was not the one that I moved. The amendment that I moved states, 'The Minister must table the advice in the Legislative Assembly within 7 sitting days after receiving it.' The amendment requires that advice provided to the minister from the commission must also be provided to the Legislative Assembly, as the elected representatives of the people of Queensland. That is all it requires.

The amendment goes on to refer to the fact that the minister must 'prepare drafts of the report and program' and 'publish a notice about the drafts in the gazette and the newspaper circulating'. It does not suggest that those things need to be tabled in the parliament within any specific time. There is nothing in this amendment that would interfere with the timetable outlined by the minister. I suggest that it was quite a reasonable timetable in terms of what might happen.

However, it is also reasonable that at the beginning of that process, when the minister is provided with advice from the commission, the Legislative Assembly is also provided with that advice. Members will then be aware of the advice that has been provided to the minister and we can use that advice as a basis for a considered judgment about the appropriateness or the legitimacy of the report and program that the minister compiles based on that advice. That is fair and reasonable, and it would be very difficult to argue against that. I suggest that that is why the minister did not try to argue against it but, rather, went off at an oblique tangent, the relevance of which was very difficult to understand.

In terms of the levy, I stand by the comments I made in moving the amendment. Nothing in the minister's response takes away from any of those comments. The suggestion that somehow this levy will stop the Water Commission bureaucracy from growing does not have any legitimacy. Essentially, that is the minister's job. Whoever sits over there in the minister's seat has a responsibility to ensure that bureaucracy does not grow unnecessarily, be it in this commission, in the department or in any other government entity under the minister's control. To suggest that somehow or other that responsibility can be abrogated or better done by the imposition of a levy is quite absurd.

As I said when I moved these amendments, essentially, the first amendment ensures that the government meets its responsibility to fund the planning process that this commission will undertake. The second amendment ensures that the government is accountable to the Legislative Assembly and is open with the advice that is provided. The third and fourth amendments ensure that the government consults properly with major stakeholders.

I am disappointed that the government and the minister are being stubborn and determined not to accept these amendments. I do not believe that any legitimate argument can be mounted against them. If this legislation had been prepared and brought to this House in a more appropriate way, these changes would have been made in the consultation phase.

As I said during the second reading debate, the whole process was truncated. This legislation was brought here in a rushed attempt to build a certain perception within the community. This type of inappropriateness is embedded in this type of hastily prepared legislation. These amendments are common sense and should have been included in the legislation. I urge all honourable members to support them and I commend them to the House.

Question—That Mr Seeney's amendments be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 22—Caltabiano, Copeland, E Cunningham, Flegg, Foley, Hobbs, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lingard, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Quinn, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Hopper, Rogers

NOES, 43—Attwood, Barry, Briskey, Choi, E Clark, L Clark, Croft, Cummins, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Livingstone, Male, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Reilly, N Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, C Sullivan, Wallace, Tellers: Nolan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mr PALASZCZUK: (8.35 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 9—

At page 11, lines 12 to 14—

omit, insert—

'(b) for water sources—the principle that water quality should be managed from its source to its end-users in a way that—

(i) ensures the health of catchments, aquifers and their ecosystems; and

(ii) delivers water of a quality desired by the end-users at the lowest overall cost; and'.

2 Clause 9—

At page 11, line 20, after 'sources'—

insert—

', and in accordance with desired levels of service objectives for the water'.

3 Clause 9—

At page 11, lines 27 to 33—

omit, insert—

'(e) for planning—the principle that assessments of regional water supply should—

(i) consider environmental, social and economic factors; and

(ii) include the application of 'least cost planning' to ensure proper economic comparison of all supply-side and demand-side options; and

(f) for commission water restrictions—the principle that they should—

(i) help the achievement of the region's objectives for long-term demand management for water; and

(ii) enable the appropriate management of any significant threat to the region having a sustainable and secure water supply; and

(g) for flood mitigation and dam safety—the principle that these issues should be considered in the preparation of assessments of regional water supply.'.

4 Clause 9—

At page 13, line 2, after 'related entity of a'—

insert—

'body corporate that is a'.

5 Clause 9—

At page 16, line 26, 'commissioner'—

omit, insert—

'chairperson'.

6 Clause 9—

At page 17, after line 21—

insert—

' '(4) Before designating a region under subsection (1) (a), the Minister must consult with each local government whose area is wholly or partly in the region.

'(5) The Minister may carry out the consultation in any way the Minister considers appropriate.'.

7 Clause 9—

At page 18, line 4, 'is'—

omit, insert—

'are to be'.

8 Clause 9—

At page 19, line 7, 'advice'—

omit, insert—

'make and give advice'.

9 Clause 9—

At page 19, lines 23 and 24—

omit, insert—

'(e) assessing the likely costs and pricing implications of addressing the issues mentioned in paragraphs (c) and (d);'.

10 Clause 9—

At page 19, line 27, 'modifications or building'—

omit, insert—

'demand management, and the modifications or building'.

11 Clause 9—

At page 20, lines 25 to 28—

omit, insert—

' '(4) Subsections (4A) and (4B) apply for the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* if there is any inconsistency between the program and a plan, policy or code under an Act.

'(4A) If the plan is the SEQ regional plan under that Act, the plan prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

'(4B) Otherwise, the program prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.'.

12 Clause 9—

At page 25, line 23, 'Subdivision 2'—

omit, insert—

'Subdivision 1'.

13 Clause 9—

At page 27, lines 10 and 11, 'climatic conditions or water conservation needs'—

omit, insert—

'a significant threat to sustainable and secure water supply'.

14 Clause 9—

At page 27, after line 19—

insert—

'*Examples of things that may pose a significant threat to sustainable and secure water supply—*

- climatic conditions
- water conservation needs
- water quality needs
- a failure of water supply works to operate properly or at all'.

15 Clause 9—

At page 28, after line 16—

insert—

' '(2A) Before it gives the notice the commission must consult with water service providers for water supply works in the region the subject of the commission water restriction.

'(2B) However, subsection (2A) does not apply if the commission considers that there is an urgent need for the commission water restriction.

'(2C) A failure to consult under subsection (2A) does not invalidate or otherwise affect the validity of the notice.'.

16 Clause 21—

At page 33, line 25, after 'adopts'—

insert—

'all or part of'.

17 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 1, after 'adopts'—

insert—

'all or part of'.

18 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 8, after 'adopts'—

insert—

'all or part of'.

19 Clause 21—

At page 34, after line 12—

insert—

' '(4A) Subsections (4B) and (4C) apply if, because of subsection (2), no regional water security options have been given for the region.

'(4B) The Minister may, by gazette notice, require the commission to give regional water options for the region for the purpose of updating or revising the region's regional water security program.

'(4C) For chapter 2A, a requirement under subsection (4B) is taken to be a requirement under section 360D(1) (b).'.

20 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 16, 'before the commencement'—

omit.

21 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 18, after 'strategy' '—

insert—

', the preparation of which started before the commencement'.

22 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 20, 'before the commencement'—

omit.

23 Clause 21—

At page 34, line 22, after 'region'—

insert—

', the preparation of which started before the commencement'.

Mr SEENEY: The minister has not outlined his 23 amendments to the House. However, I am pleased to say that the opposition will accept the minister's amendments. In fact, the first amendment is actually one of the amendments that was circulated in my name. I am happy to accept the minister's 23 amendments. There is, however, one issue that arises from that amendment of which I spoke—this was my amendment and is also the minister's first amendment—and it relates to the region that is designated to be covered by the Water Commission.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr SEENEY: If my honourable friend is going to interject he must be courageous enough to suffer the consequences. If he is not courageous enough to suffer the consequences then he should not interject in the first place. The honourable member for Toowoomba North should know that.

The issue that I want to deal with is in relation to the region that is designated as the responsibility of the Water Commission. In the bill there is a list of local government areas that clearly designates the area that the Water Commission has responsibility for. I am not sure if it was suggested by the minister, it certainly was suggested by the Premier during the public comment, that it is a possibility that the area will be extended. When members look at the list of local government areas in the bill to be covered by the Water Commission it is basically all of the urban population areas of south-east Queensland with a notable exception and that is the Toowoomba City Council area.

As has been mentioned and debated in this place over a period of time, there are considerable issues with the supply of water to the Toowoomba City Council area. A number of members, including the member for Toowoomba South and I think the member for Cunningham as well, have mentioned the very legitimate possibility of the Toowoomba City Council area sourcing extra water from the area covered by the Water Commission. It begs the question as to why the Toowoomba City Council area was not included in the area that has been gazetted as the responsibility of the Water Commission.

I want to give the minister an opportunity to put on record what process was used to arrive at the area that was going to be gazetted as the responsibility of the Water Commission and, specifically, why was the Toowoomba City Council area excluded from that area that has been gazetted?

Mr PALASZCZUK: At the outset I inform the House that the reason the government moved the amendments that it did was because it is a very consultative government. We consulted with the Local Government Association and the local governments within the south-east Queensland area and as a result arrived at the amendments to satisfy the needs of the Local Government Association and the south-east Queensland water area councils.

The member has raised a legitimate query in relation to why the Toowoomba City Council was not included. From its establishment the commission will operate initially in the south-east Queensland region. This section sets out the local governments that fall within the south-east Queensland region. All of these local governments were represented in the institutional review. However, Toowoomba was not. For this reason Toowoomba was excluded. Toowoomba was consulted when the bill was being drafted and does not want to be included at this time. However, when the time does arrive it is not too difficult to add Toowoomba to the councils in the south-east Queensland region. As we all know, the bill allows for other areas to be added to the south-east Queensland region by gazette notice. For example, a gazette notice could be published making Toowoomba part of the south-east Queensland region.

Mr SEENEY: The minister's comments about the degree to which his government consulted since the bill was introduced, necessitating 23 amendments, certainly reinforces the arguments that I have made during this debate about the extent to which this legislation was rushed in here in an unprepared form. The fact that after the bill was introduced into the House there is enough consultation to identify the need for 23 amendments to be moved en bloc, all of them which I accept, certainly proves the point that I was trying to make during the whole debate, and I will not labour it further. I thank the minister for confirmation of the point that the legislation was rushed in here as part of a political agenda.

I want to clarify an issue that concerns Toowoomba. I think it is important for the people of Toowoomba and it is important for those of us who want to properly understand the government's intent with regard to the whole planning issue in south-east Queensland. Toowoomba falls within the SEQ Regional Plan urban footprint, as I understand it. In fact, I am sure that is the case. Toowoomba falls within that footprint. Any planning exercise for south-east Queensland would naturally, one would think, include all of the major urban areas, of which Toowoomba is obviously one. When we look at the planning responsibility of this commission to deal with the water issue, it is obvious that some of the more likely scenarios for the solution that will eventually be found for the Toowoomba water supply situation will be to access some of the extra water storage or extra water opportunities that overlap the region covered by the Water Commission.

Mr Palaszczuk: From the Traveston Dam.

Mr SEENEY: I am not going to take that interjection.

Mr Lawlor: Sounds like you have.

Mr SEENEY: Yes, I know. The minister said, for the benefit of members who did not hear it, that Toowoomba could get water from the Traveston Dam. I think the people of Toowoomba will be waiting a heck of a long time to get water from the Traveston Dam. I think there are a number of opportunities to build some water infrastructure in the area that is covered by the Water Commission—water infrastructure that can be delivered, unlike the absurd proposals put forward by the government, without any backing or any basis, that will allow water to be made available to the people of Toowoomba.

There are some management options in regard to the Wivenhoe Dam to use up some of the unallocated flood space in the dam; to store some more water and make more water available to Toowoomba. If it is that there has to be flood space left, there are things like the Emu Creek Dam that can be looked at that will allow more water to be supplied to Toowoomba. That is the point.

It seems strange that the minister's answer was that Toowoomba City Council chose to be excluded from the gazetted area covered by the Water Commission that is being set up by this bill. The question I pose to the minister is: what reasons did the Toowoomba City Council give to the minister? Or did the minister ask the Toowoomba City Council for any reason why it should choose this rather unusual step of being excluded from the gazetted area that has been set up for the Water Commission that is the subject of this bill? Did the minister not even ask for a reason? Did the minister just accept that the council does not want to be in it and therefore we will not put the council in it? Or did the minister explore with the council the reasons that it chose to be removed from the gazetted area? All logic and common sense would indicate that it should not because it is, for example, included in the SEQ Regional Plan urban footprint and it is, as a major urban area, very much a part of the decision-making processes that have to be considered on a regional basis across south-east Queensland. All logic and common sense would indicate that Toowoomba should have been included in the gazetted area. What reasons were possibly given to the minister to exclude it?

Mr Palaszczuk: There were no reasons. I cannot speak for the Toowoomba City Council, I am sorry.

Mr SEENEY: For the benefit of the record, the minister indicated that there were no reasons given by the Toowoomba City Council. I think that should be part of the record. The minister chose to do that by interjection rather than by standing and putting it on the record, but I do so for the benefit of the House and for the public record. The minister has indicated that it was the Toowoomba City Council's decision and yet no reasons were given to the minister.

I suggest to the minister that he had a responsibility to explore with Toowoomba City Council the reasons as to why it chose to be excluded. Any state government setting up this sort of a planning commission has, first of all, a responsibility to consult but, secondly, a responsibility to explore with a council why on earth it would choose to not engage in what would seem to be a common-sense outcome.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The member for Toowoomba North obviously does not think that is right. The member for Toowoomba North thinks that Toowoomba can just opt out and say, 'We're not going to be part of this planning. We will just opt out and not be part of a regional planning process.' The Toowoomba area is in the SEQ Regional Plan urban footprint. The Toowoomba area is obviously part of the SEQ urban block. The Toowoomba area draws a considerable amount, or almost all of its water at the current time, from the watershed that is covered by the Water Commission. It would seem logical and commonsensical for it to be part and parcel of it.

Mr Shine: We're on the other side of the great divide.

Mr SEENEY: Where does the water come from, my honourable friend? From the Wivenhoe system; from the Wivenhoe catchment, which is an area covered by the Water Commission. Therefore, would it not be logical and commonsensical for the Toowoomba City Council to be part of the area covered by the Water Commission? If there is a long-term solution, it is that there will be extra water that will come from that area.

I find it quite bizarre that a minister would not explore these issues with the Toowoomba City Council. If there is a reason that the Toowoomba City Council or, more correctly, the mayor of Toowoomba chose to opt out—because I am sure that that would have been the case; it would have been a decision made by the mayor of Toowoomba—of what would seem to be a common-sense, logical planning process, then the minister could accept those reasons. What we have been told in the House tonight is that the mayor chose not to be a part of this and the minister never even asked why.

I do not believe that that is an appropriate way to deal with these regional planning issues. I do not believe that an adequate explanation has been given to the House tonight. The people of Toowoomba can make their own judgement. I am sure the member for Toowoomba North, who has chosen to not stand and give an explanation as to why the area he represents is being excluded from the area covered by the Water Commission, can attempt to placate any concerns his people may have. It seems a bizarre situation.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The member says that he is not on the Toowoomba City Council but he certainly represents an area that logically should have been covered by the Water Commission. As an elected member representing that area I would have thought that there would have been a responsibility to determine why that particular area was excluded from the area that has been gazetted to be the responsibility of the Water Commission. It would have indicated that the elected member had some interest and some concern about why it has not been included. So it is a rather bizarre situation, but I accept, because I believe the minister is an honest man, the explanation given to the House, even though it would seem to be a rather unlikely one.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I gave the honourable member an answer. However, what he has chosen to do is enter into some sort of political attack on the Toowoomba City Council. If he is going to do that to the Toowoomba City Council—

Mr SEENEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Government members interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The cheer squad on the back bench.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Copeland): Order! The member for Callide will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr SEENEY: I think the minister knows and every member in the House knows that that is offensive. I find it offensive. It is untrue. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I will withdraw. However, if the honourable member wants to treat Toowoomba in the manner that he has treated it over the past 10 minutes, then that is up to him. The Cooloola shire is also in the relevant area, but it has not bothered to join up either. Neither has the

Tweed shire which is also in the area. They have not bothered to join either. All Toowoomba has done and all Cooloola has done is reserve their right to join in at a later time. It will be easy to get them to join in simply by a gazettal. That is all it will take.

Do not read too much into the reasons Toowoomba City Council, Cooloola Shire Council and the Tweed are not part of it now. They were part of the council of mayors. We have only used the shires that are part of the council of mayors in the south-east Queensland region to start up this commission. It is as simple as that. The member has read too much into it.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 22, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill, as amended, read a third time.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.54 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 23 May 2006.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.54 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Hughenden, Water Supply

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (8.54 pm): I want to raise a very important issue, that being the investment in infrastructure in rural and regional Queensland and in particular a dam at Hughenden. Water is our most valuable asset. Life depends on a reliable water supply. There can be no doubt about the benefits that water infrastructure can bring to a region. Emerald is an example. Since the completion of the 1.4 million megalitre Fairbairn Dam in 1972, we have seen the development of an irrigation scheme that has helped produce crops such as citrus, cotton, peanuts, grapes and flowers. This small town expanded into a major tourism destination and a thriving region.

We keep hearing about the infrastructure problems in the south-east corner caused by the pressure of the thousands of people pouring into the region each month. I believe that a way to help alleviate infrastructure problems is to invest in infrastructure in rural and regional Queensland. Focusing on major infrastructure projects in regional areas will create jobs, prevent rural decline and encourage people to move and invest in these areas and in turn take the pressure off infrastructure in the south-east corner.

That is why I have raised a number of times in this parliament the need to seal the Hann Highway. It is an integral part of the trucking and tourism industry. It would open the west to the north and the south and link the southern states to the gulf area. Since Joh was Premier one lousy dam has been built in Queensland and now we have a water crisis. The state government now realises that if it continues to neglect to invest in water infrastructure there will be an absolute catastrophe.

While there have been proposals for a number of dam sites, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the need for water infrastructure in the Hughenden region. The town of Hughenden is situated on Queensland's longest river, the Flinders River, which has a mean annual run-off of 3.7 million megalitres—approximately 50 per cent of the flow of the Burdekin River. Yet there is not a single weir or dam on its entire network.

The Flinders council commissioned a report into potential dam sites in March 2003. The proposed development involves the construction of an in-stream dam at Mount Beckford, approximately 15 kilometres north of Hughenden. An estimate is that the capital cost of a dam would be $70 million. The surrounding area has been considered viable for crops similar to those in the Emerald irrigation area—cotton, crops related to cattle production and horticultural crops.

The other significant benefits that a dam would bring to a small community like Hughenden are the associated benefits of recreation and tourism. Crop development, tourist attractions and the flow-on impacts for the workforce in the shire have conservatively been estimated to increase by more than 85 per cent. The population of the town would increase by more than 75 per cent. Having a diverse number of industries would ensure that the region remains a viable place for people to live in and invest in.

There is very strong support for the scheme from the local residents who want the additional farming business and job opportunities that it would bring. There is no doubt that this dam would result in increased population, improved business viability, improved services, diversification of the economic base and new recreational facilities for the residents of Hughenden. It makes sense to make rural and regional Queensland attractive and an alternative option for people tired of living in the congested areas in the south-east corner.

International Nurses Day

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (8.57 pm): I would like to rise to acknowledge that this Friday, 12 May, is International Nurses Day and 5 May was the International Day of the Midwife. It is my honour for the sixth time in this House to rise and extend my thanks and best wishes to all nurses in Queensland, the over 500 nurses who live in the electorate of Aspley and, in particular this year, the nurses who have cared for me during my recent battle with breast cancer.

I have over the years tried to use my International Nurses Day speech in this parliament, if it is not too strong a word, to educate honourable members on the important role that nurses and midwives play in the community and in the healthcare system. Most people love nurses and they think that they are great. But, quite frankly, many know little about the actual work of a nurse or midwife—in particular, their roles as patient advocates, autonomous practitioners and public health reformists.

I am pleased to say that things are changing. The role of nurses and midwives is becoming better understood and acknowledged. It was with a real sense of pride that I heard that two nurses had received top honours in the Australia Day awards. Sally Gould won the Senior Australian of the Year. Sally was a nurse educator and a colleague of mine at the old Royal Brisbane Hospital. She has always been a passionate advocate for nurses, in particular Indigenous nurses.

Toni Hoffman won the Australian Local Hero of the Year. She is a nurse whose advocacy for patients in Bundaberg has made very public the significant role that nurses as advocates have for safe patient care. As difficult as Toni's exposure of Dr Patel and the hidden problems of Queensland Health has been for our government, it has led to significant changes for patients, staff and, in particular, nurses across all of Queensland Health—and for the better.

Since the Forster and Davies inquiries, significant improvements have been introduced by our government—in particular, for public sector nurses. These have included the current wages offer worth $1 billion, which is a pay rise compounded of 25.8 per cent through enterprise bargaining; the employment of 1,080 extra nurses to create safer workloads and patient care; the offer of employment to all newly graduating nurses; the support of our government for nurse practitioners; and the implementation of the changes brought about by the *Rebirthing report*.

But, most importantly, we as a government are listening to nurses and we understand how vital it is to act on their concerns. There are many challenges left for nurses: firstly, the critical shortage of nurses and the inadequacy of the federal nurse undergraduate places means that onerous workloads will continue for many nurses; secondly, the disgraceful undervaluing of aged-care nurses by the federal government that has allowed their wages and conditions to flounder and fall behind their colleagues is a national shame; and, thirdly, the crushing impact that the new federal IR laws will have on the working lives of nurses. They are just some of the challenges.

Still, International Nurses Day is a day for a celebration of nursing, to celebrate the gains of the past and accept the challenges of the future. To the nurses and midwives of Queensland, I with everybody in this House wish you a happy International Nurses Day and say thanks for all that you do.

Disability Facilities, Electorate Office

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—NPA) (9.00 pm): This government has failed miserably the disabled members of the community at large. I would like to raise the issue of the difficulty that Queensland parliament—

Government members interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: Government members should listen to this.

Mr Hopper: Listen to this!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! The honourable member for Darling Downs, come to order.

Dr DOUGLAS: I would like to raise the issue of the difficulty that this Queensland parliament created for me to employ a disabled woman in my electorate office. I employed a supporting parent who is wheelchair bound and is a paraplegic. It was a significant challenge for her to obtain the position. We asked for a number of concessions from the Speaker's office initially, and unfortunately due to lack of money none were forthcoming. We started her off and it was very difficult for her due to a lack of toilet access and office configuration.

Mr REEVES: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a speech reflecting on the Speaker, and I notice that he is doing it while the Speaker is absent.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I would ask the member to err on the side of caution when he is dealing with inferences on the Speaker.

Dr DOUGLAS: I discussed this with the Speaker this morning, and he allowed me to put this in a general speech.

Little from the office was done to help her as a matter of urgency. There was a visit from building services and HR. An officer came subsequently and elevated the desk. They looked at the toilets. Five days ago, she was denied access to the only toilet she could enter and, after being abused by another tenant, she refused to continue and took leave.

I was informed by the Speaker's office that, even though it was unsuitable for a disabled person, there was no money for relocation, temporary staff and there was no immediate proactive policy to help her. She resigned with dignity. She has saved you all from future embarrassment. The cost to the public has been managed but a disabled person has lost her career. She was not prepared to return in the same circumstances.

I asked for a temporary staffer to be approved and paid for. This was denied on the basis of cost. Some offers of help in the future, including the provision of a lift up stairs to another female toilet, were proposed, but nothing for the immediate crisis was addressed. Justice for her was not done. This government is disabled unfriendly. It has no policy to cope with any type of crisis in these situations. It actively discourages, both subtly and actively, employing disabled people.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gaven, can I clarify that you have shown the speech to the Speaker?

Dr DOUGLAS: I have.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: And you have been given explicit permission to read this?

Dr DOUGLAS: The Speaker read this speech this morning and he has agreed—

An honourable member: No, he hasn't.

Dr DOUGLAS: No, you are wrong.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please continue.

Dr DOUGLAS: Justice for her was not done. This government is disabled unfriendly. It has no policy to cope with any type of crisis in these situations. It actively discourages, both subtly and actively, employing disabled people. I believe the disability policy of this Queensland parliament needs urgent review.

Time expired.

4th Pan Pacific Pork Expo

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (9.03 pm): It gave me great pleasure to represent the minister for primary industries, Tim Mulherin, and officially open the 4th Pan Pacific Pork Expo last Friday at the Gold Coast Convention Centre. The expo offered a unique opportunity for people from the Pacific countries and diversified groups involved in the pork industry—from producers to scientists—to come together and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the industry and arrive at solutions and ways forward that account for the varying needs of each group.

The pork industry is critical to the Queensland economy. The gross value of farm gate production is about $220 million. Continuing market pressures both domestically and overseas mean that pork based enterprises must remain at the cutting edge to survive and be profitable. Threats to the Australian industry from exotic disease incursions remain high, and vigilance is required by all industry participants to prevent the enormous damage that these diseases can cause. More frequent air travel and other rapid transport from a wide range of countries can mean that a disease outbreak overseas can very suddenly be on our doorstep threatening our very own industries, shaking consumer confidence and wiping out lucrative domestic and international markets and market share.

It is vitally important that the industry adopt practices and technology such as traceability systems that prevent the arrival or spread of these diseases. The expo gave the participants the opportunity to learn of the latest Australian and overseas leading edge research and development, groundbreaking industry practices and new technologies in the area of biosecurity and in other priority areas for this industry, such as new improved feeds.

This was a very successful event. Like all such events, it would not have been possible without the support of sponsors. I thank the many sponsors who supported the pork expo, particularly the major sponsors of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Qantas Freight and *Australian Pork Newspaper*. I also congratulate Mr Enso Allara, Chairman of Australian Pork; Dr Rob van Barneveld, the Chairman of Pan Pacific Pork Expo; Mr Andrew Spencer, from Australian Pork Ltd; Dr Roger Campbell, CEO of Pork CRC; and Mr Wayne Bradshaw, Vice-Chairman of Pan Pacific Pork Expo. I look forward to seeing them all back on the Gold Coast for the 2008 pork expo.

Death of GL Ferguson

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (9.06 pm): On Monday, the towns of Nobby and Clifton farewelled one of the pillars of their communities. Graeme Lindsay Ferguson passed away suddenly last week on 2 May aged 64 years—and it was suddenly. I had twice spoken with Graeme only a few days before and I could not believe it when I heard the news. I know it sent a shockwave right throughout those communities and also around Queensland.

Graeme was very well respected, particularly within the Santa Gertrudis breeding industry. He was a life member of the Heartland Santa Group and a member of the Big S Santa Group. He was heavily involved in every community organisation one could possibly think of within Nobby and Clifton. He was an honorary life member of the Nobby P&C. He was a member of the Lions Club of Clifton and had had a 100 per cent attendance record for 37 years for Lions, which is just an extraordinary feat.

Graeme joined the Lions Club in 1969. I was talking to his daughter Suzanne, who is a very close friend of my wife Rae and I, and she said that even when they went away on holidays the big joke in her family was that they had to get a list of where the Lions clubs were so that her dad could make sure he kept his 100 per cent attendance. Any one who is involved in community organisations would know that that sort of commitment is absolutely incredible. I know that the Clifton Lions Club in particular will miss Graeme dearly when it comes to doing the very good community work that they do. Graeme was also very interested in politics. He was a stalwart of the National Party for many, many years. He had just been re-elected as chairman of the Clifton branch of the National Party the Thursday prior to his sudden death.

We will miss him tremendously. Not only was he a stalwart of the community, not only was he a stalwart of the National Party, not only was he a stalwart of all of those community groups and the Santa Gertrudis breeding societies, but he was a very good friend to all of us. I know that my wife, Rae, and I will particularly miss Graeme, and I know that his family will likewise miss him. We extend our very deep personal sympathies to his family: his wife, Margaret, his son Scott and his wife, Wendy, his daughter Cathy and her husband, John, and Suzanne, whom many members of parliament will remember as she has been a staffer in the opposition office previously and now works for a federal member. I know that everyone in the National Party locally extends our very warm and deepest sympathies to the whole family. It was a huge funeral at St Stephen's Uniting Church on Monday and that was a real tribute to the man that he was. At the back of the order of service there is a quote from Stephen Grellet, who lived from 1773 to 1855. It states—

> I expect to pass through this world once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow human being let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

That was a real tribute to the man that Graeme Ferguson was.

Burringilly Respite Centre

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (9.09 pm): Burringilly is an Indigenous HACC funded organisation in Woodridge which runs day respite and also in-home services to both aged and young disabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. In 2005 I joined them to celebrate their 15th anniversary with a gala dinner at the Logan Recreation and Sports Club where in excess of 100 friends and family gathered to recognise the significant contribution the workers and volunteers have made to their communities.

Burringilly, meaning 'walking together', offers services to clients in an area spanning from Inala to Redlands and Beenleigh to Wynnum Manly, as well as to areas such as Yeronga and South Brisbane. It is indeed a very large area. The centre is nestled in a residential area with peaceful, natural surroundings and is a very special place. A visit to the centre leaves you with the impression that there is a lot of love and care in the work that they do. Each day, clients are bussed in from one of the outlying areas where their eight staff members assist with craft, exercise, reading, videos, music, storytelling, or, as they like to refer to it, 'yarning' and sometimes outings. They also have some 60 home carers as well as 13 volunteers who visit homes to ensure that their clients are well cared for.

Many of the staff have been with the centre for many years and were recognised at their celebration—staff such as Christine Fewquandie who has been with the centre for 16 years when it was known as the OPAL Day Respite and Resource Centre. The coordinator of the centre, Judy Watego, has given 14 years of service and is a lady with a very big heart. Recently she was involved in a leadership project, which has caught the imagination of many in the local area. She chose the name Ngoonbull—Keep Warm Project and through local media was able to gather help from the local Aboriginal community as well as some donations and in-kind support from businesses. The project aims to sew and knit items to gift to their elderly and disabled clients to keep them warm through the winter months.

Recently I visited the centre to launch the project. They had on display colourful crocheted booties, beautiful crocheted rugs, striped doona covers—some in their favourite football team colours—as well as knitted items to gift to our hospitals for the premature babies. Further help has been given by such devoted women as Merle O'Chin and Barbara Coolwell.

However, special thanks should go to Pam Fagg. Pam has had a lifelong love of sewing and is a very gifted seamstress. She has added her talents to this project as well as to the Sewing Centre, which is run by Mission Australia; Ronald McDonald House where she volunteers each weekend; and the YMCA Shed where she works with at-risk youngsters. Pam's life has not always been easy. I have known her for many years and have assisted her from time to time. She has now found her place—found her people in the Aboriginal community and has turned her life around. She is now giving of her talents to help others and her life is rich and full.

Time expired.

Carina Heights, Department of Housing Plan

Mr CALTABIANO (Chatsworth—Lib) (9.12 pm): When I was elected to the state seat of Chatsworth, the residents of Carina Heights placed their trust in me to pursue local issues and to improve their quality of life, as they had done at three previous elections. Late last month the Department of Housing released plans to redevelop some of the land it owns in Carina Heights, changing its use from low-density residential to high-density residential. The residents are faced with an issue that will, if it happens, reduce their quality of life and displace many people from their homes. Many residents have approached me with their concerns that are legitimate and heartfelt. I table one such letter.

Carina Heights was established in the 1950s and 1960s as a housing commission estate on the outer edge of Brisbane's development zone. Former Lord Mayor Clem Jones tells the story about the timber frames being imported from Italy to build these buildings. Over the ensuing years, many of these properties have been sold to former residents to allow them and their families to make a new start in life—an opportunity they appreciated having and have prospered from. Presently, there are a vast range of housing choices already in existence in this suburb.

The Department of Housing has unit complexes on Willard Street and Gallipoli Road to house residents. As these two higher density dwellings surround a park and a Salvation Army community centre and are also adjacent to shops and a bus route, they fit quite well within the structure of the suburb. This government is proposing the wholesale change of the character of Carina Heights. This state Labor government is proposing three things: it wants to remove longstanding public housing residents from their homes; it wants to demolish multiple homes in a street; and it wants to build 10 to 12 townhouses on sites that were previously occupied by three to four homes.

In a discussion with the minister's staff when I was presented with this plan I expressed my strong objection to the destruction of the character of Carina Heights and the intrusion of high-density living in this predominately low-density residential suburb. It is not appropriate for this state government, or any future state government, to act contrary to the city plan for Brisbane and develop high-density units in an area zoned for low-density housing.

When it comes to abiding by rules that govern our local community and local council, this state government has a poor track record. In this case it has met strong community objection to its plan to massively increase the density of Carina Heights. There has been significant fear and uncertainty created by this government's plans to destroy the quality of life for public housing residents and private homeowners, which is unacceptable and unforgivable. When people buy a home, move into an area and raise a family, they have a right to have certainty that they will not have two- or three-storey unit developments built next door to them.

I will strongly oppose any moves to have this wonderful part of Brisbane turned into an ugly, high-density shadow of its former self. This suburb is full of vibrant, energetic and enthusiastic families who deserve better than to be treated like second-class citizens by this Labor government. Private homeowners who have moved into the area with a full knowledge of the council zoning and local home ownership have invested many hundreds of thousands of dollars into their properties: raising and building in underneath, extending with new decks, landscaping and new fencing. The local community is outraged that this government would act with such disrespect, dishonesty and disdain for their families, their lifestyles and their futures.

Rotary Mental Health Forum

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (9.15 pm): Tonight I would like to tell members about some wonderful work that is being done in my electorate to help those affected by mental illness. Rotary International is an organisation that has done a great deal for the community in many different ways. Recently it has undertaken the challenge of mental health, which is a cause very dear to my heart.

Last year, Gold Coast Rotary held a mental health forum with the hope of assisting people living with mental illness, their families and friends. The aim was to better educate the community about this silent epidemic. It was such a success, and so obviously needed, that it was decided to make it an annual event. The Australian Rotary Health Research Fund was established in 1983 with the intention of raising an initial $2 million and deriving an income from the investment, which was to be used in providing grants for medical research to a variety of applicants. Since 1983 the fund has been very well supported and has far exceeded its original premise. Today, the investment fund stands at $16 million.

About five years ago it was decided to promote research into mental illness. The second annual Gold Coast forum is set to take place on Sunday, 28 May, from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm at the Albert Waterways Community Hall in Mermaid Waters. Discussions will encompass various areas of mental health, including substance abuse and amphetamines, anxiety and depression and youth issues. The agenda will include several workshops and opportunities for attendees to have their say. People experiencing mental illness, health professionals and carers will be at the forum to present an informed point of view and answer questions. It is to be hoped that some of the key speakers will help to challenge some of the existing prejudices. Admission is free to all and everyone is welcome to attend. Of course, the forum will be of particular interest to those who have a friend or family member who is suffering from a mental illness.

The planning for this forum has gone on for many months and I have been very proud to be of some small assistance to Rotary. My fellow Gold Coaster Peta-Kaye Croft has also been a regular visitor to the meetings and between us we have done our best to help. I truly believe that an improved understanding of mental illness and how it affects everyday lives is an essential part of tackling the issue. The cost to the community of mental illness is immense and educating the community and opening up some of the prejudices and problems for discussion is a great way to begin making things better.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks and praise to Brian and Val Heaton, Franz Huber, Ken Lister, Greville Easte, Warren Fowler and all the good people of Rotary who work so hard to help others. They make a tremendous difference in our community and I am very proud to be associated with them.

Liyou, Mrs E

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.18 pm): Today I received information from a constituent in my electorate relating to her mother, Mrs Elsie Liyou, who was born on 29 April 1905. I make this contribution at the family's request and with the family's approval.

On 2 May, Mrs Liyou had a fall and broke her hip, foot and hand. She also severely bruised her other hand. She was admitted to the Royal Brisbane Hospital orthopaedics ward. My constituent, Beth, has two sisters in Brisbane. The impression I have is that they were supportive of their mother's treatment in the first instance. However, last night they contacted Beth, distressed that their mother still had not received any surgery and they were very concerned at their mother's state of mind when they visited her then.

Each day since being admitted, Mrs Liyou was prepared for surgery. The hospital staff had taken Mrs Liyou down to theatre three times, but brought her back to the ward each time. The first time she was returned due to chest pains, however this turned out to be heartburn. For the other two times there was no apparent reason for the procedure being aborted. With each preparation for surgery, food is withheld. Beth's sisters became alarmed because their mother was becoming very frail as she was not eating properly. When the sisters left their mother last night, she was hallucinating.

Beth's initial contact with my office today was to request my intervention in the delays in operating on her mum. A short time after the initial contact, Beth called my office again to advise that her mother had been taken to surgery this morning. However, she requested I continue to seek answers as to why Mrs Liyou's surgery was delayed for so long, allowing her physical condition to deteriorate. Tragically, she called my office a third time to advise that her mum had died on the operating table. The hospital advised the family that 'her heart gave out'.

While the family acknowledge that Mrs Liyou had a pacemaker, the family remains distressed and concerned that the delays to surgery and the withholding of nutrition in preparation for surgery so many times contributed to Mrs Liyou's death. I would ask the minister to investigate the circumstances surrounding the delays.

While Mrs Liyou was in her senior years, she deserved the best care available to her, including the timing of procedures required. Again, no comment has been made about nursing care, but there are concerns about the delays in surgery, including whether the delays contributed to Mrs Liyou's death. I look forward to the minister's response to the family's questions.

To Mr Liyou, Beth, her sisters and other family members, I pass on my deepest sympathies. Parents hold a revered placed in our lives and the loss of one's mother is deeply felt. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family during this sad time.

Lockhart River Air Crash, First Anniversary

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (9.21 pm): On Sunday I accompanied the minister for communities, Warren Pitt, to Bamaga to mark the first anniversary of the Lockhart River plane crash. As honourable members would remember, the crash was the most significant air safety incident in Australia for over 30 years. Fifteen people lost their lives when a Metroliner crashed on approach to the Iron Range airport at Lockhart River, where it had a stop off en route from Bamaga, at the tip of Cape York, to Cairns.

Many families have been severely disrupted by the crash. I have attended a number of memorial services and funerals since the crash and the sense of loss has been overwhelming. Sunday's memorial was no different.

Members should think for a moment of the small, tight-knit community of Injinoo, which has a population of 300 or 400 people. It lost four people in the crash, which means that every family has been affected. The crash has undermined the community's ability to function and progress.

One year on, the community is now slowly getting back to normal. Every family was represented at the service on Sunday, and I estimated that well over 500 people from the community attended the ceremony. They were joined by a large police contingent who were there to remember Constable Sally Urquhart, one of the victims of the crash. It was a solemn and well-organised ceremony. I would like to acknowledge the work of Val Schier from the Department of Communities, community recovery team for her assistance in coordinating not just Sunday's ceremony but all of the state government's assistance working with the communities affected by the crash.

At the ceremony a large memorial was unveiled. It has the names of the victims of the crash inscribed on it, as well as some basic information on the tragedy. It will stand as a permanent reminder of the crash for the communities of the northern peninsular area and visitors to the region.

It was important to commemorate the first anniversary and I was pleased to hear a number of family representatives speak highly of the occasion and comment on how it assisted them deal with their loss. Of course, as important as it was, the ceremony is not the end of the matter. There is an ongoing investigation into the causes of the crash. Families are unlikely to achieve any sort of closure until the results of the investigation are known and the recommendations are acted upon.

I thank the minister for communities, Warren Pitt, for travelling to the far reaches of my electorate on a Sunday to show the Queensland government's support for the victims of the crash. Ironically, he experienced plane troubles and did not return to Brisbane till 2 am the next day. I very much appreciate his efforts and the efforts of his department to assist my constituents deal with this matter.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.24 pm.