PROOF ISSN 1322-0330

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Subject **FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT** Page

Wednesday, 11 October 2006

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION **17**
MEMBER SWORN **17**
Mr J Pearce 17
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH **17**
Tabled paper: Copy of speech by Her Excellency the Governor to the parliament dated 10 October 2006. 17
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—LOAN OF DOCUMENT **17**
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—PHOTOGRAPHER **17**
DEPUTY SPEAKER AND CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES **17**
PANEL OF TEMPORARY SPEAKERS **18**
MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS **18**
Tabled paper: Copy of *Extraordinary Government Gazette* volume 343 No. 14 dated 13 September 2006. 18
LEADER OF THE HOUSE **19**
GOVERNMENT WHIP AND DEPUTY GOVERNMENT WHIPS **20**
OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS **20**
LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS **20**
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES **20**
Appointments 20
STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS **21**
PETITIONS **25**
TABLED PAPERS **26**
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS **30**
Election Commitments 30
Gateway Motorway Upgrade 36
Driving Export Growth for Queensland: 2006-2011 ..... *37*
Tabled paper: Report titled 'Driving export growth for Queensland 2006-2011' and associated documents. 37
Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Network 37
Population Growth 38
Tabled paper: Copy of article from Sunshine Coast Daily dated 11 October 2006 titled 'Sol-less! Telstra's $9M man sacks 83 coast workers'. 38
Skills Recruiting 39
Ekka Hospital Hostel 39

L J OSMOND
CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER

N J LAURIE
CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

Influenza Research ... 40
Rugby Union ... 40
Lexmark Indy ... 41
Parliamentary Allowances ... 41
Death of Mr S Irwin ... 41
Death of Mr C Thiele ... 42
Death of Mr P Brock ... 42
Infrastructure ... 43
Health System ... 44
School Community Development Fund ... 45
Intensive Care Paramedics ... 45
Parliamentary Sittings ... 46
Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library brief regarding sitting days. ... 46
Indigenous Police Officers ... 46
Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package ... 47
Department of Communities ... 47
NOTICES OF MOTION ... 48
Climate Change ... 48
Water Infrastructure ... 48
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS ... 48
Beattie Government ... 48
Seabird Aviation Australia ... 48
Tabled paper: Article from www.aopa.com.au titled 'Seabird rising'. ... 49
Beattie Government ... 49
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE ... 49
Water Infrastructure ... 49
Tabled paper: Document titled 'Costs of SEQ water projects'. ... 49
Water Charges ... 50
Tabled paper: AAP media article dated 27 September 2006 titled 'Qld: water grid will not push up water price: Beattie'. ... 50
State Library ... 51
State Taxation ... 51
Aurukun Bauxite Project ... 52
Water Charges ... 53
Energy Asset Sales ... 53
Health Service Districts ... 54
Queensland Health, Recruitment ... 54
Queensland Court of Appeal ... 55
Public Transport ... 55
Water Restrictions ... 56
Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence ... 57
Mental Health Services ... 57
Lexmark Indy ... 58
Disability Services, Family Support ... 58
Liquor Accords ... 59
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ... 60
Federalism ... 60
Tabled paper: Premier's speech notes for CEDA's second State of the State luncheon on Wednesday, 11 October 2006. ... 60
ENERGY ASSETS (RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL ... 61
First Reading ... 61
Second Reading ... 61
REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL ... 62
First Reading ... 62
Second Reading ... 63
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2) ... 65
First Reading ... 65
Second Reading ... 65
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) ... 65
First Reading ... 65
Second Reading ... 66
HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL ... 66
First Reading ... 66
Second Reading ... 66
BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL ... 68
First Reading ... 68
Second Reading ... 68
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL ... 71
First Reading ... 71
Second Reading ... 71

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL 72
First Reading 72
Second Reading 73
YEPPOON HOSPITAL SITE ACQUISITION BILL 76
First Reading 76
Second Reading 76
NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL 77
First Reading 77
Second Reading 77
ADDRESS-IN-REPLY 78
WATER INFRASTRUCTURE 105
Tabled paper: Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006. 109
Tabled paper: Details of water infrastructure achievements in rural Queensland. 110
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to. 115
Resolved in the affirmative. 115
Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to, viz— 115
Resolved in the affirmative. 115
ADDRESS-IN-REPLY 115
ADJOURNMENT 130
School Administration Staff 130
Queensland Arts Council 131
Ambulance Services, Western Queensland 131
Mental Health Week 132
Burnett Electorate, Mental Health Care 132
Biggera Waters Police Beat 133
Toowoomba South Electorate, Birthing Facilities; Young Women's Place 133
Bribie Island Ambulance Station 134
Springfest 134
Death of Mr S Irwin 135
ATTENDANCE 136

WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2006

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION

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

The Clerk read the commission, viz—

Constitution of Queensland 2001

To the Honourable MICHAEL FRANCIS REYNOLDS, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

I, QUENTIN BRYCE, Governor, acting under section 22 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, authorise you to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office that is required to be taken or made by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 10 October 2006.

By Command

(Sgd)

P Beattie

RECORDED in the Register of Patents, No. 47, page 5. On 10 October 2006.

(Sgd)

Clerk of the Executive Council

MEMBER SWORN

Mr J Pearce

Mr James Pearce, having taken the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Fitzroy.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor on Tuesday, 10 October 2006 delivered a speech to parliament of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I now table a copy for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Copy of speech by Her Excellency the Governor to the parliament dated 10 October 2006.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—LOAN OF DOCUMENT

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that in accordance with standing order 19 approval was given on 13 September 2006 to loan a volume of original acts of parliament to the Supreme Court of Queensland Library.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have given permission for the *Australian* newspaper to have a photographer in the House for question time, and I so inform honourable members of that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER AND CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.34 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That Mr John English be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

Motion agreed to.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in accordance with standing order 11, I advise that I have appointed the following members to the panel of temporary speakers: Ms Darling, member for Sandgate; Mr Hinchliffe, member for Stafford; Mr Hoolihan, member for Keppel; Ms Jones, member for Ashgrove; Mr Moorhead, member for Waterford; Mr O'Brien, member for Cook; Ms van Litsenburg, member for Redcliffe; and Mr Wettenhall, member for Barron River.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): I wish to advise the House of ministerial arrangements. I inform the House that on 13 September 2006 in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001 Her Excellency the Governor accepted a number of resignations. She then subsequently made a number of appointments to the ministry, and I will seek in a moment with your leave, Mr Speaker, to incorporate the details of those who resigned and those who were appointed. I also inform the House that as part of the 52nd Parliament parliamentary secretaries who are included in these appointments will be allowed to ask questions without notice. The only exception will be that they will not be able to direct questions without notice to their relevant minister. Our parliamentary secretaries represent a broad cross-section of our great state, and I want to continue to ensure that they have the opportunity to raise issues relevant to their electorates.

I table the details of the gazette and, with your permission and the permission of the House, Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the details of the appointments as indicated previously.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Copy of *Extraordinary Government Gazette* volume 343 No. 14 dated 13 September 2006.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY; APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES; AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, on 13 September 2006, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor-

(a) Accepted the resignations of—

The Honourable PETER DOUGLAS BEATTIE, as Premier of Queensland;

The Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH, as Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation of Queensland;

The Honourable THOMAS ALFRED BARTON, as Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport of Queensland;

The Honourable ROBERT EVAN SCHWARTEN, as Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing of Queensland;

The Honourable RODNEY JON WELFORD, as Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts of Queensland;

The Honourable HENRY PALASZCZUK, as Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and Minister Assisting the Premier on Water of Queensland;

The Honourable MICHAEL FRANCIS REYNOLDS, as Minister for Child Safety of Queensland;

The Honourable FREDERICK WARREN PITT, as Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors of Queensland;

The Honourable REGINALD JOHN MICKEL, as Minister for Energy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy of Queensland;

The Honourable DESLEY CAROLE BOYLE, as Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women of Queensland;

The Honourable CHRISTOPHER PAUL CUMMINS, as Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs of Queensland; and

The Honourable LINDA DENISE LAVARCH, as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Queensland.

(b) Accepted the resignations of—

The Honourable THOMAS ALFRED BARTON;

The Honourable HENRY PALASZCZUK;

The Honourable MICHAEL FRANCIS REYNOLDS; and

The Honourable CHRISTOPHER PAUL CUMMINS,

as members of the Executive Council;

and

(c) Appointed—

The Honourable PETER DOUGLAS BEATTIE, to be Premier and Minister for Trade of Queensland;

The Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH, to be Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure of Queensland;

The Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS, to be Minister for Transport and Main Roads of Queensland;

The Honourable ROBERT EVAN SCHWARTEN, to be Minister for Public Works and Housing of Queensland;

The Honourable JUDITH CAROLINE SPENCE, to be Minister for Police and Corrective Services of Queensland;

The Honourable RODNEY JON WELFORD, to be Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts of Queensland;

The Honourable STEPHEN ROBERTSON, to be Minister for Health of Queensland;

The Honourable REGINALD JOHN MICKEL, to be Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations of Queensland;

The Honourable FREDERICK WARREN PITT, to be Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth of Queensland;

The Honourable DESLEY CAROLE BOYLE, to be Minister for Child Safety of Queensland;

The Honourable LINDA DENISE LAVARCH, to be Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Women of Queensland;

The Honourable MARGARET MAJELLA KEECH, to be Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development of Queensland;

The Honourable TIMOTHY SEAN MULHERIN, to be Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries of Queensland;

The Honourable PATRICK DOUGLAS PURCELL, to be Minister for Emergency Services of Queensland;

The Honourable ANDREW PETER FRASER, to be Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport of Queensland;

The Honourable GEOFFREY JAMES WILSON, to be Minister for Mines and Energy of Queensland;

The Honourable KERRY GERARD SHINE, to be Minister for Natural Resources and Water of Queensland; and

The Honourable LINDEL HELENA NELSON-CARR, to be Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism of Queensland, and

(d) Also appointed those Ministers to be members of the Executive Council.

I also inform the House that on 13 September 2006, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed—

Karen Lee Struthers MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health; and

Neil Stuart Roberts MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure.

In addition, on 21 September 2006, in accordance with the same provisions, the Governor in Council appointed—

Craig Ian Wallace MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Minister for Trade in North Queensland;

Philip Gerard Reeves MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport;

Andrew Ian McNamara MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Main Roads;

Gary Bernard Fenlon to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations;

Julie Maree Attwood MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Child Safety;

Ronan Oliver Lee MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth;

Veronica Lesley Barry MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Training and the Arts;

Janice Heather Jarratt MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries; and

Michael Wai-Man Choi to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism.

Mr Speaker,

I would also like to inform the House that as part of the 52nd Parliament, parliamentary secretaries will be allowed to ask questions without notice. The only exception will be that they will not be able to direct questions without notice to their relevant Minister.

Our parliamentary secretaries represent a broad cross section of our great State and I want to continue to ensure they have the opportunity to raise issues relevant to their electorates.

I also inform the House that, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved:

- on 13 September 2006, Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 2) 2006; and
- on 28 September 2006, Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 7) 2006.

I lay upon the table of the House copies of the relevant notifications from the Queensland Government Gazette.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made, and the honourable the Speaker informed accordingly, for the Hon. Robert Schwarten, Minister for Public Works and Housing, to be the Leader of the House.

GOVERNMENT WHIP AND DEPUTY GOVERNMENT WHIPS

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): I have to inform the House that Ms Carolyn Male has been appointed Government Whip. Ms Rachel Nolan and Mr Simon Finn have been appointed Deputy Government Whips.

OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I inform the House that I have been appointed Leader of the Nationals, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Queensland Coalition and shadow minister for trade. Dr Bruce Flegg has been appointed Deputy Leader of the Queensland Coalition and shadow Treasurer. Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore, has been appointed Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and shadow minister for infrastructure and shadow minister for state development and shadow minister for employment and industrial relations. Mark McArdle, the member for Caloundra, has been appointed the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the shadow Attorney-General and the shadow minister for justice.

Stuart Copeland, the member for Cunningham, has been appointed shadow minister for education and training and shadow minister for the arts. Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, has been appointed shadow minister for local government, planning and sport. Ray Hopper, the member for Darling Downs, has been appointed shadow minister for natural resources and water. Mike Horan, the member for Toowoomba South, has been appointed shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries. Vaughan Johnson, the member for Gregory, has been appointed shadow minister for transport and main roads.

Shane Knuth, the member for Charters Towers, has been appointed shadow minister for mines and energy. John-Paul Langbroek, the member for Surfers Paradise, has been appointed shadow minister for health. Kev Lingard, the member for Beaudesert, has been appointed shadow minister for communities, seniors and youth. Ted Malone, the member for Mirani, has been appointed shadow minister for emergency services and shadow minister for northern development. Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin, has been appointed shadow minister for environment and multiculturalism and shadow minister for women.

Rob Messenger, the member for Burnett, has been appointed shadow minister for police and corrective services. Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, has been appointed shadow minister for tourism, fair trading and wine industry development. Ray Stevens, the member for Robina, has been appointed shadow minister for public works and housing. Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin, has been appointed shadow minister for child safety, disability services and mental health policy. Ian Rickuss, the member for Lockyer, has been appointed the Opposition Whip and Steve Dickson, the member for Kawana, has been appointed the Deputy Opposition Whip.

Andrew Cripps, the member for Hinchinbrook, has been appointed shadow parliamentary secretary to the shadow minister for mines and energy. Jack Dempsey, the member for Bundaberg, has been appointed shadow parliamentary secretary to the shadow minister for police and corrective services. Glen Elmes, the member for Noosa, has been appointed shadow parliamentary secretary to the shadow minister for environment and multiculturalism. David Gibson, the member for Gympie, has been appointed shadow parliamentary secretary to the shadow minister for infrastructure, the shadow minister for state development and the shadow minister for employment and industrial relations.

LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (9.40 am): I wish to advise that I have been appointed as Leader of the Liberal Party. Mr Mark McArdle, the member for Caloundra, has been appointed Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the member for Surfers Paradise, has been appointed secretary to the Liberal Party.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointments

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.40 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES FOR THE 52nd PARLIAMENT—APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

That members be appointed to parliamentary committees as follows—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—

Mrs Reilly (Chair), Mr Cripps, Ms Darling, Mrs Kiernan, Ms Lee Long, Mr Nicholls, Mr Wettenhall

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee—

Mr Hinchliffe (Chair), Mr Gray, Mr Horan, Mrs Miller, Mrs Pratt, Mr Springborg, Mr Wells

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee—

Mr Hoolihan (Chair), Mrs Cunningham, Mr Dempsey, Mr Finn, Mr Hobbs, Mrs Smith, Mr Weightman

Public Accounts Committee—

Mr Hayward (Chair), Mr English, Mr Gibson, Mr Langbroek, Mr Lawlor, Ms Male, Mr Johnson

Public Works Committee—

Ms Stone (Chair), Mr Copeland, Mr Hopper, Mr O'Brien, Mr Lingard, Ms Palaszczuk, Mr Wendt

Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—

Mrs Sullivan (Chair), Ms Croft, Ms Jones, Mr Moorhead, Mr Stevens, Mrs Stuckey, Mr Wellington

Standing Orders Committee—

Mr Speaker (ex officio) (Chair), Mr Beattie, Ms Bligh, Mr Schwarten, Mr Seeney, Miss Simpson, Mr Lingard

---

SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRAVELSAFE FOR THE 52ND PARLIAMENT—APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

That—

(1) A select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Travelsafe, be appointed to inquire into and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland. In particular the Committee shall monitor, investigate and report on-

(a) issues affecting road safety including the causes of road crashes and measures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries and economic costs to the community;

(b) the safety of passenger transport services, and measures aimed at reducing the incidence of related deaths and injuries; and

(c) measures for the enhancement of public transport in Queensland and reducing dependence on private motor vehicles as the predominant mode of transport.

(2) The committee consist of Mr Pearce (Chair), Mr Bombolas, Mr Elmes, Mr Foley, Ms van Litsenburg, Mr Malone, Mrs Scott.

(3) The committee have power to call for persons, documents and other things notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament.

(4) The committee may examine witnesses on oath or affirmation.

(5) A quorum consists of four members of the committee.

(6) The Chair of the committee, or the Deputy Chair when acting as Chair, shall have a deliberative vote and in the event of an equality of votes shall also have a casting vote.

(7) As soon as practicable after the end of each year ending 30 June the committee shall prepare a report on the operations of the committee during that year.

(8) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.41 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That for this session unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, the sessional orders for the 52nd Parliament circulated in my name be adopted.

SESSIONAL ORDERS—52ND PARLIAMENT (FIRST SESSION)

EFFECTIVE FROM 11 OCTOBER 2006

Days and Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

1.(a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.

(b) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—

9.30am—10.30am (each day)—

Prayers
Messages from the Governor
Matters concerning privilege
Speaker's Statements

Appointments
Petitions
Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
Ministerial Papers
Ministerial Notices of Motion
Ministerial Statements
Any other Government Business
Personal Explanations
Tabling of Reports
Debating of Committee Reports (on each Thursday only)
Notices of Motion (including motions for debate from 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Wednesday)
Private Members' Bills (Introductions)
Private Members' Statements

10.30am—11.30am (each day)—

Question Time

11.30am—12.30pm (Tuesday)—

Matters of Public Interest

12.30pm—1.00pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

11.30am—1.00pm (Wednesday and Thursday)—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm (each day)—

Lunch break

2.30pm—6.30pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

2.30pm—5.30pm (Wednesday)—

Government Business

5.30pm—6.30pm (Wednesday)—

Private Members' Motion

2.30pm until adjournment moved (Thursday)—

Government Business

6.30pm—7.30pm (Tuesday and Wednesday)—

Dinner break

7.30pm—10.00pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

7.30pm—10.00pm (Wednesday)—

Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business (in accordance with Sessional Order 1(c))

(c) On a Wednesday after debate of Private Members' Motion—

(i) if there are no Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the adjournment may be either moved immediately or otherwise the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved;

(ii) if there are Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved.

(d) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may only be moved by the Member occupying the position of Leader or Acting Leader of the House in the House.

(e) As soon as the motion in (d) is moved, there will be an Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes and then the question shall be put.

(f) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may be moved by the Leader or Acting Leader of the House at any time despite the order of business.

(g) If the House sits on any day other than a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, then unless otherwise ordered, the order of business shall be as follows:

From 9.30am to 10.30 am—

Prayers
Messages from the Governor
Matters concerning privilege
Speaker's Statements

Petitions
Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
Ministerial Papers
Ministerial Notices of Motion
Ministerial Statements
Any other Government Business
Personal Explanations
Tabling of Reports
Notices of Motion
Question Time (for remaining time until 10.30 am)

10.30am—1.00pm—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—

Lunch break

2.30pm—until Adjournment moved—

Government Business

Debate of Parliamentary committee reports

2. (1) On tabling a committee report or, where a committee report is tabled when the House is not sitting, on the next sitting day, the member tabling the report may give notice of motion that the House take note of the report.

(2) Debate of motions that the House take note of committee reports may be moved and debated without amendment on each Thursday following Tabling of Reports in the order in which the notice of motion was given.

(3) A debate of a motion in (2) not completed may be adjourned to the following Thursday.

(4) A motion in (2) cannot be amended.

Debate of Private Members' Bills

3. (1) If a Bill introduced by a member who is not a Minister has laid upon the Table of the House for a period exceeding ninety days and has not passed all stages, that Bill will be brought on for debate on the following sitting Wednesday evening.

(2) The House will continue to debate the Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised.

Condolence Motions

4. (1) A motion of condolence may be moved as the first item of business after Speaker's Statements in the Order of Business.

(2) If a motion of condolence is moved in accordance with (1), the debate on such motion will last no more than one hour, after which time the question shall be put.

(3) After a motion of condolence is moved, debated and resolved in accordance with (1) and (2), the Order of Business for the day shall then resume, with Question Time commencing one hour after the motion of condolence was resolved and with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.

Maximum time limits for debates, speeches and statements

5. The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are contained in the schedule below.

Subject	**Relevant Standing or Sessional Orders**	**Time**
Election of Speaker—each member	SO 39	5 minutes
Private Members' Statements—each member	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Debating of Committee Reports—each member	Sessional Order 1	3 minutes
Tabling of Reports—member tabling report	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Tabling of Reports—Chairperson of Committee on presentation of committee report	Sessional Order 1 & 2	5 minutes
Personal Explanations—each member	Sessional Order 1	At discretion of Speaker
Matters concerning privilege	Sessional Order 1 & SO 248 & 267	At discretion of Speaker
Questions Without Notice		
— Question time (total time)	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	1 hour Time remaining until 10.30 am
— Member asking question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	At discretion of Speaker
— Minister answering question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	3 minutes
Matters of Public Interest		
— Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour

— Leader of Opposition or nominee	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
— Other Members	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Adjournment debate		
— Total time	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	30 minutes
— Each member	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	3 minutes
Private Members' Motions (Wednesday 5.30—6.30 pm)		
— Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour
— Mover	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
— Other member	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Dissent to ruling of Speaker		
— Total time	SO 250	1 hour
— Each member	SO 250	10 minutes
Disallowance of statutory instruments		
— Total time	SO 59	2 hours
— Mover	SO 59	15 minutes
— Other member	SO 59	10 minutes
— Minister in reply	SO 59	20 minutes
Motions		
— Mover	Chapter 15	20 minutes
— Other members	Chapter 15	20 minutes
— Mover in reply	Chapter 15	30 minutes
Bills (Private Members) Second reading debate	Sessional Order 1 & 3	
— Mover	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 hour
— Other Members	Sessional Order 1 & 3	10 minutes
— Mover in reply	Sessional Order 1 & 3	30 minutes
Consideration in Detail		
— Mover	Sessional Order 1 & 3	no limit
— Minister responsible for policy area (on each question)	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
— Other Members (on each question)	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
Bills (Government) Second reading debate		
— Mover (Minister)	SO 128(5)	1 hour
— Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)	SO 131	1 hour
— Other Members	SO 131	20 minutes
— Mover in reply	SO 131	30 minutes
Consideration in Detail		
— Mover (Minister)	SO 139	no limit
— Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)	SO 139	1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
— Other Members (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes

Address in Reply Debate		
— Total time	SO 47	28 hours
— Mover	SO 47	20 minutes
— Other members	SO 47	20 minutes
— Mover in reply	SO 47	30 minutes

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): I second the motion.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Kirrama Range Road

Mr Cripps from 670 petitioners requesting the House to upgrade the Kirrama Range Road to an acceptable standard to allow general traffic to utilise the road in view of the fact that it is an intricate link to the hinterland and the many attributes of Girringun National Park.

Yandina, South East Queensland Regional Plan

Mr Wellington from 147 petitioners requesting the House to remove the investigation area at Bridges (Yandina) from the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

Kulangoor, Ferntree Creek Road

Mr Wellington from 726 petitioners requesting the House to ensure that any application for a landfill site at Ferntree Creek Road, Kulangoor be thoroughly scrutinised and rejected so that the Government ensures the current permitted land uses on this site remain unchanged.

Duck and Quail Hunting

Mrs Menkens from 5097 petitioners requesting the House overturn the decision to ban traditional duck and quail hunting and launch an inquiry into the process involved in making this decision.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

Mrs Menkens from 2626 petitioners requesting the House to immediately increase Patient Transfer Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) payments in line with the increase in transport and accommodation costs since the present subsidy amounts were calculated, and thereafter index the subsidies in line with inflation.

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

Ferny Grove Train Line, Parking

Mr Caltabiano from 47 petitioners requesting the House to provide adequate parking at train stations on the Ferny Grove line and the full implementation of the Queensland Coalition train safety solutions policy.

Paddington, Carrington Street

Mr Fraser from 40 petitioners requesting the House to refer the matter of the proposed application for permanent road closure of part of Carrington Street, Paddington to the Minister for Natural Resources and to refuse the proposed application.

Wyaralong, Proposed Dam

Mr Lingard from 406 petitioners requesting the House to not proceed with the construction of a dam at Wyaralong.

Water Recycling Plants

Miss Roberts from 531 petitioners requesting the House to not support dams as a means of water supply in this State and to construct recycling plants, to recycle water in lieu.

Kitchener Road Children's Centre

Mr Caltabiano from 15 petitioners requesting the House to not sell the Kitchener Road Children's Centre but transfer the title to Brisbane City Council to enable the Kitchener Road Children's Centre site to be retained for ongoing community use.

Redland Shire, Fire Station

Mr English from 78 petitioners requesting the House to urgently consider placing a Fire Station in the southern part of Redland Shire.

Yungaba

Mr Caltabiano from 196 petitioners requesting the House to call a full public inquiry into the reasons for the State Government's reversal from its stated action to refurbish Yungaba, the subsequent conduct of sale and approval procedures and the use of "call in" powers; and to suspend the sale process and to engage in proper community consultation about suitable public uses for Yungaba, including full consideration of Yungaba continuing to be used for multicultural purposes.

Alcoholic Beverages Licence

Mr Malone from 106 petitioners requesting the House to issue licences to purchase and possess alcoholic beverages to anyone over 18 years who wants one and legislate to prevent anyone purchasing or possessing alcoholic beverages without a licence.

Nerang, Nielsons Road

Mr Caltabiano from 145 petitioners requesting the House to fast track Nielsens Road interchange, Nerang.

Logan North Library

Ms Stone from 83 petitioners requesting the House to withhold State government funding until the Logan City Council have undertaken public consultation with the residents of Springwood, Daisy Hill and Rochedale South about the relocation of the Logan North Library.

Rate Rises

Mr Langbroek from 112 petitioners requesting the House to review rate rises based on the published advertisements and the actual increases in rates, and the legality of discriminating against rate payers based on the height of their unit.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 52ND PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received prior to the constitution of the 52nd Parliament of Queensland, were deemed to have been tabled by the Clerk of the Parliament on the dates indicated—

15 August 2006—

- Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority—Report for the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003
- Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority—Report for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004
- Report under section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 by the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

5 October 2006—

- Crime and Misconduct Commission Report titled—Regulating outcall prostitution: should legal outcall prostitution services be extended to licensed brothels and independent escort agencies?

9 October 2006—

- Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee Report No. 71—Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission
- Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Purcell) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

- Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 198

Electricity Amendment Act (No. 2) 2004—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 199

Electricity Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Electricity Regulation 2006, No. 200 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 200

Freedom of Information Act 1992—

- Freedom of Information Regulation 2006, No. 201

Water Act 2000—

- Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006, No. 202

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 1988, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006, No. 203, Explanatory Notes for No. 203 and Regulatory Impact Statement for Subordinate Legislation Numbers 203, 204, 205 and 206

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2006, No. 204 and Explanatory Notes for No. 204 [Please note that the Regulatory Impact Statement which accompanies Subordinate Legislation No. 203 also applies to this instrument]

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006, No. 205 and Explanatory Notes for No. 205 [Please note that the Regulatory Impact Statement which accompanies Subordinate Legislation No. 203 also applies to this instrument]

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006, No. 206 and Explanatory Notes for No. 206 [Please note that the Regulatory Impact Statement which accompanies Subordinate Legislation No. 203 also applies to this instrument]

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Conservation Plans) Amendment Conservation Plan (No. 1) 2006 and Explanatory Notes for No. 207

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2006, No. 208

Integrated Planning Act 1997, Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 209

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 210

Casino Control Act 1982—

- Casino Gaming Amendment Rule (No. 3) 2006, No. 211

Corrective Services Act 2006—

- Corrective Services Regulation 2006, No. 212

Corrective Services Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 213

Statutory Instruments Act 1992—

- Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 214

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Regulation 2006, No. 215

Inala Shopping Centre Freeholding Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 216

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

- Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 217

Property Agents and Motors Dealers Act 2000—

- Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Auctioneering Practice Code of Conduct) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 218

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000—

- Property Agents and Motor Dealers Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 219

Property Agents and Motor Dealers and Other Acts Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 220

Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995—

- Coastal Protection and Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 221

Marine Parks Act 2004, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995—

- Marine Parks (Declaration) Regulation 2006, No. 222, Explanatory Notes for No. 222 and Regulatory Impact Statement for Subordinate Legislation Numbers 222 and 223

Environmental Protection Act 1994, Fisheries Act 1994, Marine Parks Act 2004, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Place Names Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Marine Parks Regulation 2006, No. 223 and Explanatory Notes for No. 223 [Please note that the Regulatory Impact Statement which accompanies Subordinate Legislation No. 222 also applies to this instrument]

Marine Parks Act 2004—

- Marine Parks (Zoning Plans) Amendment Zoning Plan (No. 1) 2006, No. 224 and Explanatory Notes for No. 224

Marine Parks Act 2004—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 225

Building and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 226

Building Act 1975, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Pastoral Workers' Accommodation Act 1980, Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991, Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Workplace Health and Safety Act 1990—

- Building Regulation 2006, No. 227

Integrated Planning Act 1997—

- Integrated Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 228

Marine Parks Act 2004—

- Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006, No. 229 and Explanatory Notes for No. 229

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection (Approved Sugarcane Varieties) Amendment Declaration (No. 2) 2006, No. 230

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2006, No. 231

Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2005—

- Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 232

Forestry Act 1959—

- Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 233

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 234

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 235

Public Service Act 1996—

- Public Service Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 236

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—

- Transport Infrastructure (Rail) Regulation 2006, No. 237

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

- Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 238 and Explanatory Notes for No. 238

Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991—

- Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 239 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 239

Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Act 1998—

- Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 240

Mineral Resources Act 1989—

- Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 241

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

- State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 242

Keno Act 1996—

- Keno Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2006, No. 243

Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

- Transport Operations (Maritime Legislation) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 244

Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996, Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005, Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002, Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003—

- Education Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 245

Aboriginal Communities (Justice and Land Matters) Act 1984, Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, Child Care Act 2002, Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996, Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Evidence Act 1977, Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, Food Production (Safety) Act 2000, Health Act 1937, Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003, Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006, No. 246

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 247

Consumer Credit and Trade Measurement Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 248

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

- Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2006, No. 249

PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following papers, which were received after the dissolution of the 51st Parliament of Queensland on the dates indicated—

17 August 2006—

- Letter, dated 10 August 2006, from the President of the Senate (Hon. Paul Calvert) to the Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly (Hon. A McGrady) regarding a resolution agreed to by the Senate regarding the United Nations' Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

23 August 2006—

- Report on an overseas trip to China and South Korea by the Minister for Child Safety (Mr Reynolds) from 12-23 July 2006

24 August 2006—

- Letter, dated 22 August 2006, from the Member for Ferny Grove (Mr Wilson) to the Clerk of the Parliament correcting comments made in the House on 9 August 2006 regarding new car parks at Ferny Grove Railway Station
- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to an e-petition sponsored by Dr Flegg from 4447 petitioners and a paper petition presented by Dr Flegg from 1137 petitioners regarding access to Bibles during a stay in Queensland hospitals

28 August 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle) regarding a paper petition presented by Mrs Stuckey from 2434 petitioners regarding the former Coolangatta Special School at Kirra Hill

1 September 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition presented by Mr O'Brien from 462 petitioners regarding the speed limit at the intersection of Port Douglas Road and the Captain Cook Highway
- Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence) to a paper petition presented by Mrs Sullivan from 1604 petitioners regarding volatile substance misuse

7 September 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition presented by Dr Flegg from 3538 petitioners regarding the need for a polyclinic to be built on Bribie Island

8 September 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and Minister Assisting the Premier on Water (Mr Palaszczuk) to an e-petition sponsored by Mr Wellington from 3071 petitioners regarding the Queensland Government's proposal to dam the Mary at Traveston Crossing
- Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and Minister Assisting the Premier on Water (Mr Palaszczuk) to a paper petition presented by Mr Foley from 1166 petitioners regarding the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam

22 September 2006—

- Letter, dated 20 September 2006, from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of a letter from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties listing proposed international treaty actions tabled in both houses of the Federal Parliament on 8 August 2006 and the National Interest Analyses for the proposed treaty actions listed

27 September 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to an e-petition sponsored by Mr Fenlon from 642 petitioners regarding the Preparatory Year educational reform
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition presented by Mr O'Brien from 654 petitioners regarding scheduled bus services in the Port Douglas area

28 September 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition presented by Mr Caltabiano from 224 petitioners regarding the proposed bus station on the south side of Paradise Road as part of the Pacific Motorway Transit Project
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition presented by Ms Croft from 61 petitioners regarding the introduction of a six knot speed limit in the "Labrador Channel"

29 September 2006—

- Letter, dated 29 September 2006, from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of a letter from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties listing proposed international treaty actions tabled in both houses of the Federal Parliament on 5 and 6 September 2006 and the National Interest Analyses for the proposed treaty actions listed

4 October 2006—

- Amendment to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement titled "Schedule E Transferring Water Entitlements and Allocations", as approved by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council on 19 May 2006

6 October 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism (Ms Nelson-Carr) to a paper petition presented by Dr Douglas from 15164 petitioners regarding the proposed cruise liner terminal in the Southport Broadwater

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

Report pursuant to Standing Order 158 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006

Amendments made to Bill

Clause 2 (Commencement)—

At page 16, line 11—

omit—

'.'.

Clause 2 (Commencement)—

At page 16, line 12—

omit—

';'.

Education (General Provisions) Bill 2006

Amendments made to Bill

Chapter 15, part 3, heading (Appeals against directions under s 340 or 349)—

At page 239, line 22, 's'—

omit, insert—

'section'.

Chapter 15, part 4, heading (Appeal against decision under s 69, 72, 154, 302(4) or 309(6))—

At page 241, line 22, 's'—

omit, insert—

'section'.

Clause 446 (State educational institutions)—

At page 261, line 3, 'A'—

omit, insert—

'An'.

Schedule 2 (Amendments commencing on 1 January 2007)—

At page 319, line 21, 'Sections 76(6)'—

omit, insert—

'Section 76(6),'.

Schedule 2 (Amendments commencing on 1 January 2007)—

At page 321, line 8, 'section'—

omit, insert—

's'.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Election Commitments

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 am): I promised in the election campaign that we would continue to get on with the job and deliver nearly 80 initiatives within the first 100 days of government. Not only did we start work on those initiatives on the first working day after the election; we have already completed delivering a good number of them. For example, I am delighted that Professor Alan Isles has already been appointed Clinical CEO of the Queensland Children's Hospital development. Site establishment works for the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and for the Gold Coast desalination plant have already started. We have started to obtain easements for the south-east Queensland water grid by buying the necessary land or by compulsory purchase. The contract for the duplication of the Gateway Bridge and upgrading 20 kilometres of motorway has been awarded. The contract for the Mitchelton-Keperra rail work has been awarded and work on a third track between Salisbury and Kuraby has started.

I was delighted to launch the $17 million Queensland Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Network based at the University of Queensland last month. This new facility will help make the Smart State a key centre for biodiscovery and drug design. Chalco has been awarded preferred developer status to develop the Aurukun bauxite deposit. Today, the 32nd day after the election, I present a complete list of all 79 promises along with the progress we have made on delivering them.

This action builds on our record of investing more in key areas such as health, water, infrastructure and services than any government in the history of Queensland. Since our government was elected, we have spent more per capita on our state's capital program than any other state in the nation. Our capital works spending this year alone tops $10 billion for the first time ever.

Since being elected in 1998, we have increased funding to health by more than 64 per cent, to education by more than 55 per cent and to welfare and housing by more than 110 per cent. We are building a better Queensland. The promises and the vigorous action that we are taking are proof that this government is just as enthusiastic and determined to make a difference as we were in June 1998. We are delivering on our vision of a Smart State where knowledge, creativity and innovation drive economic growth to improve prosperity and quality of life for all Queenslanders.

I promised Queenslanders that I would report to parliament. I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the details of progress on the first 100 days.

Leave granted.

And this is how we are delivering on each of our commitments for the first 100 days of this new government.

Health

Promise: Finalise the acquisition process for the Sunshine Coast Hospital at Kawana and begin detailed design and planning.

Action: A special project team will be created this month and before the end of the month it will formulate a development program. I want the site acquisition contract signed by the end of November.

Promise: Establish a project team to ensure fast tracking of construction of new University Hospital at Parklands on the Gold Coast.

Action: An inter-departmental working group has already started work. A project team is due to complete work on a development program by the end of this month.

Promise: Commence scoping and design work for capital projects to create extra beds at hospitals, including Princess Alexandra, Townsville, QEII, Robina, Caloundra, Nambour, Rockhampton and Bundaberg hospitals.

Action: Project teams and governance structure will be in place this month to complete an examination of planning requirements.

Promise: Employ staff, purchase equipment and open additional theatres to ensure elective surgery centres at Redcliffe and Caboolture start operations as soon as possible.

Action: Plans are in place to actually start the additional operating sessions before the end of the first 100 days. We are starting the process of recruiting extra staff with a target of employing at least half of them within this period.

Promise: Appoint Dr Alan Isles to lead the consultation process for the creation of the new Queensland Children's Hospital.

Action: I am delighted that Professor Alan Isles has already been appointed Clinical CEO of the Queensland Children's Hospital development and consultation has started.

A draft Implementation Plan for the $700 million project is already being prepared by Queensland Health and a steering committee with broad-based membership will meet for the first time this month.

It will provide strategic direction in the establishment of the hospital and oversee the full implementation of the recommendations made in the Report of the Taskforce on Paediatric Cardiac Services.

There will be monthly reports to the Minister on progress.

Promise: Create a separate Medical Board to focus solely on doctor registration issues.

Action: We will introduce the necessary legislation in this year's sittings. An acting CEO for the new Office of the Medical Board will be appointed within the 100 days.

Promise: Complete an independent review of the *Mental Health Act 2000*.

Action: Former Crime and Misconduct Commission chair Brendan Butler is due to present his report on his independent review of Queensland's mental health laws by December 11.

Promise: Advertise nationally and internationally for extra staff to boost paediatric cardiac services at Prince Charles Hospital.

Action: A national recruitment strategy is being launched in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Annual Scientific Meeting in Hobart from October 12 to 15. An international campaign will be run in conjunction with medical conferences in the UK and New Zealand this month.

Promise: Introduce legislation to accelerate the acquisition of the site for the new Yeppoon Hospital.

Action: The legislation has already been drafted. It will be introduced in Parliament this week.

A project team to handle the initial planning for the new hospital has already been established in anticipation of the legislation being passed.

Promise: Continue aggressive recruitment of health professionals from interstate and overseas to build on the 311 extra doctors, 1,358 nurses and 546 allied health staff recruited over the last 12 months.

Action: Since the promise was made we have already increased those totals to deliver 397 extra doctors, 1,812 extra nurses and 601 extra allied health professionals.

We are continuing the successful "*Work For Us*" recruitment strategy on Queensland Health's website which has helped to deliver this massive increase.

In addition, we are identifying the vacancies which are likely to occur in January and we will advertise nationally and internationally for doctors with the necessary qualifications and experience to fill those places.

We will also continue to recruit doctors, nurses and allied health professionals at national and international conferences and trade expos as well as using recruitment agencies when appropriate.

Promise: Offer jobs to all students graduating as nurses.

Action: Offers have already been made and more than 730 upcoming graduates have accepted offers with Queensland Health.

Promise: Conduct consumer focus groups in Health Service Districts across the State as part of the public consultation process for introducing a Consumer Health Council as a fearless, independent voice for health consumers.

Action: We will complete these consultations by November 17.

Promise: Continue to publish 'Our Performance' Related Reports on hospital activity (monthly) on Queensland Health website www.health.qld.gov.au; elective surgery waiting times (quarterly), emergency department performance (daily) and staffing (monthly).

Action: We are continuing the regular release of information as promised, with the October waiting times for elective surgery due (as always) in early November.

Promise: Finalise negotiations with Griffith University for the establishment of a third Queensland Academy at the Smith Street campus on the Gold Coast focussed on Health Sciences.

Action: The initial meeting with Griffith University took place last month, followed by the establishment of a steering committee and its first meeting.

A project manager is being appointed this month and we expect to be able to call tenders for the project within the 100 days.

Water

Promise: Deliver the initial report on the South East Queensland Water Regulation helping co-ordinate the drought response across Councils.

Action: Initial responses from the service providers were received last month. The Government is now preparing the initial report.

Promise: Extend the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme statewide.

Action: The Cabinet Budget Review Committee has already approved the funding to extend the scheme statewide. We anticipate launching the scheme in areas outside South-East Queensland early next month.

Promise: Set water savings targets for all new residential subdivision developments under the *Local Government Act*.

Action: By December 18 the Queensland Development Code under the Integrated Planning Act will be amended to require all new estates to include water savings targets.

We are likely to introduce a stricter target for some new estates in early 2007.

Promise: Commence construction on the Southern Regional Pipeline.

Action: Pipes are currently being purchased for the Bundamba to Swanbank section. I visited the Tyco Water factory at Carole Park to watch the first piece of piping come off the assembly line. These pipes will be installed in the ground later this month.

Promise: Commence site works for Gold Coast desalination plant.

Action: Site works started last month.

Promise: Commence site works for Western Corridor Recycling Scheme.

Action: Site works started last month. Delivery of the first piece of piping for the scheme should be delivered this month.

Promise: Commence action to obtain easements to set in place the South East Queensland water grid.

Action: We have issued the first set of acquisition notices for the pipeline easements for the Western Corridor Recycling Scheme and the Southern Regional Pipeline Project.

We will start to acquire easements for the remaining sections of pipelines, the sites for the treatment plants, balancing tanks and pumping stations within the 100 days.

Our preference is to purchase the land by agreement but will start the compulsory acquisition process to ensure any delays are kept to a minimum.

Promise: Declare Traveston Crossing dam, Wyaralong dam and Bromelton off-stream storage as projects of State significance and commence consultation on terms of reference for an environmental impact statement.

Action: We will declare these projects to be of State Significance before the end of this month and plan to release the draft terms of reference for each environmental impact study before the end of the 100 days.

Promise: Invite tenders for construction of Cedar Grove Weir.

Action: We will release tenders for the construction of the weir before the end of the 100 days.

Promise: Negotiate arrangements for raising of Hinze Dam.

Action: We will declare the project to be a proposal of State Significance and assist the Gold Coast City Council with its selection of alliance partners for planning and construction before the end of the 100 days.

Promise: Complete drilling of the initial production bores of the Nambour/ Landsborough Basin.

Action: There are four initial bores and we are on target to complete them towards the end of next month. The bores will provide additional supplies which will contribute to the South-East Queensland water grid.

Promise: Finalise report and act on recommendations from the Toowoomba Water Futures Taskforce.

Action: The taskforce met for the first time on August 14 and is meeting again today. By November 17 it aims to have established the amount of water needed by Toowoomba up to the year 2050 and options for immediate action.

The Taskforce will provide a final report to the government on its preferred strategy which will then be acted on.

Promise: Progress geotechnical and environmental studies on the Eden Bann and Rookwood Weirs.

Action: Consultants have already been engaged for geotechnical and environmental studies, including vegetation, turtles, fish, social and cultural issues.

Promise: Complete First Stage of the Burdekin to Moranbah pipeline.

Action: Pipe connection for the first stage of the pipeline, from the Burdekin Falls Dam to Eungella, is due for completion within the 100 days.

In addition, the eastern pipeline from Moranbah to Coppabella will also be completed and work will start on the southern pipeline from Moranbah to the Dysart area.

Promise: Conduct preliminary feasibility study of Connors River Dam.

Action: Subject to approval from the Governor in Council that the project amounts to works under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act, Sunwater will be requested to undertake a “fatal flaws” analysis as the preliminary feasibility study. This will occur within the 100 days.

Promise: Identify or progress identification of corridors for pipelines between Connors River Dam and surrounding shires, Burdekin to Bowen and Proserpine.

Action: A broad corridor for a pipeline or channel from Burdekin to Bowen will be identified. In addition, we will start identifying a pipeline route from Bowen to Proserpine. We will also declare Water for Bowen as a significant project under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act.

Promise: Commence acquisition of corridor to connect Rockhampton and Gladstone supplies.

Action: After the appropriate consultation, we will complete the Gladstone to Rockhampton Corridor Study, finalise the preferred route and approve funding to acquire land on the route. Landowners will be notified of the need to secure land for the corridor.

Promise: Extend the Business Water Efficiency Program Statewide.

Action: The Business Water Efficiency Program is an incentive scheme funded by the State Government to help businesses save water by adopting sustainable water use practices.

We are extending the program. Outside South-East Queensland the program will be delivered through organisations such as existing water service providers. These will be identified by December 18 and offered a business model for delivery of the program.

Businesses will be able to access the program from January next year.

Promise: Finalise and release the Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy.

Action: The strategy is being finalised and will be released in the near future.

Infrastructure and economic development

Promise: Outline a blueprint that will see the emergence of Mount Isa, Townsville and Bowen as a triangle of industrial development and mineral processing over the course of the next half century.

Action: A blueprint will be prepared and taken to Cabinet for endorsement within the 100 days.

As part of the planning for the industrial triangle, the Co-ordinator-General will complete an assessment of an environmental impact report on building the 69 kilometre missing rail link between the Goonyella rail network and the Newlands network linked to Abbot Point Coal Terminal.

We will also start the process needed to acquire the land for the line.

The plan for a third stage of the expansion of Abbot Point Coal Terminal will be advanced by the completion of a supplementary report on the environmental impact statement.

And we will release draft terms of reference for an environmental impact statement for the proposed AGL Townsville South Power Station.

Promise: Announce preferred developer status for the development of the Aurukun Bauxite Deposit.

Action: We have awarded preferred developer status to Chalco.

Promise: Establish the Clean Coal Technology Board and initiate action to test new technologies in the generation of clean power from fossil fuels.

Action: The board is meeting this month. We will initiate action to test new technologies in the generation of clean power from fossil fuels by sponsoring the Zerogen project of Stanwell Corporation, a leading-edge demonstration project to efficiently generate power from coal and to capture and sequester the carbon dioxide produced.

Promise: Amend the *State Development and Public Works Act* and related legislation to provide the Co-ordinator-General with powers to take over approval processes where agencies have not made decisions in 20 working days.

Action: Legislation will be introduced to Parliament in this year's sittings.

Promise: Select six regions as Centres of Enterprise in key areas of industry strength to seize upon opportunities for economic growth.

Action: We are completing the selection process and will announce the six Centres of Enterprise next month.

Promise: Identify private sector partners and prioritise areas for the implementation of the mineral exploration program and the collaborative drilling program.

Action: A program has been developed to identify the private sector partners before December 18.

Areas for implementation of the exploration programs have been prioritised.

Projects have been placed in a four-year plan, budgets have been assigned and arrangements are being made to acquire geophysical data programs with Geoscience Australia and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

The areas for acquisition of new geoscientific data have been prioritised, based on areas nominated in the Smart Mining policy which include areas with no modern geophysical survey coverage. Many of these areas have been nominated as high priority by Queensland Resources Council.

Discussions have been held with Geoscience and contractors about the availability of aircraft and contractors to conduct airborne geophysical surveys, gravity surveys and seismic surveys.

Promise: Initiate works on major road projects including release of the environmental impact statement on Airport Link, awarding of construction contract for Ipswich-Logan Motorway interchange and final investment decision on Northern Busway.

Action: The Airport Link environmental impact statement and the Northern Busway concept design and impact management plan are due to be released today.

I announced on Sunday that business plans for both the Airport Link and the Northern Busway show that both projects are viable, with the State Government funding construction of the busway and the Airport Link being delivered as a public private partnership.

The tender evaluation for the Federally-funded Ipswich-Logan Motorway interchange is complete. We are awaiting approval for funding from the Federal Government for the contract to be awarded.

Promise: Accelerate major rail projects by awarding tender for the Mitchelton to Keperra second track, awarding tender for Nerang to Robina second track, complete track works on Ormeau to Coomera duplication and commencing construction of Salisbury to Kuraby third track.

Action: A contract for the duplication of the track between Mitchelton and Keperra and for station upgrades has already been awarded. In addition, work is due to start later this month.

Tenders for construction of a second track and new bridgework between Nerang and Robina have been invited. Assessment will be fast-tracked and I am advised that construction is expected to start within the 100 days.

The track between Ormeau and Coomera is expected to be operational this week.

Construction of the third track between Salisbury and Kuraby is already under way.

Promise: Appoint successful tenderer to duplicate the Gateway Bridge and upgrade 20km of the motorway.

Action: A Leighton Abigroup joint venture for the $1.88 billion project was appointed last month. Construction work on the upgrade is due to start before the end of this year. The project will include building a new Gateway Bridge 50 metres east of the existing bridge and upgrading 20 kilometres of the Gateway Motorway between the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba road and Nudgee Road, including a new northern deviation and second access to Brisbane Airport.

Promise: Take investment decision on Springfield Road Rail corridor.

Action: We are on track to make an investment decision within the 100 days.

Promise: Facilitate the development of a new, alternative crossing for the Toowoomba range and CBD bypass which is currently being developed as a public private partnership.

Action: We have appointed Connell Wagner as design and construction supervision consultants for a test tunnel. We will call tenders for construction of the test tunnel within the 100 days.

Planning for the CBD bypass is continuing as part of the Toowoomba Bypass project business case.

Promise: Commence site plans for five bridges and resurface 71km of the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Banana.

Action: Site works and detailed design on the five bridges on the Dawson Highway—at Branch Creek, Deep Creek, Double Creek, Doughboy Creek and Duckholes Creek—have started.

Site works for the resurfacing have started and the actual resurfacing is due to start next month.

Promise: Establish a whole-of-government review process to identify risks in each portfolio area leading to the development of a Statewide Infrastructure and Services Plan to identify future need and impact on resources.

Action: This process will be established by the end of next month.

Promise: Develop an integrated strategy to assist development of the industrial and enterprise precincts in the western corridor of south east Queensland.

Action: We will complete this strategy by the end of this month. I anticipate being able to make major announcements as a result of the strategy within the 100 days.

Promise: Complete preliminary planning for final alignment of corridor and station locations on the Sunshine Coast CAMCOS Rail corridor.

Action: Invitations will be made to consultants for the Caloundra South Realignment Study shortly, with the appointment of one of them to complete the study.

Since the promise was made, Horton Park Golf Club at Maroochydore has decided to sell the golf course. This may allow a better route, necessitating a fresh study of the location of Maroochydore Station.

Preliminary planning for the Caloundra South Realignment will be completed by mid-December.

Subject to a anticipated request from Maroochy Shire Council preliminary planning for a possible Maroochydore Station will also be completed in a similar time frame.

Detailed planning will then start, with completion due in late 2007.

Promise: Complete and open the new Gallery of Modern Art as part of the Millennium Arts project.

Action: The Gallery of Modern Art will open on December 2.

Promise: Complete and open the refurbished State Library as part of the Millennium Arts project.

Action: The State Library will re-open on November 25.

Promise: Launch the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Facility at the Institute of Molecular Bioscience.

Action: I was delighted to launch the $17 Million Queensland Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Network based at The University of Queensland last month. This new facility will help make the Smart State a key centre for biodiscovery and drug design.

Promise: Open the new Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at Queensland University of Technology.

Action: I look forward to opening this major Smart State facility later this month.

Promise: Open the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology at the University of Queensland.

Action: I look forward to opening yet another major Smart State facility later this month.

Jobs, industry and skills

Promise: Commit to an extra 1,000 apprentices and trainees in the first 100 days as part of our agenda to increase apprentice training places by 17,000 each year by 2010.

Action: We will finalise plans necessary for this commitment within the 100 days.

Promise: Open Acacia Ridge campus of the Trade and Technical Skills Institute.

Action: The campus, involving a first stage of 10 new classrooms, toilets and 8,300 square metres of flexible learning space and stores, will be ready for opening in the 100 days.

Promise: Introduce legislation to support $1.1 billion Queensland Skills Plan.

Action: We will introduce the legislation this year.

Promise: Establish 10 new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland.

Action: We have established 10 new sites, with seven leases being finalised. Two more leases are in the final stages of negotiation. At the 10th site a suitable shopfront is being sought.

Promise: Establish three new Training Centres of Excellence.

Action: Interim management committees have already been established for the energy and the manufacturing and engineering centres of excellence.

The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund is being transformed into the building and construction centre of excellence. A new board to run the centre is due to be established by the end of November.

The three new training centres of excellence will not deliver training themselves but are designed to provide industry leadership and influence and be the focal point for industry and government to deal with vocational education and training, skills development and similar labour market issues.

They will also provide government with industry advice on skills shortages and develop strategies to enable the continued growth of the industries.

Promise: Work with industry to identify locations for five new industry trade training centres.

Action: We will identify the key industries and locations of the centres within the 100 days.

Promise: Work with industry, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland to double the number of school based apprenticeships and traineeships from the beginning of the 2007 school year.

Action: Plans are well advanced to enable the doubling of school based apprenticeships and traineeships from the beginning of the 2007 school year.

Promise: Finalise the Queensland College of Wine Tourism at Stanthorpe.

Action: Construction of the further stages of the college is due for completion at the end of next month.

Promise: Undertake work with the Aviation Industry on the creation of a specialist Aviation High School at Hendra.

Action: The Government will work on this project with the Aerospace Project Governance Board which includes representatives of Aviation Australia, Boeing Australia (which speaks on behalf of the industry on the board). The board meets at the end of this month to outline the industry's expectations for the school.

Promise: If *WorkChoices* is validated, the Government will amend State legislation to ensure the employees of statutory authorities caught by *WorkChoices* are transferred to a non-corporate entity so the employer becomes the Crown.

Action: As soon as the High Court decision is released, Cabinet will make arrangements to amend the legislation.

Promise: Under the Tomorrow's Schools program provide $50 million in capital works grants to State school communities and issue guidelines to access $850 million in capital works to modernise existing infrastructure and provide new facilities required for the future in State schools.

Action: Three days after the election, guidelines for access to the $50 million were released. Applications close next month and we expect to be able to actually announce successful schools within the 100 days.

We will issue guidelines for access to the $850 million within the 100 days.

Promise: Establish the Queensland Academy of Science, Maths and Technology at Toowong.

Action: We expect to finalise the selection of students by the end of this month and complete the appointment of teaching and administrative staff within the 100 days.

Promise: Establish the Queensland Academy of Creative Industries at Kelvin Grove.

Action: We expect to finalise the selection of students by the end of this month and complete the appointment of teaching and administrative staff within the 100 days.

Promise: Appoint 14 literacy co-ordinators across the State, roll out competency training for early years teachers (Prep to Year 3) and finalise negotiations with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools of Queensland on the roll-out of additional literacy support for children in years 5 to 7.

Action: We have already appointed the 14 literacy co-ordinators.

A teacher awareness package is being developed as part of the competency training for early years teachers (Prep to Year 3) and will be communicated to them this term. The competency training will continue next year.

Negotiations with the non-State education sector for additional literacy support for children in years 5-7 will start towards the end of this month. There is no reason why they should not be concluded within the 100 days.

Community, social, and law and order

Promise: Identify priority areas and develop construction timetable to roll out the cyclone proofing of public buildings initiative on coastal Queensland and roll out education and awareness program on cyclone preparedness.

Action: The State Disaster Management Group has already met to discuss a submission on the initiative.

The Department of Public Works has initially identified the priority areas as being the 50 kilometre-wide coastal strip north of Bundaberg to the tip of Cape York and round to the Gulf of Carpentaria, plus island communities and the Hervey Bay region.

The Department is already working with Cairns City Council on a test project to document the council's community public shelter requirements.

Funding for this work has been provided by the Government.

Once this project has been finalised, it will be used as the basis for a planning guideline to be produced for use by all other local governments in the cyclonic zone.

It is proposed that the majority of the shelters will be developed through "strengthening" suitable new public buildings on existing or future capital works programs such as school gymnasiums and community halls.

Within the 100 days we will have developed a construction timetable which will identify projects from the present and future capital works programs for targeted communities in the priority areas so that suitable buildings including school and TAFE gymnasiums, multi-purpose halls, workshops and community entertainment centres, can be constructed to the standards necessary in a cyclone shelter.

We will have education and awareness advice ready to distribute before the end of the 100 days.

Promise: Introduce legislation to apply the Australian Sports Drug Agency drug code to Queensland athletes.

Action: Before the end of the year we will introduce legislation that will be complementary to the Commonwealth Government's *Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006* and the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority which has replaced the Australian Sports Drug Agency.

Promise: Enact legislation to clarify that any parliamentary allowances apply only for the term of incumbency and ensure that any funds advanced to members are repaid on a pro-rata basis.

Action: Advice was obtained that the mechanism to ensure that any funds advanced to members are repaid on a pro-rata basis could be immediately achieved by amendments to the Members' Entitlements Handbook instead of having to wait for legislation to be enacted.

On October 5 the Governor in Council approved amendments to the Handbook which will require the repayment of the allowances by former Members if they cease to be a Member.

I have written to the former Members who received the allowance and requested that they contact the Clerk of the Parliament to make arrangements to repay the relevant amounts.

I am pleased to advise that a number of former Members are already making such arrangements but I have asked the Speaker to advise me of progress in these repayments so that I may consider the necessity for any further action that may be needed.

Promise: Introduce legislation to outlaw ticket scalping at major sporting and entertainment events in Queensland.

Action: This legislation will be introduced in this year's sittings.

Promise: Induct 220 new police before the end of the year.

Action: We have already inducted 152 new police officers and I expect a further 76 officers to be inducted later this month.

Promise: Ensure ongoing increases in police numbers to keep pace with Queensland's rapid population growth.

Action: Induction figures are sufficient to keep Queensland ahead of the Australian police-to-population ratio.

Promise: Establish a new police squad to crack down on violent bikie gangs.

Action: Within the 100 days we will establish an Outlaw Motor Cycle Gang Squad under the Organised Crime Group.

Promise: Legislate to give police the power to confiscate the vehicles of repeat drunk drivers, unlicensed drivers and those who drive unregistered and illegally modified cars.

Action: It is proposed that the necessary amendments to legislation will be introduced in this year's sittings.

Promise: Commence scoping and design work for the rollout of new and upgraded police stations.

Action: This has already been achieved.

Promise: Open the new Gympie Police Station and Rainbow Beach Police Beat.

Action: Both the new police station and the police beat are due to be completed and opened within the 100 days.

Promise: Introduce laws to ensure children can't legally obtain spray-paint cans.

Action: The legislation will be introduced into Parliament later this year.

Promise: Enact legislation to outlaw drink spiking.

Action: We are on track to have the legislation introduced and enacted within the 100 days.

Promise: Enact legislation to authorise courts to apply electronic monitoring devices to persons previously convicted for paedophiliac offences.

Action: We are on track to have the legislation introduced and enacted within the 100 days.

Gateway Motorway Upgrade

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): Construction work on the $1.88 billion duplication of the Gateway Bridge and the widening of 20 kilometres of the Gateway Motorway will begin by the end of the year. A Leighton-Abigroup joint venture has been chosen as the preferred tenderer to deliver the project. Works will include building a new Gateway Bridge 50 metres east of the existing bridge and upgrading the motorway between Mount Gravatt and Nudgee. I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the remainder of my ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

When complete the existing bridge will carry six lanes of traffic north and the new bridge will carry six lanes of traffic south.

The new Gateway Bridge will also include a 4.25 metre wide shared pedestrian and cycle facility on its eastern side and full electronic tolling.

The project will create more than 5,000 jobs during the four-and-a-half year construction period, with an estimated flow-on effect into the local economy of $450 million in wages and salaries.

We have already kicked off on an early works program, improving the Wynnum Road/Gateway Motorway intersection upgrade at Tingalpa.

In addition, the project is also critical in supporting the continued growth of Australia TradeCoast, which contributes more than $4.3 billion annually to the economy and generates 5% of total employment for the Brisbane area.

It has the potential to reduce travel times from Rochedale to Brisbane Airport, by about 15 minutes, and Caboolture to the Port of Brisbane, by about 10 minutes during peak periods.

The cost increase from the original estimate of $1.64 billion includes funding for extra road works and improved design.

The extra money we're investing will mean we can include a new on-ramp and a new off-ramp to Kingsford Smith Drive at Eagle Farm.

We will also be extending the existing motorway 600 metres to the Nudgee Rd interchange to provide an extra southbound lane.

The extra funds will also mean the bridge over Airport Drive on the new northern motorway deviation would be built to a width that could accommodate six lanes of traffic in the future.

After considering a number of delivery methods, the State Government last year decided the government-financed option was the best value for money.

The Government is funding the project because it is best placed to do so.

The private sector will design and build the upgrade and bring its expertise and innovation to the job as a result of the design.

The Leighton Abigroup joint venture brings a wealth of experience to the job, including work on the $1.5 billion Westlink M7 freeway in Sydney.

To help meet the cost of the project, tolling on both the new and existing bridges will continue for 30 years after the works are completed.

In 2011, the toll on a car is expected to be $3.10.

If Canberra met its responsibility for the road part of the upgrade then the toll level would be $2.20 in 2011 and remain at that level.

The upgrade will also include state-of-the-art Intelligent Transport Systems that will use technology to provide real time traffic management.

This will include closed circuit television and vehicle detection systems that will monitor motorway traffic conditions, change variable message signs and vary speed limits.

Under the South East Infrastructure Plan and Program almost $28 billion out of the $66 billion in infrastructure spending will be for road and transport projects.

And over the next three years motorists and public transport users will see a number of vital projects delivered and substantial progress on numerous others.

As well as the Gateway Upgrade, we are delivering the Tugun Bypass, a duplicated Houghton Highway and major work on further duplication of the Sunshine Motorway.

Work is already underway on the Inner Northern Busway in the Brisbane CBD and over the next few years people will see bulldozers at work on the Boggo Rd Busway and the Eastern and Northern busways.

We are getting on with the job of delivering the infrastructure we need to meet the needs of the extra 1,500 people who come here every week.

Driving Export Growth for Queensland: 2006-2011

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): Queensland continues to lead Australia as the fastest growing exporter of goods overseas. In 2005 Queensland's exports rose 34.2 per cent to $35.4 billion and set a new record for the state. To maintain this momentum, on Monday, 9 October at the launch of Export Week 2006 I released my government's new five-year export strategy, Driving Export Growth for Queensland. I table a copy of the report and supporting documentation.

Tabled paper: Report titled 'Driving export growth for Queensland 2006-2011' and associated documents.

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the remainder of my ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

This strategy is our forward plan to diversify our export base and continue Queensland's international reach.

Not only does it build on our strengths in natural resources and primary production, it also addresses the role our knowledge-intensive exports will play in the years ahead, and the needs of emerging sectors, such as biotechnology and the creative industries.

Our strategy details initiatives that will further support Queensland businesses as they continue the march overseas, including a new statewide Export Advisory Service, dedicated export strategies for target markets including China, India and the Middle East, and a greater presence in-country.

We will also be boosting our international visibility under the banner of Trade Queensland to build on our international profile as the trade partner of choice.

I would like to inform the House that I will be visiting New Zealand between the 27th and 29th of October to promote Queensland as the first choice for future investment.

Currently, New Zealand is Queensland's 7th largest export destination, with $907 million in merchandise goods exported during the past financial year.

I will be attending meetings with Prime Minister Helen Clarke, along with industry and business representatives to discuss the potential for our countries to collaborate in areas of respective expertise.

Additionally, I will be visiting Auckland's new Starship Children's Hospital to see first-hand this major project which may have applications for the new Queensland Children's Hospital at the Mater.

Mr Speaker, extending our global reach and nurturing our international trade relationships are fundamental for sustaining export growth, and my Government is delivering.

Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Network

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.51 am): Last month I launched one of the world's most powerful magnetic instruments to help pave the way for research and development into the next wave of life-saving drugs.

The 900-megahertz nuclear magnetic resonance high-resolution spectrometer is the largest machine of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. It is the centrepiece of a new $17 million Queensland Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Network based at the University of Queensland. This new facility will help make the Smart State a key centre for biodiscovery and drug design. I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the remainder of my ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Nuclear magnetic resonance is a key technology for determining the structure of molecules and for visualising the anatomy of living tissue and microscopic structure.

It has helped revolutionise chemistry, physics, diagnostic medicine and structural biology.

It will enable scientists in Queensland and across our region to pioneer pharmaceuticals that require a detailed understanding of large molecules and target diseases such as cancer, heart disease and inflammatory disease.

It will also help attract top international researchers in fields such as drug design, biodiscovery, neuroscience and materials science.

Already, UQ researchers are working with this technology to develop a treatment for multiple sclerosis and a pain killer that could be 1000 times more powerful than morphine.

The State Government contributed $5 million through the Smart State Research Facilities Fund to help establish the network.

Other partners included the University of Queensland, QUT, Griffith University, James Cook University, Central Queensland University, the University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of Auckland and the Massey University in New Zealand.

This funding has been used to help purchase three systems—the 900MHz high-resolution machine for biomolecular studies; a 700MHz wide-bore micro-imaging system for small animal neuroimaging and a 600MHz system for use in biodiscovery.

These powerful machines have the potential to take our scientists into a whole new realm of discovery.

For example the network operates under the same principles as magnetic resonance imaging which many patients experience as part of modern medical procedures.

But it's powered by a superconductor and has a magnetic field 400,000 times stronger than the Earth's magnetic field.

The machine is so strong it has the power to "wipe" information from credit cards, to stop watches, and also to interfere with heart pacemakers.

The new facility will provide Queensland with a competitive edge in biotechnology research and development unparalled in Australia.

This type of facility provides not only the technological solutions for our future, but also vital, knowledge-intensive jobs.

It also means that our best research brains do not have to go interstate or overseas to conduct top level research and we can attract top researchers from overseas, who will come not just for our lifestyle but because of what this state-of-the-art facility offers.

Population Growth

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): The latest population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics demonstrate the enormous pressure placed on infrastructure in Queensland. Analysis of the figures show that seven of Australia's top 10 fastest growing districts are in Queensland. Queensland still leads Australia as the fastest growing state, with an increase of 80,000 people in the 12 months to March this year compared with 65,700 in Victoria and 56,900 in New South Wales. The total of 80,177 new Queenslanders amounted to 31 per cent of all new Australians—that is, 263,200. Queensland still has only 19.6 per cent of the total population.

What that means is an extra 1,542 Queenslanders every week on average. That is the growth issue that we are dealing with. That is one of the reasons why I have to say that I am disappointed to see decisions by Telstra to reduce the number of employees in this state. Indeed, in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* this morning there is a heading that says, 'Sol-less'—and I think that is appropriate—'Telstra's $9 million man sacks 83 coast workers'. I table that for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Copy of article from Sunshine Coast Daily dated 11 October 2006 titled 'Sol-less! Telstra's $9M man sacks 83 coast workers'.

I say to Senator Barnaby Joyce: thanks very much for nothing, because that is what you have done. You have seen Queenslanders sacked in the regions. At a time when we have record population growth we need better services, not worse. That is one of the reasons why the Deputy Premier and I sought to attract skills here. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The fastest growing districts in Australia between June 30, 2004 and June 30, 2005 were:

1. Mandurah (WA)—5.32%
2. Bunbury (WA)—5%
3. Hervey Bay (Qld)—4.89%
4. Mackay (Qld)—3.21%
5. Townsville (Qld)—3.01%
6. Nowra/Boomaderry—2.75%
7. Sunshine Coast (Qld)—2.56%
8. Toowoomba (Qld)—2.47%
9. Gold Coast/Tweed (Qld/NSW)—2.47%
10. Cairns (Qld)—2.43%

Queensland's 10 fastest growing districts were:

1. Gold Coast/Tweed—11,629 extra people
2. Sunshine Coast—5,311
3. Townsville—4,350
4. Cairns—2,925
5. Toowoomba—2,867
6. Hervey Bay—2,229
7. Mackay—2,198
8. Bundaberg—1,325
9. Rockhampton—546
10. Gladstone—521

Queensland still leads Australia as the fastest growing state with an increase of 80,000 people in the 12 months to March this year, compared with 65,700 in Victoria and 56,900 in New South Wales.

The total of 80,177 new Queenslanders amounted to 31% of all new Australians—that's 263,200—although Queensland still has only 19.6% of the total population.

It means an extra 1,542 Queenslanders every week on average.

This represented growth of 2.0% compared with 1.9% in Western Australia which increased its population by 38,600 over the 12 months (although Western Australia increased its population by 0.6% in the March quarter compared with Queensland's 0.5%).

Queensland's natural increase of 28,913 people represented the largest proportion of Queensland's population increase of 80,177 during the 12 months. It represented 23% of Australia's natural increase in population for the year.

Net interstate migration resulted in an extra 26,773 people arriving in Queensland, with overseas migration adding another 24,491 people.

Interstate migration resulted in 24,500 people more people leaving New South Wales than arriving and Victoria lost 2,300 in the same way.

Skills Recruiting

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 am): We had an '@ Work & Play—Queensland on Show' jobs expo in Sydney. From that, 1,000 skilled workers have either been signed with companies or are being interviewed. We need those skills to continue to build Queensland's required infrastructure. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I am delighted to be able to tell Members that the inaugural @ Work & Play—Queensland on Show jobs expo in Sydney in August has recruited 1,000 extra skilled workers for the Smart State.

I am advised that more than 1,000 skilled workers have either signed with companies or are being interviewed.

This was a cheeky raid across the border and its looks to have paid off—especially for our regions.

We co-sponsored this with the aim of getting 1,500 extra skilled workers by 2008.

We are well and truly on target and the preliminary figures are far beyond everyone's expectation.

The expo is clear evidence of the Queensland Government successfully working with the private sector to get jobs where they are needed.

The quality of skills on show at the event was very high with a good range of tradespeople such as IT specialists, health workers, chefs and construction workers.

The event attracted a broad cross section of workers, ranging from young families pushing strollers to highly qualified medical practitioners interested in moving north.

Industries represented at the event include mining, construction, energy, health, IT, tourism, hospitality, real estate, manufacturing, heavy machinery, human resources, property management and education.

Ekka Hospital Hostel

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 am): Land on the site of the Ekka will be leased to the private sector to develop accommodation for patients and their families visiting the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The redevelopment is part of a broader multi-million dollar strategy between the State Government and the Royal National Association to help revitalise the Ekka Showgrounds.

Often people have to travel long distances to visit the hospital but they don't necessarily have to be treated as inpatients.

Queensland Health estimates that on a daily basis, at least 30 patients at the Royal Brisbane Hospital could use this kind of accommodation.

They require on-going treatment but don't require intensive nursing care overnight or are recovering from treatment.

This is an innovative way of creating yet more hospital beds for inpatients.

We are already opening at least 1,359 additional public hospital beds over a six year period through projects and redevelopments at existing hospitals. This does not include the three major new hospitals I committed to building during the election campaign.

Current figures show there were 9,679 beds in Queensland public hospitals at June 30 this year, an increase of 339 over the June 2005 figure of 9,340 beds.

If family need to visit a loved one in hospital the last thing they need to be worried about is somewhere to stay that is too expensive or too far away from the hospital.

The Ekka site is right across the road from the hospital and will offer visitors greater convenience and security.

Of course, special times of year the accommodation has the potential to be used by Ekka exhibitors and show goers—helping boost patronage of one of Australia's most popular family shows.

The land, on the northern side of the Ekka ground, would be offered by the RNA on long term lease for the development of a multi-storey building.

In August, approval was given to the Coordinator-General to work with the RNA to help identify a private sector developer and operator of the 'medi-hotel'.

Expressions of interest are due to be called/have been called and construction is due to start in 2008.

Influenza Research

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): I have welcomed an announcement from Griffith University to establish an International Rapid Response Network to tackle influenza outbreaks in the Asia-Pacific region. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The collaboration between Griffith University's Institute for Glycomics and the Institute Pasteur Asian network will significantly boost Queensland's preparedness for pandemic influenza.

The announcement will see Queensland scientists working directly with researchers in Asia to study the evolution, transmission and treatment of influenza in animals and birds and their potential to lead to a human pandemic strain.

By working with scientists on the ground in bird flu hotspots—such as Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam—the rapid response team will be able to help identify new strains of influenza and fast track the development of new drugs to treat them.

The better we understand influenza viruses, the better prepared we will be to fight it in the event of a human influenza pandemic in Queensland.

The International Rapid Response Network is building on the Queensland Government's pandemic flu preparations.

We have a state-wide contingency plan in place in conjunction with other State and Commonwealth agencies.

This month, from October 16 to 19, Queensland is hosting the world's largest pandemic influenza exercise to test Australia's preparedness for any outbreak.

Health and emergency services from around Australia will participate in the four-day event that will exercise border control, quarantine and hospital plans; as well as national and state level response arrangements.

One of the operational phases will be based at Brisbane Airport to simulate an international arrival of people with suspected pandemic human influenza.

Other State Government initiatives include:

- The purchase of two new molecular virology extraction machines worth $170,000 each to increase the surge capacity of the Queensland Health Scientific Services Laboratory to conduct rapid virus testing.
- An enhanced train the trainer program has been provided to 450 health care workers on infection control and pandemic influenza.

Rugby Union

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): Queensland has secured at least 10 Wallaby Rugby tests over the next eight years in what is one of the most significant agreements ever entered into by the Australian Rugby Union. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The 10-match package between 2007 and 2014 is a rugby coup for Queensland, which could pump upwards of $100 million into the State's economy.

This package includes three Bledisloe Cup Tests against the All Blacks to be played at Suncorp Stadium, which has been described by Captain George Gregan as the Wallabies' favourite stadium.

The first of the three Bledisloe Cup Tests will be played in 2008 with the remaining two expected in 2011 and 2014, subject to the potential extension of the South African, New Zealand and Australian Rugby agreement.

The remaining seven Wallabies Tests will be against leading rugby countries, with the guarantee of two Test matches in both 2008 and 2009.

Also as part of the agreement, I requested the ARU to play international matches in regional cities such as Townsville and the Gold Coast.

If there is support shown for these matches from local patrons, businesses and councils then I will work with the Mayors in both cities to secure these additional games.

I commend the Australian Rugby Union on its foresight to invest heavily in a "heartland" State, ensuring Queensland becomes a premium Rugby market for the next eight years.

July's Bledisloe Cup Test generated about $17 million in economic impact for the State, while Brisbane Airport reported very heavy traffic—with all inner-city hotels booked out well in advance of the game.

Based on 2006 dollars, the three Bledisloe Cup Tests can be expected to contribute upwards of $50 million and the seven other Tests a further $50 million, meaning a $100 million injection into the Queensland economy as a result of today's announcement.

If we hadn't turned Suncorp Stadium into the state-of-the-art venue it is today, we would not be attracting such high-class Rugby blockbusters, it's as simple as that.

And it should be remembered that the construction of the stadium was funded from a levy placed on poker machine operations—not from taxpayers.

Popular international sporting events such as the Bledisloe Cup and other international rugby fixtures pump big bucks into several sectors of the Queensland economy as well as showing off Queensland to an international market.

The flow-on effects of this investment are obvious. More than 500,000 fans will get to watch the cream of international Rugby in Queensland while our local businesses and economy will benefit as a result of the increased number of visitors.

Many millions more will see everything Queensland has to offer via the international broadcasting of these matches.

I congratulate everyone involved in securing the games for Queensland, including the Major Sports Facilities Authority, the management of Suncorp Stadium, Tourism Queensland, Brisbane City Council and Brisbane Marketing.

Lexmark Indy

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): I want to mention the Lexmark Indy 300. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Next week the green flag will come down on the Lexmark Indy 300.

This annual carnival is a highlight of the Australian social and sporting calendar and showcases Queensland to the world.

This year—the 16th Indy on the streets of the Gold Coast—is shaping up to be even bigger and better with a packed program of events on and off the track.

The Champ Car and V8 Supercars will be the stars of the show but there will also be a huge program of entertainment including support races, stunt shows, precision driving challenges, driver parade laps, and the Sea FM Air Show.

Highlights will include the green and gold of Team Australia in the Champ cars and the appearance of England's Katherine Legge—the first woman to drive a Champ Car on the streets of the Gold Coast.

A special treat this year will be a tribute lap to Australian motorsport legend Peter Brock to be completed by his son James.

James will actually be competing on the support program at this year's event in the Yokohama V8 Ute Series, but will break from his racing duties on the Saturday to complete the lap in his dad's 1984 Bathurst-winning Holden Commodore.

I think the lap will be a wonderful addition to another great Indy carnival.

Last year a record 316,459 patrons filed through the gates and we are expecting big crowds this year.

Over the past sixteen years Indy has grown into a showcase event for our State.

It is estimated to pump approximately $60 million into the local economy each year through direct and flow-on income for associated industries such as retail, travel, tourism and hospitality.

Major events such as this bring thousands of visitors into the state who spend money on food, accommodation, transport, entertainment and souvenirs.

The Lexmark Indy 300 is on-track action will kick off on Thursday October 19 and continue through until Sunday October 22.

Sales are strong and I encourage everyone to get in fast to get their tickets through Ticketek.

Parliamentary Allowances

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): As members would be aware, prior to the recent state election parliamentary allowances were paid in advance to a number of members who had chosen not to contest or who were not returned at the election. At that time, the *Members' Entitlements Handbook* did not require repayment of the allowances by those members. As I made clear during the election campaign, I believe that when a person ceases to be a member they are no longer entitled to receive parliamentary allowances and that in such circumstances it is appropriate that pro rata amounts of the allowances, within reason, be repaid.

Accordingly, on 5 October 2006 the Governor in Council approved amendments to the handbook which will require the repayment of the allowances by former members if they cease to be a member. This will cover any member who resigns during their term of office, who retires at the end of their term, or who is not returned at an election. Further, the handbook now also provides that these allowances will be paid quarterly rather than annually or biannually in the year preceding a state general election.

In addition, I have written to the former members in receipt of the allowances and requested that they contact the Clerk of the Parliament to make arrangements for a repayment—and I know that that has already started. I have requested that the Speaker advise me of progress in relation to the repayment of the allowances by former members by the end of October so that I may consider the necessity for further action in relation to this matter. I am pleased to advise that a number of former members have already made the necessary arrangements for repayment.

The amendments to the *Members' Entitlements Handbook* will strengthen guidelines regarding the allowances, in line with the public expectation that members only receive remuneration for the period during which they are members.

I am aware that some members, particularly those not returned, would have sought to spend their electoral allowance. If they have some financial difficulty I will engage in consultation involving themselves and the Clerk about a periodic repayment if necessary, but this money will be repaid. If people cannot repay it by the end of October because they are in financial difficulty, then I am prepared to be reasonable. But this money will be repaid and I will keep the House informed.

Death of Mr S Irwin

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.56 am): Tragically in recent times we have seen the death of some great Queenslanders. Today I want to in particular pay tribute to these Queenslanders. As you know, Mr Speaker, Steve Irwin's death has moved not just a nation but people all over the world. Steve's passion and commitment—his Australian view of the world—gained him millions of supporters across the planet. He made the understanding and protection of wildlife his life's work. He was a passionate volunteer for the Queensland government's east coast crocodile management program, he made Australia Zoo a world-class tourist destination and his *Crocodile Hunter* wildlife documentary series has millions of fans.

In 2004 Steve was recognised as 'Tourism Export of the Year' and was honoured as Queensland's representative for the 2004 Australian of the Year awards. The news of Steve's death on 4 September 2006 prompted, understandably, widespread shock and sorrow. His achievements and international acclaim certainly made him worthy of a state funeral. While the family declined this offer—which is perfectly understandable—the Queensland government worked with Australia Zoo to support the memorial service for Steve which was held on 20 September 2006 at the zoo and was broadcast around the planet.

Carolyn Male, who is the local member and Government Whip, will later today pay appropriate tribute. As the member for Glass House, she obviously knew Steve and his family very well. On behalf of all members of this House, I seek leave to incorporate that tribute in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, Steve Irwin's death has moved not just a nation—but people all over the world.

The Government has also provided support to Wildlife Warriors to assist in handling the thousands of letters, cards and phone calls that have flooded in from all over the world.

Over 22,000 world wide email messages of condolence have been received.

Additionally, hard copy condolence sheets have been signed at the Executive Building and Parliament House, in the Environmental Protection Agency Offices throughout Queensland and Queensland Government Trade and Investment Offices around the world.

All of these messages will be collated and bound for the Irwin family.

Steve Irwin was a passionate conservationist and will be remembered not only as a great Queenslander, but a great Australian.

On 27 September 2006, I announced that the Glass House Mountains Road will be renamed Steve Irwin Way as a tribute.

We will continue to work with the family to find lasting ways to remember Steve and help ensure his legacy continues.

I am sure all Members will join me to extend sympathy and condolence to his wife Terri, and his two children; and his wider family, most especially his father Bob.

Death of Mr C Thiele

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.58 am): I wish to mark the passing of Colin Thiele, a renowned educator and Australian children's author who died on 4 September 2006. While he was born in South Australia, he obviously spent a great deal of time here in Queensland. During his career, Colin Thiele published almost 80 books on various subjects including poetry, fiction, drama, history and biography. Colin Thiele is best known for his children's book *Storm Boy*, about a boy and his pelican, which was released in 1966 before being adapted into a film in 1976. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a tribute to him.

Leave granted.

I wish to mark the passing of Colin Thiele, a renowned educator and Australian children's author who died on 4 September 2006.

Mr Thiele was born in Eudunda, South Australia, in 1920 and was educated in various country schools before graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1941.

He served with the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II from 1942 to 1945, and then completed a Diploma of Education upon his return.

From 1946 until his retirement in 1981, Colin Thiele was a teacher and later undertook the roles of Principal and Director of Tertiary colleges.

During his career, Colin Thiele published almost 80 books on various subjects including poetry, fiction, drama, history and biography.

Colin Thiele is best known for his children's book Storm Boy, about a boy and his pelican, which was released in 1966 before being adapted into a film in 1976.

The film won Jury and Best Film awards at the 1977 Australian Film Institute Awards.

Several other books written by Colin Thiele have been made into movies or television series and he won many awards and citations for merit for his work with many of his books being translated and published extensively overseas.

Additionally, in 1977 Colin Thiele was honoured as a Companion of the Order of Australia as well as being awarded the Dromkeen Medal for his contribution to the appreciation and development of children's literature in Australia.

Colin Thiele spent his later years living with his wife in the Dayboro region, and was working on his final book, due for release in 2007, at the time of his death.

I am sure that all Members will join me in conveying a message of respect for Colin Thiele, and condolence to his wife Rhonda Gill, his two daughters, and their families.

Death of Mr P Brock

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.58 am): It would be remiss of me if I did not pay tribute on behalf of all members, and all Australians in fact, to motor racing legend Peter Brock, who died on 8 September 2006. Peter Brock shared this passion for motor sport and it led him to nine Bathurst victories, as we know, winning more races and pole positions than any other driver since the Australian Touring Car Championship commenced in 1960. Peter Brock made a long-lasting contribution to not just motor sport but the community as a whole, working tirelessly to

spread the road safety message. He was also a great supporter of V8s, as we all know, and that is one of the key components of the Lexmark Indy on the Gold Coast. I seek leave to incorporate that tribute in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Australians, in particular the motor racing community, was shocked when the news came through that Peter Brock had died on 8 September 2006.

Peter Brock was born in 1945 in the country town Hurstbridge, Victoria and was destined to be a driver, it was in his blood.

His great-great-uncle, Henry James, was a founder of the Royal Automotive Club of Victoria and organised Australia's first motor sport event, the 1905 Sydney to Melbourne reliability trial.

Peter Brock shared this passion for motor sport and it led him to nine Bathurst victories and winning more races and pole positions than any other driver since the Australian Touring Car Championship commenced in 1960.

Peter Brock made a long lasting contribution to not just motor sport, but the community as a whole working tirelessly to spread the road safety message.

He retired from racing in 1997 and launched the Peter Brock Foundation which provides support to individuals, families, community groups and organisations who are in need.

Peter Brock gave back to the sport he loved by becoming a member of the Board of Australian Grand Prix which is responsible for both the Australian Grand Prix and the Australian Moto GP.

Peter Brock will always be remembered as one of Australia's sporting greats, his outstanding achievements were unique.

On the local level we enjoyed Peter's involvement at the Lexmark Indy 300 several times.

That is why next month's Lexmark Indy 300 will be highlighted by a special tribute lap—completed by his son James in one of his Bathurst-winning Holdens.

This will be one way for us to say thank you for what Peter Brock contributed to Australian motor sport and on behalf of the Queensland Government, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to Peter's family and friends.

Infrastructure

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.59 am): Our government is committed to building the infrastructure that Queensland needs to secure a prosperous future. Whether it is roads, rail, water, energy, ports, or schools and hospitals, we are on the job, with the highest capital works spending per capita in the country.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: They do not want to hear about it, but I know that people on this side of the House are very, very interested in infrastructure. I am pleased today to provide a brief update on the progress of some of the major projects.

Let me start with water. I am pleased to advise the House that, in relation to both the proposed Traveston Dam and the Wyaralong Dam, flood and hydraulic modelling are being completed, final designs are being refined and are very close to conclusion, and further geotechnical work and investigations are being undertaken to underpin that design work.

The land requirement definition, as required for the EIS and for referral to the Commonwealth government for assessment under its legislation, will be known and made public before the end of 2006, with the EIS draft terms of reference released for public comment. Let me talk about the desalination plant at Tugun. As Gold Coast members will know, early site works have already commenced in mid-September this year. The final decision to proceed on the basis of the final costings will be formalised and formally approved by both the Gold Coast City Council and the state government in November.

Let us talk about the water grid. The pipes for the 100-kilometre southern regional water pipeline are currently being manufactured by Queensland pipe company Tyco, and pipe laying is scheduled to commence later this month. The Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme is being progressed in two stages. Preconstruction activities at the Bundamba to Swanbank section are well underway. Preliminary establishment work has started on the advanced water treatment plant at Bundamba that will supply recycled water to the Swanbank precinct.

Hastening this, an initial order of approximately 50 kilometres of pipe has been placed with Tyco Water for both the southern regional pipeline and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. Tenders are being evaluated for the construction of the remaining advanced water treatment plants. These plants will provide high-level treatment of water to be recycled from the Luggage Point and Gibson Island waste water plants. Last week I announced the two successful consortia to design and build the eastern and western pipeline network that will deliver additional recycled water in that western corridor, thereby freeing up water currently being used by industry for domestic and potable purposes.

In relation to both the northern pipeline and the eastern connector, work is underway and government is due within the next month—in November—to receive advice about the preliminary design and pipeline route information for the Sunshine Coast pipeline. The Redland shire is undertaking a detailed investigation and planning report for the eastern connector and is, I am advised, on track to respond to government in November.

Water of course is only one area of activity. Can I just mention a couple of major road projects. I was very pleased to join the minister for transport and the Premier to announce that the successful tenderer, Leightons Abigroup, has been approved and chosen for the $1.88 billion Gateway Bridge duplication and motorway upgrade, with work beginning by the end of the year.

I was also pleased to join the Premier and the minister for transport, along with the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, on Sunday to announce the green light for the airport link toll road and the first stages of the northern busway. The state government has resolved to fund the construction of the northern busway as a state project. An airport link will be delivered as a public-private partnership.

Work is also well underway in a number of public transport areas. With regard to just two areas of importance, construction is occurring, as I speak, on the inner city busway. Gold Coast members will again be relieved to hear that the new rolling stock for the Gold Coast rail line is currently in the track testing phase.

It is not only in the area of public projects that we see things being progressed as quickly as possible. In a number of areas of private investment in the last four weeks since the election, significant milestones have been reached. The go-ahead, for example, has been given on a new coal seam gas power station at Spring Gully, near Roma. It is a proposed $1 billion project by Origin Energy.

Mr Mickel interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Yes. For those who opposed the 13 per cent gas policy, isn't it great to see companies like Origin Energy and the market generally responding with these sorts of investments? It is a billion-dollar project in a part of Queensland that needs that investment and those jobs should go there. I am pleased to be giving it the green light.

I am also pleased to advise the House that Chalco has been awarded preferred developer status for the development of the massive Aurukun bauxite project. This is an important milestone to getting this project to the next phase. Similarly, we have released environmental impact statements on two projects in central Queensland, the first of which is the Dyno Nobel proposed $500 million ammonium nitrate project at Moranbah. That plant will provide 350,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate annually, generate 400 jobs during construction and 90 when fully operational. Similarly, in central Queensland after completing EIS work we have now given the go-ahead to the $220 million central Queensland gas pipeline project to take coal seam gas—again, coal seam gas—

Mr Mickel: Thirteen per cent.

Ms BLIGH: Thirteen per cent—from the coalfields in the Moranbah region to Gladstone, underpinning further industrial development right across those areas, supported by our government and opposed by those opposite.

It is not only in those major project areas that I wanted to quickly brief the parliament. Under the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan we have some $66 billion worth of projects on the books. The major ones for completion this year include $78 million worth of major education projects at Springfield, Stretton, Burpengary and Meridan—all on track for completion this financial year. We will complete the $85 million Acacia Ridge trade skills institute and receive another $13 million worth of Citytrain rolling stock.

When it comes to infrastructure, Queensland is alive with activity from the Gold Coast right throughout the length and breadth of the state, and there is more to come. Under this government, Queensland has become the infrastructure capital of Australia. We are committed to meeting the needs of Queenslanders, and we will build it.

Health System

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.06 am): During this term of government, Queenslanders will continue to see major changes and improvements to our public health system. We have already laid the platform for a new Queensland Health—one that is more patient focused, with more front-line clinical staff and resources and a leaner bureaucracy. Through our $9.7 billion Health Action Plan, Queensland Health's renewal will gain momentum this term to keep building what will be the best public health system in the country.

The top priorities of our health agenda this term are in five key areas—opening more hospital beds, recruiting enough doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, attacking elective surgery waiting lists, providing better infrastructure, and strengthening partnerships with the private sector, including GPs, to meet the demands of increasing chronic diseases in our community.

Our government will embark on the largest hospital bed program ever undertaken in Australia. We have commenced opening an extra 860 beds up and down the coast, including 339 last financial year. Through redevelopments at existing hospitals from the Gold Coast to Cairns, a further 499 extra beds over the next five years will be delivered. That is 1,359 extra beds in six years, which does not include three new flagship hospitals we have already committed to building, planning for which has already begun.

Queensland Health now has 397 more doctors, 1,812 more nurses and 601 more allied health professionals than it did in June last year. We will continue recruiting aggressively to fill key clinical vacancies. Work has already begun on two dedicated elective surgery centres at Redcliffe-Caboolture and the QEII Hospital at a cost of $164 million. These centres will focus entirely on the most urgent elective surgery patients.

Other important capital works projects will roll out across the state. In fact, in addition to the new hospitals being built, every major metropolitan and regional hospital either is receiving, or will undergo, capital improvements this term. Our hospitals are treating a record number of patients every year, so these projects involve equipping our hospitals with the right infrastructure and equipment, and enough beds to cope with this increase in demand.

Finally, a detailed statewide health services plan will be completed by the end of this year to ensure our $9.7 billion Health Action Plan is spent efficiently to meet the health demands of our growing and ageing population.

School Community Development Fund

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.09 am): I am pleased to advise members that one of the biggest capital works projects in our state's history is about to get underway, touching every part of Queensland from Coolangatta to Cardwell, Brisbane to Birdsville. I am referring to the work that will be undertaken through our $50 million School Community Development Fund. This project is part of our ongoing commitment to provide young Queenslanders with the best possible learning environments.

Over the next five years we will be investing $900 million in the most comprehensive school renewal program ever undertaken in Queensland. Funds are being directed to modernising and building new school facilities across the state. Under the School Community Development Fund, all 1,276 state schools will share in a total of $50 million initially for minor capital works projects to improve their school's learning environment.

Right now, state school communities are finalising their proposals. Principals are consulting parents and citizens associations, and local members are getting involved. Applications close on 3 November and a streamlined decision-making process involving both regional and state assessment should see grants provided to schools before Christmas. It is up to school communities to decide how this money is spent in partnership with the school principal. It is an opportunity for parents and citizens associations to get involved with their school and influence their children's learning environment and set priorities on projects that they have been wanting to do for some time.

The guidelines are flexible, and the feedback we have received so far from schools regarding the application process is very positive. There is a great degree of scope; it depends on what the school P&C considers most important. It could involve installing water tanks, upgrading the library, refitting the science lab or putting in playground equipment. The amount of the grant is determined by a combination of factors, including the size of the school, the enrolments and the locality. These grants do not replace our existing capital works or maintenance programs; they are part of our government's long-term commitment to modernise state schools.

We are also supporting the non-state school sector. In fact, a one-off payment of $100 million has already been made as part of the program to Catholic and independent schools to support urgent capital programs and new technologies.

In addition to the $50 million School Community Development Fund, a further $850 million will be spent to upgrade existing infrastructure and provide new facilities where needed. This is the most comprehensive school renewal program ever undertaken in our state's history. It will ensure we have a modern education system that equips our young people for the challenges of the 21st century.

Intensive Care Paramedics

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.13 am): Before I begin, could I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on attaining the high office of Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Mr PURCELL: The Queensland Ambulance Service is leading Australia in providing world-class prehospital emergency care to the community. Our paramedics are well equipped and highly trained, and that is especially true of our intensive care paramedics, known as ICPs. ICPs are highly qualified paramedics who specialise in severe trauma cases, and I am pleased to advise the House that this month marks the 10th anniversary of the intensive care paramedic program in Queensland.

ICPs have proven to be a vital addition to the Queensland Ambulance Service over the past decade, providing expert care to our communities. In addition to the high level of skills held by all paramedics, they can administer a greater range of drugs and perform more complex medical procedures than ever before.

To become an ICP, a paramedic must complete a Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Paramedics, which involves a year of full-time study. Two hundred ambulance officers have graduated as intensive care paramedics in Queensland during the past decade. ICPs care for the whole of Queensland. They are located in every QAS region, in stations from Weipa to the Tweed to out west and everywhere in between.

Intensive care paramedics are making a difference to patient care in Queensland. In 2004 the percentage of patients who were delivered to hospital with return of a spontaneous heartbeat had risen to 21.6 per cent, up from 18.3 per cent in 2000. The impact of ICPs is a major reason for this increase. 'Quality Every Time' is the aim of the Queensland Ambulance Service, and it achieves this goal remarkably well. On behalf of all Queenslanders and members of this House, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognise the expertise of our ICPs and thank all Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics for the wonderful work they do.

Parliamentary Sittings

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am): Mr Speaker, as you know, the Queensland parliament is a very productive place and regularly sits for between 10 and 12 hours a day. You would also be aware of recent media reports in which the number of days that this House sits was criticised. That is why I feel obliged in my capacity as Leader of the House, and in support of all members—from both sides—who work hard both in their electorate and here in this House, to set the record straight.

It is not necessarily the number of days that a parliament sits that is indicative of its work but the number of hours per day and per year. A comparison of the number of sitting days and hours from other jurisdictions in Australia illustrates just how hard we in Queensland do work, and I table this comparative document for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library brief regarding sitting days.

I will highlight just one of the examples. In 2005 the Queensland parliament sat for 49 days, or 558 hours; Victoria sat for 48 days, or 469 hours. So we sat a similar number of days but almost 90 hours more than Victoria. I have also looked into other Westminster parliaments and can advise that in 2005 the UK House of Commons sat for 65 days, or 535 hours. So even though that parliament sat for 16 days more than Queensland, this parliament actually worked for over 20 hours more.

I am not going to use 2006 as an example because, as all members know, this year was an election year, which of course impacted on the number of days this House could sit. However, I can advise members that in the 29 days the House has sat so far this year we have already sat for 336 hours, and I am very happy to assure members we will sit for many more in the remaining sitting days!

Indigenous Police Officers

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.16 am): Today I would like to put on the public record the number of Indigenous people in the Queensland Police Service. Understandably, there is public interest in this matter and recent media attention about the difficulties of policing in Indigenous areas.

This government believes that increasing the number of Indigenous police officers is the best way to improve relations between police and Aboriginal communities. There are currently 186 sworn Indigenous police officers employed in the Queensland Police Service. In the eight years of the Beattie government, almost 100 Indigenous officers have been appointed. How have we done this?

In 2003, Queensland police developed a pilot program to help people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds gain entry into the Police Academy. It was so successful that it is now offered on an ongoing basis. The traineeship is called the Justice Entry Program. This helps prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for entry to the general police recruit program.

The program assists trainees, many of whom have achieved a year 10 standard, with access to a program that culminates in the awarding of a Certificate IV in Justice. This certificate is accepted as the education standard for entry into the Queensland police recruit training program. Thirty-nine people have gone through this program and 25 have become police officers. Others have become watch-house and corrective services officers. Five new trainees are starting their police training on 23 October, and more applications continue to be received. Once accepted, they undertake a 30-week training period where they are given training in firearms, vehicle driving, operational skills and tactics, the various computer systems employed by QPS, and police policies, procedures and legislation.

Throughout Queensland we also have 140 police liaison officers, most of whom are Indigenous. Together with police, these PLOs link homeless people with government and non-government support networks, defuse conflict and violence through mediation, transport people to safe places if they are affected by drugs or alcohol, and work to ensure marginalised members of the community are given case management access opportunities.

The Queensland Police Service also has an equal employment opportunity management plan to ensure its members best reflect the community from where they are drawn. The Queensland Police Service will continue to promote the benefits of having and using a diverse workforce in order to best police our very diverse community.

Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.19 am): I am pleased to update the House on the success of the special employment program this government established in north Queensland in the wake of Cyclone Larry. A focus of the $18.6 million Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package was to help individuals who lost their jobs and livelihoods when the cyclone devastated north Queensland. Equally important, we wanted to sustain vital industries and help communities back on their feet, and that means keeping local people in the area so they can resume their normal jobs as they become available.

From more than 870 calls to the hotline set up to link cyclone affected workers with local jobs and training opportunities, I am advised that around 700 people registered for assistance. Organisations funded through the Cyclone Larry Community Jobs Plan have taken on approximately 645 local people. They have been involved in a diverse range of activities including debris clean-up, rebuilding public infrastructure and helping restore the homes of the elderly and impaired. More than 400 participants are still employed on projects.

Now departmental officers have developed a transitional strategy to help participants who have been working on these jobs projects move back into mainstream employment. From the end of November, with the approach of the region's harvest time for the first crops of bananas, it is expected there will be many thousands of positions available for farm labourers.

I am pleased to report also that more than 90 displaced workers have received up to $5,000 assistance in job preparation, training and wage subsidies under the state government's Worker Assistance Program. In addition, approximately $640,000 has been allocated for training of the local workforce to ensure that their skills meet the requirements of local industry.

The Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package has helped individuals and communities in all seven shires affected by the devastation that this natural disaster caused. As the area recovers and activities begin to be absorbed into regional businesses, departmental officers are working on a post Larry economic development plan. I know that members of this House will join with me in looking forward to providing further updates as this rebuilding program progresses.

Department of Communities

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth) (10.21 am): Following the state election, the government announced its intention to streamline Queensland Health, strengthen community services and provide greater policy capacity and impetus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. The new administrative arrangements have resulted in the transfer of former department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy functions to the Department of Communities. In addition, the following functions of Queensland Health have been identified to be transferred to the Department of Communities: residential aged care; home and community care; mental health strategy, policy and legislation; and non-government sector contract administration.

The community expects that government services will be delivered in the most effective, integrated and coordinated way to maximise benefits for community members who use those services. The Department of Communities and Queensland Health each have a strong client focus and service delivery role for individuals and for communities. In many cases they share the same client groups, for example supported accommodation, respite care and home and community care clients such as the elderly and people with a disability.

The integration of mental health strategy and policy within the Department of Communities provides opportunities to deliver benefits for clients. The greatest potential lies in the implementation of more coordinated and integrated early intervention and prevention programs that support access to a range of services that promote people's mental health and minimise the impact of mental illness on the person and their family and carers. There is also the potential to achieve better service integration for people with a dual diagnosis; that is, they have both an intellectual disability and a mental illness.

A change like this takes time, and it is important to take the time to get it right. Options on the best way to integrate the new functions within the Department of Communities will be developed based on evidence. The government is committed to a smooth transition to ensure clients and staff experience minimal, if any, disruption. It is expected that the transition of those elements of Queensland Health transferring to the Department of Communities should be completed by 30 June 2007.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Climate Change

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.23 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this parliament acknowledges the growing threat to Queensland from climate change and calls on the state government to take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emission levels.

Water Infrastructure

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.24 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes the government's water infrastructure promises together with the associated costs and delivery timetables and, in view of the water crisis facing the state, calls on the government to provide this House with a report on progress with these projects on a quarterly basis with particular reference to any changes to the proposed costs and delivery timetables.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Beattie Government

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.24 am): Mr Speaker, at the first opportunity in this first full sitting of the parliament, I congratulate you again on your election to the high office of Speaker. I also take the opportunity to congratulate the Premier on his re-election and congratulate each of the ministers who have been appointed to the executive government. I also congratulate every member who has been elected to this House. Despite the different roles that we play in this House, at the core we have a commonality of purpose, and that is to represent our peers in this place. None of us should lose sight of how much of an honour and a privilege it is to represent our peers in this great parliament, which is so much a part of the democracy in which we live.

This morning we have heard a string of ministers tell us what the government is going to do. We sit here and listen and we have heard it all before. Last term we heard what the government was going to do but never did. It was always going to do something, but it never did. This term the challenge for it will be to actually do something; to actually deliver something; to actually do something real, instead of produce glossy brochures, plans and approvals; to actually make something happen so that the people of Queensland get the infrastructure and the services that they deserve and that it is the responsibility of this government to deliver.

The opposition will be using whatever opportunities we have to ensure the government delivers on those promises and commitments that it has made to the people of Queensland. We will be using this parliament, at every opportunity that we get, to ensure those commitments are delivered. I know that we will hear all sorts of complaints from ministers who come under pressure about us misbehaving or bullying them, but our role is to ensure that the government delivers, and we will not be backward in performing that role.

Time expired.

Seabird Aviation Australia

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (10.26 am): Mr Speaker, may I also offer my congratulations on your election to your new position. I wish to bring to the attention of the House the leading-edge work being done in Queensland's booming aviation industry by Seabird Aviation Australia Pty Ltd in my electorate of Hervey Bay. Two Fridays ago I had the honour of representing the Premier at the Premier's Export Awards for the Wide Bay-Burnett region at which Seabird Aviation picked up the prize for the small or micro business award. Seabird Aviation has a manufacturing facility in Hervey Bay, at the Hervey Bay Airport. On a recent visit to Hervey Bay the Premier met Don Adams, who is a Queensland aviation industry legend, as well as other members of the team there. Seabird Aviation is a true Smart State success story. It also won the Wide Bay-Burnett region emerging export award in 2005 and was a highly commended manufacturer award winner last year.

Seabird currently has 20 employees manufacturing its Seabird fixed-wing observation aircraft. The company has received substantial support from the department of state development over a number of years. That support has been very well justified by the export results that are now opening up for Seabird around the world. Seabird has been selling its aircraft into Jordan and Iraq, to conduct low-level surveillance work over oil pipelines and power infrastructure. That has become a very important part of protecting the economies in those countries. Its new aircraft is now being prepared as a demonstrator for the US market, and Seabird Aviation has received interest from companies such as Boeing for its Seabird aircraft as a platform for surveillance and observation in many different roles.

I table an article from March this year from *AOPA Magazine*, which is Australia's general aviation industry magazine, featuring Seabird Aviation's success. The magazine has Peter Adams and other company staff on the cover. I strongly support this high-tech company which is succeeding in the cut-throat international aviation market with a home-grown product of which we should all be very proud.

Tabled paper: Article from www.aopa.com.au titled 'Seabird rising'.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Liberal Party—one minute.

Beattie Government

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (10.29 am): Mr Speaker, in my one minute I would like to join with the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating you on your election as Speaker. This is my first opportunity to do so. I also congratulate members of the House on their re-election. I particularly congratulate those new members of the House on their election.

At the election the people of Queensland made a decision and gave this government a mandate. We understand and accept that mandate. Our role will be to hold the government accountable to deliver what it promised in gaining that mandate. In its previous terms in government the problem was not this government getting a mandate from the people but honouring the mandate the people gave it. We have had a government promise to stamp out rorting in the ALP and here we are still having rorting. The government was given a mandate to fix the child protection—

Time expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Water Infrastructure

Mr SEENEY (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's election commitments to provide water infrastructure worth some $5.6 billion in south-east Queensland alone. I table a list of those election promises and their costings. Of that $5.6 billion less than $200 million is specified in the budget. Now the election is over, can the Premier tell this parliament where the other $5.4 billion is going to come from?

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Costs of SEQ water projects'.

Mr BEATTIE: The answer to the question is absolutely. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I congratulate him again on his election and congratulate his colleagues in the same spirit as his congratulations today. I think that is a good start for the parliament. Well done.

What we said right from the outset was that in last year's budget we would not include all the costs for water infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition is quite right to say that in the budget all the money was not included. That is absolutely right. We said exactly the same thing. The Deputy Premier said the same thing in estimates. Do those opposite know why? Because we had not finished the evaluation of some of the projects—the desalination plant, for example. One of the things that we have said—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Just be patient. I want to answer your leader's question. The member should have enough courtesy not to interject when I am answering his question. He is your leader now.

The important point I want to make is this. Take the desalination plant, for example; we had not finished the scope of it. Remember that recently we extended the scope of it. Why did we do that? Because the original desalination plant on the Gold Coast was going to provide water just for the Gold Coast. The new member for Robina knows this. What we did was say to Gold Coast Water and the Gold Coast City Council, 'We want to take some of that water and put it into the SEQ water grid.' That makes sense but it costs more. Therefore, what we have done for each one of these projects is announce exactly what the costs are when the evaluation work is finalised. Members will recall that recently—and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported this fully—the mayor of the Gold Coast was open and up-front, and so were we, about the extra costs. When planning each one of these stages we cannot determine the full extent of the costs until the evaluations have been done and the full scope decided.

Will this cost a lot of money? Yes, it will. As we evaluate each project we will release the amounts. The Treasurer is quite happy to do that. Members will recall that before the election I set in place a series of regulatory requirements which required time lines for the delivery of each aspect of the water grid. As that water grid is delivered and the evaluations are done the costs will be released.

The Leader of the Opposition has moved a motion which we will debate later tonight. Whether we agree with the time lines is another matter, but we have no problem in reporting to this parliament on a regular basis the total costs of that water grid—that is, how much it costs, the scoping, and how much any changes in scoping will cost. We look forward to those opposite supporting what is the most imaginative and visionary plan for the delivery of water in the history of Queensland.

Water Charges

Mr SEENEY: I was happy to write the policy for you, Premier. I did not mind at all that you pinched it as long as you deliver it!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Do you have a question, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support. What a great way to start a parliament.

Mr SEENEY: My second question is also to the Premier. I refer to the promise that the Premier made on 27 September that the price of water for consumers in south-east Queensland will not rise as the promised infrastructure is completed. I table a copy of the media coverage of those statements. How does the Premier intend to provide water from these new high-cost sources without significant increases in the cost of water to consumers?

Tabled paper: AAP media article dated 27 September 2006 titled 'Qld: water grid will not push up water price: Beattie'.

Mr BEATTIE: I again thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Both of his questions were designed to end up exactly where he is going now, and I understand that. The issue of water pricing is not an easy one. It is a tough one. It is a politically sensitive one, as members well know.

That is one of the reasons we asked the Water Commissioner—those opposite will recall this; again this is on the public record—to give us advice about the costing of water. That article came out of an attempt by certain media representatives, quite appropriately, to get me to say at that time that there are going to be enormous increases in water prices. I would not do that because, frankly, until the Water Commissioner has completed the evaluation no-one knows that.

The reality is this, however. If we are going to provide significant infrastructure—the Leader of the Opposition has already referred to this and I am not going to agree or disagree with his figures off the top of my head because he may or may not be right about the costs; I have to evaluate what he has calculated—yes, there will be significant costs for water. No-one should be under any illusions about that. We do not build dams for nothing and we do not build pipelines for nothing, as those opposite well know.

Mr Seeney: Because you want to build the wrong ones.

Mr BEATTIE: No. The Leader of the Opposition supported our proposal before, I thought. I thought there may have been some sort of conversion on the road to Damascus. I thought, 'There is a God and everyone had been converted.' I think there was a halo there for a moment. I thought he had seen the light. I thought the new parliament had been given spiritual guidance. I was warming.

Let me come back to the point, because these are very serious questions that the Leader of the Opposition has raised today. Both sides of parliament will have to deal with this. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that it would not matter whether he was sitting here or I am sitting here. He well knows that the water pricing issue is a sensitive one.

What I have said consistently, and I said it at that news conference, is that while the councils are in a good partnership with us—and I want to acknowledge the partnership with the mayors—certain councils have been making a lot of money out of water. What I have basically said—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: If the member wants a sensible answer I will give one. Those opposite know as well as I do that certain councils have been making a lot of money out of water. Before we start hitting the ordinary consumer, the profits that are going to councils and elsewhere need to be returned to the consumer for that infrastructure provision. That is what I have said. When members look at the regulation they will find that I have set in place—and the Deputy Premier has responsibility for this now—that each one of the councils has to account for how much money they have received for water in recent years and how much they have spent on water infrastructure, because we want absolute transparency.

The reality is that there will be a movement in water prices. Let me say that clearly. Our job is to keep prices as low as is humanly possible. I notice some comments from our federal colleagues in relation to this that suggest that the states have been making money out of water. We have not been. Other states may well have been. The state government has been investing in water. We have not been making money out of it. We have been returning it.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: SunWater reinvested it all. That is not true about SunWater. We are happy to provide those opposite with details about SunWater, but they are not right. Can I thank the honourable member for his questions. They are both very sensible and constructive. If those opposite want to work with us on water, we are happy to do that because water pricing is the key to the future.

Time expired.

State Library

Mr FINN: Mr Speaker, can I, too, congratulate you on your appointment, as other members have. My question without notice is to the Premier. Many residents in my electorate are keenly awaiting the opening of the massive new cultural centre on Brisbane's south side. Can the Premier advise the House on the progress of this development?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly. I think everyone in this House would acknowledge that he is one of the most cultured members here. I am delighted to inform him that preparations are being finalised for the eagerly awaited opening of the $291.3 million Queensland Cultural Centre redevelopment at South Bank. I know that the member for Yeerongpilly will be at the opening on 2 December.

In less than two months this landmark project that establishes Queensland's cultural facilities as amongst the finest in the world will be unveiled. It is Queensland's largest cultural infrastructure project in more than 30 years, featuring a new State Library, almost double its previous size, and Australia's largest modern art gallery boasting facilities to appeal to all ages. I acknowledge the contribution of the Minister for the Arts and the Minister for Public Works and Housing in making sure that this has been completed.

Our new State Library will challenge the traditional library we have come to know. It will be interactive with expanded programs for children, including a new space called The Edge to be devoted to under eights with child-friendly computer stations and story-time sessions. A purpose-built children's art centre will also be a special feature at the Gallery of Modern Art and will present innovative programs for kids and families with a focus on exhibitions, education and teacher resources. The redeveloped Queensland Cultural Centre at South Bank will be the envy of curators and art lovers throughout the nation.

To build a collection worthy of such an impressive gallery, curators have been acquiring important contemporary artworks. Since 2002 some 1,100 post-1970 artworks have been acquired through purchase, commission, bequest or gift. Their estimated value is more than $7.7 million. Of these, 126 significant works by Australian and overseas artists have been purchased at a value of $2.8 million through the Queensland government's Gallery of Modern Art Acquisitions Fund. These include paintings, sculptures, photographs and film as well as installations, textiles, craft and jewellery. Many of these will be seen for the first time when the new gallery opens its doors to the public for people's day on 2 December.

I am also pleased that some 68 of the most recently acquired artworks will feature in the fifth Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art exhibition which will be hosted by the gallery in December, and how fitting it is that the Asia-Pacific Triennial will feature so prominently in the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art's first days. It will no doubt cement significant relationships with contemporary artists from across the country and our region. It will showcase major touring exhibitions never before possible in our state because we have not had the suitable space and it will exhibit the incredible artworks of our world-leading Queensland artists. Let us not consider art to be uniform but dynamic, multidimensional and engaging. For example, the gallery will feature the first art museum of its kind with a cinematheque. It will have a key role to play in the visiting Andy Warhol exhibition coming to Brisbane next year. Importantly, it will be Queenslanders who will have the opportunity to enjoy it. It is going to be a fantastic gallery.

State Taxation

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I refer the minister to the fact that the Queensland state taxation impost on every Queenslander has increased by over 20 per cent during the past six years, more than any other state, and I ask: what do Queenslanders have to show for the loss of our status as Australia's lowest taxing state?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the new shadow Treasurer for that question. All I can say is that he was not here on budget day. If he had been here on budget day he would have seen the figures that show that Queensland is the only state in Australia in which every Queenslander has net assets. With regard to every other state—every single state—in this country, the citizens of those states have net debt. We are the only state in a positive net debt situation.

I do not know where on earth the honourable member gets the perspective that Queensland is somehow a high-taxing state. Queensland has the most competitive tax regime. Queenslanders continue to pay, on an average net basis, less taxes than any other Australian. That is the way this government has kept it for more than eight years, and it is the way we will keep it for as long as people keep electing us.

What do we have to show for it? What we have, firstly, is the strongest population growth in the country—one of the fastest growing jurisdictions, arguably in the world. We have expanded services to meet that population growth. What else do we have to show for it? We have the strongest economic growth in Australia. For the 10th consecutive year, last financial year Queensland's economic growth rates outstripped the economic growth rates of Australia, and we are set to do the same again. What does that mean in real terms? It means that people want to be here. They want to invest here. We saw 16 per cent growth in private investment in this state last year—16 per cent growth—and we are set to match or outstrip that in this financial year.

I would say to the member that if he has any aspirations to be taken seriously as the shadow Treasurer he should spend the time necessary to get his head around the rate of every one of Queensland's taxes. He will find that we are one of the lowest in the country, and in most cases the only places that are lower than us, and by a very small margin, are places like the Northern Territory and Tasmania. We have, far and away, the most competitive arrangements for business taxes, the lowest payroll tax rate in the country, the highest tax-free threshold for payroll tax and the lowest rates in Australia for workers compensation and property taxes. The member should have a look at our property tax rates. Of course, given the portfolio that he administers he is probably very well aware of property and other taxes. I can certainly assure the House that Queensland's competitive tax regime has been more than well and truly looked after under this government. We continue every budget to look at every one of our taxation areas and do what we can to relieve the tax burden further, and we will keep doing it.

Aurukun Bauxite Project

Mr O'BRIEN: My question without notice is to the Premier. In a ministerial statement this morning the Premier referred to 79 actions which will be undertaken in the first 100 days of this government and mentioned that Chalco had been awarded preferred developer status for the Aurukun bauxite deposit. This is a much-anticipated project in the employment starved community of Aurukun, and I ask the Premier to provide members with further details of what this involves.

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Cook, because he has been keenly interested in this project and it will benefit his constituents significantly. Development of the massive Aurukun bauxite project passed another milestone last month with the awarding of preferred developer status to Chalco—that is, the Aluminium Corporation of China Ltd. The status is subject to satisfactory resolution of key issues in the development agreement with the state—with Queensland—and the conclusion of the Indigenous land use agreement with the Wik and Wik-Way people of Aurukun. So they will be involved in that. We have said right from the beginning that they have to be key players.

The announcement is a major milestone for the project and, of course, for the government. It marks the end of the international competitive bidding process in which 10 bidders, representing most of the major players in the world aluminium industry, investigated the opportunity of an integrated mine and mining processing development in Queensland. The awarding of preferred developer status to Chalco basically gives it exclusive rights to complete agreements with the state and Indigenous parties and then to undertake a full feasibility study on the mine and the refinery. So there is still work to be done. Ultimate project commitment by Chalco will be subject to the satisfactory completion of its $40 million definitive feasibility study, and that will take place over the next two years.

During the early part of the feasibility study Chalco is expected to determine the preferred site for a $2.2 billion alumina refinery. Current sites under consideration—and this will surprise no-one—are Gladstone, Bowen and Townsville, and I acknowledge the competing interests. The government understands the challenging nature of this project and I have asked Ross Rolfe, the Coordinator-General, to head a negotiating team to resolve all outstanding issues, including the principles for common user infrastructure support, with Chalco as a matter of priority, and members know that we are investing money in those common user facilities. Chalco's project proposal represents an initial capital investment of almost $3 billion, an investment that will enable Chalco to produce 2.1 million tonnes of alumina each year and to export 25 per cent of its annual bauxite production to China. The company has also mooted an expansion of the alumina refinery as well as an interest in constructing an aluminium smelter in Queensland.

This project has enormous job creation potential in regional Queensland. Up to 700 construction jobs will be created at the mine site—at Aurukun—hence the benefit for the member for Cook's constituents, and about 1,600 construction jobs will be created at the refinery site in Queensland. Once operational, the project will generate about 600 full-time jobs. Right from the start the Queensland government's objective, in partnership with the Indigenous community, has been to identify an organisation with the capacity and willingness to develop and add value to the Aurukun bauxite resource and to do it within a reasonable time frame. Any successful bidder also had to address the concerns and aspirations of the Aurukun community with a view to delivering agreed economic, social and financial benefits.

Water Charges

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure. Now that the Premier has agreed that water price hikes are inevitable, backing away from his earlier statement, has the minister made any estimates of how much more Queenslanders will pay for their water due to her government's failure to plan and build water infrastructure in a timely way?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Can I just put her straight on one thing. Firstly, it is not my role to wander about making estimates of what the cost of water might be. This parliament is well aware of a water regulation that gave responsibility to provide estimates and advice to government to the Queensland Water Commission. The Queensland Water Commission is required under the regulation to provide that advice to government in, I think, February next year.

I expect that, on the basis of that advice, we will be in a position to incorporate that advice into the 2007-08 budget process. That advice will be made public. I expect that it will minimise the impact on water users and consumers and, as the Premier said, maximise the use of existing water charges towards the cost of water infrastructure. I also hope that by then the Commonwealth government, through its new national water office, will be in a position to provide final advice about Commonwealth contributions to the projects. I look forward to that advice being very positive. I had a very constructive meeting with Malcolm Turnbull. Of course, that will assist in our consideration of water pricing. I can say to consumers that any increases in water costs will go to fund the infrastructure that will provide a security of supply of water right across the south-east corner. We will not be asking consumers to pay for a water system that fails to deliver water where it is needed.

If the election had turned out differently and the current shadow minister for infrastructure was sitting on this side of the House, I can tell members that that is exactly what would have happened. One issue that unfortunately received very little airplay during the election campaign was the long-term water planning proposed by the coalition. The member for Moggill signed up to a water strategy that saw the coalition commit to three dams: Amamoor Creek, raising Borumba Dam, and Glendower Dam in the south-east corner, all of which were not connected to Brisbane. None of them! No pipelines were costed in the coalition's plans. If members read the coalition's election commitments they will not find the word 'pipes' mentioned and they will not find them mentioned in the coalition's costings. During the campaign the coalition members gained a reputation for being clueless. They are not only clueless; they are pipeless.

Energy Asset Sales

Mr McNAMARA: My question is also to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. In April this year the government announced the sale of some important state energy assets. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on the progress of those sales?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in this important area of government activity. I am very pleased to advise the House that, despite some of the inevitable interruptions owing to the caretaker period to government activity, the sale of the retail energy assets of the Queensland government is on track.

The sale is proceeding by way of three sale packages. The first is the sale of the Allgas distribution network, which I am sure members are aware is now complete. On 3 October the government entered into a contract with Australian Pipeline Trust. The purchase price for this asset is $535 million. That is inclusive of stamp duty, which I have to say is an outstanding result for Queensland taxpayers. I am very pleased to see the first down payment into our new Queensland Future Growth Fund.

In terms of the second stage, the Sun Retail component of the packages, binding bids for that are due early in November. The third and final stage was announced on 6 October—last Friday—with expressions of interest being called for PowerDirect Australia, Ergon Energy's sale package. We expect to have all assets finalised in February next year—well in advance of the introduction of full retail contestability from 1 July.

This morning I was very pleased to note in the *Australian Financial Review* that the coalition will support the sale of these assets. I thank them for that and welcome their support. But I have to say that I was alarmed by further comments by the new shadow Treasurer who told the *Australian Financial Review* that the sale had been forced on the government to prop up its ailing budget. Its ailing budget? I remind the House—and again I wonder where the new shadow Treasurer was on budget day—that the budget forecast a surplus for the last financial year of $2.8 billion. That estimate was revised upwards to $3 billion. That is $3 billion worth of ailing Queensland budget! I can only assume that that could not possibly be the budget that was described by Standard and Poor's on the day of the budget as the following—

The state of Queensland is in a standout position. Queensland's balance sheet is the strongest of all the Australian states. The balance sheet is forecast to remain one of the strongest even after an increase in debt to fund part of the state's infrastructure program.

I remind the shadow Treasurer that every dollar of the asset sale goes to the Future Growth Fund, which is a legislated separate fund for capital programs. Nothing in that fund can prop up the budget.

A government member interjected.

Ms BLIGH: They opposed the Future Growth Fund. Now they want to put the money into consolidated revenue. They would put the money into consolidated revenue, but they accuse us of using it to prop up the budget. That is an interesting argument. If Queensland's budget is ailing, then we are very happy with it.

Health Service Districts

Ms LEE LONG: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the proposed restructure of health service districts, which is expected by the end of June 2007, when the tablelands and Innisfail health districts will centralise into Cairns. I ask: will the reintroduction of hospital boards be considered as part of this restructure? If so, how will they operate? Is hospital based nurse training being reconsidered? How will these changes benefit the Atherton, Mareeba, Herberton and Innisfail hospitals to ensure that my constituents are better off as a result of these changes?

Mr ROBERTSON: One of the complaints that we have heard consistently over the past 16 or 17 months that I have been health minister is how top heavy Queensland Health is with so-called bureaucrats. As a result of the Davies inquiry and the Forster inquiry, we committed ourselves to slimming down Queensland Health—that is, employing more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, ensuring that we have appropriate administrative support for those clinicians so that they can do their jobs but at the same time looking at where we can improve the efficiency of Queensland Health.

Following the election we decided to reduce the number of health districts from 38 to about 20. That will result in some consolidation and some administrative efficiencies. Those administrative efficiencies mean that where money can be saved it will be reinvested into patient care and into employing more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. That means that for the Tablelands electorate we will be reaching out to the community and tackling head-on a very important emerging issue, which is the emergence of chronic disease in our community: heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer. Our No. 1 challenge is what I have described as the tsunami of chronic disease that is coming at us apace and how we provide sustainable health care in this state. Part of this restructure of Queensland Health will align boundaries with the divisions of general practice so that there will be a closer relationship between Queensland Health and the GP sector. Frankly, no hospital system anywhere in the Western World that will be faced with this problem of the increasing incidence of chronic disease will be able to cope with it. We need to find community based care for those thousands of Australians who will suffer from chronic disease now and into the future. That is what this restructure means for the Tablelands electorate.

I was somewhat surprised, however, by the comments of one member opposite who was part of a team that was about to slash 2,000 jobs from Queensland Health. Do members remember the coalition's election commitment that it was going to slash 2,000 jobs from Queensland Health? But within a month, what does the member for Warrego have to say about the idea of reducing administration in Queensland Health? He spoke of it as being a retreat. He spoke of it as being an absolute outrage. Yet he was happy to support a policy to reduce 2,000 jobs.

Mr Hobbs: What you did was stupid.

Mr ROBERTSON: Where did the member for Warrego think those jobs were going to come from? They were going to come from electorates such as his. The member sold out his electorate and now he has been caught out.

Queensland Health, Recruitment

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to reports by the British Medical Association that almost 6,000 British doctors and nurses may be forced to move overseas because they cannot find jobs. What success is Queensland having in recruiting doctors and nurses from the UK and elsewhere to work in our public hospitals?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Pumicestone for the question and welcome her back to this place as the very strong defender of Caboolture Hospital.

The UK presents excellent opportunities for Queensland to recruit more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals for our hospitals. The simple fact is that Britain's National Health Service is in financial meltdown, and associated job losses there make Queensland a very attractive employment option for UK doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. That is why 12 months ago the Beattie government made the UK a key target market for Queensland Health's 'Work for Us' international and interstate recruitment campaign. Our recruitment efforts are already paying dividends from Britain as well as other overseas and interstate markets.

As at 6 October, 257 doctors, nurses and allied health staff recruited through the 'Work for Us' campaign had already started work or accepted jobs with Queensland public hospitals. Another 278 doctors, nurses and allied staff have been interviewed for jobs or are currently being considered by health districts for employment. And a further 422 doctors, nurses and allied health staff from overseas and interstate have been assessed as suitable for employment in our hospitals. These are very pleasing outcomes in a global market where the shortage of Australian trained clinical staff means that all of the states are forced to compete against each other for available doctors and nurses. But we still need to do a lot more.

However, I want to assure Queenslanders that under no circumstance will we hire every doctor or nurse who applies just to boost clinical workforce numbers. I want to assure Queenslanders that every applicant is carefully screened and their credentials thoroughly checked by Queensland Health, the Medical Board and the Queensland Nursing Council to make sure that they have the required qualifications and experience. In fact, to date we have rejected 1,812 applicants—including 1,401 doctors and 103 nurses—because they did not have the required qualifications, skills or experience to meet our high standards. We make no apology for that, because patient safety is paramount. That is why we are committed to recruiting the best qualified and most experienced doctors and nurses—so that our public hospitals can continue to deliver world-class health care to Queenslanders.

Queensland Court of Appeal

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Attorney-General. Could the Attorney-General please advise the House whether she bothered to read the decisions of the Queensland Court of Appeal and, if so, how several decisions over two years concerning allegations of sexual abuse against children relating to section 21AW of the Evidence Act escaped her attention, leading to at least four matters having to be retried?

Mrs LAVARCH: I thank the honourable member for his question. There were media comments in relation to some decisions of the Court of Appeal. At that time the media were reporting that there were seven decisions of the Court of Appeal in respect of section 21AW of the Evidence Act. I can advise the House that over the last 18 months or so there have been four decisions of the Court of Appeal in respect of section 21AW of the Evidence Act.

This section requires a judge to give a direction to a jury where evidence from a child is taken remote from the court—where it is taken by video proceedings and then played into the court. These changes to the Evidence Act, which came about under this government, were revolutionary. They were changes which came about because we understood the vulnerability and the trauma caused to a child in giving evidence before a court, especially in a child sex offence case. Of course we take child sex offending very seriously.

Leading up to the legislation being introduced into this parliament there was extensive consultation which arose out of two Law Reform Commission reports. One was an Australian Law Reform Commission report and the other was a Queensland Law Reform Commission report. There was extensive consultation with the judiciary, the legal profession and all stakeholders involved. In fact, when the legislation was introduced into parliament in May 2003 further consultation occurred. The legislation was not debated until September 2003 and, after it was debated and passed, delay of the provisions was permitted until 5 January 2004 to allow the judiciary to bring in its practice and directions and also to have it incorporated in their bench book.

Members must understand that our courts are independent and our judges are independent—the judiciary is independent—and lawyers and judges alike need to keep abreast of the law. Of course, ignorance of the law is no excuse. It is not my role as Attorney-General to hold the hands of judges and it is not the role of the department of justice to babysit the judges. In fact, the Chief Justice has come out and endorsed this view—that it is up to each individual judge to keep abreast of the law themselves, as with the lawyers involved in those cases.

What has happened, as happens under our rule of law, is that there can be a review in relation to a matter. Of course, appeals were lodged in these matters and the Court of Appeal in four of the decisions ordered retrials on the basis that there was not a sufficient direction. I advise the House that it was not that the judges did not direct; it was that the Court of Appeal held that the direction given was not sufficient in itself.

Time expired.

Public Transport

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister inform the House of measures the state government is putting in place to make bus and taxi travel in rural and regional Queensland cheaper, safer and more accessible?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Congratulations on your appointment, Mr Speaker.

The Smart State does not just begin and end in south-east Queensland. We have a very strong commitment to public transport throughout this state and, indeed, to supporting people in even tiny communities when it comes to providing accessible public transport.

Since TransLink started two years ago, patronage increases have been in the vicinity of 20 per cent throughout south-east Queensland. Some increases have been even larger than that. In Cairns and Townsville, additional funding was provided over the term of the last government from 2004-05 to improve public transport. In Cairns, patronage in 2003-04 was 2.28 million people. That rose to 2.85 million by the end of 2005-06 and is expected to be 3.7 million by 2008-09. That is a 65 per cent increase over five years, and similarly in Townsville.

What we have now committed to as a result of the election campaign is equalising fares in regional Queensland with those operating under TransLink. In other words, the same lower fare structure will apply, and that includes not only tickets but also the method of ticketing, such as daily tickets, weekly tickets and, indeed, in selected cases monthly tickets. It is a great initiative. It is about saying to people in regional Queensland that we want them to use public transport, and they are doing that in droves.

During the election campaign we committed to further extending the rollout of taxi cameras in regional Queensland. Previously we had a commitment to communities above 40,000 people. We promised to extend that to every cab in Queensland, even in a one-cab town. More importantly, one of the issues is that there are often no wheelchair accessible licences in single-cab towns, where the cab is a major form of public transport in those communities. We have announced—and as an Australian first it is not being financed by the industry but being financed by the sale of additional licences—that every town in Queensland that does not currently have a wheelchair accessible cab will have one. Every town will have not only a wheelchair accessible cab but also a wheelchair accessible cab that is a people mover.

It will also have the added advantage of being supplied at a cost to the government on a one-off basis. So the first one will be supplied by the government. That licence will then be converted to a wheelchair accessible licence, and in the future the operator will of course then be expected to replace that. But it will be firstly supplied by the government, and that is a major shot in the arm for those small communities. It is saying to people in those small communities, 'If you are in a wheelchair in a one-taxi town, we will make a wheelchair accessible taxi available to you.' That is being smart with taxpayers' money.

I point out that the taxi camera program that we instituted in Queensland, unlike in a number of other states, is being financed through the sale of extra licences, not by increasing fares. That rollout is going extremely well. Members would have seen a number of instances in the media of people having been prosecuted as a result of being caught on those cameras. We have the best taxi industry in Australia, and it will get even better for people who live in little country towns.

Water Restrictions

Mr HOBBS: My question is directed to the minister for local government. By the end of the month south-east Queensland will be facing level 4 water restrictions which will have a significant impact upon the community, and commerce and industry in particular. As local authorities presently do not have the power or the resources to enforce these restrictions, how does the minister propose to enforce level 4 restrictions?

Mr FRASER: I thank the honourable member for his question. The issue of water restrictions is one that is set by the Queensland Water Commission rather than me as the local government minister. There is obviously a role for the minister for local government in making sure that local councils have the capacity to enforce whatever obligations they have under the Local Government Act, and that is something that is the daily grist for anyone who serves in the job as minister for local government.

Obviously the Queensland Water Commission has a role to play in setting those restrictions, and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure plays a lead role in the south-east Queensland water grid as the lead minister in that regard. If it is the case that extra resources are needed for local government to address those issues, then that is certainly a matter that will come before me. What is important with regard to my role is to make sure that we have the laws in place that allow local governments to have those powers and to be able to enforce those restrictions, because this is obviously an issue that presently is acute in the south-east corner but is certainly going to affect the whole of the state—and is indeed affecting the whole of the state at the moment.

My role as local government minister is always, outside of water, to make sure that local government has both the necessary powers and the necessary resources, and that is a role that I intend to take to the cabinet table on a weekly basis.

Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence

Ms BARRY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Natural Resources and Water. I refer the minister to the government's commitment to establish the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence, and I ask: how will the centre help Queensland cope with the effects of climate change?

Mr SHINE: I thank the honourable member for her question. During the recent election campaign, the government committed to establish a new dedicated centre to tackle the impacts of climate change on Queensland. As Minister for Natural Resources and Water, I believe the new centre will help us, as promised, to better understand, to forecast, to prepare and to adapt to climate change. The centre will harness the expertise of officers from the department's natural resources, primary industries and the Environmental Protection Agency. The centre's work will ensure that Queensland can be better prepared in all facets for climate change and its impacts.

The severe drought and depleted supplies in many of Queensland's water storages are of great concern. It is projected that our temperatures will increase by two degrees Celsius and our rainfall will fall by 15 per cent over the next 25 years. This week Australia's climate change and development round table released a report highlighting the impact on the Asia-Pacific region of climate change and the constructive role Australia can play. Queensland is already playing a constructive role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the Queensland Greenhouse Strategy, the government has implemented a range of initiatives in key areas such as clean coal technology, renewable fuels and energy, as well as emissions reduction. In that regard, the government's action to control tree clearing is very important. By the end of this year, broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation will cease in Queensland. This commitment is in legislation, and the government will honour its commitment. The government is offering financial assistance to affected landholders, and I welcome the increased uptake of this assistance and urge landholders who have not applied to do so. This commitment has been very important to protect our land and water from future degradation as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the federal government's fourth national communication on climate change report, the Queensland government's action on tree clearing will result in greenhouse gas emission reductions of an estimated 17.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2010. As minister, I look forward to working with the new Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence and stakeholders to ensure that we effectively respond to the impacts of our changing climate.

Mental Health Services

Mrs PRATT: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In a recent letter to the officer in charge of the Kingaroy Police Station from Peter Maher, the director of community health services in the South Burnett Health Service District, notification was given that our already inadequate mental health resources will place restrictions on the delivery of services from community health because of 'sudden and serious critical staff shortages'. The added burden placed on our police personnel is impacting heavily and adversely on our police resources. I ask the minister: what caused this serious and sudden staff shortage? When will the minister address the crisis facing Kingaroy district hospital services, and will he investigate the management of this hospital? As I have heard reports from other areas of a similar drain on police resources for the same reason, has a letter been written under a directive from Queensland Health and gone statewide?

Mr ROBERTSON: That is a somewhat curious question, particularly with respect to the second part. I have made no secret of the fact that mental health is one of those areas where chronic national shortages of skilled clinicians impact upon our ability to deliver services, including in rural and regional Queensland. In fact, a constant theme in my time as Minister for Health is being quite up-front about the challenges that face us as a result of decisions taken by the federal coalition government to restrict the number of graduates coming through our medical schools in Australia. As a result, we have chronic national shortages in areas such as mental health, emergency medicine, orthopaedics—and I can go on through the specialities. That is why we are seeing shortages in places like Kingaroy, although I have to say that the member for Nanango excelled herself during the previous term in being openly critical of the wonderful staff that provide services at her local hospital at Kingaroy—

Mrs PRATT: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I do not criticise the staff, but I do criticise the shortages they are operating under.

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

Mr ROBERTSON: Perhaps I might leave an accusation of misleading the parliament for another day, then, because quite frankly I have a litany of articles from the member's local newspaper, written often by her part-time electorate officer, complaining about the performance of Kingaroy Hospital. I have to say that if there is one thing that mitigates against attracting staff to hospitals it is headlines in the paper complaining about the performance of those hospitals. If the member for Nanango wants to do something positive about attracting clinicians to Kingaroy Hospital, then she should start being a little

more positive about the wonderful work that it does. I was up there only a number of months ago talking to the doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, administrative staff and maintenance staff about the work that they do, and quite frankly the constant message that came through to me from those staff was how upset they were with her constant and often ill-informed complaints about the performance of that hospital. The record speaks for itself.

Mrs PRATT: Mr Speaker, they may be upset about comments but not half as much as the people who were asking for services in the area.

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

Mr ROBERTSON: If the member for Nanango wants more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in Kingaroy, then she should start being a bit more positive about the wonderful work that the existing staff do. That remains her challenge as an effective local member.

Lexmark Indy

Mr LAWLOR: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Preparations are well underway for the Indy on the Gold Coast next month. Organisers are expecting crowds to be even bigger than last year. What are the police doing to ensure public safety at this event?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for Southport for the question. I am sure that he is looking forward to being part of the crowd at this world famous tourist drawcard. Last year over 300,000 people attended the Indy and police tell me that there were no significant adverse events there, that the Indy was a very safe event and that they were pleased with the behaviour of most of the patrons at that event. I think sometimes we forget just how fortunate we are to live in a state that is as safe as Queensland. Many countries around the world are not as safe as Australia. In fact, many states in this country are not as safe as Queensland. The fact that we can put on a world-class event like Indy in a safe environment is certainly very important for tourism and the sport in this state.

One of the reasons we have such a safe state is that we have some very proactive police. On Monday, cabinet decided and the Premier and I announced that we would give our police special event powers for this year's Indy. The Indy at this stage is still rated as a low-risk event, but of course that may change at any time so it is important that the police have these powers if they become necessary.

This means that police will be able to randomly inspect cars, persons and their belongings not only in the Indy precinct but also in the precinct surrounding the Indy event. That is not all, of course. Police have been preparing with other agencies, such as Transport, to make sure that traffic moves freely during the event. They have been working with Main Roads, Queensland Transport, Queensland Rail, Liquor Licensing and the Gold Coast City Council to identify issues and coordinate risks.

Last week, a series of desktop exercises were successfully held involving all agencies and event organisers to test their response to potential major incidents. To best manage joint responses to incidents from both inside and outside the race, police have established a joint emergency services coordination centre in Surfers Paradise. Also, a large contingency of police, including specialist officers from SERT, the Public Safety Response Team, tactical crime squads and general duties officers from police regions across the state will be deployed to the Gold Coast during the Indy festivities.

As well, the Gold Coast Intelligence Unit will work in conjunction with the Queensland Police Security Intelligence Branch and the Australian Federal Police Joint Counter-Terrorism Team to provide daily intelligence briefings. In addition, a traffic transport advisory committee, which includes police representation, has been developing contingency plans.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Currumbin, I welcome to the public gallery the principal and school leaders from St Andrews Lutheran College in the Burleigh electorate, represented by Christine Smith.

Disability Services, Family Support

Mrs STUCKEY: Mr Speaker, may I add my congratulations upon your election as Speaker of the parliament. My question is to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth. The minister's absence, together with that of his state Labor counterparts, and reluctance to appear on national television with regard to respite funding for parents with autistic children was beamed across Australia on Monday and Tuesday night this week. *A Current Affair* stated that they again tried to contact the minister's offices yesterday but received no reply prior to going to air. Where is the duty of care? What do the minister and his department intend to do with regard to this critical issue, and what does the minister have to say to these desperate and exhausted parents who really are at the end of their tether?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for the question. I put it in the same category as the disgraceful display by *A Current Affair* regarding this issue. People who have autism as a difficulty within their family environment deserve better than to have a TV program use them for its own purposes. I need to let the member for Currumbin know that no-one has ducked their responsibilities and no-one has shirked an opportunity to go on this particular program. As a matter of fact, the first airing of the story was done

without any notification to my office at all. It was only after the program was put to air that anyone sought any sort of response from me. On the second occasion this story aired, the program did request my attendance. Unfortunately, I happened to be 2,000 kilometres away at the time fulfilling previous engagements. That is not ducking for cover; that is not shirking my responsibilities.

As for some of the assertions made by the program regarding the lack of support from the government, they are categorically wrong. It is misinformation. It is dishonest. If the member for Currumbin wants me to go on, I will think of a few other terms to add to that.

I would like to let the House know that at the time this program was going to air the family was receiving considerable support from Disability Services Queensland. They were receiving an average of five hours per week in-home respite, approximately eight to 10 weeks per year school holiday respite, full-time education at Kumbari Avenue Special School, and after-school care from 3 pm to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. At the same time as this program was going to air, officers from my department were meeting with the family to discuss further options for additional care, considering the fact they had come into crisis. The family had never notified this department that they had any intention of relinquishing their child. That was something that was announced on TV.

May I say to the member for Currumbin that it is probably a good idea, while in this new portfolio of hers, that she gets her facts straight before she exposes herself in the way that she has by asking a question of this nature. If she wants a full briefing in private of the situation surrounding this family, whom I am determined to help—and this government has a very proud record of assisting people with a disability, autism being one of the more significant disabilities emerging from a range of other disabilities in this state—perhaps she could go and see Dr James Morton from AEIOU, and he will talk about the early intervention prevention programs we are establishing with it and other agencies.

As for *A Current Affair*, I have offered to take them up on their request to appear on the program on one condition: they set the record straight and declare to the public that they have been dishonest, they have been misleading and they have maligned not only me but of course more particularly the people in the department that I represent, who do a fantastic job in providing support for people with autism.

Liquor Accords

Ms STONE: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development and the minister responsible for liquor licensing. Liquor accords are being formed in more and more Queensland communities to address alcohol related issues at the local level. Can the minister update the House on the success of these accords?

Ms KEECH: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am very pleased to be able to inform the House of recent activities regarding liquor accords. Liquor accords are a key initiative of the Beattie government. I take this opportunity to thank the member for Springwood for her strong support and leadership in terms of liquor accords, not only in her own electorate but also around Queensland.

Liquor accords provide the framework for communities to work together to address alcohol related problems. They are partnerships between communities, government agencies, including police, and local liquor licensees. As the member for Springwood and other government members are aware, accords have been very successful in reducing violence and antisocial behaviour in communities where they have been conducted.

I am pleased to inform the House that there are currently 30 accords around the state, and communities such as Bundaberg, Brisbane, Caboolture, Cairns, the Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Normanton, Rockhampton, the Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Toowoomba and the Whitsundays are reaping the benefits of the accords. The Liquor Licensing Division of my department is committed to assisting liquor accords become strong, active and responsive groups that develop and manage local solutions to alcohol related problems.

The inaugural Queensland Liquor Accord Groups Conference was held on the Gold Coast on 14 and 15 September. The conference was opened on my behalf by the member for Springwood, who is an active member of the Logan Liquor Industry Action Group. The member for Springwood informed me that approximately 100 representatives from the liquor industry, police, local councils and health and social welfare sectors were present. She advised me that the conference was a resounding success, with those in attendance agreeing it should become an annual event. A statewide liquor accord web site will be established by the end of the year, and the first edition of a regular e-newsletter is expected to be generated by the end of this month.

Liquor accords are a proactive and effective compliance and regulatory tool because of their ability to deliver local solutions designed by local people to address local issues of concern. They work extremely well, and I thank all honourable members who are a part of them. I encourage honourable members to contact me if they would like to become more involved. This is yet another example of the Beattie government delivering for the people of Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has concluded.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federalism

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.29 am), by leave: Over the course of the last century we have seen the birth and maturing of the Australian Federation. The first half of the 20th century was largely characterised by the states holding the balance of power over the Commonwealth. The turning point in the evolution of the Commonwealth powers came in the response to the combined effect of the Great Depression and the Second World War. These two events provided the key impetus for the extension of Commonwealth powers, the emergence of the uniform taxation system, the development of a national approach to social security and the emerging significance of the role of Commonwealth policy in foreign affairs.

Progressively throughout the sixties and seventies the Commonwealth continued to consolidate its influence with the 1967 referendum referring the race power to the Commonwealth. The Whitlam administration extended Commonwealth powers into a raft of new areas. The establishment of the High Court as the highest appellate court also heralded in a new era of consolidation of Commonwealth powers with a predisposition to find in favour of the Commonwealth on constitutional issues over the states.

The Hawke and Keating governments opened up new frontiers for Commonwealth powers on a range of fronts including the enactment of Corporations Law and the implementation of national competition policy. However, no government in the history of the Federation has extended its reach into the domain of the states as significantly as the Howard-Costello government. It is completely eroding the powers of the states. What have been the results of these interventions? An industrial relations system that threatens worker and family values, total national spending on infrastructure that is only slightly more than we are spending in Queensland alone and an underfunded health system with not enough doctors being trained to meet our population needs. This power grab has been compounded by the almost total failure of the Senate to discharge its charter as the states house. That is how it was intended by the Constitution.

The structure and composition of the Senate, together with the influence of party politics in the election of senators, has meant that in the living memory of most Australians the Senate has operated without regard for the protection of state interests—its primary reason for being. It is therefore appropriate 100 years on to reflect on the future role of the Federation and the role that the states are to play in building the national society and economy of the 21st century. Cooperative engagement between the Commonwealth and the state law-makers, both vertically and horizontally, offers the greatest prospect of delivering a society of the future. Voters no longer tolerate three levels of warring government or unnecessary duplication. In fact, the community is sick to death of the arguments between the Commonwealth and the states—and, indeed, from time to time it involves local government.

Today I am calling for a need to look at new models, models such as—and we should consider these—the German parliament, which provides for the equivalent of ministers or state premiers represented to sit in an upper house, or Bundesrat. This ensures state rights and interests are properly reflected in any legislation put before the lower house. Reinventing the Federation along these lines is the current challenge that state premiers, together with the Commonwealth, must confront. That is why I am calling today for a major Constitutional Convention to examine federalism in Australia. The system is broken. The Howard government, along with other federal governments, has eroded principles that are the core of a democratic system of government in Australia and it is time for change.

I will be delivering a major CEDA address today and I table part of that speech for the House. I want to seriously put to all members—and I say this seriously to the Leader of the Opposition—the reality is that since the war and in more recent times both sides of politics federally have eroded the powers of the states. If we are seriously going to have a three-tiered system of government in this country we have to have a meaningful role for every level of government otherwise in 30 to 40 years the functions of the states will be almost irrelevant if the current trend of federal governments on both sides of politics continues.

Tabled paper: Premier's speech notes for CEDA's second State of the State luncheon on Wednesday, 11 October 2006.

The Senate was initially established as the states house and it has now not been playing that role. What basically happens is that, because of the party system—

A government member: It has never performed that role.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right; it has never really performed that role. Because of the party system a whole group of people get elected to the Senate who simply toe the party line and do not worry about the states. If we are going to have—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Both sides are guilty in this. Let us have real reform. That is why I am calling for a Constitutional Convention so we can actually examine a greater role not just for the states but also for all levels of government to ensure that we end up with better government. Take, for example, the duplication that exists today in a range of areas. Julie Bishop is talking about education. The fear for us is that if we agree to some of those education aspects we may lower Queensland's standards to the national standards, which we do not want to do. Take health for example. We will have our argy-bargy about health, but every day in this nation millions of dollars are wasted because of duplication between the Commonwealth and state systems. Unless we have better engagement between the states and the Commonwealth, we will end up with the usual name calling continuing, a continual erosion of state responsibilities and perhaps the situation where we, as state MPs, are simply wasting our time turning up here in this House for another 20 or 30 years. What I am saying is—and I hope we can get some bipartisan support for this—we need real change, real reform where we end up with a change in the role of the Senate so there is a greater role for the states even to the extent of this parliament electing two representatives to sit there permanently and to report back here as to how and what laws will affect us and how to better represent Queensland.

We have to remember one final thing—and this concerns me. We need to remember that the decentralised states, particularly Queensland, have a vested interest in ensuring that the regions and the bush are looked after. The reality is that, if we do not ensure that is done through the states, the regions will be ignored. That is one of the reasons why both sides of politics have to put aside the usual point scoring and think about how we achieve constitutional reform. I believe both sides of politics should be represented at a Constitutional Convention similar to the one that was held on the republic. Let us have real reform and ensure that we stop wasting taxpayers' money.

ENERGY ASSETS (RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.32 am): I present a bill for an act to facilitate the disposal of particular energy businesses, including by facilitating the restructure or sale of energy entities, and for other purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.32 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will facilitate the restructure and divestment of particular energy and gas businesses owned by Energex Ltd and Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd. On 26 April 2006, the government announced a number of measures for the reform and restructuring of the Queensland energy retail industry. The changing landscape confronting the energy industry convinced the government that continued government ownership of electricity retailers was a risk to taxpayers. This risk is heightened by the introduction of full retail contestability into the electricity market from 1 July 2007. As part of the government's reform process, the government proposes to sell Sun Retail and Sun Gas Retail—comprising the electricity and gas retail businesses of Energex Ltd, Energex's Allgas network and elements of contestable and selected non-contestable retail businesses of Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd.

Special legislation is required to facilitate the full implementation of the divestment of particular energy businesses of Energex Ltd and Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd. South Australia, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria also introduced special legislation to facilitate the rationalisation of their electricity entities. I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This Bill will enable the State to complete the divestment process by the end of 2006 or early 2007. It provides a degree of flexibility to the State in packaging a number of discrete businesses to be sold in a manner which will maximise the return to the State. While the Bill provides a degree of flexibility to the State it will also ensure a structured and responsible exit by the State from the gas and electricity retail industries.

The Bill provides that the Treasurer may, by gazette notice, do a number of things to facilitate the restructure of the businesses, assets and liabilities of the energy entities to maximise the return to the State.

These powers are however limited to energy entities, as defined in the Bill, and cease on the commencement of FRC in Queensland.

The use of the gazette notice is a timely and flexible solution and is not unique in these circumstances. All information relating to transfer notices would be available for public inspection at an office stated in the transfer notice or published in the government gazette. A similar transfer process was utilised in the South Australian, Western Australian and Victorian legislation in relation to the rationalisation of their electricity entities.

The Treasurer is also empowered to give a direction to the board of an energy entity (as defined by the bill) requiring it do something considered necessary or convenient for effectively carrying out this project. Again the Treasurer's powers in this regard will cease on commencement of FRC. For example, a direction may be issued to the Board of Energex to execute a sale agreement and dispose of its shares in Sun Retail to a third party purchaser. This Bill does not require the Treasurer to publish the direction and operates in the same way as the directions power under section 299 of the Electricity Act.

Clause 50 provides that a decision under this Act is final and conclusive; cannot be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, set aside or called into question in any other way, under the Judicial Review Act 1991 or otherwise (whether by Supreme Court, another court, a tribunal or another entity); and is not subject to any writ or order of the Supreme Court, another court, a tribunal or another entity on any ground. However, this clause may affect contestable gas and electricity customers and persons (other than customers) in relation to any commercial agreements between them and energy entities. There are three circumstances in which third parties' commercial rights may be affected by this Bill:

- the disclosure of confidential information without third parties' consent;
- the transfer of businesses, assets and liabilities between the energy entities without third parties' consent; and
- the issue, amendment, transfer, cancellation and surrender of retail and distribution authorities under the Gas Supply Act and Electricity Act in relation to any subsequent sale of Ergon Energy Pty Ltd by the purchaser to another person.

Given the State's proposed timeframe and the need for certainty and speed in which things need to be done for this project, any legal proceedings could adversely affect the sale process.

The exclusion of review in relation to things done under this Bill is on the basis that this is a significant commercial project and the purchasers of the energy entities and their customers require certainty prior to the onset of FRC in Queensland. Also, the State would suffer a significant financial detriment if it was delayed in restructuring the State owned energy entities and their subsequent sale. It is necessary to limit the ability of third parties to unreasonably delay the implementation of this project.

To facilitate due diligence and sale processes, the Bill clarifies provisions in relation to the release of information by energy entities to the Retail Asset Sales Implementation Team which is responsible for the implementation of this project.

The Sales Team are establishing a "vendor data room" which will contain information in the possession and control of the energy entities. Pursuant to clause 55, the State will enter into a confidentiality agreement with a prospective purchaser for the purpose of giving access to information in the possession or control of an energy entity.

Clauses 56 and 57 authorise an energy entity to disclose information to persons involved in the project, prospective purchasers and other energy entities for the purpose of the project. Clause 57 overrides any condition contained in an agreement between a third party and an energy entity that certain information (including the terms of the relevant agreement) cannot be disclosed to any person without that third party's consent.

To achieve the State's proposed timeframe, it is not possible to obtain the necessary consents from the relevant third parties to disclose the requisite information to the prospective purchasers. At the same time, this information needs to be provided to prospective purchasers for the purpose of them being able to make an informed decision. South Australian, New South Wales, Western Australian and Victorian legislation have overridden the commercial rights of third parties in the same way, when they rationalised their energy entities.

The Act also includes provision for existing legal relationships to continue despite anything done under the Act. For example, clause 57 would deem that in relation to any commercial agreement between third parties and the selected energy entities, third parties have consented unconditionally to the change of ownership of those energy entities. Again to achieve the State's timeframe, it is not possible to obtain the necessary consents from the relevant third parties. This avoids any pressure from third parties to renegotiate the provisions of their agreements and/or delay the process for their own commercial interests to the detriment of the State and the people of Queensland. A similar clause is found in section 61 of the Government Owned Corporations Act.

The Bill also makes a number of other minor consequential amendments to the Government Owned Corporations Act, the Gas Supply Act, the Electricity Act and the Community Ambulance Cover Act to facilitate the sale process and to respond to concerns raised by key stakeholders.

Additional technical issues in relation to the Electricity Act 1994 and the proposed restructure of the electricity retailers have been identified since the Bill was first introduced. Accordingly, minor amendments have made to the Bill.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Flegg, adjourned.

REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.35 am): I present a bill to amend acts administered by the Treasurer and the Premier. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.36 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 amends the state's revenue legislation to implement a range of measures, including changes announced in the 2005-06 and 2006-07 state budgets and initiatives announced during the 2006 state election. Some of the 2006-07 budget revenue initiatives have already been implemented in the Revenue Legislation Amendment Act 2006.

The first measure is the abolition of hire duty and duty on transfers of unquoted Queensland marketable securities from 1 January 2007. Last year, Queensland participated in a multijurisdictional review of the need to retain certain state duties, as required under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations. As a result, a timetable for the abolition of a number of duties was announced in the 2005-06 state budget. Hire duty and duty on transfers of unquoted Queensland marketable securities are scheduled for abolition on 1 January 2007, with abolition of mortgage duty and duty on transfers of core business assets to follow between 2008 and 2011. These abolitions will deliver further savings to Queenslanders following the abolition of credit business duty and lease duty on 1 January this year.

As is usual with the abolition of a tax, there will be a period of continued operation of these duties after 1 January 2007 to allow for the winding-up of outstanding matters. Generally, this means that liabilities arising before 1 January 2007 will continue to be payable, and rights relating to a pre-abolition liability, such as the right to object to an assessment of duty, can still be enforced after 1 January 2007.

For certain hiring arrangements, hire duty is payable at the start of the arrangement based on the hiring charges over the full term of the arrangement. In these cases, because the liability for hire duty arises before abolition, no duty will be refunded for any unexpired portion of the arrangement falling after abolition. This is consistent with the approach taken for the recent abolition of lease duty.

Abolition of duty on transfers of unquoted marketable securities will not extend to land rich duty or corporate trustee duty, which also relate to certain dealings with shares. Those provisions have an antiavoidance purpose and are necessary for the continued protection of the transfer duty base. The abolition of hire duty and duty on transfers of Queensland unquoted marketable securities will save taxpayers an estimated $33 million in 2007.

The Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 also delivers on this government's election commitment to provide further transfer duty relief for first home buyers. The level of transfer duty relief for first home buyers will be extended by implementing the following measures—

- Increasing the maximum purchase price for a full rebate of transfer duty on first home purchases of established homes from $250,000 to $320,000.
- Increasing the transfer duty relief available for first home purchases of established homes valued above $320,000 and less than $460,000.

I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As I announced in this year's budget, from 1 January 2007 a new first home owner transfer duty concession will be available for the purchase of vacant land. If the eligibility criteria are satisfied, a person purchasing a vacant block of land on which to build their first home would have paid no duty where the land value is up to $100,000, all purchasers of first home vacant land with a value up to $250,000 would be better off than if there had been no change and the concession would cut out once the value of the vacant land reached $250,000.

According to this government's election commitment, the vacant land concession announced in the budget will be extended, also from 1 January 2007, by increasing the maximum purchase price for a full rebate of transfer duty from $100,000 to $150,000. The concession will also be extended to increase the transfer duty relief available for first home vacant land purchases valued over $150,000 and less than $300,000 so that the concession will now cut out once the value of the land reaches $300,000.

The transfer duty concession for vacant land will only be available where the residence will be the person's first home within two years of the land purchase. For consistency, the time frame allowed to build and move into a home under the mortgage duty home concessions will be extended from one year to two years.

The introduction of the new first home transfer duty concession for vacant land purchases as announced in the 2006-07 budget will save taxpayers an estimated $2.2 million per year. The extension of both the existing first home transfer duty concession for established homes and the new first home transfer duty concession for vacant land will provide taxpayers with additional savings of at least $2.7 million in 2006-07, $5.8 million in 2007-08 and $6.2 million in 2008-09.

Even though Queensland home buyers pay the lowest rates of transfer duty in Australia on properties valued between $250,000 and $1 million, the extension of the first home transfer duty concessions demonstrates this government's commitment to making home ownership more affordable for Queenslanders.

These initiatives will mean that about 75% of first home buyers will pay no transfer duty and in total more than 95% (about 20,000 Queenslanders) should pay no more transfer duty or a reduced amount from next year.

This year's budget also announced two extensions of Queensland's fuel subsidy scheme that will deliver further benefits to Queenslanders. The first responds to industry submissions by extending the scheme to subsidise diesel fuel used for on-road travel by equipment-type vehicles, such as concrete pumping trucks, mobile cranes and elevating work platforms. These vehicles can travel significantly on-road but have previously been ineligible for the subsidy because of their design. The extension means

the subsidy will be available for diesel used for on-road travel by any vehicle, except a vehicle that is conditionally registered, or of a type that would qualify for conditional registration in Queensland. Conditionally registered vehicles such as backhoes and graders generally travel primarily off-road and do not meet the requirements for standard registration. The fuel subsidy will continue to apply only to diesel used for on-road travel, and not diesel used for a commercial off-road purpose. As the extension has operated under an administrative arrangement since 1 June 2006, the necessary amendment to the legislation will have retrospective effect from that date.

The second initiative extends the subsidy to certain new types of fuel, in recognition of the increasing interest in alternative fuels. Currently, motor spirit and diesel must be of the type ordinarily sold by a retailer to qualify for subsidy, which targets the subsidy to fuels with market acceptance. Under the extension, motor spirit or diesel will qualify for the subsidy even though it is not ordinarily sold by a retailer, as long as the fuel can be used in a vehicle as a replacement for motor spirit or diesel ordinarily sold by a retailer, and a Commonwealth fuel standard applies to the fuel. Fuel types such as unleaded petrol and E-10 will continue to be subsidised, as well as certain new fuel types, such as biodiesel, which can be directly substituted in a vehicle for currently subsidised fuel types and are subject to a Commonwealth fuel standard.

Finally, the existing exemption from the community ambulance cover levy for electricity accounts relating to water pumps and farming sheds used in primary production will be extended to cover certain amenity horticulture activities. This extension recognises the changing nature of the industry. Under the extension, which has operated under an administrative arrangement since 29 May 2006, electricity accounts relating to water pumps or sheds used for the commercial production or wholesale selling of non-food horticultural products may now qualify for exemption. This is likely to be of particular benefit to commercial cut flower producers, turf farms and wholesale nurseries. Water pumps or sheds used for retail or service activities such as retail nurseries will continue to be ineligible for exemption. The necessary legislative amendment will have retrospective effect from 29 May 2006, when the administrative arrangement commenced.

In addition to these budget and election initiatives, the bill makes a number of amendments to the state's revenue legislation to effect certain policy changes, address technical matters and clarify the operation of the legislation.

The community ambulance cover levy is collected by electricity retailers as agents of the Commissioner of State Revenue. In recognition of commercial arrangements, electricity retailers may subcontract some or all of their functions under the act with the commissioner's approval. In some cases, this requirement for commissioner approval may place an unnecessary administrative burden on retailers and their subcontractors in the conduct of their business. These are situations where the activities being contracted out are ancillary, administrative processes routinely outsourced by business, such as printing and mailing. To address this, the bill will amend the Community Ambulance Cover Act 2003 to provide for exclusion by regulation of ancillary, administrative processes, from the requirement for commissioner approval of subcontracts.

The eligibility criteria for a first home transfer duty concession will be amended to relax the requirement for the buyer to pay at least the unencumbered value for their home. As a result, where the unencumbered value of the home is up to the threshold of $250,000 (and from 1 January 2007, $320,000) a person may still qualify for the concession even though they have paid less than full value, or have been gifted the home. However, where the unencumbered value is more than the relevant threshold, the buyer must still pay full value for the home to qualify for the first home concession. This amendment gives legislative support to the current practice, which has operated under an administrative arrangement since 1 May 2004.

The mortgage duty provisions in the Duties Act 2001 will also be amended to reflect the abolition of mortgage duty in Tasmania from 1 July 2007. All states except Victoria charge mortgage duty on amounts secured by mortgages. Where a mortgage secures property wholly in Queensland, Queensland mortgage duty is charged on the full amount secured. However, where the mortgage secures both Queensland and non-Queensland property, special rules apply to prevent double duty.

Tasmania will abolish its mortgage duty from 1 July 2007. As a result, certain changes need to be made to Queensland's mortgage duty provisions to deal with situations where a mortgage secures property in Queensland and Tasmania. These changes are essential to prevent avoidance of Queensland mortgage duty. They will ensure that property in Tasmania is treated consistently with property in other jurisdictions that do not impose mortgage duty, being the Territories, Victoria and overseas jurisdictions. The changes are consistent with the underlying principle of the national multijurisdictional mortgage duty model that full duty, but not double duty, should be paid in Australia on a mortgage.

Following a recent court decision which expanded its scope, the transfer duty exemption for transactions correcting an error in a previous dutiable transaction will be amended to reinstate the pre-existing interpretation and practice regarding the exemption. The amendment will clarify that the exemption is limited to the correction of clerical errors and does not extend to errors by parties in the structuring of their transactions.

The Land Tax Act 1915 will be amended to remove the eligibility of Australian citizen absentees (that is, non-residents) for a land tax primary production deduction, effective from the 2007-08 land tax year. This will align the treatment of Australian citizen absentees with that of non-Australian citizen absentees, who are currently ineligible for the deduction. This amendment is necessary to prevent contravention of a non-discrimination article in Australia's international tax treaties.

The bill will also amend the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to confirm that a purpose of that act is the administration and enforcement of other jurisdictions' revenue laws. This will support the provisions of the act that confer the Commissioner of State Revenue's investigative powers on interstate investigators for conducting revenue investigations in Queensland. Reciprocal provisions in other jurisdictions' revenue legislation apply to enable Queensland revenue investigations interstate.

Minor technical amendments will also be made to a provision of the Duties Act 2001 relating to exempt institutions, and a provision of the Land Tax Act 1915 relating to a land tax concession.

In addition to the revenue legislation amendments, the bill also amends the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993. Mr Speaker, as part of the October 2005 Special Fiscal and Economic Statement, the Premier announced that the government would extend the mandate of the Queensland Auditor-General to undertake an assessment of the relevance of the published measures used by government agencies.

The extended mandate will ensure that appropriate independent scrutiny of the performance of government agencies contributes to improved service delivery to the community, and will complement the operations of the Service Delivery and Performance Commission, established to assess how well government services are meeting community needs.

The Queensland Auditor-General considers this to be an important amendment to his mandate that has the potential to significantly enhance the value of performance management systems audits to the parliament, government and public sector agencies.

The bill proposes to amend section 80 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and make consequential amendments to the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 to extend the Queensland Auditor-General's mandate, in accordance with the Premier's October 2005 announcement.

The proposed amendments will ensure that the extended mandate can be implemented at the discretion of the Queensland Auditor-General and will apply to public sector entities, thereby retaining consistency with the current performance management audit arrangements.

The bill proposes that the extended mandate commence from 1 January 2007 and includes transitional provisions that will ensure that the Queensland Auditor-General is able to assess performance measures that were published prior to 1 January 2007.

Mr Speaker, this bill delivers on the government's commitment to abolish two further duties. It provides further benefits to the community by extending and introducing new tax concessions and extending Queensland's fuel subsidy. The bill ensures that our revenue and audit legislation adapts to the changing environment and operates as intended.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Flegg, adjourned.

Mr Deputy Speaker read the following message from Her Excellency the Governor—

I, QUENTIN BRYCE, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay an amount from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial year starting 1 July 2005.

Signed Quentin Bryce, GOVERNOR

5 October 2006

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.44 am): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay an amount from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the financial year starting 1 July 2005. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.44 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today to introduce the supplementary Appropriation (Parliament) Bill for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service for 2006-07. The government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and this extends to the means by which public moneys are appropriated to ensure its continued functioning. We are therefore adhering to the convention that the Legislative Assembly's appropriation be contained in a bill separate from the Appropriation Bill for the other activities of government.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2006 provides supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service in the 2005-06 financial year. The total amount mentioned in the schedule is appropriated for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service for application to its outputs, equity adjustment and administered items for the 2005-06 financial year. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Flegg, adjourned.

Mr Deputy Speaker read the following message from Her Excellency the Governor—

I, QUENTIN BRYCE, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial year starting 1 July 2005.

Signed Quentin Bryce, GOVERNOR

5 October 2006

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.46 am): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial year starting 1 July 2005. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.46 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today to introduce the supplementary Appropriation Bill for departments as stated in the schedule attached to the bill. The Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2006 provides supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by departments in the 2005-06 financial year. For each department, the total amount mentioned in the schedule is appropriated for the department for application to its departmental outputs, equity adjustment and administered items for the 2005-06 financial year. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Flegg, adjourned.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (11.48 am): I present a bill for an act to amend acts administered by the Minister for Health. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (11.48 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Health Legislation Amendment Bill builds on this government's efforts to improve the recruitment, assessment and registration of health professionals. It will also make a number of amendments to ensure consistency and improve processes across the Health portfolio. The bill amends a total of 19 Health portfolio acts, including the 13 health practitioner registration acts, the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act, the Mental Health Act, the Radiation Safety Act, the Private Health Facilities Act and the Health Services Act. Of major policy significance are amendments to the health practitioner registration acts, which will provide greater opportunities for the recruitment of medical and allied health professionals to Queensland. It is these amendments that I will address first.

All Queenslanders rightly expect the doctors, nurses and allied health professionals practising in this state to have appropriate qualifications and the highest standard of competence. Equally, Queenslanders expect us to do whatever we can to ensure our public hospitals are suitably staffed to meet local health demands. That is why the Beattie government established the ministerial task force to examine the recruitment, assessment and registration processes for medical practitioners, in particular international medical graduates working in areas of need. This bill amends the Medical Practitioners Registration Act to give effect to recommendations made by the ministerial task force to help ensure the medical workforce is competent and sufficient to meet the needs of the Queensland community.

Firstly, the bill introduces new policy and guidelines for determining areas of need which were developed by the task force. They will clarify the scope of power for the minister or delegate of the minister to decide whether an area of need exists for the purpose of registering a practitioner to practise in the area of need. If it is determined that an area of need exists, the bill specifies that this decision may remain in force for up to four years. This will reduce red tape involved in processing area-of-need applications and give international medical graduates greater employment certainty, thus increasing Queensland's capacity to attract such graduates. It will also specify the criteria to be considered for making area-of-need decisions. These criteria include, for example, a shortage of medical practitioners to provide a medical service at one health facility and whether it is reasonable for the service to be provided at another facility. Although these criteria are currently applied under the area-of-need policy developed by the task force, their inclusion in the act was recommended by the Davies report and will give greater transparency and accountability to the area-of-need process.

The task force also highlighted that there should be greater scope for practitioners in area-of-need positions to transfer to other positions or facilities and to receive further training. The bill addresses this issue by inserting new provisions to allow junior medical staff to transfer, for example, to a higher level junior position or to another facility without affecting their registration. This gives junior medical staff greater mobility and employers greater flexibility to manage the medical workforce. However, as a safeguard, the bill requires that prior notice of transfers be given to the Medical Board. Also, the notice must be accompanied by a certificate signed by the executive director of medical services of the health facility from which the practitioner is transferring that the practitioner has sufficient practical experience and training to practise in the new position in a safe, competent and professional way.

The bill also allows for specialties and senior medical officers to transfer to practise at other health facilities in the state for training purposes without affecting their registration. The same notification and certification requirements will apply to these transfers as apply to transfers by junior medical staff. The upskilling of senior medical staff under these arrangements will help improve medical standards. The task force also endorsed the comments in the Davies report that special purpose registrants should only practise under supervision and should progress to general or specialist registration within a specified time frame.

In accordance with the task force recommendations, the bill amends the act to require applicants for special purpose registration to submit a supervised practise plan and, as a condition of registration, practise only in accordance with the plan. It will also be a standard condition that special purpose registrants must apply for general or specialist registration within a set time frame. For example, registrants in the area of need category must do so within four years after obtaining special purpose registration. This will improve the quality of medical services in the state by ensuring all international medical graduates progress through a process which will lead to an Australian standard qualification.

The bill also amends the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001 to give effect to a national initiative established by the Australian Health Ministers Conference in November 2003 to address the Australia-wide shortage of dentists in the public sector. Overseas trained dentists with qualifications from schools approved by the Australian Dental Council, the ADC, are eligible to participate in the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme. These dentists will be exempt from the ADC's preliminary written exam and granted conditional registration to work under supervision in the public sector for up to three years. During this period, they must also successfully complete the ADC's final clinical examination and occupational English test. The bill implements the scheme by creating a new category of special purpose registration for these dentists. Applicants will be assessed by the Dental Board of Queensland in accordance with the 'fitness to practise' criteria outlined in the act which include English language proficiency, recency of practise, physical and mental health, criminal history and details of any past suspension or cancellation of registration.

The Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme will facilitate the recruitment of overseas trained dentists which, in the short term, will play a crucial role in addressing the current dental workforce shortage in the public sector in Queensland. The bill will also amend the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001 to enable dentists from interstate and New Zealand to provide professional services in Queensland in an emergency or while a patient is being transported. This amendment gives effect to the Dental Board of Queensland's request that section 270 of the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 be replicated for the dental profession. In addition, the bill replicates two functions of the Medical Practitioners Registration Act in the remaining 12 health practitioner registration acts. All boards will have the ability to approve short-term registration and will have expanded delegation powers regarding their registration functions.

I now turn to the amendments to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act. I am pleased to inform the House that this bill continues this government's tough anti-smoking laws by banning the supply of smokeless tobacco products such as nasal snuff and chewing tobacco. Although there is little evidence to show that these products are presently being sold in Queensland, Queensland Health has received a number of inquiries from retailers interested in selling these products. Smokeless tobacco products are addictive. The nicotine delivery capabilities are very high and can result in an increased potential for nicotine dependence. Users of these products experience cravings and nicotine withdrawal symptoms when attempting to quit. The use of these products is also a risk factor for oral or throat cancer, non-malignant oral diseases and cardiovascular disease. This tough stance is consistent with the prohibition of smokeless tobacco products in other parts of Australia, including New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia.

The bill also clarifies the intent of a number of provisions in the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act concerning the advertising, display and promotion of smoking products as well as reducing the exposure of members of the community to environmental tobacco smoke. Since 1 July 2006 smoking has been banned inside all Queensland licensed premises and at all commercial outdoor eating or drinking establishments. The response to the smoking reforms from industry, I am pleased to say, has been positive. To avoid ambiguity, this bill clarifies the meaning of an outdoor eating or drinking place by establishing broader criteria. The provision will encompass a wide range of places where food or drink is provided at the venue, including sporting fields, shopping centre food courts and festivals or other events held in parks.

The bill also clarifies that smoking is prohibited within four metres of any entrance to an enclosed space, including temporary structures such as a circus tent. This will ensure that additional entrances to buildings and other enclosed spaces are captured, not just the main entrance. These amendments are consistent with the objective of the Tobacco Act to improve the health of community members by reducing their exposure to tobacco and other smoking products. Queensland Health will continue to implement a major public education campaign about these public health reforms and will work with industry to support their implementation.

The bill addresses a range of operational issues in the Transplantation and Anatomy Act. Most notably, the requirements governing the taking of skeletal muscle or oral tissue for research purposes will be simplified. The legislation will continue to specify that tissue biopsies may only be taken from adult donors. The legislation will also continue to have due regard to the welfare and rights of donors by specifying that the research must be approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee established in accordance with the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council. In addition, donors' consent must be obtained in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans prior to the biopsy being preformed by either a medical practitioner or dental practitioner. I have been advised that tissue biopsies are relatively simple and involve little risk for the person concerned.

Finally, the bill makes minor amendments to address operational difficulties, clarify the policy intent of provisions and omit redundant provisions in other health portfolio acts. In short, the bill allows persons who have been detained without charge under a prescribed state or Commonwealth act to receive mental health services under the classified patient scheme in the Mental Health Act; ensures that the Radiation Safety Act is consistent with the National Directory for Radiation Protection, which aims to achieve uniformity in radiation protection practices between jurisdictions; rectifies an operational deficiency in the Private Health Facilities Act relating to the disclosure by another party of information provided under the act and omits an incorrect reference; and enables the appointment of inspectors with appropriate powers to investigate alleged breaches of confidentiality obligations under the Health Services Act.

The introduction of a bill such as this involves extensive consultation with stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those stakeholders who were involved with the development of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (12.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 and the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal Act 2003, and for other purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (12.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The key policy objective of the bill is to improve dispute resolution processes for community titles schemes. Importantly, the bill introduces two processes which will not only accelerate the resolution of disputes and minimise the likelihood of future problems but also improve communication between the persons in dispute, allowing them to reach agreeable outcomes rather than have decisions imposed on them. The bill achieves this in the following ways.

Firstly, most persons intending to seek formal government intervention in a body corporate dispute must initially make a reasonable attempt to resolve the problem internally within their body corporate. Internal dispute resolution may involve the disputing persons communicating, or the intending applicant making use of formal body corporate procedures by submitting matters to the committee, or presenting motions for consideration at a general meeting of their body corporate.

It is expected that proper use of internal dispute resolution processes will reduce disputation in a body corporate and limit the need for formal intervention. The importance of this process is emphasised as the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management—the commissioner—will have the power to choose not to proceed with a dispute resolution application until the person undertakes reasonable steps to resolve the dispute, and ultimately to reject the application.

Secondly, the bill provides for departmental conciliation to be conducted by the BCCM Office. Departmental conciliation will facilitate prompt and informal resolution of disputes; encourage parties to disputes to arrive at their own resolutions and agreements in line with the 'self-management' focus of the BCCM Act; and improve communication between parties, their understanding of rights and responsibilities under legislation and, in turn, minimise future disputes. For most body corporate disputes, conciliation will be compulsory before an application is made for adjudication.

Given the concerns raised by stakeholders in the 2004 review of the community titles sector, a person's right to access justice has also been given serious consideration in the bill. Stakeholders were concerned that most complex body corporate disputes are only determined by a specialist adjudicator and that the associated costs are prohibitive. Stakeholders were particularly concerned that the only processes for the resolution of disputes about the adjustment of lot entitlements are either specialist adjudication or the District Court.

The bill extends the jurisdiction of the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal—the CCT—of my department to determine complex BCCM disputes currently resolved compulsorily by specialist adjudication or by the District Court. The CCT already deals with a range of complex commercial and consumer matters and is a viable and accessible means of resolving complex BCCM disputes. This jurisdictional change will alleviate stakeholders' concerns regarding the current costs of specialist adjudication and the costs and formality of District Court proceedings.

Additionally, the jurisdiction for hearing appeals of orders made by adjudicators will be vested in the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal rather than the District Court. For some time, stakeholders have contended that the District Court is too formal and costly. Appeals will continue to be limited to those raising a question of law. Adjudicators' orders warrant a reasonable degree of certainty for those people who have the benefit of the order and questions of law are broad enough to ensure that unsuccessful parties have reasonable access to appeal if they consider the adjudicator has misapplied legal principles or failed to accord the party natural justice.

The bill also contains a number of enhancements to the procedures for managing disputes. On occasions, the definitions of 'parties to a dispute' cause confusion and obstruct dispute resolution. The bill clarifies the parties by clearly defining the parties as the applicant and the respondent. The respondent to an application is defined in the bill as the person against whom the application is made. Additionally, the bill classifies an affected person as a person who would be directly and materially affected by relief sought in an application. An affected person is not a party to a dispute.

The bill addresses the uncertainty about when a 'dispute' exists for the purpose of dispute resolution. The parties to a dispute must have standing under the BCCM Act when the application is received by the commissioner. The bill also provides for the continuation of an application even though a party may cease to have standing before the dispute is resolved—for example, by selling the person's unit.

To a large extent, the BCCM Office has exclusive jurisdiction to resolve body corporate disputes. This exclusivity has proven to be obstructive where the parties to a dispute would prefer to have the matter dealt with in another jurisdiction such as a court. The bill allows parties the flexibility to refer their dispute, by agreement, to a court or tribunal having jurisdiction or another process capable of dealing with the dispute and binding the parties. The flexibility to refer the dispute is subject to the agreement of the commissioner.

The power of an adjudicator to award costs against a person who makes an application that is dismissed on the basis that it is frivolous, misconceived or without substance is extended to permit an order for costs in favour of an affected person or the body corporate who have incurred costs regarding the application. While the persons able to claim costs have been extended, the total amount which may be ordered against an applicant has not been increased. Therefore, the bill clearly specifies that $2,000 is the maximum amount which can be ordered for an application.

In addition to dispute resolution enhancements, the bill recognises the importance of community titles schemes to the tourism industry. The secondary objects of the BCCM Act are expanded to encourage the development of tourism potential in community titles schemes without diminishing the existing rights of unit owners.

Most bodies corporate are required to elect a committee with responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the body corporate. Clearly, a committee has a significant and important role in the ongoing management of a body corporate. Stakeholders have expressed concern about the conduct of committees. In particular, it is claimed that many committee members do not understand their roles and do not act in the best interests of the body corporate. Specific problems include committees exceeding the legislated spending limit and chairpersons making unilateral decisions. It is apparent that these issues contribute to the cause and escalation of body corporate disputes.

In response to these issues, the bill introduces a code of conduct for voting members of a body corporate committee. The code provides guidelines for voting committee members without increasing their existing obligations. It is proposed the regulation modules will be amended to empower bodies corporate to enforce the code against a voting committee member through the removal of the member from office.

A body corporate manager is a person engaged by a body corporate to provide administrative services, such as secretarial or financial management services. The BCCM legislation includes a number of consumer protection provisions regulating the relationship between body corporate managers and bodies corporate, including a code of conduct for body corporate managers.

Stakeholders have expressed concerns about the competence, performance and conduct of body corporate managers. At present, a body corporate manager is not subject to a specific regulatory or licensing regime. While my department is currently conducting a separate analysis of possible regulatory options, the bill enhances the existing statutory code of conduct for body corporate managers by including a requirement that body corporate managers must not attempt to unfairly influence the outcome of body corporate committee elections.

I turn now to the background to the BCCM Act. The Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 amends the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997. The Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 regulates some 33,000 community titles schemes containing over 303,000 lots or units.

It is estimated that well over 500,000 Queenslanders live in apartments or units. At the same time, a significant proportion of Queensland's estimated 18½ million annual visitors and tourists choose to stay in community title apartments and units for the duration of their stay in Queensland, in preference to hotels and motels.

As well as providing affordable accommodation and quality lifestyle options, the community titles sector also supports and underpins a number of associated industries. These include the development and construction industries, body corporate managers, on-site or resident managers and a whole host of other support industries ranging from travel agents through to tradesmen and subcontractors.

The BCCM Act is also very complex legislation. Getting the balance right between all the competing interests is vital. However, the facts are that in the community titles world sometimes interests, or perception of interests, can be diametrically opposed. While most schemes operate at an optimum level with residents enjoying the benefits of community ownership of common property which would never be available to owners as individuals, there are, sadly, some troubled schemes and some troubled owners.

The government is also aware that, increasingly, community titling rather than traditional flat land development is becoming the preferred option of developers for progressive development. There is a view that bodies corporate provide better governance outcomes for staged developments than traditional local government. We are also mindful that the South East Queensland Regional Plan will significantly increase the stock of medium- to high-density housing. This will place much greater pressure over the next five to 10 years on the dispute resolution and information services provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management, the BCCM Office, if the numbers of lots covered by the BCCM Act increase at their expected rate.

As a result of these factors, the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to improve dispute resolution processes for community titles schemes without unduly adding to the already prescriptive nature of the BCCM Act. The fact is that the community titles sector is a rapidly developing sector. It is also a fact that the sector will need ongoing monitoring. There will never be a final legislative 'fix'. However, these current amendments will go a long way towards addressing some of the more pressing issues raised through the current review process.

I turn now to budget enhancements. These legislative amendments have been complemented by a $1.6 million increase to the commissioner's and CCT budget to implement these enhancements. This process has already commenced with the recent launch of a range of improved information products, the most noticeable of which is the online training module for new and existing body corporate members and elected office-bearers.

In addition to these proposed amendments, as I have mentioned, my department is examining regulatory options with respect to body corporate managers. There is also ongoing research and consideration of the need for some new thinking about the governance of large and mega scheme developments. I am also aware that there are varying views about the management rights industry, and the government will continue to monitor that sector.

The Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill provides important immediate and constructive improvements to the BCCM Act. The amendments significantly improve dispute resolution services and continue to position Queensland as a world leader in flexible governance arrangements for community living.

I would like to thank the 177 respondents to the call for submissions made through the 2004 BCCM discussion paper. I would particularly like to thank the Community Titles Institute of Queensland, the Unit Owners Association of Queensland and the Queensland Resident Accommodation Managers Association, particularly Tim Carrigg, Gary Maynard and John Anderson, who have been a important source of authoritative and welcome advice. We have also listened to many individual unit owners and wherever possible sought to ensure that their best interests were represented and accommodated in these vital reforms.

I turn now to amendments to the Liquor Act 1992. I note the support of the member for Nicklin. The bill also addresses the concerns raised by a private member's bill introduced by the member for Nicklin, Mr Peter Wellington MP, by amending the Liquor Act 1992 to allow the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal to require the submission of fresh evidence in 'particular circumstances'.

At present, section 34(1) of the Liquor Act 1992 provides that an appeal to the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal against the decision of the chief executive is by the hearing on the evidence that was before the chief executive. The new provision will allow the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal to hear fresh evidence in circumstances where the party seeking to introduce new evidence did not know or could not reasonably be expected to have known of the evidence on or before the day of the chief executive's decision.

In addition to allowing the tribunal to hear new evidence, in circumstances where it is deemed necessary the tribunal will be empowered to direct an applicant to make a new application. It is envisaged that this will only occur where an applicant provides fresh evidence at a hearing and the tribunal decides that the new material is sufficiently significant to require reconsideration by the chief executive. Fresh evidence may also be required where the tribunal considers that an applicant has failed in their responsibility to identify the potential impact on all sensitive sites in the locality as part of the public interest assessment process.

In addition, the proposed amendments will empower the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal to require an applicant who provides fresh evidence at hearings to make a new application to the chief executive. Fresh evidence may also be required where the tribunal considers that an applicant has failed in his or her responsibility to identify the potential impact on all sensitive sites in the locality as part of the public interest assessment process.

Additionally, my department is currently conducting a review of the Liquor Act 1992, with a focus on enhancing harm minimisation objectives and improving community consultation processes. In conjunction with the policy proposals being developed by my department's Liquor Act review team, the proposed amendments to the Liquor Act contained in this bill will establish a forum for improved consultation, more equitable processes and informed decision making.

I turn now to the background to the Liquor Act. The Liquor Licensing Division of my department administers the Liquor Act 1992, which regulates the sale and supply of liquor through the licensing of business operators and the approval of suitable premises. In addition to the regulation of the sale and supply of alcohol, a fundamental object of the Liquor Act 1992 is to regulate the liquor industry in a way compatible with minimising harm arising from alcohol abuse. To effectively meet these objectives, application and decision-making processes are governed by rigorous and meticulous principles to ensure full and frank disclosure of all matters relating to applications, the conduct of consultation, the handling of objections and the conduct of investigations.

The proposed reforms for a more flexible approach to the regulation of the sale and supply of liquor contained in this bill attest to my continued commitment to serve the interests of the community without compromising industry interests. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (12.19 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend legislation about primary industries. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (12.19 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 amends a number of acts within the primary industries portfolio and repeals another act which is no longer relevant. These amendments have become necessary as a result of the ongoing process of assessing the operational effectiveness of primary industries legislation.

It has been standard practice in most years to bring a miscellaneous or omnibus portfolio amendment bill before the parliament so that non-controversial changes can be made to a number of acts without the need to amend each act via a separate bill. The 2006 omnibus bill makes key changes to three acts, by amending the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Agricultural Standards Act 1994 and the Grain Research Foundation Act 1976. It also repeals the Grain Industry (Restructuring) Act 1991.

The amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act will clarify that an inspector has the power to re-enter a property to care for an animal which has been seized in situ. Experience has shown that it is not always possible, nor desirable, to move animals as soon as they have been seized under the act. It is therefore necessary to re-enter the property to finalise seizure arrangements or to continue the care of the animal which, as a result of seizure, has become the responsibility of the relevant agency. This clarification of power under the act will therefore enable officers to meet the ongoing welfare needs of seized animals and the objectives of the act. The act will also be amended to authorise the chief executive of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries to accept the transfer of a relinquished animal from its owner, on behalf of the state, where such transfer is in the interest of the animal's welfare.

Amendments to the Agricultural Standards Act are required to assist the compliance auditing program in controlling bovine spongiform encephalopathy, otherwise known as 'mad cow disease'. These powers are required to clarify entry powers and enable seizure of evidence where entry is made to monitor the ruminant feed ban. This will further mitigate the risk of a disease outbreak and continue to underpin Queensland's international market access based on its exemplary biosecurity status.

The proposed amendments to the Grain Research Foundation Act will enable the Grain Research Foundation to convert from a statutory body into an industry owned company, limited by guarantee and operating under the Corporations Law. The conversion to an industry owned company has been proposed by the foundation in order to provide a more flexible and commercial company structure to enhance its ability to advance grain industry research. The incorporation proposal has received widespread support from industry stakeholders including AgForce Grains. A number of legislative precedents exist for converting primary industry statutory bodies into industry owned companies, so this will not be a complex exercise.

The bill will also repeal the Grain Industry (Restructuring) Act, as there are no operative provisions under the act, with the exception of a review clause. The act was designed originally to facilitate the major Queensland grain industry restructuring exercise back in 1991-92. There were also some transitional provisions, but as these have all now expired there is no need for the act to remain on the Queensland statute book.

Other amendments in the bill include those to part 5B of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, dealing with the cultivation of low drug content industrial hemp, and to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936. The Drugs Misuse Act is to be amended to correct drafting anomalies and ensure consistency in requirements for the issue and renewal of licences for growing industrial cannabis plants. This will include a requirement for applicants to provide photographs and in the instance of a corporate applicant the names of the corporation's executive officers. This will enable comprehensive background checks to ensure the suitability of licence holders and to underpin the rigorous administration of part 5B in a manner that is consistent with the entirety of the act.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act is also to be amended to remove references to the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950. The Veterinary Surgeons Act currently provides that the Veterinary Tribunal of Queensland is a commission of inquiry. The relevant provisions will be replaced with provisions similar to that used in the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 to ensure the tribunal continues to have access to necessary powers and procedures as appropriate for professional disciplinary bodies.

The bill also proposes a number of minor machinery amendments to the Brands Act 1915, the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994 and the Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981. These amendments are considered minor but necessary to correct terminology or drafting anomalies, improve consistency and remove archaic provisions with the aim of achieving optimum efficiency in legislative administration.

Overall, the bill ensures that at least in the short term Queensland's primary industries legislation is operationally efficient and responsive to an ever-changing policy environment. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (12.26 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 and for other purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (12.26 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In 2004 and 2005 the Department of Emergency Services conducted a review of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990. The review included consultation with the public via the release of a discussion paper, direct consultation with stakeholder organisations and focus group research. The review identified a number of areas where fire safety arrangements in Queensland could be improved. The bill incorporates these improvements.

The bill makes it compulsory for smoke alarms to be installed in all existing homes. Homes built since 1 July 1997 are already required by the Building Code of Australia to have mains-wired smoke alarms installed. Residences built prior to this date may also, if required by a building certifier, be required to install smoke alarms when renovating more than half of the original building. Also, the government has installed hard-wired smoke alarms in all 50,000 Queensland public housing dwellings. There is currently no legal requirement for most pre-1997 houses and units to have smoke alarms installed. This bill will fill this gap and will mean that all homes in Queensland are required to have smoke alarms installed.

Queensland's experience with the promotion of smoke alarms and the introduction in 1997 of mandatory mains connected smoke alarms in new or significantly renovated housing has seen coverage increase from 38.7 per cent of homes in 1996 to 84.2 per cent in 2005. It is anticipated that the new laws will lift smoke alarm coverage considerably.

Smoke alarms are very important domestic safety devices. The risk of death from fire in a home is up to three times higher in homes without smoke alarms when compared to homes with smoke alarms. In Queensland, 78.1 per cent of all home fire deaths occur in homes without smoke alarms. In Queensland, since June 2004, 19 people have died in house fires in homes that either did not have smoke alarms or had smoke alarms that did not work, usually because batteries were removed or dead. In just over a fortnight in late May, early June last year 13 people, including seven children, died in home fires in New South Wales. These tragic statistics emphasise the serious risks presented by house fires and the necessity for the government to act to address this risk.

Cost-benefit studies conducted by the Department of Emergency Services, with the assistance of the Queensland Treasury Corporation, indicate that if Queensland was able to achieve 100 per cent coverage of working smoke alarms in domestic residences there could be a potential saving of 106 lives over 20 years with a net saving to householders of approximately $70 million in reduced property losses and injury costs over the same period.

The bill makes smoke alarms compulsory but leaves it to the householder to select what type of alarm to install. The minimum acceptable alarm will be a one-year battery alarm that meets the applicable Australian standard. This type of alarm provides a reasonable level of protection provided that batteries are replaced regularly and the alarm is tested and cleaned in accordance with the alarm manufacturer's instructions. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service promotes the necessity to change smoke alarm batteries regularly. I take this opportunity to urge all Queenslanders to regularly check the batteries in their smoke alarms.

The smoke alarms are to be located to provide warning to occupants especially whilst sleeping so that occupants may safely evacuate in the event of fire. The location requirements for smoke alarms mirror the location requirements for smoke alarms contained in the Building Code of Australia for new homes. This requires that there be one alarm outside sleeping areas and one alarm on each level of the home. It is estimated that the laws will require the typical home to install two alarms.

Details of where to locate smoke alarms and how to test, clean and generally maintain smoke alarms are contained in instructions prepackaged with the alarms. Information on these matters and guidance about the best type of alarms to purchase is also available on the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service web site.

The new smoke alarm laws set a reasonable minimum standard of protection for householders. Protection against fire increases with the number, quality and type of smoke alarm installed. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service recommends that householders consider installing smoke alarms above the minimum standard. For instance, it is recommended that alarms be installed in bedrooms and that photoelectric rather than ionisation alarms be installed. Information about the advantages and disadvantages of different types of alarms and other information to help householders comply with the new laws is available on the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service web site and via a 1300 number.

The bill requires that lessors of rental properties replace smoke alarms before the end of their service life. Under the applicable Australian standard smoke alarms are required to have a service life of at least 10 years. Lessors also have to check smoke alarms and carry out routine maintenance at the beginning of a tenancy. Tenants are responsible for routine maintenance during the tenancy.

To facilitate ongoing compliance, the bill requires notification from a vendor to a purchaser on the sale of a property that the property contains smoke alarms. The vendor is also required to lodge a form with the Queensland Land Registry stating that smoke alarms have been installed. This is the same process that is in place for electrical safety switches. This will make checking for the existence of smoke alarms a standard part of the conveyancing process and will help ensure that the smoke alarm initiative is sustainable over the longer term.

For manufactured homes—these are homes where the land is not sold, just the home—the bill requires that the smoke alarm notice be given by the seller of the home to the buyer in the form of assignment used for the transfer of manufactured homes.

The new laws will take effect on 1 July 2007. However, the government encourages all Queenslanders not to wait for 1 July 2007. A working smoke alarm could be the difference between life and death. The government urges Queenslanders to act now and put in smoke alarms.

All buildings in Queensland, except domestic dwellings, are subject to a fire safety obligation not to overcrowd. The bill gives the Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service power to require licensed premises at risk of overcrowding, such as nightclubs or hotels configured as nightclubs, to set and manage a specified maximum safe occupancy limit.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service will assist operators to assess maximum occupancy numbers in these premises over a 24-month period. The government has worked closely with industry in the development of the overcrowding proposals and will continue to work closely with industry to ensure that they are properly implemented.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service attends a large number of call-outs by automatic smoke detection and alarm systems. Call-outs from monitored automatic alarm systems account for approximately one-third of all Queensland Fire and Rescue Service call-outs. The vast majority—96.6 per cent in 2005-06—of such call-outs are false in that, upon investigation, the cause of the alarm activation is not an emergency that requires the intervention of the fire service.

It is likely that the lack of alarm system suitability to the environment of the building, occupier activities—such as toasters burning toast—inappropriate location and type of detectors, system malfunctions, the lack of ability of detectors and alarms to distinguish between fires and normal conditions in the building and the lack of appropriate design features and management procedures account for the majority of unwanted alarms. The two most serious consequences of unwanted alarms are:

- firstly, complacency—the main reason for an alarm system is to provide a warning to occupants to evacuate a building to a place of safety when a fire or other relevant emergency happens. The prevalence of unwanted alarms means that building occupants may become complacent about alarms and delay evacuation in response to an alarm. In a real fire or emergency situation this may delay evacuation and put lives at risk; and
- secondly, cost—Queensland Fire and Rescue Service resources responding to unwanted alarms could be more effectively utilised for other public safety purposes.

The bill places an obligation on occupiers to maintain alarm systems so that they do not exceed an unacceptable level of unwanted alarms.

The Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 imposes fire safety obligations on building occupiers of all buildings except homes to maintain building fire safety systems so that they will operate effectively in the event of a fire. These obligations include requirements to maintain adequate means of escape, fire safety equipment and evacuation plans and procedures to ensure personal safety in the event of fire. The act also imposes obligations on owners of budget accommodation buildings to prepare and update fire safety management plans for budget accommodation buildings.

These provisions are critical to maintaining adequate standards of fire safety in buildings in Queensland. Contravention of these obligations could potentially result in very serious consequences, including loss of life, injury and property loss. The government has reviewed the penalties imposed for breach of these important safety obligations and has increased the penalties to provide higher penalties where the breach of a fire safety obligation causes serious consequences such as death or injury.

The bill imposes a sliding scale of significant penalties for contraventions that result in adverse consequences, ranging from $150,000 or three years imprisonment for a contravention that results in multiple deaths down to $7,500 where there is a contravention with no adverse consequence. These increased penalties are in line with the level of penalties that apply to other public safety legislation such as the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995.

Further, the bill provides that sections 23(1) and 24 of the Criminal Code do not apply in relation to the contravention of these fire safety obligations. Section 23(1) of the Criminal Code incorporates a general requirement that an offending act or omission must have been performed with intent, and section 24 excuses acts done in an honest and reasonable, but mistaken, belief in the existence of facts. The removal of these protections is balanced by the inclusion of defences that the contravention was due to causes over which the person had no control and that a person took reasonable precautions and exercised proper diligence to avoid the contravention.

The bill clarifies the power of fire officers to enter premises for investigative and preventative purposes. The powers currently enjoyed by authorised fire officers are general in nature and permit officers to enter premises to—

- prevent or reduce the likelihood of fires or hazardous materials emergencies;
- investigate whether fire safety measures have been taken;
- ascertain the causes of fires or hazardous materials emergencies; and
- ascertain whether fire safety requirements have been met or whether enforcement powers should be exercised.

The bill makes clear that the general powers already conferred include powers to—

- search, inspect, measure, test, photograph or film a premises;
- take things or samples, copy documents, make enquiries, conduct surveys and tests at a premises; and
- take required persons, equipment and materials onto premises.

In addition, the bill updates the fire prevention and investigation powers in relation to the collection of evidence and the conduct of inquiries into fires and hazardous materials emergencies.

Section 69 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 empowers the Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to require an occupier to take measures to reduce the risk of a fire occurring on premises or reducing the potential danger to a person's property or the environment in the event of a fire occurring on premises. The requisition may be given to a particular occupier or, by gazettal notice, to all occupiers to whom the requisition applies. There is no right of merits appeal provided to an individual occupier who wishes to object to a requisition given to an occupier under section 69.

Section 69 is an important fire safety power. It enables the commissioner to take prompt action to address fire safety issues. For instance, it enables the commissioner to require firebreaks be made to reduce fire risk or that vegetation be cleared where the vegetation presents a fire risk. Further, it permits the commissioner to require a person to suspend operations where those operations present a fire risk.

Other similar enforcement procedures—for example, a building fire safety enforcement notice under section 104G of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990—contain a right of merits review to the fire panel established under act. It is only fair that persons affected by fire safety enforcement action have a right to have their grievances aired, and the bill provides a right of merits appeal to particular occupants the subject of a requisition under section 69.

Because it is important that the commissioner have power to require steps be taken immediately for fire safety purposes, the lodgement of an appeal does not stop the notice. The bill, however, permits an occupier, the subject of a requisition under section 69 of the act, to apply to the panel for a stay of the notice.

The panel can stay or suspend the notice only if it is necessary to secure the effectiveness of the objection and any later appeal. So, for instance, if the notice requires the occupier to spend money on fire safety measures, the appeal panel could postpone the obligation to spend the money until the panel had heard the appeal about whether the fire safety measures were justified. The panel could also require the occupier to take interim measures to ensure fire safety was not compromised pending the appeal.

Such circumstances would apply if certain building operations have to take place. The panel could require the building not to be used for the purposes it was being used until such time as the panel heard the case. I am talking now about nightclubs that may not have the required fire safety.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is currently impeded by confidentiality provisions of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 from providing information about building fire safety to prospective building purchasers or tenants. The bill amends the act to allow the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to disclose any information in relation to a building to the owner, occupier or a person with an interest in the premises.

Further, the bill permits but does not require disclosure where such disclosure is reasonably necessary for enforcement of the criminal law. Such disclosure would have to comply with the government privacy arrangements.

The bill amends fees and charges provisions of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 to clarify the intent of the charging provisions—

- to clearly provide that owners of properties that pay a fire levy are liable to be charged for attendances at unwanted alarms; and
- by clearly recognising that the chief executive is able to waive a charge where it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so.

Under section 147 of the Building Act 1975 private certifiers are required to keep and provide certain records relating to the specifics of a building being approved for construction under the Integrated Planning Act 1997. These documents include a list of required fire safety installations and required special fire services.

Section 137 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 requires that local governments provide fire safety officers with these documents where the local government has certified a building.

The bill amends section 137 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 to extend to building certifiers the requirement to provide fire safety inspectors with records where these records are not available from local government. This has been causing a problem over a period in relation to private certifiers in that their certification records are not available. This power permits an authorised officer to enter any premises in which a certifier carries on business during the ordinary hours of business. Nothing in the section permits an officer to enter any part of a dwelling if the part of the dwelling is not also a workplace.

The bill also amends section 216 of the Building Act 1975 to overcome the recent decision of the District Court of Queensland Charleville Registry in Goldfox Investments Pty Ltd v Paul Evans.

In the Goldfox decision the court decided that the mere existence of accommodation as defined in the definition of budget accommodation contained in section 216 of the act as it then stood was insufficient to prove for the purposes of a criminal prosecution that the accommodation was in fact budget accommodation within the definition.

Numerous members have talked to me about houses that have been used as boarding houses where the people claim they have had a party the night before and they have only slept the night. Hopefully this provision will go a long way to ensure that if a home is configured with so many beds and if people stay there on a regular basis, unless they are related, they would fall under this section of the act. The court considered that it was necessary to prove that the accommodation was actually used for the purposes of providing budget accommodation to come within the definition.

Section 216 was intended to apply to buildings configured to provide accommodation so that the mere existence of a building configured to provide accommodation in accordance with the definition would be sufficient for the building to meet the definition of a budget accommodation building. The Goldfox decision indicates that this intention has not been achieved and the section has been amended to achieve the original intention.

In addition, the bill makes a range of other improvements to the fire safety regulatory framework that fill gaps in the current building fire safety regulatory framework to make the fire safety laws operate more efficiently. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

YEPPOON HOSPITAL SITE ACQUISITION BILL

First Reading

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water) (12.49 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the acquisition of land for a hospital and associated health and medical facilities at Yeppoon. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water) (12.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 10 August this year the Premier announced to this House that the government would have legislation drafted immediately to authorise the acquisition of land for the construction of a new hospital at Yeppoon. As the authorising legislation, this bill honours that commitment. This bill provides for the Queensland government to acquire this parcel of land for hospital purposes and, therefore, allow the government to start the work of building a new hospital. At the same time, this bill also provides certainty to the landowner that he will be fairly compensated for the Queensland government's acquisition of the land required for the construction of the new hospital.

A site has been identified for the new Yeppoon Hospital that incorporates lot 12 on SP164801 and the proposed lots 13 to 26, previously part of lot 525 on SP164801. The site consists of approximately three hectares of land at the corner of the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road and Hoskyn Drive at Yeppoon. I am advised the site is considered the most suitable site for a new hospital for a number of reasons.

This site provides good visual and physical access from the Yeppoon-Rockhampton Road. It is important that a hospital have a prominent location, easily found by the public and visitors, especially in emergency situations. It is capable of meeting anticipated health service provision for the next 30 years. The site has good accessibility for emergency vehicles and it is not in a residential neighbourhood. The site is capable of incorporating co-located health facilities. In addition, this site is unlikely to be isolated by natural disasters such as cyclones and flooding and it is also capable of being used as an emergency centre for disaster recovery.

Rather than relying on the processes under the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, this bill will take the land as part of the enactment. This will significantly shorten the time taken for the land to be available for hospital purposes. In seeking to shorten the normal process, however, this legislation will not impact on the current owner's right to fair compensation nor will it impact on their right to have the claim for compensation referred to and heard in the Land Court. The rights to fair compensation, determined in the same way in which it would be calculated under the Acquisition of Land Act, are clearly identified in the bill.

The need for the new hospital has been the subject of ongoing investigation resulting in the preparation of the health service plan for the Capricorn Coast health services in 2005. The existing hospital site is undersized. It is unable to cope with the projected population increases and service delivery demands over the next 20 years due to the inability to expand the built infrastructure on the existing site. The existing hospital is in need of major capital upgrade to continue as a viable facility.

The government's position is that the substantial funding required for this upgrade would be better directed to a new purpose-built facility. The health service plan identifies that a new integrated health service facility can incorporate a range of services including in-patient, outpatient, community health, aged care and possibly co-located private provider services. All this will assist in catering for the projected 63 per cent population increase on the Capricorn Coast over the next 20 years.

With the need identified in the health service plan for Capricorn Coast health services, work commenced on locating the most suitable site for the new hospital. Despite an appropriate site being identified, I am advised negotiations with the owner for the purchase of the land have not had a successful outcome. This is why the formal processes under the Acquisition of Land Act commenced. However, the people of Yeppoon and Capricorn Coast need this new hospital sooner rather than later, therefore the Queensland government has taken this course of action in the public interest. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hopper, adjourned.

NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (12.54 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (12.54 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Premier announced in August last year that a new duck and quail conservation plan would not be remade on its expiry in September 2005. This brought about an end to recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland, as this activity could only be authorised under a conservation plan. The decision to ban this activity was based primarily on animal welfare grounds, with advice from the RSPCA indicating that a majority of birds shot by recreational hunters suffered slow and painful deaths. Due to animal welfare concerns, the issue was referred to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries' Animal Welfare Advisory Committee for consideration. After reviewing the available evidence, the committee concluded that recreational duck and quail hunting caused an unacceptably high rate of wounding, with a consequent high level of pain and suffering. On this basis, the committee provided advice that recreational duck and quail hunting was unjustifiable on animal welfare grounds.

As the Premier himself stated here in August last year, it is clear that recreational duck and quail hunting is 'not an appropriate activity in contemporary life in the Smart State'. This sentiment is one that is shared by many of our fellow Queenslanders. Since the Premier's announcement last year, the

government has received over 5,000 items of correspondence from people across the general community who want to see this activity permanently banned. In contrast, less than 50 submissions supporting recreational duck and quail hunting were received during the same period.

The drop in support for this activity is further demonstrated by the decline in licences issued for recreational duck and quail hunting over the last two decades. In 1984, some 1,800 licences for this activity were issued while in 2004, the last year in which a harvest period was declared, only 376 licences were issued. The ban on recreational duck and quail hunting will not affect the current rights of primary producers to seek authorisation to shoot ducks for the purpose of crop protection under an approved damage mitigation permit.

People will also be able to continue hunting feral animals, such as pigs, deer, foxes and rabbits, as such action benefits the environment. In terms of animal welfare, land based feral animals are generally stationary targets when shot which means the chances of a direct kill are far higher than for a rapidly moving, small, airborne target like a duck. The ability to immediately retrieve and dispatch a land based feral animal that has been wounded is also higher than for a duck or quail.

Some proponents of duck hunting have claimed that duck populations will explode if recreational hunting is not permitted. Given the low numbers of duck hunters as at the last season, duck numbers are not likely to be significantly impacted by the cessation of shooting. Duck populations are essentially self-controlling. Factors such as wetland availability and water levels influence the populations of Queensland's ducks.

Although recreational duck and quail hunting was effectively banned following the expiry of the conservation plan, the activity could be permitted again in the future by remaking a conservation plan or making an amendment to the Nature Conservation Act's regulations. This bill seeks to enshrine in the Nature Conservation Act 1992 measures to ensure that no conservation plan can be made to allow the activity in Queensland without an act of parliament. This amendment will also remove any other legal avenues that could be used to allow the resumption of recreational duck and quail hunting.

This government is committed to enacting a clear and permanent ban on recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland. I call on the opposition to support this bill and consign duck and quail hunting to history. I therefore commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Menkens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Ashgrove, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I now have a great deal of pleasure in calling the member for Ashgrove.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (2.30 pm): It is an honour that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the 52nd Parliament of Queensland—

May it please Your Excellency

"We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.

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

I am extremely honoured to be the first woman member to represent the people of Ashgrove and to be one of 30 women in the 52nd Queensland Parliament. The suburbs of Alderley, Enoggera, Grange, Gaythorne, The Gap and of course Ashgrove comprise the electorate today, which was first established in the 1959 electoral redistribution. The former member, the Hon. Jim Fouras, represented the electorate for almost 17 years. Today I would like to acknowledge Jim's significant contribution to the electorate and to Queensland through his parliamentary service. Jim had a long and distinguished political career and he held numerous positions, including Speaker of the House, Deputy Speaker and various shadow ministries.

I am also proud to be a member of the first fourth term Labor government in more than 65 years. The government's re-election is a testament to the leadership of the Premier, Peter Beattie, and the Deputy Premier, Anna Bligh, and this government's commitment to building a better future for all Queenslanders. We now have the lowest unemployment in a generation, the biggest infrastructure plan in our state's history and record spending on health, community services and education. We are investing in our children's future through the introduction of the prep year in our schools.

We often hear these statements, but what do they really mean? They mean real job opportunities for our young people, securing reliable water supply through our statewide water grid, better public hospitals with more doctors, nurses and allied health workers, and building schools which provide our children with the skills and abilities they need for their future. The strong result at the election locally clearly shows that the people of Ashgrove believe this government is best positioned to deliver in these key areas.

As outlined by Her Excellency yesterday, there are significant challenges for all of us in the years ahead. We have record population growth which has placed enormous strain on our public infrastructure. We are currently experiencing the worst drought on record. We have a federal government that continues to divert funding away from key public service areas such as education, health, housing and disability services. The Howard government has also introduced industrial relations laws which directly attack the Australian values of fairness and equity in our community, destabilising working families. These are tough issues and I know that the electors of Ashgrove care deeply about how this government will tackle these challenges.

We have a tough road ahead but, most importantly, we have a plan for the future. We understand that in this climate, now more than ever, we need visionary leadership and strong government. During the next four years we will increase training places by 14,000 under the new $1 billion Skills Plan. This government spends more on research and development than any other state. We are also leading the way on biotechnology and aviation. I am a strong believer in investing in emerging industries because they create the jobs of the future.

A former member for Ashgrove, Alan Sherlock, when making his first speech in 1987 highlighted the problem of unemployment in the local area, which had climbed as high as 20 per cent among our young people. Today under our government the unemployment rate in Ashgrove is around three per cent. We will ensure that through our prudent economic management we continue to grow Australia's strongest economy, that we maintain our AAA credit rating and retain our reputation as the low-tax state. We are planning for growth with the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan, which is about not only delivering a strategic framework for future development but also protecting our green spaces such as Brisbane Forest Park and the quality of life we currently enjoy. I represent one of the greenest and leafiest suburbs in Brisbane, and I am committed to ensuring it stays that way.

Growing up in the area, I worked for one of the largest local family businesses—The Gap Family Markets. This family business is a real showcase of how well small business is doing in the current strong economic environment we have in Queensland. It is now called Zone Fresh and has expanded to four stores across Brisbane, employing more than 180 people. I want to take this moment to thank the owners, Sam Mangano and Darren Roose, for providing me with that opportunity and for supporting me during my university studies.

Spending on education and training is the most important investment a government can make to build a better future for our state. The significant investment by this government in The Gap State High School and my old school Kelvin Grove State High—and one of my former teachers is in the gallery today—has made a profound difference to the quality of education provided. Just look at the enrolment figures at The Gap State High School. Eight years ago there were around 660 students. The school is now projecting that there will be more than 900 next year, with 200 enrollees already signed up to start year 8 in 2007. Our local state primary schools have also benefited from the priority our government has given to education. The Gap State School now boasts a new world-class, multipurpose arts centre for students to develop skills in this key learning area. Hilder Road State School was one of the first schools to start the prep year trial in 2004 and has been used to train teachers from throughout Queensland. The principal, Josephine Bottrell, has been instrumental in leading facilitators to train administration teams and staff so that they can implement the early year curriculum guidelines across Queensland from 2007.

While the electorate of Ashgrove does not have a physical hub such as a major retail centre, one thing which I see evidence of every day is our strong sense of community. There is compassion and a deep commitment to social justice and equality. These values are ones that I share and will stand up for as the local member. Unmet need in areas such as mental health and disability services is a problem that crosses all socioeconomic barriers. Historically in Queensland, these social services were neglected by successive conservative governments and we have seen the same disregard by the conservatives in Canberra. I know that my government has a strong record in this area—more than doubling funding directed to disability services to improve care and provide respite to families. However, there is still so much need in our community and governments at all levels must work harder to support those families who are struggling to care for people with disabilities and mental health issues.

This strong belief in fairness and equity in my community is why so many people have approached me in the past six months about their concerns regarding the Howard government's industrial relations laws. Basic entitlements such as meal breaks, overtime, sick leave and a fair and valid explanation for being sacked from your job are under threat. As always, when legislation is intrinsically unfair, it is the poorest people in our community who are the most vulnerable. Last week one

young man called at my office. He is an ex-student of The Gap State High School and is now in his second year of university. He has also just secured a job with a major Australian telecommunications company. He called me because he was concerned about the conditions in the AWA that he was forced to sign if he wanted the job. Such a fear is not confined to young people entering the job market. Many parents I met during the campaign—baby boomers in the main—are deeply concerned about the future employment conditions for their children. With the prevalence of casual and insecure working arrangements, parents are worried that many of their adult children will never be able to secure a loan to buy their first home. This is a real and justified concern and one that I share.

The erosion of security and fairness in the workplace are threats to our quality of life. Many families are already struggling to balance work and family. While I strongly support flexibility in the workplace, this should not be at the cost of basic rights. Surely no-one in public office wants to be responsible for passing on worse working conditions to future generations than those they inherited. I strongly support my government's fight to repeal the federal industrial relations changes and protect Queensland workers.

Finally, I would like to concentrate on an issue that affects all of us: protecting our environment. I am very fortunate that in my local community there are many active environmental groups, including SOWN—Save our Waterways Now—which has more than 100 members and is helping to protect and rejuvenate over 23 kilometres of local creeks. There is a growing awareness in the community that our daily behaviour and consumption is having a direct and lasting impact on our planet through climate change.

Parents have written to me genuinely concerned about the future of their children. I believe that this growing alarm and public discourse creates a unique opportunity for government to lead the way in addressing these challenges. The Beattie government has already made a significant contribution by banning broadscale land clearing. This was not a popular decision in many parts of the state but it was the right thing to do. Over the next 20 years we need to continue to make the tough decisions about the kind of society we want to live in and the legacy we want to leave. The state government has an important leadership role to play in addressing key environmental issues such as reducing carbon dioxide emissions as I do not believe that the Howard government will do this.

If we are smart about investing in sustainable, renewable and affordable locally managed energy sources, it is my strong belief that Queensland will be able to harness new economic benefits and employment opportunities while making our state a healthier and better place in which to live. Just laying more bitumen for private passenger vehicle use is not the answer. We need to continue our strong investment in public transport.

I, like all the other new members of the 52nd Parliament, am deeply humbled and honoured by the responsibility I now have to make a difference to our community. But most of all, I am struck by the great sense of opportunity we have to contribute to decision making that will shape the future of our state. As the Leader of the House, the member for Rockhampton, told me, 'You will be a successful politician if you continue to remember where you came from.' Politics above all else is about people, and our side of politics believes that everyone should be given enough support so that no matter where they come from they should have every opportunity to achieve in life. This belief is why I first became involved in politics. It will be what I strive for every day I have the privilege of being a member of the Queensland parliament representing the people of Ashgrove.

I would like to conclude by thanking those closest to me, especially my mother who taught me these values and who made huge sacrifices in her life to give me the opportunities that she, as a young woman, never had. I thank my grandparents, Tony and Marie Harrison, whose work ethic and Catholic values taught me a keen sense of what is right and wrong and that no matter how much or little you have it is always important to stand up for those less fortunate than yourself. I thank my father, all my brothers, and Kerry and Jan for their support.

I would like to thank everyone who helped on the campaign team, especially John Battams, Paula Ridler, Terry Evans, Aileen and Henry Quayle, Bob Hill, Donna O'Donohue, Mike Smith, Rob McMurdo and John Hine. I must make special mention of the Bevis family who have for five generations in Australian history supported working people and Labor governments. I owe a great debt to Shane Bevis. I thank my loving partner, Paul, who, as Aunty Es would say, keeps me grounded. On that note I would like to thank everybody in Robert Schwarten's office. I start in this new job as the youngest member the Ashgrove electorate has had but I am confident that the experience and knowledge that I gained in that office will be invaluable.

I realise that I have been afforded a unique opportunity. The electors of Ashgrove have placed their faith in me, for which I am deeply honoured. I care about the community I grew up in and I will work hard to serve their interests and repay the faith that they have placed in me.

Mr BOMBOLAS (Chatsworth—ALP) (2.47 pm): It is with great pleasure that I second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, moved by my esteemed colleague the member for Ashgrove. I congratulate Kate initially on her election and subsequently on her first speech, which she has just delivered with plenty of passion before us all here in the 52nd Parliament.

After spending a quarter of a century in the media, with almost 21 of those years in sport at Channel 9 Brisbane, I appreciate what teamwork is all about. That is why early on in my maiden address to parliament I would like to pay tribute to those who were part of 'Team Bombolas'—a subbranch of 'Team Beattie'—on 9 September 2006. It is no secret that their blood, sweat and tears were the backbone of my success on election day. To all the troops who played a part, big or small, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. From branch members at Carina-Carindale and Tingalpa-Belmont, to the campaign committee, to the enthusiastic volunteers who handed out how-to-vote cards, to the office workers, to those who offered advice and encouragement, to those who made sandwiches and to the passionate personnel who staffed street mobiles displaying the 'Bomber' brand, I am truly indebted to their loyalty and dedication.

Of course, there are a number of people who I would like to acknowledge personally. To my campaign organiser, Daniel Pollard, thanks mate. He took leave from his full-time job and young family to help get a rookie across the line, working long hours through illness and often sacrificing family time. To Sharon Humphries, your commitment was total and you, too, worked tirelessly. To my campaign director, Peter Lovegrove, thanks for keeping the team together, especially during tense times. Peter was another who gave up family time and worked feverishly for the cause.

Special mention must go to a close friend of mine, Bernie Courtney. From the times we spent playing test match cricket in the Courtneys' backyard at Wynnum, to the games of league at the vacant block next to the local clinic, to our touch footy days for 'Ubiquity', to our academic pursuits at the Queensland Institute of Technology—of course, now QUT—through births, deaths and marriages, Bernie and his wife, Gina, have been there for me. Thanks to both of them. When I asked Bernie to help out in the office during the election campaign, he did what most great mates do: he rolled up his sleeves and jumped on board. Another person who was quick to volunteer and did a great job was Wayne Holmes. He and his mother, Eunice, have red and white eyes—not Swans' or Dragons' colours, but the Labor Party's colours. They, like many others, are the heart and soul of the ALP, and I am blessed to have them in Chatsworth.

My journey into politics has just begun. As a 'newbie' I have been fortunate to be surrounded and guided by people who have become not just colleagues but also dear friends. Firstly, to the member for Mansfield, Phil Reeves: thanks for all your help and support. I reckon I have burdened Phil with more questions than have been asked during question time in 51 previous parliaments. To the member for Mount Gravatt, Judy Spence, and the member for Rockhampton, Rob Schwarten: thank you for your words of encouragement and advice. That coffee on our back deck has changed my life forever.

To the Premier and member for Brisbane Central, Peter Beattie: thanks for having the belief in me and acting on the early media rumours, which ironically turned out to be correct, that I was in fact leaving Channel 9. To the Deputy Premier and member for South Brisbane, Anna Bligh: you, too, have become a wonderful ally, and I look forward to working with you for at least the next three years. By the way, your son Joe was an invaluable asset during our campaign in Chatsworth, even though he easily upstaged me by doorknocking twice as fast as yours truly. To Joe, thanks mate. The carton I promised you should I win is on its way.

To the member for Bulimba, Pat Purcell: thank you for your unquestioned support. Pat and I literally spilt blood for the cause—one day sacrificing some doorknocking time to give blood at the Red Cross mobile office which was parked at the Belmont Shopping Village. I think it might have just been an excuse by Pat to get out of doorknocking! In neighbouring electorates, Pat and I not only share boundaries but also a passion for this great state. Although, Pat, I still have not yet got any jars of that world renowned relish of yours in my office!

Another electoral neighbour who has extended the hand of friendship is Lytton's Paul Lucas. And with you being the Minister for Transport, Paul, I am sure we will be spending plenty of time working on roads, bridges and other vital infrastructure needed here in Queensland. To Michael Choi, the member for Capalaba: your help, especially with the Asian community, is much appreciated.

From a party perspective, big thanks go to the ALP in Queensland, especially state secretary Milton Dick. From day 1, Milton and his team were right behind me. To my party organiser, Chris Forrester: your sacrifice, support, encouragement, advice and dry humour have been and will continue to be invaluable. To the federal member for Griffith, Kevin Rudd: I am indebted to you for not only the support and advice you have given and hopefully will continue to provide but also the election day deeds when you stood beside me in the trenches at Belmont State School greeting voters as they headed toward the ballot boxes.

And while bouquets are being handed out, a huge vote of thanks must go to two Chatsworth icons: Clem Jones and Terry Mackenroth. As a former Lord Mayor of Brisbane and a huge supporter of the area, Clem Jones is a wonderful ally—never afraid to speak his mind, ready to offer advice and a champion for our community. These are qualities which can be attributed to Terry Mackenroth as well. But Terry also made himself available for a spot on my campaign committee, introduced to me many local sporting and community groups and took me under his wing, without pressure or prejudice. For almost three decades—or 27 years and eight months, as Terry once subtly reminded me—the former

deputy premier represented Chatsworth doggedly and fought hard for the area. There is no way I or anybody can fill Terry's shoes, for he has set a high standard to follow, but my aim is to give that crossbar a real nudge.

Though this is a very special day when I pledge to serve the people of Queensland, it is tinged with a touch of sadness. I must announce the end of commercial associations which brought me to this point in my life. To my previous employer, the Nine Network: thanks for a fabulous ride. And I would like to wish Lee Anderson and my former colleagues all the best in the future. To Terri Zupp and the Zupps Group of Companies: you guys have been fantastic supporters of mine and it has been a pleasure to be associated with your company. To Peter Brewer and the Professionals Real Estate Group: your support for the National Breast Cancer Foundation is outstanding, and I am proud to have helped you guys along the way. To Don Jackson from Castlemaine Perkins, makers of that great Queensland icon Fourex: thanks a million and I hope you guys to continue to back sport here in the Sunshine State. The Bank of Queensland, especially Elsewerth Ephraums and his team at the Private Bank, and Daryl Agnew and the crew at PPS Hairwear have also been generous towards the many good causes such as Surf Life Saving Queensland, the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Diabetes Queensland and Kim Walters Choices, which I have helped raise much-needed funds for.

Now to my new career and passion for representing the people of Chatsworth. It is indeed a privilege and an honour to have been chosen as the representative of the area and to take a seat in the 52nd Parliament of Queensland. It is a position of responsibility and trust, and I vow to respect the power and opportunity which I have been afforded. My promise, and indeed my duty now, is to give Chatsworth a strong voice in government.

While I have lived in Carina for only six years, I am a 'southside boy' through and through. During my early years, the family lived at Cannon Hill before moving to Carindale when I was a teenager. From there I never really ventured too far—stints at Capalaba and Eight Mile Plains before settling in Carina. It is an area well and truly worth fighting for and a place where I feel safe in bringing up a young family.

Speaking of my family, if I may I indulge, I would love to give the House a brief history of the Bombolas family. Mum and Dad came to Australia in the 1950s as young migrant workers looking for better opportunities and a new life, as many others had done before and have since done. Perhaps that is why the Labor ideology has always appealed to me. My father was born in a tiny village in Greece; Mum was born not far from Hamburg in Germany. They met in a migrant hostel in Scone in the Hunter Valley, fell in love and got married. Soon after, they owned a milk bar in Newcastle, where I and later my brother, Jim, were born. Both a little homesick, my parents decided to move the whole family to Greece in the mid sixties. After 12 months of doing it tough there, they opted to give Germany a go. Again, life was not easy and decent employment was difficult to find. So it was back to the land of opportunity, where ultimately they settled in Brisbane in 1970. We lived in Cannon Hill, where I attended Cannon Hill State School and played Rugby League for the Cannon Hill Stars.

From there, we moved to Carindale, where Dad still lives in his two-storey brick castle today. Unfortunately, Mum passed away in July last year after a brave battle with cancer, but I know that she is looking down on me today making sure that my tie is straight, that my hair is right and that I do not forget anybody in my speech, because that is what she used to do when I worked in the media. I thank Con and Gisela for the boundless love, the support, the guidance, the strong Christian upbringing and the morals they instilled. They were big on family values and, despite a rapidly changing world, we are doing our best to carry on that tradition. My folks were small business people. They owned a snack bar, a fruit shop and a place called Balmoral Seafoods—a fish and chip shop across the road from the old Balmoral Hotel—and they treated their employees with respect. I joined the Labor Party because it is the only party that can be relied upon to ensure that working people get fair and safe workplaces and conditions to earn a living.

In an electorate with a broad range of socioeconomic groups and people of many different ethnic backgrounds, I will battle hard for the young and the old and all those in between. In fact, whoever needs a hand I pledge to do my best to help. I want to encourage and assist people in the pursuit of their dreams. Nurturing ambition is a must. The strong economy and record low unemployment under the Beattie government make up the ideal environment in which people can strive to do better for themselves and their families. The run-off from this type of success is immense.

We want our slice of it in Chatsworth, so I will be doing my best to ensure that the state government continues to provide a positive environment. On that note, I promise to work hard with ministers, government contractors and locals to ensure that projects in the area go as smoothly as possible. I will be keeping a close eye on the Gateway duplication, the Gateway upgrade, the proposed busway, transport issues, future developments in the area, the building of police and ambulance stations in the electorate, the maintenance of bushland and green space areas, funding for local schools, public housing, care for the elderly or any other issue, be it positive or prickly, which affects my constituents.

To the schools, P&Cs, community groups, businesses, large or small, sporting groups and clubs, churches, let us all work together. If the power of one is great, then the power of many is far greater. In the lead-up to the election the Beattie team made many promises. Now it is time to deliver, especially on the water and health fronts. As elected MPs, it is our civic duty to serve the people of Queensland and as a member of the Beattie government it is my role to ensure that we deliver. A revamped and overhauled health system is a must, and already there are signs our $9.7 billion, five-year Health Action Plan is being put in place. Unfortunately, there are no miracle cures here, so change is not going to happen overnight but it is underway.

However, for at least one family in my area, a miracle is needed. Many of you may recall the horrible motor vehicle accident on the corner of Old Cleveland Road and Creek Road on Tuesday, 4 July 2006. Apprentice builder Matthew Zemek was travelling home from work that afternoon when he was involved in a collision with a bus. The 21-year-old sustained multiple fractures and severe and extensive brain injury. Instead of celebrating the end of TAFE and the beginning of his carpentry career, Matthew was in the neurological ward of the Princess Alexandra Hospital constantly fighting for his life. Matthew's parents are concerned about their son's posthospital treatment and so am I. This is an incredibly stressful period for the Zemek family, and we as members of parliament owe it to young people like Matt, who require supported accommodation, to make sure that appropriate community facilities are available to them.

My other personal crusade will be in the fight against childhood obesity. For one who has struggled with his weight for most of his life, I know just how hard the battle of the bulge is. I can certainly tell you that it is not over in my case. My goal is to encourage kids, with the help of their parents, to eat sensibly and to become more active, whether it is through school programs, sporting clubs or community activities. I would like to see our children give up some computer time or TV time and spend it being more active. Perhaps we could revisit the days of backyard test matches, where kids pretended to be Rugby League legends like Wally Lewis or Darren Lockyer, or cricket heroes like Matt Hayden or Glenn McGrath. In this regard it is not about winning or losing, it is about taking part, about being active and living healthier, thus avoiding medical complications like diabetes and heart problems down the track.

Our kids are our future. They are the most precious commodities we have, so we need to look after them in as many ways as possible. Finally, to my fiance, who is in the gallery this afternoon with my son Mitchell, thank you for walking through my sliding door and not running off into the sunset. You have been in my life for just on four wonderful years, and I have every intention of seeing out our unofficial contract of 50 years. Thanks for toughing it out in those early days. Thanks for constantly being there for me, and thanks for understanding, especially during the demanding times like a seemingly endless election campaign. Marney, you are my rock, and my three children are my lucky charms. To the kids, Anna, Kosta and recent addition Mitchell, who is the one making the noise upstairs, you mean the world to me and I love you all. To Anna and Kosta, both of whom attend Mansfield High, thanks for your help especially during the election campaign. During my time at Nine, you guys had to share dad with the Broncos, the Lions, the Bulls, Queensland Roar, the Firebirds and many other sporting teams and events. Now it is just 30,000 constituents in Chatsworth. Also thanks—I think—for being typical teenagers and keeping Marney and I in touch with the real young person's world.

Lastly, with your permission, Mr Speaker, can I express to the House and the 88 other members in this time-honoured and tradition-laden chamber that I am proud to be just the fifth member elected to the seat of Chatsworth, which was created in 1959 and includes the eastern suburbs of Carina, Carindale, Carina Heights, Belmont, Camp Hill, Capalaba West, Chandler, Tingalpa, Manly West, Gumdale, Ransome and Wakerley. To the 30,000-plus residents in my electorate, let us work together to get the best deal for our area. I do not know how long I will be an elected member—three years minimum, I guess, because that is out of my hands. But as in the election campaign I make no outrageous promises; just a pledge to work and fight hard for Chatsworth in and out of parliament. I truly believe I can make a difference. That is why I am here today. I love this great state of ours and the area I represent. My duty and goal is to make sure both of them get even better.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.06 pm): I feel quite privileged this afternoon to rise to speak after what I consider to be two very good rising stars in the Labor Party—Chris Bombolas, the new member for Chatsworth, and the new member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, whom I am sitting next to, who tells me that she is an avid speech writer. Unfortunately, I think that she will be of more use to me than I am to her. I certainly want to wish both Chris and Kate all the very best. As I said, it is a great privilege to speak after them.

I am absolutely delighted to be once again elected to represent the electorate of Pumicestone. This is my third term and, although there were certainly some issues in the lead-up to my third term, the majority of people in the electorate of Pumicestone believe that the Beattie Labor government was certainly more credible and could better resolve the issues.

I had enormous support also from my family, staff, the ALP, both in Brisbane and the local branch, people from the community and also people who kept calling my office with offers of assistance. I did not get too many favours from the local press. In fact, I had people writing to the papers trying to defend me,

but as I said to them I was quite capable of defending myself. I gave just as much as they did. I was certainly able to get out all of my positive messages by way of direct mail. A lot of coloured brochures and flyers went out, and a lot of good old-fashioned doorknocking occurred. To save money, a lot of my volunteers also letterboxed and they had very sore feet.

Figures from the 2006 state election show that I improved my primary vote marginally by 2.4 per cent. In fact, with only three candidates on the ballot paper, I received over 50 per cent of the primary vote. The Labor vote was 55.42 compared with the Liberals on 44.58. The Liberals continue to run unsuitable candidates. But if, in the lead-up to the next election, the Liberals selected a more formidable opponent, then I would certainly have a fight on my hands to retain the seat for a fourth term for the Labor Party.

I must thank those who supported me in this election. I will not let them down. I will continue to work just as hard during the next three years. I did manage to celebrate the win with my friends and family at a mate's home on the night of the election, but I went back to work—just as Peter Beattie told me to—the next day. I had two meetings booked in on the Sunday, and people were very grateful to see that I was still there and that I was still interested in attending functions in the community. We did not miss a beat in the office, and while I gave some R & R to my staff, who had put in extra hours, I have not had a night or a weekend off as yet. I am hoping to take a short break over Christmas and the new year and then start afresh in 2007.

I must add my congratulations to all members who returned. In my area I am particularly pleased to see the return of Carolyn Male, Linda Lavarch, Ken Hayward and Dean Wells, and I acknowledge them in the chamber this afternoon. We all work very well together and have managed to agree on many projects that have benefited all of our communities.

This year many cabinet ministers also took the time to visit Pumicestone. In the lead-up to the election some made commitments, and I will be making sure those commitments are met in my third term. Probably the biggest commitments were a 24-hour police station for Bribie Island, which has been lobbied for in earnest for some time by the Bribie Island Chamber of Commerce since Mrs Anne Kinchela took over as president, the Neighbourhood Watch groups and permanent residents on Bribie Island and some individuals.

My heartfelt thanks go to the Hon. Judy Spence, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, and her staff for working through this issue of great importance to the community. Of course the minister did not stop there. She was also instrumental in assisting Carolyn Male and me in getting our very own police district headquarters, which are soon to be finalised.

Mr Johnson: You want to thank us for that!

Mrs SULLIVAN: Some on the other side may try to take credit for it, but I have to say that it was our initiative. The sad point is that all the way through the election campaign the Liberals tried to jump on every single bandwagon—and they are still doing it. Under the minister's good leadership, Carolyn Male and I also managed to obtain more police and resources for Caboolture, Morayfield and Beachmere.

The other commitment for a six-month trial for more bus services in Beachmere made by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Paul Lucas—and I acknowledge him here in the chamber today—was very welcome. I have begun the process, with talks to commence with TransLink on 16 October to help develop this proposal, and we are confident that extra services will be up and running by the Christmas holidays.

While the minister is in the chamber, I would also like to thank him most sincerely for the amount of effort and money that he has put into Pumicestone. The second stage of the Caboolture northern bypass has started. This project was put on the backburner by successive governments for over 20 years. Somewhere in the vicinity of $65 million is being spent, and it will make a huge difference to those people who live on Lower King Street, which is the main street of Caboolture.

We will also see some big improvements in the Caboolture-Bribie Island Road, with $170 million proposed to four-lane the Bribie Island Road from the interchange at McDonald's on Lear Jet Drive right up to and including the very dangerous spot near the 24-hour service station on the Bribie Island Road. So I thank the minister. I have appreciated what he has done in the past and I very much look forward to more projects and more money in the next three years.

I would like to compliment the minister for education, the Hon. Rod Welford, for his fast-tracking of the replacement of asbestos roofs in schools program. There is only one school left in the entire electorate of Pumicestone that has asbestos roofs, and that school will be done this year. The Labor government is the only state government that has tackled asbestos roofs in schools. When the Liberals were in power in the mid-nineties and while Bob Quinn was the education minister, he said in this House that it is safe while it is maintained. The Liberals did not care about the asbestos and were quite prepared to leave it there, exposed to the weather and potentially putting children at risk.

I am very proud of the changes and improvements that we as a government have made in schools and the education system as a whole. As a former school teacher, I take great interest in schools and visit them regularly—often for a chat to see if I can help. I have been the honorary president

of a local drug prevention program which has been successfully implemented in primary schools for over 11 years, and it was very gratifying on election day to be actually recognised by students who visited the polling booths with their families.

Each year, I invite the student leaders from schools in the electorate to visit parliament to see how it works. They are also given a tour and lunch, and my husband is often given the task of helping with the barbecue. I hope that he still has time to help me out because, for those members who do not know, my husband Jon has just been selected as the Labor candidate for the federal seat of Longman. Yes, I know that he would have everybody's full support in this chamber! I know they all wish him well, just as I do.

Mr Springborg: Was it a legitimate preselection?

Mrs SULLIVAN: As legitimate as you well ever know. Jon and I have made political history. We are the only married couple who have both won three consecutive elections at a state level, and I have followed Jon's footsteps to become the Chair of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. I am certainly looking forward to that challenge. It was Labor of course who set up this committee, and I am certainly very proud to chair it. I have big shoes to fill, but I certainly think I am up to that challenge. During the election campaign, Jon and I missed out on celebrating our 26th wedding anniversary, we missed out on my birthday and we missed out on Father's Day. However, we did catch up on the night after the election and celebrated all four events with a quiet family dinner at the Bribie Island Bowls Club.

I certainly hope to continue to work hard for the electorate. Providing my health stays well and providing the party endorse me, I will contest the next election for Labor. Queensland is looking at a redistribution of seats, and Pumicestone may well have brand-new boundaries. But, whatever happens, those constituents who fall within the boundary will have my full representation and I will do as much as possible to help those who have genuine concerns and problems.

Over the years, I have built up a network of contacts, and that is the great thing about being re-elected: it is that continuity that is so important. New members of parliament do take some time to find their feet, make some contacts and gain knowledge. I guess I was luckier than most in that my husband was a local MP before me and he certainly taught me a lot about the job. So, when I was elected in 2001, I was actually able to slip into the role quite comfortably and start from day 1.

Again, I would like to thank the community for their faith in me and the Labor party to govern this great state of Queensland. With our weather, the State of Origin win and the Broncos now the 2006 NRL premiers, who would live anywhere else?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Gympie, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the honourable member for Gympie.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (3.15 pm): Firstly, Mr Speaker, let me offer my goodwill and congratulations to you on your election to this high office. You enjoy our goodwill, and I am confident that you will earn our respect as you conduct your duties with independence, neutrality, fairness and good humour.

I acknowledge the presence of my wife and children in the gallery today. I thank them for so many things that cannot be counted. I would like my sons and my daughter to know how very proud I am of them, and I pray I will be a good example to them as I serve in this parliament. My parents are also here today. I am the eldest child of deaf parents. I know firsthand what it is like to be a part of the disadvantaged in our society. My parents made many sacrifices for my sister and me when we were young. For me, sign language was my first language. Spoken English came later in life through my grandparents. Unfortunately, I am no longer as good as I should be with signing, so I will pass the task of interpreting my speech to a professional interpreter.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr GIBSON: My parents were Labor supporters. Indeed, I think this recent election was the first time that my father has voted for a non-Labor candidate. I mention this only to position myself politically. Fewer than 12 months ago, I had never been a member of any political party when I saw an ad in the *Gympie Times* calling for community minded individuals to stand up and represent the people of Gympie. Imagine that! A political party that was willing to advertise to find the best person to do the job.

Before I joined the Nationals, I made some inquiries into what they stood for and I was impressed. Here was a party that is based on three principles: security, individual achievement and strong representation for local communities. I discovered the Nationals are committed to upholding family values and fighting for a better quality of service, opportunity and life for all people, and I quickly came to the conclusion that this was a party I could be proud to belong to.

When I was preselected, I was required to give up my career in the media. It was not a decision made lightly. We had many family discussions and I sought advice from trusted friends. It was a matter of prayer and quiet meditation for me. But, in the end, it was the support that my wife Alicia was willing to

provide for our family by taking the responsibility of becoming the sole income earner that helped me to make my final decision. It is through these experiences that you discover what true love means, and for that I am grateful that our marriage is for time and all eternity.

I must thank those who helped me in the campaign—for whilst I had a successful career in business, and prior to that the military, I was incredibly politically naive, and without their help I would not be here today. I wish to show gratitude to our zone vice-president, Teresa Cobb, who gently guided me in the right direction; our electorate council chair, Guy Burnett, who provided wise advice and a trusted ear; my Liberal friend, Michael Kucera, whose energy and drive was boundless during the campaign; and all the members of the National Party branches who put so much into the campaign, including a concern for my dietary habits.

I must also thank my friends, who do not have any political desires but who offered to help, as well as the members of the public who walked in off the street and asked what they could do to wipe the smile off Beattie's face. It was that broad support that resulted in our election victory in Gympie. It was a brave decision by the people of Gympie to put their trust in someone as relatively unknown as me. I am honoured by the confidence they had in me and I will not forget the responsibility I have to all the people of the electorate.

I am the 18th person to represent the seat of Gympie since it was formed in 1873. Gympie has given our state many great men. Andrew Fisher was both the state and federal member representing the people of Gympie and was, of course, the first Labor Primer Minister. Jacob Stumm and Tom Dunstan were also Gympie men who sat in this very Assembly. They were also associated with the *Gympie Times,* as I was. In my case I served as the general manager for two years before stepping down to campaign. Interestingly though, Jacob Stumm had the luxury of retaining his position as editor whilst he was the local member from 1896 to 1899. I am sure there was never a bad story about him.

These newspaper men brought to this House a good understanding of the local issues and a healthy dose of common sense. I would like to reflect on a comment Jacob Stumm made in this very chamber in 1897. He said, 'When party obligations come into conflict with pledges to constituents they must give way to the constituents.' It was good advice nearly 110 years ago and I intend to follow this advice today. We saw in the last parliament what Labor did to the former member for Noosa when she put her constituents before the Labor Party. Thankfully, the National Party is far more enlightened and has a policy of 'electorate first'. In effect, if an issue is important enough locally, I am free to vote with my community instead of along party lines. I doubt I will ever need to use this, but I want the people of Gympie to know that I will fight for their interests. In the end I must return to live with them and I will do that with my head held high.

There would have been few times in the history of this parliament when a new member, rising to make his maiden speech, could not have been confronted more with a sense of urgency and a need to bring about change. Of course, I speak of the water crisis we face in south-east Queensland and in particular the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. Media reports recently indicated that Brisbane could be facing level 4 water restrictions in as little as two weeks. Based on current demand and rainfall predictions, Brisbane will run out of water in 2008 if we do not do something. The proposed dam at Traveston Crossing has been put forward as a solution to this crisis. However, the reality is that it will not secure the future water supplies for south-east Queensland. The proposed dam will not be constructed until 2012. Assuming it takes two years to fill, it will not provide any water until 2014—six years after Brisbane has run out of water.

In April this year the Premier flew over the Mary Valley, landed at Gympie Airport and, like some water messiah, announced to the people of south-east Queensland that Traveston Crossing was to be the site of a 'megadam', which would solve our water problems. The south-east Queensland dam options report was used to justify the decision, quoting a capital cost per megalitre of yield of only $4,600, making it the most cost effective of all the options considered. However, less than two months later the official government cost estimate had risen to $1.7 billion and the yield had dropped to only 70,000 megalitres, increasing the capital cost per megalitre from $4,600 to $24,300, making it the most expensive option considered. The estimated cost is now between $2 billion and $2.5 billion and the capital cost per megalitre has once again blown out to between $28,600 and $35,700 per megalitre. If this dam goes ahead it will become a financial millstone around the neck of every Queenslander, resulting in higher taxes to service the debt. Is it this government's intention to burden future generations of Queenslanders with this debt?

I appreciate that at times there are unintended consequences to the decisions that are made. The original GHD desktop report identified the Traveston Crossing site as the best location from a hydrological perspective. However, it has serious flaws from a geological perspective. Geologists advise that the proposed dam site is an ancient subduction zone which is the junction of two tectonic plates, the easternmost of which has dived under the stationary western plate forming a trough which is the Mary River bed. This is an area which geologists refer to as a chaotic geologically complex environment known in geological terms as a classical melange setting. Melange means a motley assortment of things and in this case it means a collection of rocks, shale, slush and gravel, all of which has to be sealed

somehow. This is why the test drilling has not revealed suitable bedrock. It is extremely difficult in engineering terms to build a safe dam on a subduction zone. I am not aware of any other government in Australia that has been foolish enough to try due to the risk and high cost.

There are also further areas to consider in terms of the impact of this proposed dam: the devastating social impact on families and communities and the loss of extensive areas of valuable and irreplaceable agricultural land. Indeed, up to 12 per cent of Queensland's milk comes from the inundation area as well as beef and crops. Were this dam to go ahead we would see Queensland move from a water crisis to a food crisis in a matter of years. The ecological damage resulting from this dam will be nothing more than wanton environmental vandalism. I urge this government to heed the call made yesterday by the federal environment minister and rethink this dam, otherwise the Beattie Labor government will be remembered as the government that destroyed the Mary River, the Mary Valley and all of the life associated with her.

I am a pragmatist, however, and I realise that if we do not go ahead with the proposed dam at Traveston Crossing we will still need solutions to the water crisis that we face. As members of this parliament, we do not have the luxury of becoming nimbies, or 'not in my backyard' members. For this reason I am glad the Deputy Premier found time last week to undertake a secret visit to my electorate. I note that the meeting was so secretive that she dispensed with the courtesy of advising the local member's office that she was visiting the electorate. However, not withstanding this slight, I am glad that she made time to see the problems firsthand. I applaud elements of the water policy that this government announced during the election. It is comforting to know that, if the National Party offers a policy that is good for the state of Queensland, this government is prepared to pinch parts of it.

There are many alternatives that could provide more secure water supplies for south-east Queensland. Let me quickly discuss three. The first one involves a re-engineering of Borumba Dam. I have been told that if a new dam wall were built 300 metres in front of the existing dam wall and it were built to a maximum height and with two new saddle dams, Borumba could provide up to a two million megalitre storage capacity. That is twice the size of the Wivenhoe Dam. Had this work been done as the National Party had committed to, a much larger dam would have been full in the year 2000. In fact, the data shows that a raised Borumba Dam would have been full for the last 40 years. Why? Borumba is a very deep storage with a relatively small surface area and is located in solid rock. So evaporation and leakage losses would be minimal. Indeed, it only takes 10 millimetres of rain in the Borumba catchment to create any run-off. By contrast, it takes 50 millimetres of continuous rain in the Wivenhoe catchment area to create any useful run-off.

The second alternative worthy of consideration is of course desalination. There are over 7,500 desalination plants in operation around the world, the largest being in Dubai which produces 232,000 megalitres per year using waste heat from a co-located power generating plant. Why do we not consider co-locating a major desalination plant with a new power station that we would need on the coast? What about one along the upper reaches of the Brisbane River which would treat the brackish salty water and then pump the desalinated water back into the Wivenhoe Dam? Surely this Smart State can embrace these alternatives.

No discussion of alternative solutions to the water crisis would be complete without acknowledging what the Premier referred to as the 'Armageddon solution' which, of course, is nothing more than the concept of water recycling. I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to drink recycled water with the Cooloola Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Mick Venardos, and the Greens candidate for Gympie, Mr Paul Marshall. The water was from Singapore and in my opinion had no taste to it at all. It was incredibly bland. If I were given a choice it would not be my first preference and it fails to compare to a glass of rainwater any day of the week.

I know that there has been a lack of political courage on the recycling issue from those on both sides of this House. However, we do not need to wait for a referendum on water recycling. At a fraction of the proposed cost of Traveston Crossing Dam we could implement water recycling today as part of a source substitution scheme. This is where additional water is extracted from the river systems and replaced with highly treated recycled water. The net impact on the environmental flows is zero and the public is not required to drink bland, recycled water.

As an example, the Brisbane River at Mount Crosby has a system yield of 379,000 megalitres and an allocation of 286,000 megalitres. The balance of approximately 100,000 megalitres is reserved for environmental flows. If 50 per cent of that flow were harvested for the drinking water supply and replaced with highly treated recycled water, this would effectively provide an additional water source of 50,000 megalitres per annum for Brisbane. This represents only a fraction of the total system river flows in the Brisbane River which are over a million megalitres per annum. So when we compare this to the cost and the yield figure of just 70,000 megalitres for Traveston Crossing, we see that it becomes a very attractive alternative.

From listening to me today, members may think that water is the only issue affecting the people who live in the Gympie electorate. This is far from the case. On 9 September the electors in Gympie recognised the real source of their difficulties and voted against a government which has presided over the mismanagement of and decline in services in our region. Let me touch on a few of them.

Just last week the RACQ identified the Bruce Highway around Gympie as being worthy of only a two-star rating—the worst in Queensland. That is nothing new to this government. Previous reports identified that section of the Bruce Highway as the most deadly stretch of highway in Queensland. We have funding provided under the AusLink program from the federal government; however, the state Labor government has shown that it is unable to get on with the job. No-one doubts that we need a bypass. However, the uncertainty that the delays have created for the residents in the study area is unacceptable. We need leadership from this government, not buck-passing.

Health is another issue that many in my electorate are concerned about. We heard the recent announcement that we will lose our Gympie health district—a health district that has to be one of the most efficient in Queensland. This is a path we have already been down with the Goss government and which was, without doubt, one of the most negative things to happen to our health service. I fear that history will repeat itself.

Another area of concern relates to our schools. Were it not for the commitment of teachers, support staff and parents, the situation would be dire. I specifically refer to Gympie Special School. It caters for the most vulnerable students in our community and yet it does not even meet the basic standards for a special school. The school relies on the outstanding efforts of the P&C members to fill the gaps. People like Janet Jarrem work tirelessly to provide basic items for students—items that Education Queensland would not provide such as a covered eating area for the children and a wheelchair accessible playground. The services that we enjoy in Gympie are not always as a result of good government but rather as a result of a strong sense of community and the dedication of staff.

I feel a strong sense of responsibility to the people of Gympie, representing them as I now do as their member. The people of Gympie put their trust in me because I love Gympie. I love the lifestyle it offers. I love the environment. I wish to preserve it for future generations. I see it as my task in this place to work for and with the community to repay their faith in me through my commitment to them. In doing that, I intend to be governed by the examples and philosophies that I have referred to in this speech, particularly with honour and a special regard for those people needing assistance.

Those of us who have made the pilgrimage to parliament share many common ideals and make significant sacrifices. In the main, we are committed to the institution of parliamentary democracy. We also have our own visions for a better future for our state and the wellbeing of our fellow Queenslanders. Those visions vary, as do our philosophies and the policies we would pursue to achieve them. It is my aim to work with all colleagues in this House, regardless of where they sit, to achieve the very best for Gympie and for Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech. He should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (3.35 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to that position. Would you convey on my behalf my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to that high and respected office. Inasmuch as all of us here are conscious of the expectations of members of parliament in the community, the Speaker is particularly burdened with the responsibility of ensuring that the traditional impartiality and dignity of that office are preserved.

I would like to take this opportunity to pledge my loyalty to my constituents in the Hinchinbrook electorate, to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to her representative in this great state of Queensland, Her Excellency the Governor. The Australian Federation has been served very well indeed by the Westminster system and our constitutional monarchy. Our current constitutional arrangements have served us well and I am a strong advocate for retaining these arrangements in the interests of good government.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to a number of people who have assisted me greatly on the journey that has led me to this place. There are many. In the first instance, I would like to thank my party colleagues, both in the organisation and in the parliament. They have all, at various times, supported, encouraged, lectured and counselled me. Time does not permit me to list them all.

The next group I must sincerely thank are those special people who make up the branches and committees of the Nationals in the Hinchinbrook electorate itself. These people are very dedicated supporters of the party and have helped me enormously during the recent election campaign. Again, there are many but time is against me.

One special man who poured his heart and soul into the campaign and who has been a wonderful support to me and a loyal and faithful member of the Nationals from the Hinchinbrook electorate is Ignazio La Spina, or Nat as his friends and peers call him. Those who know Nat understand the commitment he has to the party and the passion he has for Hinchinbrook. I would like to acknowledge his contribution and thank him sincerely for his support.

Another man to whom I must pay tribute but who requires no introduction to the longer serving members of this House is my predecessor and mentor, the former member for Hinchinbrook, Marc Rowell. I met Marc when I was still a high school student. But even at that time I was interested in

current and public affairs and took a keen interest in the 1998 Queensland state election. This was, of course, the election at which One Nation made its extraordinary electoral debut. It captured 11 seats in Queensland, including several in north Queensland.

However, it was a measure of the respect and the esteem in which the people of Hinchinbrook held Marc Rowell, as a fundamentally decent man and passionate advocate for his electorate, that even while every seat around him fell to One Nation the Nationals, through Marc, held Hinchinbrook. Indeed, Marc faced the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate on six separate occasions without being defeated, choosing, as we all know now, not to contest the most recent election. That Marc chose the time and manner in which he would leave the Queensland parliament is indicative of the measured and practical approach Marc had to public life. This was reflected in the tributes that were offered to him in this place during the final sitting of this House before the last election from both opposition and government members.

I have a challenge in front of me to provide the level of quality representation to the Hinchinbrook electorate that Marc Rowell did over 17 years. Having worked with Marc for a period of time, I hope I have taken on board some of the fundamentals that will provide me with a sound basis to continue that standard. To Marc and his wonderful wife, Sandy, I am thankful for your support and guidance. I wish you all the very best in the next chapter of your lives.

My friends and family have always been the foundation blocks of my life. We are, each of us, nothing without those who love and care for us and we in return can only live limited lives if we do not love and care for them. My friends and family are my harshest critics and my sources of inspiration. To my parents, Lloyd and Lorraine, who are here in the gallery today, I wish to tell them how thankful I am for the support and opportunities I have had throughout my life. In return, they have asked only for a commitment to do my best. My parents have worked tremendously hard to give me and my brother every chance to receive a first-class education and to open as many doors as possible for us and our future. They have made many sacrifices and I owe them a great debt. I hope I can repay their faith and support. To my brother Graham, my best mate, of whom I am so very proud for the things he has achieved in his life already, thank you for your support. I am a lucky person to have such wonderful friends and family. While those were very personal comments, they reflect a much wider reality in our community that the family plays an integral role in our lives as we grow and develop as young people and as we take on more burdens and responsibilities as adults. The importance of the family as the fundamental unit of a strong society should never be taken for granted. Public policy can affect families in a variety of ways, and we ought to be conscious of our decisions insofar as the welfare of the family is concerned.

At this point I wish to turn to the character of the electorate that I have the privilege to represent in this place—the electorate of Hinchinbrook. Truly, this is God's own country. The Hinchinbrook electorate runs from its southern boundary at the Black River just north of Townsville to its northern boundary just south of the township of Innisfail. Nestled between the Great Dividing Range and the Coral Sea, the Hinchinbrook electorate is diverse and dynamic. We are a part of Queensland with great potential and many opportunities. Our great primary industries continue to underpin the economy of the Hinchinbrook electorate. The sugar, banana, cattle, horticultural and fishing industries create wealth and employment for the families of thousands. I recognise this undeniable fact and I have no hesitation in saying that I stand at the ready to defend them and to support them against any government or other organisation that would undermine their operations—that would try to take away their property rights which they have acquired in good faith, their right to farm, their right to fish and their right to provide for their families.

However, the economic base of the Hinchinbrook electorate is more diverse than agriculture. The tourism industry is well developed in my electorate and stands at the ready to continue to grow and make a contribution to this diversification. It boasts spectacular natural beauty, exciting attractions, areas of historical significance and wonderful people and cuisine. I look forward to encouraging and supporting the continued development of the tourism industry in my electorate. Just some of the unique locations that are a must-see in Hinchinbrook include the village of Paluma in the clouds; Wallaman Falls near Ingham; Lucinda and Cardwell, respectively the southern and northern gateways to the spectacular Hinchinbrook Island; world-class whitewater rafting on the mighty Tully River; days of relaxation at Mission Beach opposite Dunk Island; the rich history of farming towns like Silkwood and South Johnstone and popular tourist destinations such as Paronella Park. That means that there is something for everyone in the Hinchinbrook electorate.

The Hinchinbrook electorate is also fortunate to include the growing Northern Beaches area of Thuringowa city, including locations such as Black River, Yabulu, Saunders Beach, Purono Park, Bluewater, Toolakea, Toomulla, Rollingstone, Balgal Beach and Mystic Sands. These communities on the coast are blessed with beautiful beaches. The QNI nickel refinery at Yabulu is a major employer in the area. These communities have a strong local identity and they have become attractive to a broad range of people—from young families to retired couples but also those seeking a different lifestyle away from suburbia.

The Herbert River district where I live is a wonderful area with enormous potential. The various sectors of the sugar industry are the dominant economic interests, though cattle and tourism are successful complements. Ingham is renowned as the home of the annual Australian-Italian Festival, a unique cultural event held each year that celebrates the strong Italian and Sicilian traditions of hundreds of families who live in the Herbert River district. It is an award-winning festival that I strongly urge all members to attend. You will enjoy a wonderful experience including food, drinks and entertainment in the finest and most authentic Italian tradition.

The historic town of Cardwell, situated between the larger centres of Tully and Ingham, was established as one of the very first ports on the Queensland coast. Today it offers a wonderful lifestyle that is drawing new people from across Australia who are embracing what Cardwell has to offer. Port Hinchinbrook has offered an exciting opportunity to Cardwell, and I wish to offer my congratulations to Keith Williams for his vision in relation to this project and for his determination to see the vision become a reality in the face of dogmatic opposition from previous federal and state Labor governments. It is a fine facility and a first-class tourism destination.

Also in Cardwell the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has its offices and training facilities. I am lucky to have such a professional and proactive organisation representing a federation of nine Indigenous tribes within the Hinchinbrook electorate. Girringun has a strong reputation as an accountable and progressive Indigenous group with significant cultural expertise concerning the teachings and values of the Aboriginal people they represent and a determination to make these values relevant to the younger generation and the wider community. I value the strong relationship I have with Chairman Pastor John Andy and CEO Philip Rist. I look forward to continuing to work with them for the benefit of the Indigenous people in the Hinchinbrook electorate.

I was born and raised in the township of Tully, and I am very proud of it. I enjoyed a wonderful childhood in this small rural sugar and banana town. It is a wonderful community and I have a great affection for the people there. Tully is famous for experiencing the highest average annual rainfall in Australia of 4.27 metres a year and holds the record for the most rain in a calendar year in Australia, set in 1950 when 7.9 metres fell on the lush green rainforests and productive farmland of the Tully district. My education at St Clare's Catholic primary school and Tully State High School was a very happy time and I received first-class instruction and care from committed teachers and support staff.

Indeed, I am a strong supporter of small schools and rural and regional schools generally. These schools provide an excellent standard of education and our young people are in no way disadvantaged by attending these small schools unless we fail in our obligation to provide them with the support they deserve. The Hinchinbrook electorate has many schools—primary and secondary, state, Catholic and independent. As custodians of our young people, our schools are an important asset to the community and support for all of them, be they public or otherwise, ought to be readily forthcoming from this place.

North of Tully there are communities in the Hinchinbrook electorate such as El Arish, Silkwood, Kurrimine Beach, South Johnstone, Mena Creek, Moresby, Wangan and Mourilyan that have suffered particularly badly as a result of Tropical Cyclone Larry, which struck the far-north Queensland coast in the early hours of Monday morning, 20 March 2006. Time will prevent me from listing the heroes and heroines who saw those communities through the aftermath of Cyclone Larry and who have led the recovery effort since that time. There were many. The area is extraordinarily beautiful, tranquil and productive farming country with tight-knit communities that love living in north Queensland. Many lives were shattered on that day and the memory of Cyclone Larry will not readily fade from the minds of those who lived through it.

It is only right and proper that I place on record my sincere gratitude to the Queensland and Commonwealth governments for their generous support following Cyclone Larry. Party politics was put to one side and all members of parliament—state and federal—worked together to try to address the terrible misfortunes of the people of far-north Queensland affected by Cyclone Larry, and rightly so. The strong bipartisanship displayed during the recovery process was the only way that the community would have any chance of making a proper recovery. I am pleased to say that, while there is still a long way to go—and it is true that the circumstances of many are still of significant concern—we have come a long way and we have made substantial inroads into the rebuilding program. Those communities I have mentioned have maintained their optimism and their vibrancy and they have demonstrated that they will overcome this hurdle. They are fine Queenslanders.

At the age of 25, I am a relatively young person to be entering this place. Indeed, I am the youngest member of this the 52nd Queensland Parliament. Alas, I am no record breaker. My parliamentary colleague and friend the member for Southern Downs holds that distinction, and I suspect that his is a record that will stand for some time. Nevertheless, as I understand it, I am currently the youngest member of any Australian parliament—state, territory or federal. I am conscious of the added responsibility of being a representative of Queensland's young people in addition to being the voice of the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate. The Queensland parliament ought to reflect the wider Queensland community, and it is appropriate that young people have a voice in this place. Having said that, I am determined that that voice will be a thoughtful and constructive contribution in the best interests of the community as a whole, as young people are part of it and not separate from it.

I have touched on the importance of education for our young people, but I have another concern relating to our youth. I have observed my generation and subsequent generations increasingly becoming a drive-through, log-on generation where if they cannot get it by driving through to pick it up or logging on to download it, they do not want it because it takes too long. That is not true for everyone. A lot of young people are making great achievements and making great contributions, but the trend is contributing to the steady decline in the number of young people involved in community groups, service clubs, volunteer organisations and some sporting clubs.

The importance of participation in and service to your community is something that I believe in strongly. I think it is important that more people, especially young people, learn about the reward and satisfaction that is gained through working towards something that may not be of benefit to you in the short term, or may not even benefit you at all, but which strengthens and enhances the community in which you live, work and raise your family. I sincerely hope that my contributions in this place can be an example of what young people can achieve.

My election as the member for Hinchinbrook was a humbling experience, and I am grateful to the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate for placing their faith in me to represent them in the Queensland parliament. The Hinchinbrook electorate has been represented by the Nationals for 46 years—since 1960—and between 1960 and 2006 by only three members: Sir John Row, Mr Ted Row and, most recently, Mr Marc Rowell. However, Hinchinbrook has never been a long-term safe seat for the Nationals. The people of Hinchinbrook expect effective representation and there have been several elections during those 46 years when the result was marginal, including the most recent one. The electorate has undertaken significant boundary changes over that time and will undoubtedly undergo further changes in the redistribution before the next election. As such, it is my challenge to demonstrate to the community that I am worthy of the support that it has given me. I said several times during the election campaign that I could take nothing for granted. I did not then and I will not in the future.

I will be particularly focused on ensuring that the government delivers on its promise to fix a range of pressing problems in the Hinchinbrook electorate and in north Queensland more generally. North Queensland's public health system needs urgent attention. In particular, I look forward to the long-promised new hospital in Ingham finally materialising sooner rather than later. I am concerned that the problems in the Townsville Hospital emergency department are persisting, with elective surgery cancelled and on Monday this week 26 patients left waiting for a bed in the emergency department. Things did not get much better on Tuesday.

Transport issues, such as the upgrade of the Cardwell Range crossing and the need for the relief of congestion on the Bruce Highway travelling north from Townsville between Woodlands and Bluewater, are also pressing problems. I will also be pursuing the matter of the Kirrama Range Road and the proposed Tully to Innisfail transmission line with the government. They are significant local issues that require the Beattie government to listen to the clear and unequivocal messages coming from the local community.

Although the people of Queensland have spoken and returned the government, the people of Hinchinbrook also spoke and they elected me as their voice in this place. I give them an undertaking that I will do my best to further their interests and to provide them with the strong representation that they deserve.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Bundaberg, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (3.54 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. After hearing the maiden speeches of the member for Gympie and the member for Hinchinbrook, my resolve that the National Party is a great and visionary party for the people of Queensland has been strengthened. I would like to thank the people of Bundaberg for putting their faith in me and giving me the opportunity to represent their interests in state parliament. This is an honour that I intend to reward by hard work and dedication to the community of Bundaberg. I would also like to formally thank and acknowledge the Independent candidate for Bundaberg, Greg McMahon, for his preferences, which enabled me to be elected the member for Bundaberg. Greg's intestinal fortitude, sincerity and family values are to be commended and I thank him for his support.

I am not an academic, but I know the difference between right and wrong. I look forward to listening to the people of Bundaberg to give me good advice for the benefit of our community. To be elected the first Nationals member for Bundaberg in 110 years is a very humbling experience—an experience that I take on with great respect for those who have elected me and with an appreciation of the responsibilities that lie ahead. I congratulate the government on its election and I wait with great interest to see how it will take advantage of our current national wealth and how it secures benefits for future generations.

I would also like to wish the previous member for Bundaberg, the Hon. Nita Cunningham, and her husband, Elvin, good luck and happiness in retirement. I wish them a healthy future and many happy times with friends and families. I also acknowledge the dedication of the honourable member during her time in representing the people of Bundaberg—as the mayor for four terms and state member for three terms. That is a long political career that certainly deserves recognition.

I thank my wife, Christine, and my five beautiful children—Bridine, Aidan, Brennan, Lachlan and Ronan—for giving me the confidence and support to achieve my goals. Not a day goes by without me learning from Christine and my family, who all have their own special ways. I know that the single most important thing to my existence is my family. I would also like to thank my mother and father, Bridget and Patrick, who emigrated from Ireland, for instilling in me life's qualities, about which I am still learning, and for teaching me never to be shy of hard work. I would also like to thank my four brothers and sisters for giving me the challenges to reach new heights and of whom I am always very proud. From this, members can confirm that I am a believer in the family unit as the cornerstone of social cohesion, no matter how diverse it may be in this ever-changing world. Through strong families we build strong communities, and this is one of the many factors that makes Bundaberg such a special place in which to live.

I have a great passion to work for the people of Bundaberg and to see Bundaberg get its share of facilities and services to meet its current and future needs. Bundaberg is a fast-growing community, and I will work hard because that community is in my heart. Bundaberg is the town that I call home. I say to members here today that Bundaberg is truly a great place in which to live. I sincerely invite every member to come and stay for a time and enjoy one of the most beautiful places on earth. Bundaberg boasts the most even climate of any Australian town or city and in this capacity the city is ranked fifth in the world.

Bundaberg is perhaps best known for its sugarcane industry, but the region also boasts a diverse array of horticultural businesses, an extensive seafood industry, a range of manufacturing industries, a large Public Service sector and, of course, Bundaberg is home to the famous Bundaberg Rum and Bundaberg Brewed Drinks. Bundaberg also has a rapidly expanding tourism industry and is part of the southern gateway to the Great Barrier Reef.

This great community is a fantastic place to raise a family and it has great pride in its sense of community. This pride is exhibited by numerous civic buildings and churches that have added to the bringing together of community members over many generations. This pride is also exhibited in the faces of the people of Bundaberg and in their hearts and actions. I would like to personally thank Timothy Langmead and his family for giving their time and advice during the election campaign. I give a special thankyou to Richard, or should I say, Dick Bitcon and his wife, Carmel; my campaign manager, Greg Pershouse; Betty Raticliff; Kate Barwick; and every person involved in the campaign team from booth workers, branch members and volunteers.

I give a special thankyou to Paul and Margaret Neville and Rob Messenger, the member for Burnett, for their words of confidence, support and guidance during the election campaign. The motto 'through hard work comes great opportunity' certainly describes the dedication of all of those involved, and without their support and guidance I would not have had the opportunity to be elected and be here with everyone today.

Prior to being elected, I have spent the past 19 years of my working life in the Police Service. It has been a pleasure, and I am eternally thankful for the skills and confidence that I have developed working with a team of highly motivated and professional people. I will miss the Police Service but, most of all, I will miss the dedicated, hardworking and honest people within its organisation. I joined the Police Service to help the community and achieve a great deal of satisfaction in doing so. The motivation of helping people has also steered me in the direction of politics. We all have passions that motivate and inspire us, and I look forward to achieving the same level of satisfaction as a member of parliament.

Thank you to Father Jim Spence, who taught me to walk quietly and care for others. I thank all my sporting coaches who taught me to respect my opponents and especially the late Dick Gunthorpe from Oxley, who always said, 'A true champion is someone who gets up when they know they can't,' Col Wilson from Sacred Heart School at Ipswich, Jim and Barb McClellan and Trevor Lovell from Brisbane State High School—all of whom I respected dearly for the time they gave to others to teach young people new skills and confidence. Their dedication, like so many other coaches and volunteers in our community, is invaluable. The job of a volunteer or coach can often be taken for granted, but they are such an invaluable part of every community. In Bundaberg we are indeed fortunate to have so many hardworking, community minded people, and I thank each and every one of them for their commitment. Their dedication is what makes Bundaberg such a great place to live and raise a family.

I personally believe very strongly in decentralisation and the need to ensure that all of Queensland shares in the state's economic wealth and prosperity. I strongly believe that all levels of government must work together and show the fiscal and political will needed to promote family and community lifestyles right throughout this wonderful state. We must develop policies, trade agreements, viable transportation, reliable electricity, gas and water supplies and tax incentives to promote decentralisation and its benefits to the state of Queensland.

People are spending more time in their vehicles and in other modes of transportation than with their families. Despite the widespread problem of traffic congestion, it is still much faster to travel by car than by public transport. Despite the increased cost of fuel and environmental concerns, we continue to use our vehicles because we want to get to and from work faster. Why? To be with our families. The annual wage-equivalent cost of time commuting in Australia is a loss of $21 billion per year. According to an article in 2004 *The 200km City*, the Brisbane City Council transport plan and Brisbane Institute research, only two per cent of the people in the area between Noosa and the Tweed travel by public transport—the lowest rate of any major urban area in Australia.

I will be promoting decentralisation to regional Queensland and, in particular, to the Bundaberg region—for individuals and families to return to family and friends, or to purchase an affordable family home within easy reach of workplaces so that less time is wasted commuting. The increased infrastructure that comes with decentralisation will also create jobs in regional areas. With increased employment and education we can decrease social divisions and reduce poverty. With employment we create stability, direction and a safer community, and with jobs we give people respect, dignity and a sense of worth within their community.

Increasing financial independence reduces domestic violence, street and property offences and drug use, which is a major issue affecting today's society, especially with the increase in the use of amphetamines and other so-called 'designer' drugs. Education and training are vital in regional Queensland so that young and older Queenslanders have the same learning opportunities as their city counterparts. I will be pushing for improved facilities and courses to facilitate the needs of the fast-growing region of Bundaberg. I am also concerned about declining standards in the basics being taught within our schools. I am a firm believer in teaching the three Rs before all else to give our children a solid base.

An increasing problem for young families in regional Queensland is the high cost of rental and long-term accommodation. The long-held dream of home ownership is sadly becoming an unrealistic goal for many, and I believe that all governments should do whatever is in their power to restore this dream. The cost of land and home construction is becoming too expensive for families. Yet due to work commitments we are forced in the direction of the CBD and time away from our loved ones. There is an identified benefit to linking land and transport policies for the benefit of the community.

Rural and regional Queensland offers a better way of life—increased time with our families and a better lifestyle where we can have the best of both worlds, being close to work and the opportunity to spend more time with family and friends. Many regional families are torn apart in the chase for job promotions and career opportunities. This is a necessity at the present time, but we need to look further at models that are working elsewhere—models that embrace information technology, models that offer flexible, more effective workplaces while embracing family and community values. The numerous ports along our coastline give Queensland a distinct advantage over other states in Australia for this model to develop.

In my electorate of Bundaberg, health remains one of the main issues, and I look forward to working with community organisations and government at all levels to achieve successful outcomes that will benefit the people of Bundaberg and surrounding districts. We must fix the problems of the past and give closure and justice to all of those who have been affected. We must grasp the future with openness and transparency.

During the election campaign, the government committed to $41.4 million to upgrade the Bundaberg Hospital, promising 30 new beds and improved services in the emergency department and rehabilitation unit. I, along with the community of Bundaberg, will be closely watching to ensure that the government honours those commitments. While this financial commitment is welcomed, it is only the first step in what will be a long journey to restore faith and confidence in our local health system—a journey that I will embrace, remembering the quote that from little things big things grow. We must put faith and confidence back in our health system. Our hardworking health staff must be able to enter their workplaces without fear of retribution, knowing that they have the confidence and support of a caring and understanding community.

Another concern raised with me during the election campaign was the need for an open and honest government. The perceived image of dishonesty and a lack of trust in all politicians is a major concern. I look forward to the future, when the perception of governments condoning lying will be removed and full confidence in our elected members returned; a future when integrity will be strengthened not by a motion moved on the strength of numbers but on moral fibre. Making mistakes, rectifying them and moving forward in a positive way is part of life's journey and not dissimilar to political life.

During the election campaign I was told by a humourous Labor gentleman at the railway station that, if I could not hear the train, I should simply move closer to the track. I passed on my sincere gratitude and advised these kind souls that I could hear the rattle of the train coming from the yards. However, it was not the tilt train but the loud voice of the people of Bundaberg sending a message—a message that they wanted to be heard and not be taken for granted.

In conclusion, and most importantly, I look forward to the challenges ahead and know that with the support of my family, friends and the people of Bundaberg we can work together in an atmosphere of cooperation and partnership to make Bundaberg an even better place—a better place not just for this generation but for the generations to come. Thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Cleveland, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Cleveland.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (4.12 pm): It is with great pleasure that I deliver the first maiden speech coming from Cleveland in the past 17 years. I acknowledge the traditional owners of our land and I pay sincere respects to the Jagera people, the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament sits, and the Indigenous peoples who are the traditional owners of the land on which the electorate of Cleveland is situated.

To describe how I feel about being here today I will borrow a phrase from a speech of the honourable Minister for Emergency Services, Pat Purcell, in 1992 when he said, 'I'm just an ordinary bloke and I stand here today with a mixture of pride and humility.' I am more than happy that these words characterise who I am and how I feel about being elected to represent the people of the Cleveland electorate. I am both proud and humbled that the residents of Cleveland, Ormiston, Birkdale, Wellington Point, Thorneside and the communities of North Stradbroke Island have placed their trust in me to be their representative in parliament and to voice their concerns and needs to the Beattie government. I will work hard to vindicate and validate their trust.

I am a person with two simple philosophies in life. One is to practise, recognise and reward the good old-fashioned virtues of honesty, loyalty and reliability, and the second is to always try to do the right thing. These are simple philosophies that have brought me here and I can only hope that they hold me in good stead during my time as the member for Cleveland.

Today I would like to take the opportunity to impress upon parliament some serious issues not only affecting the people of Cleveland but also the rest of the state. Before I do this, I will take the time to recognise and extend my sincere gratitude to some people who are very important to me. I extend my congratulations to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and other honourable members of the Labor government. I recognise that as a government we have a lot of hard work ahead of us during this next term. I look forward to working as part of a cohesive and united team to meet the needs of all Queenslanders.

I would like to thank my parents, Ron and Marina, who are here in the gallery today and who have provided me and my brothers and sisters with the fundamental principles and lessons that have helped shape me into the person I am today. Both have been great role models in their own unique ways, and I am pleased to be able to repay their faith in me by trying to be the best person I possibly can be and by remaining true to myself.

My mother often said that dad was a professional volunteer. I am sure that this is where I developed my strong sense of community and social justice that eventually led me into politics through 27 years as a police officer. As a result of inheriting the professional volunteer gene from mum and dad, I became involved in a number of community organisations including spending 17 years as a volunteer with Camp Quality—a support program for children and families living with cancer. I have over the past 30 years or more been involved with many junior and senior sports clubs including Rugby League, Rugby Union, swimming, softball and cricket. I am currently a member of the Point Lookout Surf Life Saving Club on North Stradbroke Island and a community based member of the Moreton Institute of TAFE Advisory Council.

Many people ask me why I decided to enter the world of politics. My answer to that is that my ongoing work with community organisations instilled in me the desire to make a difference to our community, and the best way to make that difference is to be here. I hope to continue to make a difference by drawing on my experiences from those organisations. I hope to share the values and principles I developed from many years of volunteering in the Cleveland community.

There is no more accurate and appropriate truism than behind every good man there is a better woman. I consider myself extremely lucky in this regard. I have two good women and one solid bloke who have been with me all the way. To my wife, Kerry, and my two children, Matt and Maddy, you know how I feel about the unconditional love and support you have given me and the sacrifices you have made along the way. I will work hard to be all that you think I can be. I also thank my brother, Dale, and my sisters, Chris and Haley, and my extended family and friends for the faith they have shown in me and for adopting the role of keeping me grounded and in touch with reality.

One of my greatest fears is that I will lose contact with the very people who helped me get to this position. I cannot afford to lose my family and friends as they are a constant source of invaluable support and inspiration. My second fear is that I will let them down and not perform to their lofty expectations. I allay this fear by knowing that I always have and always will strive to do my best. That is the way I have always worked.

In terms of my campaign, I have so many people to thank. Firstly, I would like to recognise the support from the Australian Labor Party and the unions who provided advice and resources for my campaign. I am a very proud unionist and I recognise the increasingly important role that unions play in today's workplace. It was with great sadness that I had to resign from the Queensland Police Union of Employees. After 27 years of service and support, it was time to say goodbye and thank you. Long may they continue to support the unique individuals who make up the fine body of men and women of the Queensland Police Service. The men and women of the Queensland Police Service do a tough job and ask little in return. I have learnt much from the many good people in the service. They have been a great family to me for a long time. I will miss working with them and I will miss just being one of them.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the ALP branch members from Cleveland, Wellington Point/Birkdale and North Stradbroke Island. Your individual and collective contributions have been amazing, and I thank you for that. To Jo, Shirley, Gordon, Ava, Glynn, Sharon, Audrey, comrade Kathie, my nephew Mitch, my brother Dale, Lisa, Col, Marguerite, Barbara, Martin, Josh, Lorrel, Ian, Ravi, Jenny and Peter—and I apologise if I left anybody out: thank you for working tirelessly on a daily basis before, during and after the campaign. Without your efforts and the efforts of all those who contributed in some way, I would not be here today. You are indeed very special people.

I would also like to thank the member for Mansfield, Phil Reeves; the member for Redlands, John English; the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi; and the member for Ferny Grove, Geoff Wilson, for their guidance, advice and help on the ground. It was and continues to be greatly appreciated.

I would like to reserve a special thanks for Milton Dick and his team at ALP headquarters who, in their infinite wisdom, provided us with so much assistance as well as our incredible campaign organiser, Cameron Crowther. Cam came to us when we most needed help and provided that and much more. Cam, I sincerely thank you for the calm and professional way in which you conducted yourself, for your unshakeable faith and for your friendship. I also recognise the sacrifices you made during and as a result of this campaign. Thanks, mate.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my very good friend and mentor, the former member for Cleveland, Mr Darryl Briskey. Darryl served the people of Cleveland well for 17 years. He was first elected to the seat of Redlands in 1989 and in 1992 became the first member for Cleveland. In those 17 years, Darryl managed to guide the Cleveland area through its most expansive era, ensuring that the required infrastructure was in place to sustain the then population explosion that continues today.

Darryl's contributions have cemented his legacy in the Cleveland area as an MP who had the respect of the community and who got things done. Darryl played a key role in having Moreton Bay declared a marine park, in tripling the size of the Redland Hospital, in securing funding for the reconstructed Cleveland Court House and Cleveland Police Station and in establishing new ambulance stations at Cleveland and Dunwich and the soon-to-be-established ambulance station at Birkdale. Darryl helped to set an incredibly high standard that I hope to not only match but also exceed in the years ahead. I wish him and his family all the very best for the future.

My main message to the people of the Cleveland electorate during the recent campaign was simple and direct. I said I will work hard for them as their representative, providing a strong voice in government. I said I will work towards maintaining the lifestyle they have come to associate with living in the Cleveland area and developing a strong sense of community that is a direct result of that lifestyle. Our community is unique, especially as it is not considered to be part of the urban hustle and bustle of Brisbane. We enjoy the atmosphere of a small town whilst enjoying the convenience of the big city. We have many local icons, including the beautiful North Stradbroke Island and Wellington and Cleveland points, which are all gateways to the magnificent Moreton Bay.

Our part of the world is also home to North Stradbroke Island's unique and finely balanced ecosystem—a wonder in itself. We have the remarkable Redlands Museum, the historical landmarks of Ormiston House and Whepstead Manor and a community that has a strong sense of Indigenous culture, settlement history and an appreciation of the arts. I am proud to represent a community of Queenslanders who are environmentally aware and attuned to a wide range of social issues.

The Cleveland electorate has some incredible people living and working in the area, contributing in no small way to our priceless bayside lifestyle and sense of community. The residents of the Cleveland electorate are not afraid to speak openly about the issues that are affecting them and our treasured lifestyle. I can assure them that I will always be available to listen to them and act on their issues and their concerns.

Today I take the opportunity to mention only two of these issues. I do so because I have a passion for both. Firstly, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the people in Cleveland who are either living with disabilities or caring for people with special needs. It is because of my strong sense of social justice and the need to foster a sense of community that I feel compelled to be an advocate on their behalf. In some instances, the needs of some of the neediest in our community can be relegated in priority behind issues that a greater number of our community would determine to be more pressing.

In the past three months, I have had the opportunity to speak with a number of families who are living with people with special needs. They are wonderful people who make daily sacrifices to provide a better world for their loved ones. One family is twice blessed with two adult daughters requiring special attention. Both these girls are beautiful people with the most idealistic perspective on life. I have been lucky enough to spend some time talking with one of the girls, and I was amazed at her simplistic approach to how the world operated around her.

In March 1990 the now Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Rod Welford, the member for Everton, during his maiden speech spoke passionately and openly about his then three-year-old daughter, Lisa, who was a person with special needs. I was moved by the minister's description of the way Lisa related to the world. He said—

I have a daughter who sees the world and relates to the world around her as though it were the way it ought to be, not just the way it is.

He then went on to describe to the House how he would like to effect a world in which Lisa and in fact all Queenslanders could grow up. What impressed me most about this world was that it was a world where people were treated equally and had an equal opportunity to grow and become better people. This is the way things should be. After talking with my friends and reading the minister's speech, I asked myself two questions. The first question was: are we achieving a better world for our friends with disabilities? The answer is yes, we are. The second question was: is there room for improvement? The answer is a resounding yes, of course there is. I do not see why a family should face any greater challenge than that which has already been thrust upon them by a quirk of nature. Parents and carers in this position should be rewarded and not face any additional challenges.

Another family I spoke with have been committed to helping their son with special needs survive in this world for the past 45 years. At a time of life when they should be enjoying the fruits of their labour, they are waging battles with bureaucracy in order to maintain a quality of life for their son. Although they have achieved a lot for their son, the job is not yet done. The same applies to the family with the two wonderful girls. The helping hand has been extended, but what they need now is a guiding hand to ensure that their future is well catered for. While the federal government continues to pay lip-service to its commitment to people with special needs, this Beattie government has increased funding to the disabilities portfolio, and I know that the people of the Cleveland electorate will benefit from this commitment.

There are many more people in this situation and, although they seem to be better off than before, we should recognise that they have faced a struggle to get where they are now and should not be expected to struggle for the rest of their lives. We have a moral obligation—a real obligation—as individuals and as a community to be proactive in providing a level of service required to accommodate the special needs of this section of the population.

I now turn to another issue that I am passionate about. Public safety is a fundamental aspect of living not only for the people of the bayside but also for people everywhere in Queensland. Every Queenslander has the right to feel safe in their community. Recently, Queensland was rocked by the senseless death of 15-year-old Redlands teenager, Matt Stanley. There is nothing that can replace the loss which Matt's family has endured. I attended Matt's funeral along with a thousand other mourners and witnessed the severe impact his death had on the community. Several people who knew Matt spoke at his funeral, which brought home to me just how tragic it was that a young boy with so much promise would never be allowed to realise it.

It is what Matt's dad, Paul, said that really struck a chord with me. He said that we must change the culture that allows senseless acts of this nature to occur. As parliamentarians, we can create the laws to decrease the possibility of a tragedy of this nature happening again, but such laws will not be worth the paper they are written on unless we accompany them with a change in the culture that currently accommodates or even perpetuates such behaviour.

In her maiden speech, the Deputy Premier said that politicians must bear the responsibility that we, as community leaders, have to conduct debates about law and order in a manner that is not calculated to maximise political point scoring. As the Deputy Premier rightly said, we are community leaders, and it is incumbent upon us to draw to the attention of the House the issues that we feel are important. There are some issues that transcend the nature of partisan politics. Surely protecting our children from senseless violence is one of these issues.

I commend the Premier on setting up the new Youth Violence Task Force and inviting Matt's dad, Paul, to be a part of that process. I am confident that this task force will find new ways to keep our young people safer. I can only hope that I, and every other member in this House, can work towards ensuring that in the future families will not have to suffer what the Stanley family has suffered over these past few weeks. Senator Robert F Kennedy once said—

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

As I said in my opening remarks, I am an ordinary bloke. I certainly do not think I have the capacity to bend history. However, when the history of this generation is written, I want to be able to say that I played a role in preserving and improving the unique lifestyle of thousands of bayside residents.

When the history of this generation is written, I want to be able to say that I used my position in this House to create a better life for those people in our community who have special needs. Finally, when the history of this generation is written, I want to be able to say that I used my voice to foster a safer community for our families.

It will be the residents of the Cleveland electorate who will decide whether or not history will be able to judge me in this way. It is both an honour and a privilege to be their voice in state parliament. Over the next three years, I am looking forward to building a better bayside for all of us to enjoy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Before calling the next speaker, I acknowledge in the public gallery students and teachers from All Souls St Gabriels School in Charters Towers in the electorate of Charters Towers represented in this chamber by Shane Knuth.

Before calling the honourable member for Waterford, I remind honourable members that this is this member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Waterford.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (4.33 pm): I pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to a position of such high esteem. The Speaker of parliament is one of the linchpins of our parliamentary democracy. I have no doubt that the Speaker will uphold our democratic processes with fairness and integrity.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today. I also acknowledge the peoples whose traditional lands include those on which the Waterford electorate is based. I hope that, in partnership, we can do much to address the continuing disadvantage suffered by our Indigenous peoples.

I am both honoured and humbled that my fellow residents of the Waterford electorate have given me the responsibility of representing them in this parliament. Whilst this is my first speech in parliament, it is by no means my first job as a parliamentarian. On the Sunday after the election, my work as a local member had already commenced, with phone calls and queries from local residents. I believe that it is a show of great faith in the Beattie government's capacity to deliver, particularly on the key issues of water and health, when constituents feel confident in contacting a new member for advice and assistance so soon after the election.

We went to the election with a positive campaign and a coherent vision for Queensland's future. The Beattie-Bligh team proved that we had the strong leadership to deliver a strong economy, a revitalised health system and the infrastructure to meet the worst drought in 100 years. With every call that I have received, I have proudly assured constituents that I will be working with our community to ensure that this vision becomes a reality. I will be doing everything possible to ensure that I can return to the Waterford electorate the faith that they have shown in electing me.

I must recognise those people who have made my election possible. Our local election campaign was a positive campaign, talking about the issues that affect the lives of people in the Waterford electorate every day. This campaign was built on the hard work of volunteers who supported me and the positive agenda of the Labor government.

First, I must thank my partner Siobhan for both her hard work and for supporting me throughout this time. Contrary to all accepted wisdom, I asked Siobhan to be one of my two campaign managers. The strength of our relationship is clear from surviving an election campaign together. Siobhan, together with her fellow campaign manager, Anton Thompson, ran a tight ship that allowed me to focus on meeting and listening to the voters of the Waterford electorate.

I am overwhelmed by the number of people who were prepared to chip in to help. To these people I say thank you for supporting me from the start of this journey. I know that with your ongoing support it will be a journey of change and achievement. While there are so many, there are a few who I would like to particularly mention: Anton Thompson, Alissa Macoun, Lonnie and Ruth Nielsen, Kerrie Nielsen and Nicole Nielsen, Dolly Chang, Sean Leader, Barry Ramsay, Terry Gobert, Heather Redman, Debbie Evans, Charlie Meyers, Terry Wood and Moray Newlands.

I must also recognise the contribution and support of my family. To my parents Col and Ailsa, who are here today, thank you for your faith in me. One day I hope to be able to emulate the humility, ethic of hard work and sense of community that you have shown throughout your lives. I thank my sister Leisel and her husband Andrew, my brother John and his partner Dot, my brother Scott, Kate Keating, always ably assisted by Jo Heaton, and Rebecca Keating.

I thank my colleagues at the AMWU—Andrew Dettmer, who believed in me from the start, Peter Lees, David Fyffe and Warren Butler, who helped make this possible. To Peter I say that I am sure the residents at the top of Bingo Street appreciated the pamphlets.

The electorate of Waterford based on the Logan River, is a place of contrast. At the southern end, Beenleigh is a community with a strong sense of identity built upon its rich and proud history. Despite increasing urbanisation, farming properties follow the Logan River as it makes it way through the electorate. In the east, the suburbs of Loganholme, Tanah Merah and Meadowbrook have seen recent

growth and development, providing homes for some of the 1,500 people moving to south-east Queensland each week. The challenge that faces all of these communities is to provide the infrastructure and support for this growth. Providing housing for a growing population, whilst preserving lifestyle and providing services to meet growing need, is the task ahead of not only me but also the Queensland government.

The Beattie government's record of providing for growth in the Waterford electorate is an achievement of which I am very proud. Our area has a hospital for quality health care, a TAFE campus and a university campus that provide training and career opportunities for local residents, particularly school leavers. Improvements to the M1 motorway, Beenleigh-Kingston Road and Loganlea Road make our growing community accessible. There is no more important challenge in managing this growth than ensuring that our community has access to affordable housing. The demand for affordable housing is outstripping supply. Secure and affordable housing is one of the building blocks of a stable and supportive family environment. Affordable housing is not just about roofs over people's heads; it is about an opportunity to move forward to meet the challenges of daily life.

In Queensland, an estimated 24,000 people are homeless, but the problem goes deeper than that. Marginal housing rates are increasing as a result of pressure in the private rental market. Where three generations of a family are living in a two-bedroom unit or where schoolchildren are moving home every three or four months, pressure comes to bear not only on the financial resources of a family but also on relationships. Average house prices relative to income have more than doubled over the last 10 years. The increase in housing prices means that those who would otherwise be buying houses must remain in the private rental market, putting pressure on private rental and, in turn, our public housing system.

I am proud of the visible and measurable improvement that the Beattie government's Community Renewal Program has made in the Waterford electorate, particularly in the area of public housing. I am also proud of the Beattie government's comprehensive homelessness strategy, but there is much work ahead of us, and I will be part of getting it done. However, the challenge of growth in our community is much more than roads, hospitals and TAFE colleges. As our community grows in population, it must also grow in spirit and a sense of belonging.

Despite our ever-increasing population, meaning that we are living closer together, many people still have a sense of social isolation and exclusion from a rapidly changing society. The effects of social isolation go far beyond the individual. Whether due to issues such as mental health, unemployment, homelessness or sometimes a combination of these, the effect of social isolation ripples across our community. In my view, the measure of the strength in our community is the compassion that we can all show for those who, at some time in their life, need a helping hand.

When we are looking to our neighbours we must understand the complex path that brings people to a feeling of isolation. Issues of crime and poverty are often inextricably linked to issues of mental health, intergenerational poverty or abuse. The policies that guide us in addressing disadvantage must be informed by this understanding.

When I look back at my time in this parliament, I hope that I can say that my contribution was to leave both the Waterford electorate and the state of Queensland with a stronger community, a stronger economy and a strong sense of what is just and what is fair, with understanding and respect for our neighbours. This is the passion that I bring to this parliament.

As I come to this House, the area in which our sense of fairness and justice is most affronted is in the area of working conditions. I am proud to say that I have spent the last six years of my life representing workers in the manufacturing industry as an official of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. I am proud to stand here delivering my first speech and say that I remain a proud trade unionist and a proud member of the AMWU.

My commitment to social justice for working families did not end when I was elected to parliament. In this House, whether representing constituents or working Queenslanders or arguing for issues which are dear to me, I hope to bring the strong advocacy learnt during my time with the AMWU. Whether a union official, a member of parliament or a local volunteer, the task before us is the same—to foster the social and economic conditions that allow people to create the life they want for them and their family.

This advocacy is so much more important at a time when the working conditions of Australian families are under attack from the federal coalition and its WorkChoices legislation. As a union official, I saw firsthand how these laws affect people. This legislation will affect every family. Even those who may think that they will not be directly affected will have a husband, a wife, a daughter or a son who has their working conditions given to them on a take it or leave it basis. The Queensland government has a responsibility to fight these unjust laws and make it known how these laws will put downward pressure on working conditions. My commitment is to take up the fight against these laws: the fight to restore balance and a fair go to working conditions.

I am lucky to represent an electorate which has such an active and committed network of volunteers. If volunteers are the lifeblood of our community, then Waterford is in good health. As a volunteer with the Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre, I have seen firsthand the critical role that local community organisations play in delivering support where it is needed most. It is these organisations that make our government's policies of service and support a reality in the community.

Each of the many community groups in the Waterford electorate has a vision based on inclusion, acceptance and support in times of need. To those who each day extend a helping hand to others I offer my role as an advocate to ensure that the institutions of government help them as they help others.

My election campaign was a positive campaign. I talked about the issues that were important to the daily lives of voters. I believe that as a member of parliament I have a responsibility to build support for our processes of democratic government. Our mandate as members of parliament enjoins us to uphold the tenets of democracy in all of our actions. We must be careful to avoid fostering cynicism both of politics and of politicians. Politics and our democratic process are one and the same.

It is important that we encourage participation in our political process. Many new members who have stood here before me have expressed concern about increasing disengagement from the political process. It is a concern I share. I think it not coincidental that disengagement from the political process has increased in tandem with pressure for us to embrace an individualist society. For those who feel disengaged, politics has a pejorative connotation. It is viewed not as the medium through which individuals and communities engage in the democratic process and affect change but as the domain of vested interests and clashing ideologies that stand apart from people.

This government has taken up the challenge of participation. Through its e-democracy program it is providing new ways for people to engage with the political process. After only four days in the job I have already been approached by a local resident who asked me to establish an e-petition so that community anger over a development proposal could be made known. Finding new ways for people to engage with politics and politicians can only strengthen the quality of our democracy and, in turn, our government.

As a local member, I will play my role by giving a sense of ownership over this green seat and what it represents to the people of the Waterford electorate. I will consult, inform and engage. I will listen, understand and advocate. I can only achieve this by being accessible and approachable, and that I will be.

One of the passions that I bring to this House is my passion for apprenticeships as a career path, particularly for young people. In my time with the AMWU, the work I enjoyed most was with apprentices and training. The achievement of which I am most proud was improving the wages and conditions for apprentices and helping to make apprenticeships a real option for young Queenslanders. I strongly believe that apprenticeships are invaluable in providing workers with certified, portable skills—skills that contribute to our growing economy and skills that enhance our international competitiveness.

I worked with tradespeople who were proud of their qualifications and proud to have learnt their trade through the apprenticeship system. These tradespeople were highly skilled workers who delighted in sharing their skills with other tradespeople and apprentices—the next generation of tradespeople. The modern apprenticeship is something very different from the apprenticeship of the seventies or even the eighties. With competency based training, flexibility of training delivery methods and school based apprenticeships, the apprenticeship system has kept up with the needs of today's industry. Queensland leads the way in apprenticeship training. Last year, 58 per cent of the nation's school based apprenticeships were engaged in Queensland. The Queensland Skills Plan will further ensure that more apprentices will become tradespersons in Queensland industry. At the same time, the qualifications that apprentices receive will still have the integrity and value of those earned by the tradespeople who have gone before them.

A key change needs to be undertaken in improving the image of apprenticeships. Parents, teachers and guidance counsellors must see apprenticeships as the first-class career opportunity that they are. Apprenticeships provide lifelong skills and lifelong careers. I will be working both within my electorate and in this parliament to promote and support our apprenticeship system.

I am honoured to come to this House as only the second member for Waterford, a seat created in 1992. My predecessor, the Hon. Tom Barton, delivered significant gains for the suburbs of the Waterford electorate. Most notable of these achievements is the upgrade of Beenleigh-Kingston Road. A two-lane road with dirt shoulders is now a four-lane road with a new Larry Storey Bridge that can cope with the demands of growth in our suburbs. Tom's legacy is also evident in many other projects in our community, with new police beats, community renewal projects and a Police-Citizens Youth Club building that is a hub of activity for the Beenleigh community.

Tom also leaves political life with a distinguished career as a minister, bringing his talents and commitment to a range of portfolios. One of Tom's great contributions to our state is the introduction of the Queensland Skills Plan to promote apprenticeships and training. As an instrument fitter tradesman himself, Tom has ensured that generations of young people to come will have the opportunity to become skilled tradespersons. I wish Tom and Traute well in life after politics.

While many have stood here before me, I think it is important to bring to my role as a parliamentarian my own experiences, passions, skills and commitment. Each of us will make what we will of the mandate we have been given. When others look back on my time in this House I hope they see achievements and change that are the product of hard work, words that are strong yet fair and causes which are just and right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Sandgate, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and she should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Sandgate.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (4.48 pm): Firstly, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his appointment. This Assembly has chosen well. I know that he will provide excellent guidance to the new members of parliament. I feel honoured and proud to be the representative of the people of the electorate of Sandgate in this Assembly. I thank the voters of Sandgate for putting their faith in me and I pay tribute to my predecessor, Gordon Nuttall.

The electorate of Sandgate is a truly special part of Queensland. It takes in the suburbs of Taigum, Bracken Ridge, Fitzgibbon, Deagon, Brighton, Sandgate and Shorncliffe. It is bounded by Bramble Bay to the east, the electorate of Aspley to the west and the electorate of Nudgee to the south. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land which makes up the Sandgate electorate. The local Turrbul people have lived in the region for thousands of years. They referred to the land we now call Brighton, Sandgate and Shorncliffe as Warra, which means an open sheet of water. Lieutenant John Oxley first sailed past Warra and saw its people on 29 November 1823. The first government auction of land occurred in 1853, and by the summer of 1866 Sandgate was a growing seaside holiday village with three-bedroom seaside cottages renting for three pounds a week. Sandgate State School, which my children now attend, was opened in 1873 and in 1882 the Sandgate rail line opened.

Of course, the Sandgate electorate is much more than just the suburb that bears its name. While Sandgate and Shorncliffe were developing as seaside retreats, the areas of Brighton, Bracken Ridge, Deagon, Fitzgibbon and Taigum centred on farming and grazing. The first school opened at Brighton in 1920. Bracken Ridge and Taigum each established schools in 1957. If members are interested in the history of Queensland, I would encourage them to visit the Sandgate Historical Museum, which is operated by our wonderful Sandgate and District Historical Society.

While my electorate has a proud tradition of providing education to local children for over a century, like a lot of other areas of Queensland the school buildings are also very old. It was exciting to be able to recently announce to my electorate significant infrastructure funding under the new School Community Development Fund for each and every state school to modernise facilities. Our schools need to progress to equip our young people with the skills to compete in a global workforce when they reach adulthood. I look forward to working with educators, parents, carers and students to ensure that the Queensland education and training system is the best in Australia.

There are so many skills and experiences we want for our children, but we must also keep them safe and healthy as we teach them to think. We need to ensure certain core learning outcomes as well as encourage the innovative thinking and reasoning that will discover the solutions to problems that we have not yet even identified—the sorts of thinkers that we need for our new Smart State Medical Research Centre, for example. We need to make sure that we are building the skills to provide for solid work and career opportunities into the future.

I am pleased to represent a mix of cultures, religions and socioeconomic backgrounds. I am proud that at the heart of the electorate beats a pride in and respect for community and a drive to help those in need. Some examples of this diverse mix include the Evergreen Taoist Temple and accommodation units; the Taigum Community Church, which established Victory Community Services providing a range of education, counselling and support services; and the many local Catholic schools and top-class colleges like St Patrick's College at Shorncliffe and St John Fisher College at Bracken Ridge. I am also looking forward to working with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, groups and service providers to progress initiatives and services to help support a thriving Indigenous community.

The Sandgate electorate has special family businesses and small businesses that give back to the community. They not only provide excellent goods and services to allow people to shop locally, they put in their time, energy and money to support community programs and events. The people of Sandgate take their community responsibilities very seriously, and I am proud of the many organisations and individuals dedicated to the welfare of older people, people with disabilities, people with health concerns, and children and young people. For example, the Sandgate and Bracken Ridge Action Group, the Sandgate RSL subbranch and the Hindu Society of Queensland are all active community supporters in my electorate.

Our community groups nurture and support family, culture, faith, art, environment, sport and recreation and wonderful community festivals. Festivals such as the Einbunpin Festival, the Sandgate Bluewater Festival, the Music by the Sea Festival, the Yarrageh Drama Festival and the Greek Affair

Celebration have made their mark on Brisbane's events calendar. The Sandgate electorate is also full of beautiful old Queensland houses as well as new residential estates and the demography is just as mixed, with families and older people enjoying living side by side. We have some world-class facilities for aged people, including the state-run Eventide Nursing Home, which has just celebrated 60 years of service to the community. But members should not think this is a quiet, retiring bunch of senior citizens. I have never seen such active seniors. It must be the therapeutic sea air that invigorates our thriving seniors clubs.

The sporting and recreation clubs are thriving also, but I understand the many problems which have been brought about by the drought, rising property prices and time-poor volunteers. Sport and exercise are essential for our physical and mental health, and I will be working with sport and recreation clubs in my electorate to ensure we can continue to provide affordable and accessible sports.

The electorate contains secret pockets of wetlands and paperbarks which have been preserved. I will fight to keep them just as they are for future generations as well as contribute to policy to improve water quality in Bramble Bay. The previous member for Sandgate, Gordon Nuttall, deserves recognition for preserving many parcels of environmentally sensitive land in the electorate.

I am very pleased to see so many women representing the people of Queensland in this place. It is only right that Queensland is represented in approximately equal proportions by men and women to reflect the population balance. But I also believe that women bring another dimension to political and policy debates. Women know the many facets of strong leadership. Strength involves compassion and intelligence and the ability to consider the past while looking to the future. I was born and grew up in Nudgee in Brisbane's northern suburbs. I was involved in my local church as a teenager and was always thinking up ways to help my community, particularly other young people. I joined the Australian Labor Party at the age of 20. I was determined to have my say, determined to be involved and determined to make a difference.

In my 20s the travel group Flight Centre was booming and growing and was able to offer me career challenges to match my appetite for self-improvement and change. Flight Centre taught me a customer-focused work ethic that remains with me to this day. Also in my 20s I met and married the person who would become my greatest source of encouragement and share my enthusiasm for politics. John also grew up in a household where current issues were hotly debated around the dinner table and the nightly television news could launch us into a diatribe of how we would right the wrongs and restore justice.

I grew up in a family of strong women and gentlemen. As I campaigned around the Sandgate electorate I heard many warm stories about my grandfather, Jack Melloy, who was the member for Nudgee from 1960 to 1977 and spent his entire time on the opposition benches. He was a gentleman, everyone said, and that is my firm memory of him. He passed away in January this year at the age of 97, and many members of this Assembly paid tribute to him at that time.

In my grandfather's maiden speech of 1 September 1960 he raised issues of the day including a housing shortage, rising building costs, the price of meat, the impact on families of low wages and high housing prices, and the need for the state to encourage industry. These are the so-called good old days of the sixties, but they sound like the struggles of so many families today. I will continue the fight to find ways to help ease the burden of the rising cost of living and protect the rights of workers. Many constituents in my electorate are feeling the pinch, and the lack of affordable housing coupled with a deterioration in job security is a real problem. It is the Beattie government that has stepped in to provide relief for home owners and will abolish stamp duty for first home owners who purchase a house under $320,000 and many other measures to assist families to put cash back in the pockets of Queenslanders.

It is also the Beattie government that has stood up to the unfair workplace changes and will continue the battle on behalf of Queensland workers. The Queensland government must continue to provide a safety net for people who are left high and dry by the Howard government. I will not comment further on the responsibilities of other jurisdictions today, but I will quote a line from Jack Melloy's maiden speech. He said—

The Australian Labor Party is one day going to prove the salvation of this country.

Other parts of Jack Melloy's 1960 speech demonstrate how times have changed and how the economy has improved under the Beattie Labor government. Let me quote a little further from his maiden speech where he states—

... the fact is ... that neither Brisbane nor Queensland is developing industrially as fast or as greatly as they should. We are losing population, one of the reasons being that we have not enough employment in the State to hold the people. They migrate to the South in search of employment ... Unless the Government gives greater attention to the problem and provides better facilities for industry, we shall continue to lose population to the southern states.

Today, our Smart State strategy continues to attract the best and the brightest. People are moving here anyway, so let us make sure that we can attract the industry and skills to match our needs.

Our understanding of the environment has certainly improved since 1960 when members on both sides of the chamber referred to the precious wetland environment in my electorate as 'swampland'. We must continually keep abreast of modern thinking on the environment. Climate is changing and it has been caused by humans. That is why our government is establishing the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. We must continue to protect green space, save sensitive environments, seek energy alternatives and assess our impact on the natural world. We should also listen to the custodians of the land and learn from the wisdom of the traditional owners.

My grandfather openly and passionately loved his wife and family. I have a lot to live up to, not the least of which is his contemporary sense of fashion. A story that became something of folklore among his grandchildren was an episode set in this very place in the 1970s when Jack decided to challenge the ruling that required members to wear a long-sleeved jacket while in the chamber. One very hot day, in an Assembly with no air conditioning, he decided to make a stand and wear his safari suit into the chamber. We think it was blue. He was tossed out of parliament for such defiance but made the front page of the *Courier-Mail* the following day. I have been told that women members do not have such a tight dress code so one day soon I may just settle some unfinished family business and dust off that safari suit.

I was also favoured with many warm stories about my mother, Elaine Darling, as I travelled around the Sandgate electorate. Elaine was the federal member for Lilley from 1980 until 1993. She was the first female member of the House of Representatives from Queensland and in the year that she was elected a new record was set for the number of women in the House of Representatives: three. Elaine also served a term on the Caloundra City Council. So not only am I a proud third-generation representative of the people of Queensland but also I am a second-generation female representative. I congratulate the Labor Party and EMILY's List for encouraging and supporting women in politics.

Elaine was a true representative of the people and she was a mother so, of course, she knew how to do several things at once: make decisions, listen to conversations, fix problems, be everywhere she needed to be and still have time for her children. She took me with her at every opportunity and I ate my fair share of burnt sausages and coleslaw at backyard fundraisers. But that gave me an opportunity to see decision makers at very close quarters. It gave me hope as among our representatives were some very smart and understanding people with pure motives and high morals. Of course, I also witnessed others less reputable, but so did the voters and I was once again assured that the democratic process was working well.

My mother established many innovative ways of truly serving and reaching the people of her electorate. Many of these are now commonplace procedures for any representative of the people. She produced the first plain language entitlements guide for pensioners which she called the *Pensioner Information Kit*. She moved her office out of the city and chose to locate it in a suburb that was in the middle of her electorate so that constituents could easily come to see her. She held the first mobile office. This was not just a table and chairs at the local shopping centre like we see today; she bought a HiAce van and had table and chairs fitted in the back so it truly was a mobile office.

Elaine followed in the footsteps of my grandfather and continued to fight for the have-nots. In her maiden speech to the House of Representatives in March 1981, she described the then government as 'having divided Australia between the haves and the have-nots'. She talked of 'the growing number of citizens just fighting to survive rather than thrive in the midst of all our advertised bounty'. I share those concerns. I do not want to see the gulf between the haves and the have-nots widening. The Queensland economy under the Beattie government and the excellent guardianship of Anna Bligh is in the best shape that it has been for a very long time. We are spending on the necessary infrastructure and services. We will deliver the water grid. We will deliver the Health Action Plan. Of what use is prosperity if we cannot share it among the needy—if we cannot direct funds for the benefit of all, not just some. So to those people who feel that they have fallen under the radar, I make my commitment to continue the family tradition and fight for the have-nots. I will fight for those who do not have the strength and I will speak for those who do not have a voice.

To the people of Brighton, Bracken Ridge, Deagon, Fitzgibbon, Sandgate, Shorncliffe and Taigum, thank you for your confidence in me. I love my community and I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting down to work. I have been inspired by the selfless giving of community members. They have taught me so much.

During the 26 days of the election campaign, I played lawn bowls, watched boxing training, picked up rubbish, learnt about the native vegetation, sung along, lost several raffles, remembered the fallen, congratulated the winners, made speeches, listened to concerns, heard some great ideas and heard some injustices, read reports, knocked on doors and answered phone calls and emails late into the night. I have been encouraged by my wonderful campaign team and branch members. Their enthusiasm made the campaign fun and their great ideas and reliability made the campaign a success. We are a strong team in Sandgate with brilliant and insightful members. The Labor Party will do a lot of great things for our community.

I thank especially Phil and Diane Hay for their genius and calm guidance and Milton for his big-picture strategy. I thank my champion doorknocker, Maurice; my sign aficionado, John; the campaign hotliners, Lyn, Elaine, Margaret, Lisa and Julie; the street stall devotees, Vicki, Don, Vyvyan, John, Bill, Jared, Glen, Graeme and David; my muse, Enda; John who organised my first trophy giving; and Tom, who kept the money on track. To Eileen, Thea, Lewis, Norm, Michael, Gordon, Steve and all the team who worked on polling booths, thank you so much. Some of them were manning those booths all day. I thank the many Labor Party mentors who gave me advice, especially Neil Roberts. Neil, it is just like having a big brother watching over me and I value your support enormously. I thank my supportive colleagues Wayne Swan and Victoria Newton for a strong and unified campaign. I also thank Dave Hanna, a true believer, and the Premier for his faith in me.

I would like to pay tribute to my supportive extended family. I am proud to be part of the Melloy clan and the Darling clan. I thank mum and dad and my brothers, Russell and Mark, and their families. I give a special thanks to my cousin Liz for our many phone calls during the campaign. It made a difference to be going through it together.

I give thanks for the love and support of the McDermott clan. I lost two special men this year: my grandfather, Jack, and my father-in-law, Ray. Both loved to quiz me, tease me and challenge my thinking. I make a special mention of my patient and wonderful friends, including the parents from the Sandgate State School. I thank them. I will be having barbecues at my house for the rest my life to make up for their patience. But the most special people in my life are my husband John, my son Jack, and my daughter Billie. My mother always told me that I could do anything I set my mind to. She was a living example of that. My children are very special human beings and I hope that they will always see in their parents the best example of responsible community members and know that the joy of a vibrant community comes from individuals willing to back their words with actions. They will certainly see their mother fighting for the have-nots.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Noosa, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (5.08 pm): I rise today as a very proud representative for my home, the state seat of Noosa, and can I say at the outset that it is an honour to be here as a member of the Queensland parliament.

I was born in Brisbane and raised in Everton Park with my parents, Reg and Jean, and brother, Darren. I guess we were a fairly normal family for the time, with mum staying at home to raise her family, dad going out to work and an extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins mostly living close by. While politics was not really discussed at our home, it nevertheless surrounded me as my grandfather, Henry Henderson, was a waterside worker—a 'wharfie'—and a very proud Labor man. One of our neighbours was Eric Lloyd, the Labor member for Kedron, who retired to Coolum selling real estate and sadly passed away about 12 months ago.

My early life was spent attending barbecues in the backyard of the Lloyds, going to Labour Day marches with my grandfather; and I think at an age of 10 or 11 working on my first election campaign handing out how-to-vote cards for then Brisbane Lord Mayor, Clem Jones. I mention these early days because, although I decided to follow a different political path, I well remember stories of how people would approach my grandfather and he would go to City Hall and meet with the then aldermen to try to have their problems solved. I firmly believe that the basis for my lifelong interest in politics comes from those days, as do my core personal beliefs of traditional values: the need for society to make provision for those who are in need and the right of the individual to excel and succeed. I inherited, I believe, Labor's social conscience, and I will return to that a little later.

I have been very fortunate in that I have been able to spend all of my working life in Queensland and after a couple of short early jobs began a career in commercial radio that has seen me, I believe, contribute in a small way to communities like Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville, Warwick, Toowoomba, Emerald and, for the last 21 years, Noosa, Gympie and the Sunshine Coast. Politics was never far away, and I joined the Liberal Party as a foundation member of the Mount Isa branch in 1974. Our Prime Minister, John Howard, often says that he is a creature of the Liberal Party; I think that this is also a fair description of my involvement over many years through the Liberal organisation and, more recently, as a candidate and now member of the Queensland parliament.

There is simply no way in the wide world that I would be standing here today without the support and love of my wife, Lesleigh, and my two children, Teigan and Kristin. When I met Lesleigh well over 20 years ago she knew straightaway of my commitment to the Liberal Party and community service. She has allowed me to follow my dream and, along with Teigan and Kristin, has been rock solid in her support, even after my loss at the 2004 state poll. I started campaigning for the election held on 9 September the day after the poll was declared in 2004. So for them it has been a long, hard campaign. This is a wonderful opportunity to state in the most public of places my love and thanks to Lesleigh, Teigan and Kristin, and we are all looking forward to spending a couple of weeks away together over the coming Christmas break.

As every single person in this place knows, elections at a local level are won only with the vital support of branches and a very enthusiastic supporter group. I was extremely lucky in this regard and would like to take a minute or two to thank my campaign committee, many of whom put their own lives on hold for weeks and months to ensure victory for the Liberal Party in Noosa. The core of the campaign committee consisted of Nick Dondas, Matt Collins and Jeff Nuskie. These three totally committed individuals kept me and the campaign on track and were available almost 24 hours a day. Nothing was too much trouble, and without them and their wives—Moira, Judy and Aprile—I would not be standing here today. I give special thanks to the Hon. Alex Somlyay, the federal member for Fairfax and his wife, Jenny, for their guidance and support not only during this campaign but over many years. It is wonderful at long last to be able to refer to Alex as my parliamentary colleague.

I have been involved in campaigns when the committee becomes bogged down and focuses on side issues. In my case the campaign team got on with the job. Everyone knew what needed to be done and, as the candidate, I could rely upon them all to be on hand when they were needed. The campaign secretary, Colleen Woods, and treasurer, John Stanton, are fine examples of this.

To the other team members, Karlene Connolly, Tony Tobin, Carolyn Krueger, Lance Barrett, Kenelm Creighton, Gus Hatter, Peg Burgin, Tony Fowler, Jack Connolly, Chris Walter and Barry Elms, thank you—you were the backbone of the campaign. Thanks also to Bruce and Glenise Clelland, who were out almost every day conducting 'information booths' or just spreading the news. Once again, nothing was too much trouble for this committed couple, and I also thank them sincerely.

Over 160 people volunteered to help out on election day, with booth captains in many cases on site from three o'clock in the morning setting up the booths. Our booths looked the part and were manned by helpers who were enthusiastic, on the ball and always wearing a broad smile. I visited every booth on the day and, as a very nervous candidate, I received a real boost in confidence every time I visited a booth.

The Liberal Party organisation was a great help during the campaign, with Geoffrey Greene, Peter Epstein and all of the staff at the secretariat being on hand to assist and help out whenever needed. Bruce Flegg and Lawrence Springborg were also on hand during the campaign, with Bruce and Lawrence visiting early on in the campaign and Bruce on another occasion just prior to polling day.

We all have role models that we have looked to during our lives. These are people who have shown by example how to achieve and who have been free with their advice and guidance. For me, two people stand out from different times: the first was my employer for many years, Sir Frank Moore. If ever there was a human dynamo, Frank Moore was it. His contribution, in my experience with him, to radio, tourism and Queensland politics has been enormous. And, while he never did get me to join the National Party, I was never successful in getting him to join the Liberal Party either. Our telephone conversations both prior to the election and after gave me confidence and inspiration.

The other person is former state Liberal Party president and friend Bob Tucker, who has been unfailing in his support for me over many, many years. Bob always comes through no matter what, from giving advice to fundraising and even during the campaign helping out with doorknocking in Coolum. He and his wife, Greer, are special people who have made a great contribution to the Liberal Party as a whole and particularly to my life.

Lesleigh and I moved to the Sunshine Coast in 1985 and for the past 17 years have lived in the Noosa electorate, the first 10 years in Coolum and the remainder in Noosa itself. Community service has always been very important to me. I am a firm believer that each of us has an obligation to put back into the community in which we live. I look forward to continuing to play an active role in groups that I have supported over many years, such as the Sunshine Coast Rescue Helicopter Service, better known as Energex Community Rescue; the Noosa, Coolum and Eumundi chambers of commerce; the Tewantin Community Association; Protecting Noosa Inc.; the Sunshine Beach State High School Council; and many others.

Many people who live in the Noosa electorate have made a lifestyle choice, as I have, to live in a very special part of our state. It is special because of the hard work and dedication of those who lived in Noosa well before I came to call it home and those who carry on that work today. The Noosa Parks Association, headed by Dr Michael Gloster, is one group that has played an outstanding role in preserving our unique lifestyle and protecting the local environment.

Regardless of where new residents come from, or what their political beliefs, they are unanimous in the need to maintain what is essentially Noosa. The neighbouring communities in the Maroochy shire but still part of the electorate, Coolum and Eumundi, are also determined to maintain their village lifestyle, and they will always have my support to stand up to overdevelopment and undue pressure from government.

Noosa has a reputation as being a community made up of the rich and affluent. While it is true that many wealthy people have come to call Noosa home and invest in its future by buying businesses and providing much needed jobs, it is also true that there are many families and individuals who, through no fault of their own, are finding it difficult to make ends meet. It is here that the state government has to play a much greater role and assist with the provision of more services and not, as is

increasingly the case, pass the ball to local government, placing greater strain on ratepayers. I gave a commitment during the campaign to work productively with the Noosa and Maroochy councils and with our federal member, Alex Somlyay. I am a small part in a team that needs to work together for the benefit of my electorate and the Sunshine Coast.

Noosa is in desperate need of greater health services, and I will continue to develop ways to expand our local Noosa Hospital. Dental services and mental health are also areas where urgent attention is required.

It beggars belief that the Department of Child Safety, while it has an office at the Noosa Courthouse, has to rely on staff visiting from Gympie. Like all communities, my electorate has its problems with young people who continue to do the wrong thing, but they need more help than what is available. The staff who visit are efficient and caring, but we need local experts who are on the ground and able to be of assistance all the time. I raised this issue well prior to the 2004 state election, and I look forward to now discussing the matter with the minister to get a resolution that will help our young people.

Public transport is also an issue, and the service provided by Sunbus continues to draw complaints. Since the election I have had a number of telephone calls and one just this week that was particularly troubling. Locals and visitors must have confidence in the public transport system so that the number of services can increase and the number of cars on our roads can be kept to a manageable level.

One of the policies put forward by the coalition at the last election was on driver training, particularly as it applies to young people. So good was the policy that many parts of it found its way into the material distributed by the Labor Party, and I congratulate the government on picking up on what was an excellent policy. I have had discussions with Councillor Greg Fahey from Maroochy Shire Council regarding a driver education facility which could be built at Quanda Road, Coolum. The coalition was prepared to commit up to $1 million towards this project, and I hope that I can convince the new minister to look favourably on what is a very important project for the Sunshine Coast. This is one way of at least limiting the number of young people who are tragically killed and injured on our local roads each year.

In the last term of government there were two issues that stood out head and shoulders above the rest, with the first being continued rumours of forced council amalgamations. Let me make it perfectly clear that to my knowledge there is not a single person in the Noosa Shire who is in favour of some kind of Sunshine Coast supercouncil. Noosa has developed its own way. It is unique, it is sustainable and it is the way Noosa has chosen to live.

The last issue that I would like to raise is one that is not even in my electorate, nevertheless it has united locals to oppose Labor in electorates from Gympie to Caloundra and beyond. Of course, I refer to the Traveston Crossing Dam. In my earlier remarks I spoke of inheriting what I called Labor's social conscience. This is the party that prides itself on supporting the downtrodden, the party that champions basic human rights and the party that has fought the good fight on any number of social issues throughout its long history. Yet, when it comes to the people of the Mary Valley, Labor is prepared to abandon its soul and continue to support the worst of all options that will see townships destroyed and history flooded, the loss of some of the best agricultural land in the state and the displacement of 900 families that call the Mary Valley home.

I am not against dams, and I recognise the need to provide water for the future of south-east Queensland and use all of the technology that is available to us today. But, why does this government pursue the Traveston Crossing Dam when there are sound alternatives that could be started now? We do not need to build this monstrosity. What happened to the Labor Party of my grandfather? I promised during the election campaign that I would do everything in my power to stop the Traveston Crossing Dam, and I will work with my friend and colleague the member for Gympie to achieve just that. The Noosa electorate is my home, and with a bit of luck and a lot of hard work I hope to represent my community for many years to come. The electorate has given me its trust. It is now up to me to live up to its expectations.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.25 pm): I move—

That this House notes the government's water infrastructure promises together with the associated costs and delivery timetables and, in view of the water crisis facing the state, calls on the government to provide this House with a report on progress with these projects on a quarterly basis with particular reference to any changes to the proposed costs and delivery timetables.

This is a very appropriate motion for us to move on the first day of the 52nd Parliament following the election. This is a motion that seeks to achieve the delivery of the government's election promises. It is a motion that seeks to ensure that the government not only is reminded of the promises that it has made but also reports regularly to this parliament about the progress that it is making towards delivering on those promises, and that is a right and proper thing to do.

I think too many times in politics governments or political parties go to elections promising a whole manner of things and then they are forgotten, and there is confusion about what was promised and whether or not those promises have been delivered. This is about the accountability of the newly elected government to this parliament. It is about the newly elected government being accountable to this parliament of the people and reporting on a quarterly basis on the progress that it is making on this very important issue. It is an incredibly important issue. It is a crisis that is engulfing south-east Queensland. It is a crisis that will get immeasurably worse unless we are lucky enough to get some very extensive rainfall in the coming summer. It is a crisis that has to be addressed quickly and it has to be addressed in the manner in which the government has promised the people of Queensland that it will be addressed.

To a very great extent there is agreement about what needs to be done. I said this morning in question time that I do not mind at all that the government picked up the water policy that I released back in May almost word for word. I do not mind at all, because it identified what needed to be done. It was quite clever politics, I have to say, and I say that to the Premier because he knows that it was quite clever politics. In the end there were only a couple of differences between our water policy and the government's water policy. One difference was that the government chose to build the wrong dam—the Traveston Crossing Dam. The other difference was our emphasis on the use of recycled water for industry. The Deputy Premier and others tried to make much political mileage out of the fact that somehow the four dams that we proposed were not going to supply as much water theoretically as the dam that they chose to commit to, but they conveniently ignored the great emphasis that we had in our policy on recycled water.

So there is a broad agreement at least that there needs to be a massive investment in water infrastructure to address the water crisis in south-east Queensland. There is a very strong disagreement from our side about where some of that investment needs to take place, but there is a very broad agreement that we need to get on with this and catch up on the failures of this government to do this work over time.

I tabled in the parliament this morning a list of water projects in south-east Queensland that the government had committed to. That information was sourced from the government's own documents, so there should be no argument about the fact that the government has committed to those projects and the latest costings attached to them. One of the projects was the southern regional pipeline, which on the government's own figures will cost $600 million and is expected to be completed and has to be completed by 2008. There is the desalination plant, which is currently costed at $1.126 billion. As the Premier said this morning, that was a much inflated cost from the original because of the expected increase in water production to provide water to Brisbane. That is supposed to come on line by 2008-09.

The western corridor recycled water pipeline should have been built by now, had the government accepted the urgings of the opposition to get on with that project years ago. For years we have been standing in this parliament advocating that that recycled water had to stop going into Moreton Bay and instead be turned inland and put to good use. That project should have been completed by now. With the modelling we are currently working under, that has to be completed by 2008 at least to the stage where the power stations are able to use that water rather than continue to draw those large amounts of water from Wivenhoe Dam.

Then, of course, there is the Traveston Crossing Dam, which the government has costed at some $1.7 billion but which I confidently believe will end up costing closer to $3 billion—if it can be built at all. It is in the government's program to be completed by 2011. What a disaster it will be if the government does try to construct that dam. I also confidently predict that sooner or later this government will accept the mistake it made in adopting that project. The government will accept the mistake it made because it will be forced by the weight of evidence to accept its mistake. I say to the Premier that it was a political decision in the first place. The Premier has had his political win because of it, now let us adopt some common sense and deal with the reality that it is impossible to construct an economically viable water infrastructure storage in the Mary Valley, which it is proposing to do at Traveston.

Let us put the politics aside. Let us accept the fact that that was a political decision and move on and build the water infrastructure that needs to be built. The day the Premier stands in this place and abandons that project, I will walk around there and congratulate him—and that day will come. That will happen because the Premier knows and I know that that project was politically inspired, and it will certainly be a disaster if the government continues to pursue it.

These documents contained a range of other promises concerning areas other than south-east Queensland, including the Beattie governments commitment to fund a statewide water grid. Some of those projects were a little bit fanciful, I would suggest, but there are a range of projects here which the opposition wants to see progressed as well. We will be ensuring that we keep the government accountable in this parliament.

The government suggested in this document that it will invest $222 million in raising existing storages, weirs and dams, including a whole range of projects from the Fitzroy through to the Connors River Dam, the Nullinga Dam and the Nathan Dam in the Taroom shire, which is something I have

spoken about in this parliament for eight years. I have spoken about that for eight years now, and all of a sudden it is in the Beattie government's election promises. I am going to remind the government of that for the next couple of years, and I hope we get more progress in the next two years than we have had in the last eight. I hope we see something done in the next two years because it is there in the government's election promises.

There is also the promise regarding the statewide water grid—$198 million worth of pipelines—with pipelines from the Connors River Dam to Nebo, pipelines from the Burdekin River Dam to Bowen, pipelines from Rockhampton to Gladstone, a pipeline from Bowen to Proserpine, and another pipeline from the Capricorn Coast to Rockhampton, which incidentally is funded by the federal government—

Mr Beattie: What's wrong with that?

Mr SEENEY: There is nothing wrong with that, except the government has included the total funding in there even though two-thirds of it is other people's money. The only thing the government can point to is projects that other people have funded. All of those pipeline projects are good projects and we want to see them delivered. We want to see the promises the government has made about that infrastructure in regional Queensland delivered. But, most of all, we want to see the infrastructure the government has promised for south-east Queensland delivered, with the exception of the Traveston Dam, which the government will inevitably realise was a bad decision. I know in time that the reality of that will be forced upon the government. This motion is about holding the government accountable and it should be supported by every member of the parliament.

Time expired.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (5.35 pm): It gives me pleasure to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In relation to water, the government is shutting the stable door after the horse has already bolted. The shortage of water in south-east Queensland was foreseeable. The government knew about the population growth of south-east Queensland. It knew that we have periodic droughts in Queensland. Yet, when it came to water, it had nothing underway, no projects in the pipeline—if members will pardon the pun.

The projects that we are being promised, now that we have already entered a crisis phase, are years from completion. Many of those projects that the Premier has promised the people of Queensland will not deal with the present crisis in water because they will not be on stream for many years to come. They may help with some future crisis in water, but the crisis in water in south-east Queensland is in 2007. Not one of the promised projects will be on stream by the time Brisbane's water supply becomes critical. If government members think we do not have a crisis until the last drop of water flows out of Wivenhoe Dam, then think again. This government has been asleep at the wheel when it has come to planning and providing for growth, particularly in water supplies for the people of south-east Queensland.

In the Leader of the Opposition's motion, we have called for quarterly reporting to the parliament. Why do we want quarterly reporting from this government? Simply because we do not trust it. We have heard and the people of Queensland have heard it all before—promise after promise in relation to infrastructure that simply do not get delivered. This government is now inflicting on the people of Brisbane, in particular, and south-east Queensland progressively more and more punishing water restrictions because of its failure to plan our water supplies, because of its failure to deliver projects and infrastructure on time and because of its failure to deliver projects on budget.

Members on this side of the chamber have called for this debate because of the continuing uncertainty about the true picture of what the government is doing to fix the current water supply crisis. Prior to the recent election, the Premier made a number of announcements which he repeated during the campaign as promises to the people of Queensland. These did not provide full costings for all the promises made to date to fix south-east Queensland's water crisis. Recently, we have seen concerns raised by the people on the Gold Coast about the desalination project, which has grown from an initial cost of $260 million to an estimate of $1.6 billion, as contained in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

On top of that, there will be no full-scale environmental impact statement on the desalination project. It is hard to believe that a government that endlessly trumpets its green credentials and endlessly trumpets its concern about global warming and greenhouse gases would choose to proceed with a project that may have substantial environmental consequences for the local environment without a full environmental impact statement. There is a rapidly growing list of unanswered questions about the bottom line in regard to this project. The same problems with costings of the government's water policies surround each of the dams in south-east Queensland. On top of this, there are other unanswered questions about each of these dams, especially about the locations and whether all the engineering issues have been addressed.

The Premier is presently asking members of this House to give him an open chequebook. The Premier's official media release in July this year relating to the Wyaralong Dam at Beaudesert states that it would cost between $400 million and $500 million which is, in anyone's language, a very substantial difference in the estimated costings. There are still significant concerns about the correct costing for all the other infrastructure and the time lines of those projects. This is a water crisis—

Time expired.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (5.40 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after "notes" are deleted and the following words inserted:

"that the Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006 requires monthly reports on all major water projects."

Before us is a proposal from the opposition that there should be public reporting on the progress of every major water project on a quarterly basis. On its face it seems to be a very sensible idea. That is until, of course, members look at the Water Amendment Regulation that was debated in this parliament on 9 August. What does that regulation say? It says that it requires by regulation—requires by regulation—every water service provider that is involved in the construction of every single water project in this plan to provide to the Queensland Water Commission a report on progress every month. It is further required that that progress report be made public on the web site. So there will be publicly available reports every single month.

Mr Seeney: Not on your election promises.

Ms BLIGH: Which I would have thought—

Mr Seeney: Come on, not on your election promises.

Ms BLIGH: Which I would have thought was a significantly higher level of public accountability than quarterly reporting. I am happy to tell the opposition that while we certainly agree with it—

Mr Seeney: That's taking weasel words to a new height.

Ms BLIGH: While we certainly agree that there ought to be publicly available and regular reporting on progress, we certainly will not be lowering the standard that was debated in this parliament on 9 August in relation to this regulation.

One should not be surprised to find that the opposition is so unfamiliar with the contents of this regulation. Anybody who was here on 9 August will know that the opposition voted against the regulation. When members hear the Leader of the Opposition standing up here championing the cause of recycled water, championing how much he agrees with the government's policy on water, they should remember that the opposition agreed with it so much that it voted against it. The opposition voted against the water grid, it voted against the desalination plan, it voted against the new dams, it voted against the water demand reduction strategies, it voted against the water rebates and it voted against the Traveston Dam.

Mr Horan interjected.

Ms BLIGH: The opposition voted against everything. As I said, I have never seen such a wholesale rejection of water infrastructure—

Mr Purcell: A clean sweep.

Ms BLIGH:—in one clean sweep, as the member says.

I report to the House that progress is being made on these written report requirements. I sought the House's understanding that during the caretaker period a number of water service providers obviously had disruptions to progress, but the Queensland Water Commission advises me that it is negotiating with each of the water service providers for a standard pro forma so that these reports are much more easily understood by the public and are much clearer in a public reporting sense. The October progress report will be published on the commission's web site by the end of this month. By the end of October, the first monthly report on every single one of those projects will be publicly available.

As I said, our government is accountable on these issues. The members opposite want to limit the public awareness of progress on water, and we will not be stooping to their level. I do accept that the opposition's original motion related to water projects beyond the scope of the Water Amendment Regulation. I think it is a fair indication of this government's commitment that we are regulating to require not only ourselves but also every council and water related company to report monthly. That is a very strong indication of our commitment to transparent public accountability. Of course, we will have a public reporting regime on those components of the statewide water plan that were released during the election campaign. I am very happy to give that commitment tonight, and I will advise further when we are in a position to say what the details of that will be.

These water projects are very big and ambitious undertakings, whether it is in south-east Queensland or the rest of the state. I can assure members that nobody cares more than I do about their delivery on time and within budget. I give my absolute, ironclad guarantee that the good news and bad news is going to be on the web site for public display each month on every single project. I expect the state government entities involved to be as fulsome in their reporting as I expect local councils to be. I do expect we will see mixed reports. Across this many projects, there will be some that slip and there will be some that are ahead of time, but we need to know what they are and we need to be publicly accountable about it. That is exactly what we will do.

I have some additional copies of the Water Amendment Regulation; I will have them handed out. Once again I urge the honourable members opposite to find out what it says in the water regulation because that is the legal framework that will deliver the water plans for this government that we were elected on.

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.46 pm): I am happy to second the Minister for Infrastructure's amendment to the motion. In doing so, I table for the House the Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006.

Tabled paper: Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006.

Ms Bligh: Again.

Mr Seeney: Read the section for us.

Mr BEATTIE: I will. I am more than happy to do that. What I want to highlight to the member opposite—

Mr Seeney: The section about declaring an emergency.

Mr BEATTIE: Listen, I was very courteous to you. Just take it easy, Digger. Sorry, honourable Leader of the Opposition, otherwise known as 'Digger'. This regulation provides for transparency that has never existed. Each one of these regulations—and I introduced this when I was the minister responsible—sets out not just a time frame; it sets out when each one of these projects is to be delivered. If members go to page 15, it sets out, for example, what Caboolture Shire Council is required to do; it ensures transparency. Remember the question that the member opposite asked me this morning in relation to the water costing issues? All these things are set out clearly in here. We did not hide any of it. Why did we do it? We did it because we wanted to make certain that everybody understood what they were required to do and implement a reporting mechanism that has never existed.

I have tabled the Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006. I urge the member opposite to read it. I came in here and went on and on about it. I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition would have been attentive. I give the member credit for one thing—he is like us in that he is interested in water. Therefore, I am disappointed that the member opposite did not read every single word in that regulation.

Mr Seeney: I've got one here.

Mr BEATTIE: It should have become your second Bible; that is what it should have become. The Leader of the Opposition should have read every line of it, and then he could have stolen it for his election campaign. Had he done so, heaven knows what the numerical balance in here may have been.

Ms Nolan: He hasn't read much of the first one, either.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Oh, don't you interject.

In recent years, the Queensland government has invested almost $420 million in water infrastructure in rural communities. This includes projects such as the Paradise Dam, stage 2 of the Awoonga Dam, the Gattonvale and Moura off-stream storages and the Moura Weir refurbishment. This has added more than 190 million litres to the bush water supply capacity and improved reliability for existing users. My government was responsible for the planning decisions and building Paradise Dam. It was my government that addressed all the environmental issues.

In the 2½ half years that those opposite were in government, they did absolutely nothing. There was no environmental impact study done—nothing! During its term in government the current opposition talked about building a dam but it did absolutely nothing to deliver it. We are proud that we planned and built the Paradise Dam, which was completed late last year. I officially commissioned it in December 2005. The dam has a 300,000 megalitre capacity. It will assist in the social and economic growth of the region. It is also significant in the wider context of leading the way in state-of-the-art dams due to many notable environmental features. The dam is expected to yield approximately 124,000 million litres each year of medium priority water for agricultural use and 20,000 million litres each year of high priority water for urban and industrial use.

The Paradise Dam is the only major dam built by any government in this country in the past decade, and my government did it. We have a track record when it comes to delivering water infrastructure, and this is part of it. This huge project had a workforce of 450 workers at peak construction, and approximately 200 businesses in the Wide Bay area benefited directly by supplying products and services for the construction of the dam.

The Kirar Weir was also completed. Construction of the Kirar Weir, previously known as the Eidsvold Weir, was completed in March 2005. The weir is capable of yielding 20,000 megalitres of new water allocations and is situated on the Burnett River five kilometres north-west of Eidsvold and approximately 80 kilometres south-west of Bundaberg. The construction of the $20 million weir took 15 months to complete. These are just some of the projects that we have already completed.

The Gattonvale off-stream storage was completed. The town of Collinsville and its surrounding mines and power stations are now able to rely on a 5,200-megalitre water storage with completion of the Gattonvale off-stream storage.

Also, there was the raising of the Awoonga Dam in Gladstone. There have been a number of significant raisings of that dam. In June 2002 work was finalised on the raising of the Awoonga Dam near Gladstone. This huge project gives Queensland a water facility with a storage capacity of 770,000 megalitres, vital for the further development of the industrial opportunities in the Gladstone area. Again, that is another project that we have delivered.

There is the Blueprint for the Bush. A multimillion-dollar investment in water security and supply was a key feature of the Blueprint for the Bush. The state government is committed to a raft of initiatives. The Blueprint for the Bush outlines more than $990 million in new dams. The list goes on. There are other projects including plans for the Moranbah pipeline. I table the full details of those projects for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Details of water infrastructure achievements in rural Queensland.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (5.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I would ask the Treasurer and Premier to read the speech of the member for Chatsworth, Chris Bombolas. I thought it was brilliant the way he outlined what the government has to do in this term of government with all the money that has been promised, or something along those lines—they were not his exact words.

That is exactly what we are debating tonight. Some 1,500 people a week are moving to Queensland. We have heard the Premier talk about this on a number of occasions. That puts a lot of pressure on infrastructure. That is exactly what this motion is about tonight. I challenge the new members in this House to catch the lift up to level 23 and get an attendant to take them on to the roof of the Annexe and ask themselves, 'What has this Labor government built? What can I see that this government has put in place for Queensland?' They will see the footbridge. If they go to the other corner they will see the football stadium. That is about it.

What did we do when we were in government? We built every dam. We heard the Premier talk about Paradise Dam. We announced Paradise Dam, and those opposite had to build it when they came to government. That is what happened in terms of Paradise Dam. We built every other dam. We built the Bowen Basin. We built the Burdekin Dam. We built the electric train system. We built every highway. We built the Gold Coast freeway and the Gateway Bridge, just to name a few. We were a government with a vision for the future.

Government members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: They might laugh. Do those opposite know what people are calling them? They are calling them the 'gonna-do government'. That is what it is. It has again been elected on promises. This morning when the Treasurer was asked two questions about how things are going we saw her hide and say, 'It's not up to me; it is up to the Water Commissioner.'

If I buy a farm I have to pay the bank manager. When the bank manager rings me I do not pass the buck on to the manager. That is exactly what we are seeing from the Treasurer of Queensland. That is the problem. The people of Queensland want to see some fruits of the promises that the government made during the election campaign. Government members should read Chris Bombolas's speech. That speech will come back to haunt the member for Chatsworth because he is now part of a 'gonna-do government'.

Let me outline a few things that we have done. For the Wyaralong Dam we purchased 2,326 hectares of land, for the Glendower Dam we purchased 2,534 hectares, for the Amamoor Dam we purchased 1,516 hectares and for the Borumba Dam we purchased 5,507 hectares.

Look at the hiccups in Toowoomba lately due to its water problems. We have some policies that could have fixed that. I see the Premier laughing. Has he seriously looked at the policy we put in place for the Norwin irrigators? Some $40 million would see a pipeline to Toowoomba which takes water out of that aquifer and the farmers leasing the water to Toowoomba. When we get rain, which we will get—and I see the minister for natural resources in the chamber; he is aware of this and I hope he seriously looks at this in the future—then if that pipeline is put in place that water would go straight into the Mount Kynoch plant. We would only need to add chlorine to it. It is potable water. It is not going to hurt the aquifer. It means no more water coming out of the aquifer. When the dams fill up the farmers can go back to using that water. They are happy to sell it to Toowoomba at $1,000 a megalitre, which is quite cheap for a council of today.

That is a solution that is the result of the opposition's hard work. That is an answer for Toowoomba right now. We also announced that we would build Emu Creek Dam. The Emu Creek Dam would hold exactly what the three dams in Toowoomba can hold at the moment. That would double the size of Toowoomba's water-holding capacity. Those opposite say that we cannot build it because it is on the catchment of Wivenhoe. Wivenhoe was put in place as a flood buffer for Brisbane. That means that when there is a flood and Wivenhoe fills a lot of water goes past Wivenhoe. All that would do is catch the water that would have gone past Wivenhoe. I think it is a brilliant move.

We have to look at common-sense policies that can be put in place. This motion tonight is simply about accountability. That is exactly what we have not seen from this government. Sooner or later the people are going to wake up to the fact that they cannot live on promises. I do not believe the dam at Gympie will even be built. I heard the statement from our leader that he will walk around and shake the Premier's hand when it is. I do not believe it ever will be built. The Premier knows it will not be built.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water) (5.56 pm): I support the amendment moved by the Premier. As the Minister for Natural Resources and Water I am determined to work, in my areas of responsibility, to deliver on the government's commitment to provide greater water security. The government's commitment to water security is most comprehensive. We are working on both sides of the water equation—supply and demand. The government's work on demand management is very significant.

By using our existing water supplies more efficiently we are not only saving water; we are also saving money. The government has programs offering rebates for water-saving devices for households in south-east Queensland. The Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme was launched on 1 July this year to help residents in 22 local council areas in south-east Queensland, including Toowoomba, to save water. The scheme offers rebates on rainwater tanks and water-efficient washing machines, shower heads, dual-flush toilets, pool covers and greywater devices.

There has been a tremendous response to this scheme—more than 32,000 applications for rebates in the first three months. The department is bolstering staff working on the scheme. I am advised the department is increasing staff from 51 to 90 and continuing the night shifts and part-time teams. The department will continue to monitor the response to the scheme and the extension of the scheme statewide, as promised at the last election, with these staffing arrangements.

The Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme is just one of the demand management initiatives supported by the government. The Home WaterWise Service provides a subsidised plumbing service to retrofit up to 150 homes in south-east Queensland by September 2007. In addition, through the Business Water Efficiency Program the government is working with local councils to promote water conservation among its industrial water users.

The government has also committed funding to assist councils cut water losses from leaks and breaks in their water distribution networks. The government has committed $32 million for this work in south-east Queensland, and we have committed a further $25 million for this program to be extended statewide.

For rural industry the government has championed water savings and increased productivity through its Rural Water Use Efficiency Scheme. We are also working with landholders and the federal government to reduce water losses through the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative, which involves the capping of bores and piping open channels in the basin.

In responding to the water challenge, Queensland is honouring its commitment to the National Water Initiative—the national agreement on water reform signed in 2004. Queensland indeed is playing its part. Queensland in fact was the only Murray-Darling Basin state not threatened with a financial penalty. Our implementation plan for the National Water Initiative was approved in August. Implementation of the National Water Initiative is also linked to access to the Australian Government Water Fund. The government's approach to water charges, pricing, trading and planning is consistent with the National Water Initiative. As minister, delivering on these commitments to provide greater water supply security for users and the environment will be a major priority. As the member for Toowoomba North, I am keen to see the outcomes of the Toowoomba Water Task Force. The task force was established by the government following the outcome of the referendum on the Toowoomba Water Futures proposal. The task force has met again today. The Premier advised the House this morning that by 17 November the task force aims to have established the amount of water needed by Toowoomba up to the year 2050 and options for immediate action. The task force will provide a final report to the government on its preferred strategy, which will then be acted upon.

I urge the opposition to support the government's endeavours to secure water for Queensland. The impacts of climate change, the severe drought and our growing population and economy are placing unprecedented pressure on our water supplies. The initiatives and projects the government has committed to deliver will provide long-term water security. The Deputy Premier as the Minister for Infrastructure has ministerial responsibility for the delivery of new water infrastructure projects. As the minister for water, I believe the government's water infrastructure program is an essential part in delivering the additional water supplies and greater water security for our state. As the minister for water, I know the decisions we make on water infrastructure are accommodated in the comprehensive catchment resource planning we have been doing. This means that the infrastructure decisions we make will take into account the needs for environmental flows as well as the needs of existing water users. The important point about the government's water infrastructure plans is to build dams in catchments where it rains and where there are sufficient inflows.

Time expired.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.01 pm): I strongly support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, because this is about accountability and keeping this government accountable for its promises to the people of Queensland. This Labor government has been elected on the basis of these promises—very important commitments as far as delivering very necessary infrastructure for the state of Queensland. But why is this government now saying that it does not want to support this motion about greater accountability in terms of delivering that very important infrastructure and the promises that led to those infrastructure promises being met? Why is it intending to vote against it? Because quite frankly on its track record of the last eight years it does not believe that it can commit to these projects and see them delivered within budget and within time; otherwise, it would support this motion of the coalition.

What the government has put up as an alternative in its amendment is quite frankly weasel words, and let me explain. The regulation that the Minister for Infrastructure and the Premier referred to is substantially to do with water supply emergencies which have not been declared at this stage in Queensland. Quite clearly this government anticipates that we are about to have a water supply emergency and therefore it will be enacting provisions within this regulation. With regard to the deadlines referred to in the schedule of this regulation, many of those deadlines have already passed. Many of those deadlines have already passed, and we still await to see those reports released publicly as has been promised.

The water crisis that has emerged in this state is not because of global warming; it is because of seat warming. It is because of seat warming by a Labor government that promises much, delivers little and then does not want to be held accountable for the promises that it takes to the people of Queensland. We also see with the infrastructure crisis not only in water but also in roads and all social infrastructure, particularly health, that this government has abused the trust of the people of Queensland by blaming growth as if somehow population growth has just happened and that it did not expect it and that it turned around one day and by surprise there were all of these people coming to Queensland. I suggest those opposite go and talk to the Parliamentary Library and get the population growth figures for Queensland for the last 20 years, because, hey presto, there are no unexpected growth figures in Queensland. It has been going on for 20 years.

We have a government that now wants to blame population growth for all of the problems with infrastructure in this state. Growth is not the problem and is not the reason we have seen failing infrastructure in Queensland. It is lack of planning. Now we have a situation where the government has promised much and won an election on the basis of those promises, many of which were promises that we also as a coalition had initiated, as the Leader of the Opposition outlined earlier, particularly with regard to water, with a very notable exception—Traveston Dam. Let me set the record straight for this parliament after listening to the Minister for Infrastructure, who said that the coalition was against water infrastructure and planning because we voted against this water regulation that she has referred to. We voted against this water regulation because it included Traveston Dam. She should have told the parliament the truth, because Traveston Dam is an absolute disaster about to happen, and that has been well outlined by my colleagues previously in the House and by that excellent maiden speech from the member for Gympie. The Traveston Dam is a disaster, but this government must be held accountable.

This motion that the coalition has moved is about accountability, because if this government does not deliver and report on those deliveries in a timely way the water in Queensland will run out. We will see our roads continue to grind to a gridlock, and it is too important for those promises of this government not to be fulfilled and for this government not to be held accountable. This coalition in opposition has an important role as well, and that is to demand better of this government, to demand better than what it has done for the last eight years. For the sake of the people of Queensland, we demand better. We are watching and we ask that this parliament accept the motion that we put to the House tonight, not the amendment moved by the Premier which will fail Queenslanders if the track record of the last eight years is anything to go by.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (6.06 pm): The very essence of this motion brought to the House by the National Party is a firm and ringing endorsement of the Beattie Labor government's policies on water coupled with an attempt to water down the accountability provisions within those policies. What those opposite have said today is, 'We resoundingly endorse all aspects of the Beattie government's water plan, but we don't want you to report every month. We want you to report every quarter.' That basic nonsense at the heart of the opposition's position on water is nothing new. This opposition has had so many different views on water policy in recent years that it would be hard pressed to remember exactly where it was when it started.

Let me give the House just a few examples. For years in here the National Party has tried to paint itself as self-styled dam builders. They are the people who will build the dams—that was until it came to the Traveston Dam which, overwhelmed in a tsunami of nimbyism, it suddenly opposed. It wants to claim that it initiated the Paradise Dam despite the fact that the public record clearly shows that this is simply not the case. And then it came to recycled water. And where was it on recycled water? Well, in the case of Toowoomba—the only case where there has been an absolute black and white yes or no

question on recycled water in Australia—the National Party first was right there. It was absolutely saying yes—until its patriarch Clive Berghofer came along, at which point it ran into the corner of no. So is it any wonder that the National Party is all over the place again on water. It would be so confused it would be hard pressed to remember where it was when it started. The Beattie government in stark contrast has a complex, comprehensive, well put together platform of water measures. They include new dams. They include measures to reduce demand, and our water policy includes a water grid to ensure that water can be re-used and that it can be moved to the parts of south-east Queensland where it is most needed at any particular time.

Today, the National Party finds itself in this funny, wishy-washy position of not knowing where it stands but simply hoping that we cannot meet the timetable that we have set. That is what this motion is about. Let me tell the members opposite that, sadly, they are going to find themselves disappointed.

I want to talk specifically about two aspects of that water grid. The first aspect is the Southern Regional Water Pipeline, a pipeline that runs from just west of Ipswich down to Helensvale over a course of about 100 kilometres and which will have the capacity to pump water in both directions—that is, from western Brisbane to the Gold Coast or, if need be, as in a case such as now where the Gold Coast has water but there is not so much water in Wivenhoe Dam, in the opposite direction.

The National Party would like to say that we are not going to meet our timetable on that pipeline. I want to tell them that that is simply not the case. That Southern Regional Water Pipeline was designated as a project of state significance way back in September 2005. The corporation that will build it was established in January 2006. The pipes—or at least the start of them—are now on order from Tyco Water at Carole Park, and work on that pipeline will commence very shortly.

Then there is the western corridor recycled water pipeline which, again, the National Party wants to suggest somehow is not going to happen. But I should tell them that in Ipswich—at Bundamba specifically—work has commenced already on the earthworks for the first stage of that pipeline, which will link the Bundamba waste water treatment plant to that huge water user, Swanbank Power Station. That pipeline will ultimately run from Luggage Point all the way up to Tarong and include three major waste water treatment plants along the way.

I make those specific points to the National Party because they so undermine what is today's argument from that side of the House. Having said that it is for and against dams and that it is for and against recycled water, the National Party now does not know where it stands. We will build these water projects and we will ensure water security.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (6.11 pm): It is good to support this common-sense motion that has been moved tonight. It is absolutely disgraceful to see the amendment that has been moved in this House that will try to con the government backbenchers into believing that the government has some sort of reporting system every month. In fact, the reporting system that the Deputy Premier and the Premier talked about is one for emergency declarations only, and that system covers only south-east Queensland.

The coalition's motion is about all the promises that were made during the election campaign in relation to the supply of water in south-east Queensland—along with all the other promises that were made in relation to other areas—and a quarterly report to the parliament that will show changes in the timetable and changes in costs, not some web site, so that we can debate the issue in an open and accountable fashion. There is only one reason we have a crisis in water supply—and it is a crisis. That is, for eight years the Beattie government had a policy of building no new dams in south-east Queensland. In 2004, we were roundly criticised when we said that there was going to be a water shortage. But now the chickens have come home to roost. This massive infrastructure is a major undertaking. Any delays or any financial blow-outs must be fixed in a timely manner; otherwise those delays or blow-outs will worsen.

The coalition has moved a motion to ensure that this parliament and the people of Queensland can have every promise made in relation to water supply, ranging from those that were made in relation to water supplies in rural and regional Queensland to the important promises that were made in relation to the water supply in south-east Queensland, which is facing a water supply crisis—and it is a real crisis—debated in this parliament every quarter rather than the government simply relying on that cunning trick of saying that information is released every month when that information will be released every month only if it has been a declared emergency. If the government would move an amendment to this motion to state that it will declare every situation an emergency, that might satisfy us. But, once again, this government is hiding behind this facade.

This water crisis is immense. It will take a long time to put this major water infrastructure in place. I have only a few minutes left in which to speak, but I want to say a couple of things about what we should do. At the end of World War II we were a poor nation, yet we built the great Snowy Mountain Scheme. Now we are a nation with a trillion-dollar economy, a national $13 billion surplus and a state $3 billion surplus. It is about time we put real money into the supply of water and not continue with bandaid and boutique solutions. One such boutique solution was recycled water. A referendum for that

was held in Toowoomba. In order to recycle water we need sources of water, because only 60 per cent of water that is used in the recycling process results in recycled water. So we need dams and bores and the ability to transfer water throughout the state.

I agree with the principle of the water grid. The opposition leader proposed such a project when he was the shadow minister for water. Grids are important so that water can be taken from areas where there is rainfall or where there are good catchments to population centres or to where it is needed. We will have to transfer water more often in the future. We have to have a vision of the way in which we supply water to places such as Toowoomba, which is located 2,000 metres up on top of a range and which has to bring water from catchments that are located elsewhere.

The water task force that was put together in Toowoomba after the referendum is supposed to report within six months of that referendum. We have about 3½ months of that time left. The situation is urgent. We need immediate solutions, such as accessing the Norwin water supply and sinking more bores. I note that the council has started drilling and has been successful in getting water from some of those bores. The Norwin water supply would have given us immediately 5,000 megalitres a year, which would have been leased from the irrigators. Those irrigators could take the water when they needed it or, if there had been a good year of rainfall and they did not need the water, they could choose not to take it. We need to be hooked up to the South East Queensland Water Grid or be more visionary and be hooked up to the Nathan Dam, which would have a yield of 188,000 megalitres a year and which could supply towns such as Miles, Chinchilla and Dalby, which have booming mining industries, and Toowoomba. The sale price of that urban water could help provide water for rural irrigators at a reasonable price. South-east Queensland may also need to be hooked up to the Paradise Dam so that it could receive water from that source.

The time is now. We need accountability regarding project management and we need accountability regarding the financial cost so that this parliament can address this massive water crisis. We can do it only if each and every project—not those that have been declared an emergency—is brought before this parliament for the people of Queensland to see and for all the elected members to debate so that we can make sure that the infrastructure is delivered on time and so that we all know what the cost and the social cost is to our state. That is what we want and that is what all members should vote for.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. I am pleased that the opposition has taken the step of highlighting the comprehensive water infrastructure commitments that the Beattie government has made. Such is this government's commitment to improving water security and supply through the provision of new infrastructure that one of the first policy announcements made in the recent election campaign was in regard to the government's commitment to develop a statewide water grid. Not only did the timing of the announcement signify the priority that this government places on the provision of water infrastructure; the fact that the announcement was made in Bowen, which is in my electorate of Whitsunday, equally signified this government's recognition of and commitment to address the water needs of rural and regional Queensland.

The statewide water policy, as announced on the first full day of the campaign, was very comprehensive in its scope and in its commitment to the people of both the south-east corner of Queensland and regional Queensland. The total funding committed was $496 million, with $420 million equity injections for new infrastructure, including $222 million for new dams and weirs and raising existing storages; $45 million for demand management programs; and $31 million for work identifying new sources of water supply.

As I am a parochial person, I am most interested in what the Premier's water policy means for my constituents and the people of the Mackay-Whitsunday region. In terms of the Whitsunday electorate, the policy committed $1 million to secure the completion of the Water for Bowen feasibility study, $49 million to progress the project and a further $18 million for a pipeline to connect Proserpine and the wider Whitsunday region to bring water from the Burdekin Dam to Bowen.

The opposition refused to commit to the extension in the Whitsunday region. In the Mackay region, the government committed $3.5 million for design work on raising the Kinchant Dam, which is owned and operated by SunWater. Further south in the Broadsound shire, the government committed $56.5 million for the development of Connors Rivers Dam at Mount Bridget.

The government has also committed $60 million for pipelines to connect the Connors River Dam with the Broadsound and possibly Nebo and Belyando shires. The Connors River Dam is part of the government's strategy to ensure that the Bowen Basin region has the water it needs for the future. SunWater is currently in the process of completing the 220-kilometre pipeline from the Burdekin to Moranbah to supply additional water to the coalfields.

In the far north the government committed $6 million for design work on the Nullinga Dam near Mareeba. This project will be informed by the outcomes of the Far North Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy, which the Minister for Natural Resources and Water has carriage of.

Prior to the election, the government committed to raising the Eden Bann Weir and building Rookwood Weir. Both projects are on the Fitzroy River near Rockhampton. The government has committed $14 million for the raising of the Eden Bann Weir and another $22 million for building the Rookwood Weir. Both of these projects and the Connors River Dam were highlighted in the draft Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy, which was released for public comment late last year.

Along with the construction of the weir projects, the government has also committed funds to projects which will provide greater water security for the Capricorn Coast and Gladstone. I note that the opposition policy did not—did not—refer to a pipeline linking the Fitzroy system and Gladstone. The Beattie government committed $20 million for the pipeline from the Fitzroy River system to the Capricorn Coast. The commitment will reduce the amount to be contributed by the local Livingstone Shire Council. The federal government has also committed funds for the project.

In terms of the Gladstone pipeline, the government has committed $48 million. I note that the opposition again did not bother to include the Gladstone pipeline in its policy, which was released after the government's. One has to ask just how much importance the opposition places on meeting the future water needs of industry in the Gladstone region.

The other commitment the government made was to provide $120 million for design work and construction of the Nathan Dam. This commitment was subject to obtaining Commonwealth approvals. In addition, the government reaffirmed its commitment to undertaking an investigation of a pipeline connecting water storage facilities from the Burdekin to south-east Queensland. We have committed $3 million to this investigation.

By moving his motion, the opposition leader has endorsed the government's approach to new water infrastructure. His claim this morning that the government had copied the opposition policy is utterly false. During the election campaign the opposition said that it would build the same dams as the government but it would not connect them. The opposition ruled out a statewide water grid and it did not support the government's plan for a south-east corner water grid.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 59—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, English, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

NOES, 27—Copeland, Cripps, Dempsey, Elmes, Flegg, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Rickuss, Dickson

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to, viz—

That this House notes that the Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006 requires monthly reports on all major water projects.

AYES, 59—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, English, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

NOES, 27—Copeland, Cripps, Dempsey, Elmes, Flegg, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Rickuss, Dickson

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 pm to 7.30 pm.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr STEVENS (Robina—Lib) (7.30 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the House. May I also congratulate the Speaker, as a fellow member of parliament born in Townsville General Hospital, on his elevation to the Speaker's chair.

I rise to deliver my inaugural speech in parliament with a tremendous sense of pride, achievement and humility. A little over seven weeks ago, a seat in the 52nd Queensland Parliament for Ray Stevens was not on Ray Stevens's agenda. Due to the sudden and unexpected resignation of the former member for Robina, Mr Bob Quinn, after 17 years of diligent and faithful service to the people of the south coast, renamed Merrimac and renamed Robina, I am honoured to be representing the people of Robina in the ultimate decision-making forum in Queensland.

The fact that I am here today is in no small way due to the efforts of many, many people, all of whom I thank and generously appreciate. However, there are some people who command special mention during this, for me, most momentous occasion, and I beg the indulgence of the House to give these people their due recognition, which they have so richly earned.

Mr and Mrs Dave and Kay Elson have been unquestionably the driving force behind my rise to this seat of honour and responsibility, showing faith, dedication and commitment in my capacity to represent the ideals and philosophies of the Liberal Party in the Queensland parliament. Since my local government Albert shire mayoralty days of 1994, they have believed in and supported my representative expertise, and my arrival here today is the culmination of that belief.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my campaign managers, Mr Wayne Moran and Mr John McKeon, who have battled away unstintingly under difficult circumstances to allow me to take my place in this parliament after two campaigns.

The most important people in my life and my greatest supporters through the highs and lows of my public, business and private life are my family. My wife of 30 years, Ruth, has far exceeded my wildest dreams of a perfect life partner and has endured my very public profile with a sense of dignity, respect and understanding, for which to her I am forever indebted. My children, Jessica, who is overseas, and Louis, who is coming tonight, are my very best pals and I consider them outstanding young Australians who make their mother and father enormously proud. Lastly, I would like to put on record my everlasting thanks to my deceased mother and father, Babs and Louis Stevens, from Richmond, north-west Queensland, who would have been so ecstatically chuffed at having their boy sit in the Queensland parliament. The ideals, morals, work ethic and values that they instilled in me as a child have eventually led to me being recognised as worthy enough to grace these hallowed chambers with what I know is their full blessing.

It has been a long ride from Richmond to where I am today. In 1979, when we arrived on the Gold Coast, I could not have dreamed what a wonderful city the Gold Coast would grow to in 2006. Fabulous beaches, beautiful mountain ranges and a plethora of rural lifestyles including a great little racetrack—of which I am particularly fond—that attracted a young country couple to the Gold Coast all those years ago are still available today. In addition, there are many other attractions that are sustained by a resident population of 500,000 people and nearly four million tourists who make their pilgrimage to this holiday mecca on an annual basis, and I count myself and my children extremely lucky to have enjoyed the best long paddock in the world.

As I look back on Mr Quinn's maiden speech in 1990, I note with interest that some of his visions for the electorate have come to fruition and some of his identified problems and issues of Robina are still relevant today. As a councillor of the Albert shire at the very time Mr Quinn was delivering his maiden speech, I am pleased to say that the council was busy planning and approving the development of a massive commercial area which is today known as the Robina town centre. This successful and innovative regional business district is now blossoming into a retail and transport orientated heart of Gold Coast commerce. At the same time it is providing modern community facilities, comprehensive dining and entertainment options and of course is the home of the soon-to-be-premiership-winning Gold Coast Titans Rugby League team. As a former board member of our previous team, the Gold Coast Chargers, who were unceremoniously deleted from the national competition for expediency reasons rather than performance, I am greatly pleased to see a National Rugby League team returning to the Gold Coast.

Mr Quinn spoke of the region he represented as having one of the fastest growing electorates in Queensland. He said—

> Should this expansion rate continue, the population will double within 10 years, giving the Gold Coast region a population of over 500,000 by the turn of the century.

Well, he was a little out, but by 2006 we have reached this magical number of half a million people on the Gold Coast and are now the country's fifth largest city. The Gold Coast City Council has predicted that by 2014 we will overtake Adelaide as the fourth largest city in Australia. That means that the Gold Coast is a serious city that has to be acknowledged as economically significant, that has to be properly financed and that has to be recognised as more that just the beachside suburb of Brisbane.

With this spectacular growth that I believe will continue for at least the next two decades, it is incumbent upon us as elected representatives to plan for this growth and to adequately fund the installation of necessary infrastructure on a pre-emptive basis rather than the current practice of playing catch-up. We know that the very attractive climate and geography of the Gold Coast will continue to make it the place of choice for interstate and international migration. The windfall income that comes to the state government from this burgeoning growth must be ploughed back into its source of generation to address the issues that this growing population brings with it as a corollary of booming growth. In his first speech in 1990 Bob Quinn also said—

> With dynamic growth comes the inevitable problems of developing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate such a massive and increasing population base.

His 1990 call for a 'separated dual carriageway from Nerang to Bilinga' has now been surpassed by the community's and my call for an urgent upgrading of the Nerang to Tugun bypass part of the M1 to six lanes to alleviate the current gridlock and congestion that far exceeds anything that Bob Quinn could have envisaged back in 1990. Bundall Road is also a state government responsibility that needs immediate attention through funding to address peak hour snarls and unnecessary fuel burning. A

simple commitment to an overpass at Ashmore Road would allow smooth traffic flow to occur and has been recognised as a requirement since my early days as Albert shire works committee chairman back in 1991. Continuing in the transport mode, Mr Quinn stated—

The proposed Beenleigh to Robina railway will provide a necessary rapid transit system between Brisbane and the Gold Coast...

How right he was, and the Brian Howe inspired Better Cities program which led to the installation of the Brisbane to Robina railway needs to be taken to its logical conclusion at Coolangatta immediately, rather than procrastinating with more studies and environmental impact studies that inevitably result in catch-up football being the game of the day.

I now turn to other infrastructure that is urgently required for the Gold Coast and, in particular, the residents of Robina. I remember clearly the unfortunate decision by the Goss government to walk away from the Wolffdene Dam as the future supply for the northern Gold Coast and southern Brisbane regions purely on the basis of a political promise in the lead-up to an election. The ramifications of that decision are obviously being felt by the residents of Brisbane today and by the residents of the Gold Coast a few years ago when the Hinze Dam level dropped to 27 per cent.

In November 2004, two years ago, the Gold Coast City Council resolved to implement and increase the Hinze Dam capacity to double its current size in what is known as the Hinze Dam stage 3 extension. This extension had been planned since the early eighties and required no resumption of lands, no forcing of people from their homes and no political heartache. When I left the Gold Coast mayoralty in 1997, it was firmly on the agenda as part of the important works that had to be installed to cater for the increasing number of new citizens expected to be residing on the Gold Coast in the years to come.

Council officers in their wisdom and in their quest for an alternative water supply have stalled the installation of Hinze Dam 3 at every opportunity, preferring in their eyes to go to a better alternative source in Wivenhoe Dam, which, as history shows, is under increasing stress because of drought conditions and its own growth pressures. The moral of the story is do not let the bureaucrats make all of the decisions. I congratulate the state government on fast-tracking this much needed piece of water infrastructure and will look forward to its completion by 2009.

Further on implementing necessary infrastructure, I also note that the government has moved to upgrade the Robina Hospital with an accident and emergency facility that recognises the important role the Robina Hospital has to play for the residents of the southern end of the Gold Coast. This is in accord with the government's recognition of the strained state of the health system in Queensland. However, the government has announced plans for a multimillion-dollar new hospital facility near Parklands to cater for the Gold Coast's increasing needs commencing somewhere in the vicinity of 2011.

As most large cities have their major hospitals spread across the city, can I respectfully suggest to the government that, rather than planning another hospital in the immediate precinct of the current Gold Coast Hospital, it should look to Robina Hospital for further upgrades to appropriately accommodate health for the southern dwellers of the Gold Coast. To that end, there is a large parcel of land to the north of Robina Hospital that is currently controlled by the Gold Coast City Council and is earmarked for sporting fields. For the future expansion of the Robina Hospital, it would be timely for the government to reserve that land for health purposes now rather than limit the expansion of the Robina Hospital because of land constraints in the future.

Members would be acutely aware that my speech has the recurrent theme of recognising the spectacular growth of the Gold Coast and committing to spending on the required infrastructure today, rather than waiting for the problems to occur tomorrow. It is no coincidence that my long history and experience in local government on the Gold Coast has given me a close and insightful vision into the problems and solutions of a rapidly expanding city.

When I joined the Albert Shire Council in 1988, I came from a background of small business built around retail outlets in Pacific Fair, Surfers Paradise and Nerang. After becoming the mayor of Albert shire in March 1994, it was only 12 months later that the Albert shire was abolished by the state government and I was forced back to another election as an Independent candidate for the mayoralty of the Gold Coast. After winning this new election in March 1995 and becoming mayor of the Gold Coast for a term that was supposed to be for five years until the year 2000, we had a change in state government in 1996. This new state government ordered a new election to be held on the Gold Coast in March 1997. I lost the mayoralty election in 1997 and had therefore faced three elections in four years at the behest of the state government.

In 2004 I returned to the Gold Coast City Council as executive assistant to Mayor Ron Clarke, and I think all members would be aware of the troublesome period of instability and public dissatisfaction with the council caused by a public crime and misconduct inquiry and the threat of state intervention to remove the council. The inquiry has found no corruption, and the media vilification of the council can only impede good governance of this important city, of which I have for many years been proudly extolling the virtues. It also brings a lack of confidence in this arm of governance which is totally undeserved.

The point of this short history of my association with the Gold Coast City Council is that I believe democratically elected councils should be left alone by state governments—even though they are a child of the state government—to run their full term to complete their charter given to them by their constituents. Of course the exceptions of financial mismanagement, corruption and an unworkable council must be addressed by the state government.

However, losing candidates, vocal minority interest groups and media interests with their own agendas must not usurp the democratic process of providing the people's choice of representatives every four years regardless of how politically popular it is for the state government to intervene. I have always believed there should be constitutional recognition of local government in Australia, particularly given the size and increased responsibilities being passed to them by state governments. In accordance with the Premier's wish to revisit the constitutional arrangements espoused in this House this morning, perhaps the federal government should look at the referendum question of recognising local government again when it could be asked without tying the question to other more controversial issues.

I again refer back to history so that we can more wisely plan for the future, and I note that in Bob Quinn's maiden speech he said—

Existing national parks such as Lamington and Natural Bridge must be maintained, protected and, if possible, expanded, and green belt areas and wildlife corridors should be established as breathing spaces between densely populated areas.

Since 1990, between the local governments and the state government, we have done exactly as Mr Quinn requested with large tracts of land being bought by both levels of governments and added to the national park at Springbrook. A large breathing space for urban development has been placed over the Beenleigh cane fields, and many areas of South Stradbroke Island and the hinterland mountains have been purchased by the local authorities.

I am again proud to say that I was part of the Albert Shire Council that was the first local authority in the region to introduce the 'green levy' on its residents in 1992. This has facilitated the purchase of thousands of hectares of land in the years since. Of some 1,500 square kilometres of Gold Coast City Council, 60 per cent has been kept as open space and under rural designation protection and 145,000 hectares are for passive and active recreation.

The environmental future of the Gold Coast will be dramatically enhanced when the ambitious plan to create the 'green heart' of the Gold Coast in a 430-hectare area bounded by the Robina electorate and the Mudgeeraba electorate has been completed. Already, the Gold Coast City Council has purchased 220 hectares in this prime location in the middle of the Gold Coast and I envisage a huge 'Central Park' style recreational icon by the time this project is finished.

I disagree with the former member for Robina when he said in his maiden speech that the Gold Coast 'has now become a degraded and permanently damaged environment'. In fact, it is my considered view that the Gold Coast has become a far more enjoyable, visually attractive and exciting destination than when the first timber getters arrived there after Captain Logan blazed the opening trail. Magnificent waterways, Australia's best collection of family theme parks, some of the world's leading entertainment events, spectacular high-rise affording unequalled views and convenient new-age living, vibrant night-life and a World Heritage listed green backdrop boasting a smorgasbord of inspiring flora and fauna leave me in no doubt that I represent a region that has been blessed with great planning and innovative creativity for the past 50 years. I thank my forefathers, decision makers and planners for this bountiful legacy.

As I enter what is for me a new forum of public representation, I do so with excitement, anticipation and an enormous sense of responsibility. I look forward to a steep and rapid learning curve, punctuated with highs and lows, but at all times endured with a strong degree of propriety, decorum and a recognition that the betterment of Queenslanders is the ultimate charter of this parliament. I have many long-term friends established in this House from all sides of politics whom I respect and whose company I enjoy immensely. My debate will always be based on the improvement of the lifestyle for my Robina constituents and the pursuit of a better Queensland through clear and practical thinking.

I believe in strong, unfettered and robust debate carried out with passion, conviction and common sense. However, the principles of fairness, equity and polite consideration should always be the overriding constraints under which such enlivening debate should take place. I pledge to you, Mr Speaker, my commitment to uphold the dignity, tradition and respect of parliamentary debate in this House during my whole term of residence.

As I bring to a close the moving experience of my first speech in the Queensland parliament, I am reminded of the media heading from my good friends at my local newspaper, the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, when they announced my candidacy for the upcoming election on 9 September. At my tender age of 53 years young, they generously proclaimed the occasion with the equine imputation that it was 'into the breach again for an old warhorse'. I am pleased to advise the House that, in the words of the great Banjo Patterson, 'and the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Moorhead): Before calling the honourable member for Clayfield, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesy reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (7.50 pm): This is now the second inaugural address I have delivered in a representative chamber. The first, as some honourable members may be aware, was delivered a little over six years ago and a little less than one kilometre away in the chamber of the Brisbane City Council. I can report to members present that the experience does not evoke any less emotion or anticipation the second time round. In fact, this is not the first time today I have risen from a warm seat clutching a damp set of papers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, would you please pass on to the Speaker my congratulations on his election as Speaker, as other members have done. At the induction for new members, we heard much about the respect due to the office of Speaker. We have also heard and seen some comment in the local media about question time and its proper use and the role of Speaker. I am sure respect for the office of Speaker will be all the more readily given by honourable members when the principles of fairness, equity and impartiality are displayed, as no doubt they will be during the Speaker's term. I will have no hesitation in abiding by rulings that meet these requirements.

Clayfield is an electorate of diverse attributes. It encompasses some of Brisbane's most desirable residential property and runs the full gamut of land uses including Brisbane's major waste water treatment plant at Luggage Point, an installation I am familiar with from my time as a local councillor.

In my role as local councillor for the Hamilton ward, firstly under the Soorley regime and then in the enlightened Newman Liberal administration, I have got to know large parts of my electorate. Perhaps uniquely, I also shared part of my then council electorate with the member for Brisbane Central, and there are still some issues he needs to look after.

I want to acknowledge and thank those people who helped me reach this chamber and to be here today. The electors of Clayfield are those people. As I doorknocked my electorate, I walked streets and visited suburbs named after previous generations of Australian heroes, streets such as Gordon Street in Hendra and suburbs such as Wavell Heights. In those streets and suburbs I ran across a new generation of heroes—the unsung, unheralded heroes of our time. These are the people in families with dad working and often mum working, both putting in long hours to make a contribution to the wealth of our state, and not just the economic wealth, as important as that might be, but, most importantly, the human wealth.

I met a great variety of people—plumbers, painters, teachers, nurses, police officers, chippies, public servants, builders and mechanics, all ages, sexes and political persuasions. As I listened to the stories they told and the events that they recounted and, most importantly, the aspirations they shared with me, I was humbled and encouraged in my desire to represent those unsung heroes in this place. Those unsung heroes go about their business seeking neither publicity nor praise. They ask no special favour, no unjust reward and they look for no special deal. They work hard and they expect their government to provide leadership and to work honestly and hard for them. They want the government to uphold its side of the great social compact between the citizen and the state.

If there was one message that came through when I listened to these residents, those unsung heroes, it was that many of them felt let down on the big issues such as making sure we have enough drinking water, health care, education services, building for the future—not only for themselves but for their children and their grandchildren.

When asked to describe the most important qualities required in a politician, Winston Churchill answered—

The ability to foretell what will happen tomorrow, next month and next year and to explain afterwards why it did not happen.

I suspect that was said by the great man with his tongue very firmly in his cheek but, sadly, these days it seems that those are the qualifications of government in Queensland. Excuses and the political art of the mea culpa are not good enough and never should be good enough. In a state with all the advantages of ours, we must deliver the best possible outcomes to our people.

I will fight to make sure this government lives up to its side of that great social compact; that government, whether it be this one or any other one, does deliver on its promises; that it does care for those who need caring for; that it does build and provide for the future; and that excuses are a thing of the past. This means getting on with building the Nundah Community Health Centre, a project promised for more than five years and still waiting for the first sod to be turned. This means looking after the residents of Pinkenba, who are being affected by dust and debris from a Queensland Rail site leased out for commercial profit and now being used as a waste transfer station to the detriment of that 130-year-old community. This is where local residents like Darryl and Joanne Bertwistle, Sandy Spadotto and Alice and David Smith are leading the community fight.

I look, too, at the sell-off of the Kitchener Road children's centre, a local community operation ably led by Amanda Butler and her volunteer team. It costs the state next to nothing to run this valuable community service, but its very first existence is under threat because of this government's policy to exit 'non-core' businesses.

I want to make sure that the airport link project is carried out to the highest standards of air and pollution minimisation, and that those who might be affected are treated fairly and compassionately. This is a visionary project instigated by my good friend, and until recently colleague, Lord Mayor Campbell Newman.

To properly protect the interests of local residents, a member of the community must be involved in the reference design group for the airport link project. On the existing Gateway Motorway, sound barriers are needed. George Hood and Gavin and Loretta Duffy have been asking for years for this simple solution to something that stops them sleeping through the night. All they have had so far are excuses.

The racing industry has been cruelly ignored by this government. I will be working to help the racing industry in its efforts to get on-course stabling as a matter of priority and will fight to improve the prize money to support the owners and trainers who struggle day after day to keep this great industry alive and who are such a part of the history of this state and such a part of the history and heritage of Hendra and the Clayfield electorate.

In recent times I had reason to check the outcomes achieved in the Clayfield electorate over the last few years. I know the Nundah cut and cover tunnel was a project initiated by the last Liberal member for the electorate, as was the Hendra Police Station and the fire station, as were the repairs to the Ascot State School assembly hall, the new teaching block at Eagle Junction State School and the changing rooms at Nundah State School Swimming Pool. However, since 2001, despite the promises and rhetoric, the budget papers have been remarkably light on for Clayfield. That situation is not good enough.

Clayfield is the gateway to Brisbane with three arterial roads, Queensland's major airport, the seaport, the Hamilton northshore development, the Gateway Motorway and bridge, the Albion transit oriented development, the new cruise ship terminal and airport link as well as the second runway. Clayfield's community interests must be protected and enhanced. I will be fighting to make sure that this development leads to improvements in our local lifestyle. I will be standing up and protecting the local interest where the community receives no benefit. I will be doing so constructively but always with a critical eye to unashamedly getting the best for the Clayfield community.

Brisbane is a boom town, Queensland is a boom state and Australia is enjoying a boom economy. Our responsibility in this place is to make sure that we secure this prosperity not just for ourselves and not just for our children but for generations to come.

When government has a responsibility to deliver services they must be the best possible services. Mediocrity is unacceptable. We should strive for the best and government must get out of the way when those services can be better delivered by private enterprise. We must allow and we must encourage the small business operators of Queensland to go about doing what they do best, innovate and compete, without the cold hard hand of government regulating them out of existence. These then are the challenges I look forward to and the spirit in which I will act for whatever time the people of Clayfield allow me in this place.

As well as the electors of Clayfield some other people helped me reach this point today. My campaign team was outstanding. There were many who contributed. Some are even here tonight. My campaign manager, Daryl Fennel, in the lead-up to the election and with a less than two-month-old baby had only one request, only one demand and that was that we win. Daryl and his wife, Rachel, have learnt in the cauldron of political battle the demands placed on family and I thank them both for their friendship and support.

My parents, who are here tonight and who have never failed me, have a bone to pick with the Premier for calling the election early—what a surprise—while they were overseas on a three-week holiday. In particular, my father Peter called from Mainz in Germany while I was doorknocking in Wavell Heights with a message from my mother, Barbara, to remind me to make sure my nomination was in on time. My sisters, Sandie and Sophie, and their partners helped on election day and in all sorts of other ways. My uncle and aunt David and Paddy Nicholls travelled from Toowoomba to hand out how-to-vote cards on election day and help scrutineer.

Many people today have spoken of family. Without my family none of my achievements would have been possible. I can never thank them enough. There are other people from my campaign team to thank such as Annie Reid, my office manager and organiser extraordinaire. Thanks also to Marlene Cameron, my inveterate 4BC fanatic and effective receptionist. I thank Mark and Deb Taylor for all the photographs which I hesitate to claim as being flattering.

I thank Stan Bakac, the campaign gopher. If there was a crook, late, last-minute job and it was raining, Stan got it. He did it cheerfully and consistently. Former Senator Bill O'Chee, the youngest senator ever elected to the Australian parliament, came along and gave us a few tips along the way. He also gave us the campaign song, and to Bill, who is out curling tonight and I know would love to be here, I say, 'I love this bar.'

Campbell Newman supported me enthusiastically and also gave me great opportunities to learn, not just politics but also leadership. Mark 'the Hitman' Hyrcek, Ben Myers and Francis Quinlivan, despite avoiding the limelight, helped in all sorts of ways, including the ever popular booth manning on election day.

I thank Michael Caltabiano, a great elected representative, a great member and a great friend whom I am sure we have not heard the last of and who still has much to give the Liberal Party and the people of Queensland. John White and Chris Wiltshire every morning manned the booths on the streets in peak hour with me and some others to get my name out there. I thank Tony Marshall, the signs man and booth captain at Hendra State School. Tony and Ernie Ginn and Robin Rogers worked like Trojans. I just know we will win that booth next time, just like we did in council.

I thank Roslyn, Nina and George, who all worked beyond the call of duty—and certainly beyond the pay they received—and who kept my reputation up in the Hamilton ward office and the wider electorate. I thank Milesy, friend for over a quarter of a century and my perennial campaign chairman, and my best man, Doug, who is also here tonight. I thank Darren Barlow the Treasurer and my great friend Santo Santoro, who served Clayfield so well and who continues to serve Queenslanders as a senator for Queensland and as a minister in the best federal government this country has had. Reports of his demise were greatly exaggerated!

Thanks also go to John Greenhalgh from the Lilley FEC and Geoff Greene and the team at Liberal Party headquarters for their help and assistance. I thank David and Nicole McLachlan. David helped with the message and got so enthused he is now the Liberal candidate for the Hamilton ward. I look forward to reporting back to the House on his success after the 28 October by-election. I am sure he will succeed although he does have an Herculean task in trying to fill his predecessors shoes!

Finally, and most importantly, I thank my wife, Mary, and my children, Jeremy, Duncan and Kate. Mary little expected that I would choose to enter the political world when we first started seeing each other almost 20 years ago. But her support, level-headedness and sacrifice have enabled me to be here today. My three kids have only known political life. They know I am often not there in the evenings, on weekends and at their special events. But despite that, I do this for them, and their future.

But it is not just my children's future in which I am interested. It is the future of all the unsung heroes of Clayfield and their children and their children's children to whom I intend to dedicate the next three years. Let us never forget that truly great government is the servant of its citizens and takes its measure from the way in which it advances their aspirations. In so doing we can serve our constituents and the people of Queensland to the best of our abilities.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (8.05 pm): It is a great pleasure to be back in this place and to gain the confidence of people in my electorate. It is an honour and a privilege to serve in this place. I do not take a single moment of the time that I spend here lightly. The size of Victoria, the Cook electorate is really a state within a state. Within that state there are a number of nations. To the far north of this state between the Australian mainland and Papua New Guinea lie the beautiful islands of the Torres Strait. The Torres Strait people are a distinct cultural identity and have needs and aspirations that are distinctly different from those of their Aboriginal brothers and sisters to the south. Too often that distinction is forgotten and issues from this region are discussed in inappropriate forums.

Notwithstanding that both the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula communities share the need for more economic development the strategy in both regions will be different. In the Torres Strait the best opportunities and opportunities that are most likely to be taken up by the Indigenous and local population are in fishing. The waters of the Torres Strait are a rich resource, especially of crayfish, finfish and prawns. It causes a great deal of resentment to local fishers that they are not profiting from the exploitation of a resource they consider theirs from waters they know to be theirs.

This water is currently managed by both the state and Australian government and includes the participation of Torres Strait Islanders through the representation of the chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority on the joint authority board. It is a complicated matter as commercial fishers currently enjoy rights to fish the region and any reduction to their effort will need to be done sensitively with adequate compensation. Ensuring greater Torres Strait Islander participation in the fishing industry will be a priority for me this term.

The other industry that offers hope for the economic development of the region is tourism. The Torres Strait is one of the most beautiful places in Queensland and one of the ones that is least travelled. I am happy to report to the House that tourism infrastructure is improving dramatically in regions with a healthy mix of both private and public investment. There are some impediments to improving tourism numbers. The greatest of these is the Horn Island airstrip which acts as a gateway to the region. It is the regional hub. People come from Cairns into Horn Island and go out to the outer islands from Horn. The airstrip only allows for the turbo prop Dash 8 to land on Horn Island and even then it cannot land fully loaded. It is an impediment to bringing people in and getting freight out. Owned and operated by the Torres shire council the airstrip needs to be lengthened and strengthened. This will only be achieved with the cooperation of all three levels of government.

Tourism will also feature in the future development of Cape York Peninsula. While the cape is geographically large, and one would assume that the opportunities it offers are just as great, it seems that nothing is ever easy in getting things done to assist people who live in the disparate communities that dot its landscape. While most of these communities are Indigenous, towns like Weipa and Cooktown are largely normal country towns with vibrant and growing economies. Weipa's economy is based on bauxite mining and Cooktown's on farming and tourism. The difficulty in creating Indigenous economic development on the cape comes from a number of sources but mostly boils down to either land tenure arrangements or competing political interests.

We always hope that a silver bullet is going to magically appear to resolve these issues so that the many opportunities that do exist in the region can be taken advantage of. This ain't going to happen. That is not to say that there is no hope—far from it. As we have been discussing in parliament today, the government has recently signed an agreement with the Chinese aluminium company to exploit the bauxite reserves in and around Aurukun on western Cape York Peninsula. This offers the best opportunity since colonisation to drag the people of Aurukun out of poverty. The Wik and Wik-Way people, the traditional inhabitants of the lands under scrutiny, are extremely supportive of the mine and are getting ready for it to proceed. They know that they must bring changes to their community if this is going to happen, that they must resolve to engage much more heavily in the education and training system and be much more work ready, and that change is happening.

There has been a long history of Aboriginal involvement in the cattle industry on Cape York Peninsula. Today it remains a key employer and source of non-government revenue for people on the cape, whether they are black or white. A number of Aboriginal councils own cattle properties. A few Indigenous owned corporations have been established which run cattle, and there are also a few individuals who do the same. Clearly there are opportunities to expand Aboriginal participation in this vibrant and growing industry. I understand that great things are afoot in this regard and I look forward to the parliament hearing more on this issue.

I again refer to the tourism industry for a moment, because a number of Indigenous individuals and families have become involved in the industry and are presenting their land to an increasingly curious market. In fact, tourism research has shown that visitors to the region want to know more about Indigenous culture. That is why it is great to see people like Wille Gordon in Hope Vale, the Walker sisters from Wujul Wujul, David Claudie from the Wenlock River and a few others branching out into guiding and tourism. There are other enterprises like the houseboat at Aurukun which has started recently and is doing good business in the corporate fishing charter market and the campground at Umagico. This is clearly an area that has potential for exponential growth in Indigenous communities.

The arts industry is another area that is showing great potential on the cape. The Lockhart River Art Gang is leading the way in this regard, and some of its artists like Rosella Namok, Fiona Omeenyo and Silus Hobson are becoming significant contributors to the Queensland arts sector. Lockhart is rapidly being caught up by Aurukun artists, who are also forging a unique and intriguing style. Far removed from the dot-painting style of their Northern Territory cousins, Queensland Indigenous artists have a story and a theme that encapsulates a fascinating and little-known part of Queensland.

The reason I spend so much time here tonight highlighting the positive stories and opportunities facing Indigenous communities on Cape York is that, firstly, the state government has played an active role in the development of these business and industries and, secondly, because of comments made by the Australian Indigenous affairs minister, Mal Brough, last week. Mr Brough was quoted on ABC Online saying that he saw no future for some Indigenous communities. How disappointing it is that, after less than a year in the job, the minister has given up on remote communities. What does he plan to do with the people left in these communities? Does he plan to forcibly remove them, as happened in the past, and begin the cycle of dispossession and anguish again? I am not prepared to give up so easily. There are opportunities out there, some of which I have outlined here tonight, and it behoves leaders to concentrate on the positives and delve into the possibilities. I will never give up on communities in my electorate.

One of the great achievements of the Beattie Labor government is the fully sealed road from Cairns to Cooktown—a $100 million project fully delivered by the Beattie Labor government. The introduction of this infrastructure has seen significant growth. The number of development applications, subdivisions and commercial developments in Cooktown grew significantly over the past two to three years as the road came nearer to being sealed. Now that it finally has been sealed, that growth has continued.

We need to see that on Cape York Peninsula as well. Over the next three years people in this place are going to be quite sick of me talking about the Peninsula Development Road and the need to increase bitumen sealing on that road. There is a school of thought out there that says that the Peninsula Development Road should remain unsealed and that the cape should remain this great wilderness experience for people to explore. Let me assure those people that there are plenty of dirt roads on Cape York Peninsula, but we need to seal the Peninsula Development Road from Cairns all the way to the tip of Cape York Peninsula so that the same economic growth that is being experienced in Cooktown now can be experienced in all of the communities that dot Cape York Peninsula.

Sealing that road will allow tourists to get to the area and its more remote places more efficiently and effectively in order to spend more time in those areas. It will also allow growing industries such as the cattle industry to get their product to market more effectively and efficiently. This is certainly not the last time members will hear me talk about that. Just before the election campaign the Premier gave a commitment to put $10 million a year aside for the Peninsula Development Road. He has asked for the Commonwealth government to match that commitment, and so far we have been promised a study by the Commonwealth government. Imagine how excited people in my electorate were by a further study into the road when what really needs to be done on that road is quite simple. A lot of the preplanning and construction work has been done already.

Another part of my electorate is the Douglas shire, which encompasses Port Douglas and Mossman. Port Douglas in particular is one of the jewels in the crown of the tourism market here in Queensland. It offers all levels of tourism accommodation—from five- and six-star right down to the backpacker market. All sorts of people—movie stars, ex-presidents and what have you—have been flocking to Port Douglas because of its fantastic beach at Four Mile Beach and its closeness to the Great Barrier Reef. Over the course of the next term the Douglas shire is particularly interested in developing the waterfront to ensure that its market keeps up with other markets like Airlie Beach, Townsville and Cairns which have redeveloped their waterfronts. The community wants their development to be different and unique and wants it to take into account the unique environment of that area. It does not want to duplicate things that have been done in other areas; it wants to maintain natural areas and open public space. I look forward to working with the Douglas Shire Council and, more importantly, the Douglas shire community over the next three years to ensure that we have a tasteful and environmentally sensitive development in and around Dickson Inlet on Port Douglas.

The other exciting development that is happening in the Douglas shire relates to the Mossman sugar mill, which is probably one of the smallest mills in Queensland. It crushes about 600,000 tonnes per year. At certain stages, when the price of sugar has been low, the Mossman mill has been on the brink of collapse. Thankfully, the board of the Mossman sugar mill—it is also one of the last remaining co-op owned mills in Queensland—has taken an innovative approach with the assistance of both this government and the federal government. It is trying to develop a low-GI sugar—a sugar that will release more slowly into the body—and to make products that could be useful for people with diabetes. That is a growing concern and an issue that has been highlighted in this parliament today by the Minister for Health. If it is successful in developing this technology—and it is very far advanced in developing it—that will be a real feather in its cap and ensure the Mossman mill stays around for many more years to come.

The southern part of my electorate takes in the northern suburbs of Cairns. Those northern suburbs are Clifton Beach and Palm Cove. A major concern of constituents who live in this part of my electorate is beach erosion. Over the years Clifton Beach in particular has experienced serious beach erosion. I think that has been caused by poor planning decisions that were made in the past, overdevelopment of the foreshore and not enough protection given to creeks and waterways by putting in buffer zones in riparian areas to ensure that run-off is not deteriorating those important and iconic coastal areas. At the moment I am engaged in a fierce battle with the Cairns City Council, which seems hell-bent on giving these important areas to developers. To me, it seems hell-bent on ensuring that developers get the most of these important waterfront areas at the expense of the community. At the moment my community, particularly in Clifton Beach, are up in arms at what the Cairns City Council is doing to their foreshore areas. We will continue to fight a pitched battle with this council in particular to ensure that as much of that area as possible is kept as open public space and that the beachfront, which belongs to everyone, is not sold off or given to developers willy-nilly.

Finally, election campaigns are always a great test of one's mettle and a great test of character. I think that everyone should run for public office at some stage in their lives.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr O'BRIEN: Not everyone agrees with me. I think it is a great test of your character—of who you are and what you believe—and of convincing people that you are the right person to represent them in this important chamber. Nobody gets here alone and in that regard I am not special. I am blessed with fantastic electorate staff: Tia, Janet, Donna and Lynette. They are fantastic workers for me. They are extremely loyal and I would not be in this place if it were not for their dedication over many years. In my maiden speech I ran out of time and forgot to thank my wife. I am not going to make that mistake—

Mr Reeves: Is she still your wife?

Mr O'BRIEN: She is still my wife. She is very forgiving and very understanding. I will put my diary up against anybody's in this place. I spend 15 to 16 weeks a year down here and about 20 to 22 weeks a year on the road. I reckon I spend more nights away from my family than anybody else in this place. My wife and my son suffer as a consequence. It is something that weighs heavily on my mind every night as I go to sleep. But my wife is also committed to social change and to improving the lot of her fellow citizens. I thank her for her ongoing support.

I also thank my campaign team. I have 31 booths that I need to cover on election day and that does not include the 15 or 16 booths that I have to cover in mobile polling in the week leading up to election day. It is an incredible logistical challenge to cover booths that are located throughout an area the size of Victoria. You do that only if you have a team of dedicated supporters who are prepared to give their time. It is such a humbling experience to have people put their life on hold for you and support you in order to get you into this place. It shows that they believe in you and that they have faith in you. The weight of that never leaves you while you sit in this place. So to all of my supporters right across the Cook electorate, I say thank you. I will work hard every day in this place to earn that support and I will never let you down.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Gaven, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such an occasion.

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (8.24 pm): I take this opportunity to offer my sincere congratulations to the Speaker on his elevation to that role. My election to public office as the member for Gaven comes at the end of a long career in public service and a lifetime commitment to be of service to the people of the community in which I live. I am humbled by the trust that the people of the electorate of Gaven have placed in me and I will make every endeavour to fulfil that trust. I give my thanks to my magnificent campaign team—Friends of Phil—all 62 of them, some of whom are here tonight and many who could not be here, including 'Big Pete', thank goodness.

I have spent the last 20 years of my working life, in addition to my work with Education Queensland, in unpaid capacities in many community groups throughout the electorate in an attempt to make a difference to the lives of others and to mine. It has been said to me many times, when faced with an issue in the community, 'Someone should do something about it'. I often replied to such people that they were someone and so was I and that we should do something about it. A shopping centre now stands as a result of one conversation.

My personal desire to put time and energy into the community comes from a strongly held set of values that were passed on to me by my parents. My mother passed away in November 2004 aged 89. My father, Roy, is still with us today—sharp as a tack and still impressing on me the values of hard work, patience, persistence, egalitarianism, social justice, paying your way and Christian service. Dad will be 91 on his next birthday in February 2007. I acknowledge my elder brother, Ron, in the gallery tonight. My family and I have lived in the Gold Coast suburb of Helensvale, which is located within the Gaven electorate, for the past 20 years. It is a lovely part of the world where good people work to engender a real sense of community.

At this point I acknowledge the descendants of the traditional Aboriginal people of the Gold Coast region as well as other Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people who have settled in the area and who are a valued part of the community of the Gaven electorate.

I formed the Helensvale Residents Association in 1991 to fight against the eastern corridor proposal and have had the support over those years of many good people, among whom are Brian Doyle; Roy Neunendorf; Sonja and John Walsh, who are here tonight; Phil Clemente; Colleen and Bill Johnson; Professor Jurick Kozlozski; Sheryl Carr and many others who stood with me in a nine-year battle against vested commercial interests and Gold Coast city councillors to see Westfield allowed to construct the much-desired Westfield Helensvale Town Centre. The centre, which was opened by the Premier in October 2005, continues to be a great amenity—along with other nearby centres—to the people of Helensvale, Gaven, Pacific Pines, Oxenford and wider afield. The area is also served well by recreational and educational activities at the Helensvale Community Centre where I am the president of the association.

Transport issues are a challenge for the electorate as both the M1 and the railway line pass through it. As well, an interregional transport corridor is planned for completion, in whatever form, in 2026. In regard to the impact of transport corridors, I will work with my constituents and the minister to achieve the best outcomes possible for local residents. It must be remembered that amenity is often challenged by inconvenience.

My electorate includes the marvellous small community of Studio Village. In 1999 I was asked to assist the Studio Village Community Centre for a year to get it back on its feet. Seven years later, I am still the president. The centre offers a great range of community services funded by the Department of Communities across many suburbs of the city of the Gold Coast. In 2004, it won the mayor's award for the best voluntary organisation in the city of the Gold Coast and that is due to the great work of Veronica Cox, the community development officer; supported by Elizabeth Laurier, the family support program officer; a strong management committee and many volunteers. The centre can provide sorely needed assistance to young families, seniors and those who lack family support. The staff at the centre are always there to help. The centre strives to engage, inform, support and empower its clients and it has a long list of successes. Each year, the Christmas Carols held by the centre at the Movie World car park attract attendance in the vicinity of 10,000 people. I thank the Gold Coast City Council, Movie World, Westfield Helensvale, Nerang RSL and Club Helensvale for their ongoing financial support. My thanks also go to Councillor Peter Young for his support. This organisation builds real social capital.

Pacific Pines is a large and growing suburb within the Gaven electorate, and I congratulate the developer Stockland and its town planning provision for sport and young people as well as its initiative in setting up and supporting a local residents group. Pacific Pines is growing at a great rate, and the challenge of keeping up with the delivery of social and physical infrastructure has been met with the provision of a high school and a primary school, with another primary school on the way in 2008, a police beat and access to a range of other services.

Everywhere I look in the Gaven electorate growth is a major factor, with some 33,500-plus electors on the roll. Oxenford is growing also, as is Maudsland—houses rolling over the hills. The youth of the area are served by a large centre at Oxenford which provides great social connection for young people, but unfortunately public transport is still a major challenge throughout these growth areas.

My attention turns to Nerang and Mount Nathan, of which a major part is in the Gaven electorate and the remainder well served by my parliamentary colleague Di Reilly, the member for Mudgeeraba. Nerang is fortunate, like other areas of the electorate, to be served by an active community based organisation in the Nerang Community Association. This group is restoring heritage homes in Bischoff Pioneer Park. It is very active in environmental matters and makes a strong contribution to the general amenity of the area. I value my membership of the group and I value the contribution of good people such as Lynn Ogden, Lloyd and Irene McGuire and many others who give of their time and resources freely without any thought of recompense. The revitalisation of the Nerang CBD is also a credit to all concerned.

I must at this point express my concern and that of the vast majority of the electors of Gaven over the lack of credibility of the Gold Coast City Council amongst its constituents. When doorknocking or meeting with constituents it is difficult to find a good word for the council, with the exception of a few councillors including Peter Young. Actions are doubted, motives questioned, deals mooted, reputations questioned. I am sincerely saddened that some good and hardworking councillors and local government workers are tarred with the same brush as those whose actions as a bloc seem to have led to the tarnishing of reputations. Much work is needed by many to restore faith in the council. I want to be part of the solution and not the problem and am willing to work with others to that end.

I am also a member of the Gold Coast chapter of the Amputees Advisory Association. While not being an amputee myself, I have a deep appreciation of the good work of this group in giving support, encouragement and practical advice to people who have lost a limb or limbs through illness, disease or trauma. President Bill and secretary Colleen Johnson have worked tirelessly over many years for amputees, and it was with great pleasure and appreciation that I attended in March the opening ceremony of the Gold Coast Amputees Clinic at the Helensvale Community Health Centre by the Minister for Health. I commend the minister on this initiative and Bill and Colleen on their commitment.

I received a Centenary Medal for service to the community in 2003—recognition not of my contribution but of the work of many in the communities I service. I have never sought leadership roles in the community other than a place in this House. I believe strongly in leadership through service. My ability to contribute to the community is a result of the unswerving support I receive from my wife of 33 years, Astra, who is with us tonight, my now adult children, Tyron and Haley, and great friends, particularly one Ray Beahan, who is with us tonight and who worked tirelessly for me during campaigns, giving up his job for both the by-election and the general election to assist me. Ray is a former councillor of the Pine shire. His friendship of some 30 years started when I contested the seat of Aspley in 1977. I remember also with appreciation the considerable efforts on my behalf of my parliamentary colleague the Hon. Dean Wells during my campaigns. It marks a time in my political memory of an event which fired my passion to right the wrong of the dismissal of the Whitlam government. My determination to fight the good fight for the Labor Party ever since was strengthened by that event.

I turn my attention to a number of social matters which cause me, and I know many others in our society, to seek a solution. This society has two legalised drugs—tobacco and alcohol. The first is subject to advertising control, restriction and an active program to diminish its use due to the well-documented detrimental effect it has on our health and the cost of treating victims of its use. The other—alcohol—is not subject to the same controls, nor do I advocate that it should be. My concern here is not its use but its abuse by those who consume. The alcohol industry struggles, with the support of government at all levels, to bring about moderate and sensible levels of consumption. Overconsumption is a major factor in liver and kidney damage, obesity, the epidemic of diabetes, drunken aggression amongst people of all ages, particularly youth, and the high cost to society of road trauma. Binge drinking, at an increasingly younger age, is a blight on our society; it seems to be a rite of passage to adulthood for many youth.

Before I am labelled a wowser, let me confess to being in the past as guilty as all others. My concern is that the responsible drinking campaign conducted by our clubs and pubs be supported strongly, that parents take some responsibility for the behaviour of their teenage children by demonstrating responsibility in the consumption of alcohol themselves and that alcohol is a complement to a meal or a fun night out and not a substitute for it. I compliment the government on its legislative base to attack this social concern and believe that this problem must continue to be tackled. We must be

vigilant if we are to overcome this blight on our society. The added availability of illicit drugs compounds the problems. This problem is not Queensland-centric; it is worldwide. I feel for the members of the Police Service when faced with an aggressive drunken or drug affected person, chemically charged without fear, wont on destruction.

The genesis of my concern for youth stems from my past roles as a student counsellor at secondary and tertiary educational levels and my involvement in many community organisations supporting youth. I see an aimlessness in some youth which results from discouragement and a lack of purpose and direction. I see many young people who disengage from their families at an increasingly younger age. Our teachers battle every day to re-engage such children. The values they display are the values of the street, not of the general community and not of a sound and supportive family. They have an external locus of control, not an internal one. The sense of right and wrong is based on the chance of being caught, not a knowledge of right and wrong. The work of youth clubs, churches, sporting clubs and community support organisations needs continued encouragement. Disengagement and discouragement leads to criminality. Early intervention is vital. We need fewer criminals—preventative action rather than corrective action. The work of police youth clubs is a prime example of early intervention.

The flight to anger—reaction rather than action—is increasingly evident in our society and manifests itself in road rage and many other forms of rage. The ability to reason through a difficulty or a stressful situation, weigh the consequences of any proposed action and make a reasoned judgement appears to be sorely lacking amongst many members of our society. The simple stop-think-do paradigm seems to be disappearing. As the deputy chair of the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE Council, I discussed this concern with the council. Decision making is part of many general courses at the institute. It is a learned art and needs to be practised. Reinforcement at all levels of education is necessary. Might I deviate to commend the work of the institute director, Deb Daly, and the staff and the institute council in making the institute a model of policy and practice for this state, if not for Australia—good work by good people.

I have spent 38 years as a member of the Queensland Public Service. Having worked as a primary and secondary teacher, guidance officer, senior guidance officer, district guidance officer, counsellor in a TAFE college and university, principal education officer, principal policy officer, principal project officer and a few other roles, believe it or not, I know how dedicated and hardworking the Public Service of this state is. The vast majority of the service put in more time than they are paid for, and I tire of ill-informed comment about 'so-called bureaucrats'. The public sector of this state implements the intent of government. Yes, there are those who would serve the state better by working outside the Public Service, but they are few in number.

I spent six years as vice-president and four years as president of the Queensland Public Sector Union and am proud to be associated with the union of which I am a life member. Union membership is the deliverance of my father's advice to 'always pay your way'. Those in the Public Service who accept the hard-earned benefits gained by the union without contributing to the cost live with little conscience. I encourage all public sector workers, indeed all workers, to join their relevant union. A quick look around this troubled world of ours will reveal that where unionism is strong so is democracy. The actions of the Howard conservative government to impose unfair and divisive workplace laws on the workers of this nation are nothing short of an industrial act of thuggery.

I congratulate the government on our strong stand against these actions. Industrial democracy in Australia is an Australian icon. It is not found in nations to which Australian jobs are currently being outsourced. The current attempt of the Howard government to control the curriculum of our state schools—indeed all schools—across Australia is indefensible. The federal government forgets that it is exactly that: a federal government, not a national government. Australia is a federation of states. The Constitution clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Commonwealth, or the federal government, and the states. Education is a state responsibility. The current federal government is bent on totalitarianism and not democracy. A good fight against this action must be fought.

I have been a lifetime learner, benefiting from the legacy of the Whitlam government, which provided me with unpaid access to complete my first degree and some postgraduate studies. I paid for study towards my masters and, like all others, received a scholarship for my PhD studies in 2000. My election to the presidency of the Queensland Public Sector Union brought that chapter of my life to an abrupt end. My intent in raising my commitment to lifetime learning, other than to note my support for all who take this path, is to express great concern at the cost of higher education contribution scheme fees imposed upon those who choose to pursue learning as a personal goal and which is a benefit to the nation.

The young adults exiting our universities today carry a debt burden of large proportion, and the federal government's desire to drive more towards full fee-paying and burden our universities with this necessity to derive more income from full fee-paying students is to be condemned. Young adults entering the workforce today are burdened with this debt, which nationally has reached astronomical proportions. High HECS fee levels are a definite disincentive to further study for many and is resulting in skills shortages in many professions.

Australia has a competitive advantage in the Asia-Pacific region in education. While it is producing good export dollars for Australian universities, I become increasingly concerned that this occurs to the disadvantage of Australian students. As a parent of university students, I see on a daily basis the effect that that burden has on these students spending far more time working than studying to meet their HECS obligations.

Finally, let me harken back to the essence of this speech: my appeal to all is to give back to their communities a little of what their community has given to them. I emphasise my strong support for community groups, my core values and the influence of my parents and wider family on my ability and desire to contribute to make my community a better place to live; my concern about the widespread abuse of alcohol in our society; my concern in respect of the struggles of our youth and disengagement for families and society; my support for a hardworking public sector and the benefits of union membership; my anger at the actions of an arrogant federal government in respect of workplace laws and HECS charges; and uttermost my desire to continue to work hard for the good people of the Gaven electorate in repaying their trust—the trust that they have invested in me.

In conclusion, may I express my pride in being a member of the Beattie Labor government of this state and my total support for the Premier's and the Deputy Premier's leadership of this state throughout difficult and trying times.

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (8.43 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I pass on my congratulations to you on your elevation to that position as a new member of this parliament. I, too, served in that role in the last parliament. I know that you will enjoy the position greatly, as will all the other new deputy speakers in this place.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr WALLACE: The member for Darling Downs should well know that he should be in his chair before he yells out across the chamber. Madam Deputy Speaker, could you please pass on my congratulations to Mr Speaker for his election to that fine position. It is great to see another son of the north in that esteemed chair taking over from the member for Mount Isa and another Cowboys supporter. Members will be interested to know that when I gave my maiden speech in this place after the last election I was actually interjected upon, which was very unparliamentary, when I supported the Cowboys.

Mr Hopper: Who did that? Who interjected? Name them! Who interjected?

Mr WALLACE: The member for Darling Downs might want to go back to his seat before he interjects. A very, very rude member. He should go back to his seat if he wishes to object.

Mr Hopper: Name them! Name them!

Mr Reeves: He was a Broncos supporter!

Mr WALLACE: I am not going to mention a Broncos supporter. It is good to see that the member for Darling Downs is at last back in his seat, so I can take an interjection from him.

Mr Hopper: Name him! Who was it?

Mr WALLACE: It was the member for Logan. I was humbled by the support of—

Mr Hopper: You made out it was us!

Mr WALLACE: I did not say that. Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not really know what happened to the member for Darling Downs in the election that we have just had. He was quite a nice chap in the last parliament.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr WALLACE: He might want to swap sides again. I do not know whether we will have him on this side. We are a bit more discerning than the National Party.

I was greatly humbled in my electorate to get the support of my constituents once again. A 17 per cent swing in my electorate came my way. It was a great election result for the government in north Queensland. Again we delivered all three Townsville and Thuringowa seats back to the government. We ran a positive campaign, and I think that showed in our election results. Compare that to the negative campaign which the opposition undertook and you really can see the results. The results speak for themselves. The member for Hinchinbrook suffered a big swing against him. The member for Burdekin suffered—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection of the member for Hinchinbrook. He now has one of the most marginal seats in the state. The member for Burdekin also had a swing against her. It just goes to show what negative campaigning does.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr WALLACE: The member for Hinchinbrook might well want to interject on his first night in this place, but we all know that that seat has to have a big redistribution. His quota is down to about 21,000 people. He is going to find it very difficult to keep that seat after the next election. I think he should run a positive campaign next time, not a negative one. So that is a bit of advice for him.

Thuringowa and the north have done well for the Beattie government. Can I say how great it is to be a parliamentary secretary for north Queensland. As a north Queensland lad born and bred, it is such a great honour. I told this place before that I was born and bred up there, and I am a proud north Queenslander. To be named as a parliamentary secretary for north Queensland is simply one of the greatest honours I could have in my time in politics. No matter what I do in this place at any time in the future, I can say that I represented the people of the north and I have done so in this place, and I will proudly do that.

Mr Pearce: If you don't mind me saying so, you're very good at it.

Mr WALLACE: Thank you, member for Fitzroy. I will take that interjection, most assuredly. I enjoy the role and I think that shows.

It is great to be back here amongst friends. That is what we have developed in this place—a great friendship, especially on the government side. I think that shows in the effort that we put into this place, in that we have developed a number of friendships in this place on the government side. We are willing to work with each other for the betterment of Queensland. The member for Mundingburra is one of my best friends and I congratulate her on her elevation to the ministry. I know that she will do very, very well. The member for Mundingburra had a massive swing to her on election night as well, and I think that showed in the positive campaign that she did, unlike the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Burdekin, who suffered big swings against them.

But why did we have that big swing up north? Because we delivered. We got off our backsides and delivered for the people of north Queensland. We got off our backsides and did the job that we were elected to do. For instance, in Thuringowa there was the $15.3 million Riverway project—$15.3 million from the state government for a $40 million project with swimming lagoons and a cultural centre. I should remind the House that it was the National Party which opposed that project. It was the National Party which opposed that project in 2004. The National Party will go down as the great knockers of north Queensland. It will go down as the party that would not stand up for north Queensland and would not stand up for the residents of Thuringowa. I know that the member for Mundingburra supported Riverway, as did the member for Townsville. It was a shameful indictment upon the National Party that it stood there and handed out how-to-vote cards to oppose Riverway—a great project that has seen almost 200,000 people use that facility.

Mr Pearce: It's amazing.

Mr WALLACE: It is amazing. It is amazing that those opposite could not sense the need in our community for such a project, that they would stand at election and oppose it.

Mr Pearce: They have lost their way.

Mr WALLACE: They have lost their way. They have lost their way, as they have with their opposition to the workers of Telstra. They want to sell that marvellous asset off to the lowest bidder, and I think the way they are going it will be to the lowest bidder. They want to sell off that wonderful national asset. They opposed Riverway and they opposed Telstra. What are they going to oppose next? They just will not stand up for the people of Queensland.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take that interjection from the member for wherever you are from—Gympie, I think. I take that interjection that you do oppose dams in Queensland. I fight for dams. I will stand for dams because without dams we will not have water. I will stand for an extension of the Burdekin Dam. I will stand in this place and fight for better dams for Queensland because I know we need water.

It was the Labor government that delivered the Burdekin Dam up my way, it was the Labor government that delivered the Paradise Dam, and it is the Labor government that is delivering the Ross River Dam upgrade. I will stand on this side of the House every day and I will fight for more water for Queensland. I will fight for more dams because without dams there is no water. I will stand here and defend that every day of the week.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr WALLACE: The member for Gregory is a smart bloke. I agree with you on a lot of occasions, Vaughan, and you know that we have got to have dams because without dams we have got no water.

But I will return to the issues of the north again. We will have 100 new beds for the Townsville Hospital, with the first 22 up and running early next year. This is another wonderful win for our community. We have got $30 million for the redevelopment of the old Kirwan Women's Hospital, which is in the middle of my electorate. It is a great redevelopment and is now the largest community health centre in Australia. Local Thuringowa and Townsville residents use that every day of the week.

We also have a great initiative in Townsville that the member for Mundingburra and I fought very hard for—that is, the announcement of $1 million for a birthing centre so that expectant mothers can go to the hospital and not have to call on specialist care to have their children. This centre will be dedicated especially to the birthing of their children. I congratulate Philippa Scott, who led the campaign in the twin cities for that centre. Philippa is due within a couple of weeks and she will not get the benefit of that centre. I really congratulate her on the hard work she undertook to get that centre. We were the only party that committed to that. When they challenged the tories to commit, do members know what they got? Nothing. N-o-t-h-i-n-g. They got nothing from the tories whatsoever. They would not commit to that wonderful birthing centre for the north. They did not care about expectant mothers. They do not care about people in our community.

Mr Johnson: What about all the ones you closed down around the place?

Mr WALLACE: Member for Gregory, they do not care about expectant mothers in north Queensland and for that they will be eternally shamed in our community. We have $10 million for the Murray Sports Stadium, which is another big win for our community. Thousands of local residents use that facility every week for basketball, cricket, AFL, Rugby League and all manner of sports. That is a great win for our local community.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr WALLACE: The member for Gregory, who is a great Bulldogs fan, will be pleased to know that we have extended Dairy Farmers Stadium with extra seats, and the member for Gregory will also be interested to know that I will be pushing important local issues, like the re-laying of the Greenvale rail line. That rail line was pulled up under the Borbidge National Party government, and that was really an indictment upon the National Party. Just like the Borbidge government pulled up the rail line to the Gold Coast, it pulled up that very important rail line. I will be pushing for its re-laying.

Mr Pearce: To Mount Morgan even.

Mr WALLACE: That government pulled another railway line up in the member for Fitzroy's electorate. Overnight it was gone. Sir Mick Curtain is developing a billiondollar iron ore mine in the vicinity. I visited that iron ore mine, which has very high-quality iron ore—some of the highest in Queensland. It has about 10 million tonnes of iron ore to export, with a promise of much more. Zinc, nickel and many other products will come down from that mine, taking a lot of heavy traffic off the Hervey's Range Road. Indeed, yesterday I spoke with the transport minister, yesterday who is getting that study underway.

Honourable members, I am sad to report to the House that all is not rosy in the north. The Howard government is again taking us for granted. The Bruce Highway is a national disgrace. I heard the new member for Gympie talk about the Bruce Highway this afternoon and he somehow tried to blame the state government. He obviously did not do his research before he was elected, because the Bruce Highway is a National Highway and comes under the control of the national government. Liberal Party and National Party members stand in this place indicted for their lack of work on the National Highway. Members opposite should stop whingeing about this state government and get on to Canberra and actually do something about it. The National Party has had the transport portfolio in Canberra for years and years and it has done nothing—absolutely nothing. It gets $14 billion in petrol taxes and it does absolutely nothing.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the member for Gympie's interjection that he supports the federal government doing nothing on the Bruce Highway. That is absolutely disgusting. In my area, the most dangerous section of the Bruce Highway is the Mount Low Parkway. I was pleased to see the member for Hinchinbrook come to a protest meeting about the Mount Low Parkway, because now he can actually report back to his federal mates in Canberra that we need some money for that piece of highway. I am sure the member for Hinchinbrook will agree with me that it is dangerous and that something needs to be done. We have developed plans for it. They were on public show last week in Thuringowa. We need the money from Canberra. The federal government needs to fund it.

Mr Cripps: You've got $220 million worth.

Mr WALLACE: I take the member for Hinchinbrook's interjection that we have got $220 million for that section of the highway. I will go and report that back to Main Roads and we can get on to the work straight away. You get the letter from Canberra, buddy, and we will start work tomorrow. On 30 June the federal government gave us a letter saying it was going to fund the planning for that section of the road. We have got it underway. The plans were released last week. Let us get the letter from Canberra saying that it is going to fund it. The federal government has to commit money for the upgrade, which will be about $30 million.

Like all members of this place, I have got many, many people to thank. I thank my beautiful wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Gigi. They are down here at the moment. When I gave my maiden speech in this place after the last election—and the member for Capalaba will enjoy this—I said 'xie xie' to my wife,

which in Mandarin is thank you. Xie xie again, Jennifer, and xie xie, Gigi. Thank you very much for your help and support. Gigi is now five and she is going to preschool this year and will be in year 1 next year. She was a great support and inspiration on election night.

I thank my mum and dad from Home Hill. Dad was a Labor candidate for Burdekin in 1989. They are great Labor people. They taught me Labor values. They taught me that men and women who work an honest day's work deserve an honest day's wage, and that is what we are standing up for. That is what we will fight Canberra for. Members over there, with all their interjections, will never do that. They do not know what it is like to struggle and work hard. You blokes do not know what it is like to stand up for the working men and women. I will stand up in this place every day and defend working men and women in my electorate and in Queensland. I will do that every day of the week. You blokes need to stand up to Canberra and do the same.

To my campaign director, Barry Mitchell, and deputy director, Paul Fletcher, and treasurer, Cheryl Fletcher, thank you very much. My electorate office staff have been outstanding. Mardi, Elva and Cecilia, thank you for your hard work.

We will continue to work hard in Thuringowa to continue to deliver for the north. Let us hope that National Party members join us in that ride and actually stand up for their electorates for once and fight Canberra for a decent deal for our north. The north has a great deal to offer and we are growing in leaps and bounds. I also mention that today is the 60th birthday of my good friend from Burleigh, Christine Smith.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr WALLACE: She is not even here at the moment. I think she is enjoying a nice glass of wine. For all the new members, I can tell you that Christine Smith is probably one of the nicest persons in this place—apart from the member for Woodridge.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr WALLACE: That was the note I was given. I take the member for Mansfield's interjection that it was not my fault. I must say that it is great to be back in this place. I did not want to be a oncer, and I am glad I am a twicer at least.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wallace, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (8.58 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

School Administration Staff

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.58 pm): I rise tonight to join with my school parents and citizens associations and parents to speak in support of the school administration staff at our public schools. I understand there is currently a log of claims with the government requesting more support for our school administration staff. I will now read onto the public record a submission I have recently received which I believe shows how just, fair and reasonable the current log of claims is. The letter states—

As you are probably aware there has been a long standing Log of Claims requesting more support for school administration at our public schools.

In 1990 schools were issued with some funding that could be used to purchase administration staff, or office equipment. Many staff were employed on a casual basis for 10 years before recognition saw many of those put into permanent roles. During this time staff were not paid holiday pay or any additional benefits. Those allocated hours were based on student enrolment.

Since 1990 the calculation of office hours has not changed, but the role has gone from basic office skills, i.e. answering phones, issuing hand manual receipts, photocopying etc to managing school budgets, operating an Education Queensland specific computer based system, managing HR resources, and keeping up to date with ICT advances. The responsibility far outweighs the classification.

In a school with a minimum of 300 students, a classified position of AO3 is in place. This is a registrar's position. Yet in a school below the enrolment figure, an AO2 unclassified position is in place, yet the AO2 does the same job as a registrar without any recognition or pay increase.

As the school now has Education Queensland specific computerised systems in place, there is no difference in roles, especially in smaller schools. We are looking for change where an AO3 position, not necessarily a full-time position, is in every school. We need reclassification immediately. Teachers aides have just moved towards pay increases to match their roles.

The staff at—

this small school—

wish to offer their support for AO2 Administrative Officers and the Queensland Public Sector Union in supporting their claims to review their working conditions.

The relevant points for our school are as follows:—

- Rectify AO2 pay rates in smaller schools to reflect their work load and level of responsibility.
- Increase base allocation to 25 hours per week, regardless of number of students enrolled, ensuring required tasks can be completed without individual schools having "to buy" in extra hours.
- Provide progression from AO2 to AO3 for experienced AO2's.
- Review workloads and position level responsibilities.

Schools have become increasingly more complex places, with roles of all staff members broadening. Administrative Officers' roles have changed significantly to that of 15 years ago, with no apparent change in role description or time allocation procedures.

We strongly recommend the above points are addressed promptly to ensure a fair and equitable work environment for all.

I have received a number of letters from my small schools. I support them 100 per cent.

Time expired.

Queensland Arts Council

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.01 pm): On 8 September I was delighted to officially launch the Queensland Arts Council Ontour Inschools program for 2007 on behalf of education minister Rod Welford at the Centenary State High School performing arts centre in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. The Queensland Arts Council, QAC, is Australia's largest regional arts network and most extensive not-for-profit community based arts organisation. The QAC network consists of local arts councils in approximately 60 regional communities and more than 6,000 regional members. Many artists and performers began their progressional careers touring with the QAC. Many have become outstanding, award-winning performers including Geoffrey Rush and Bille Brown.

Our government is proud to support the largest performance for schools program in the world. The program averages the equivalent of 40 performances per day every school day a year to an audience of more than 500,000 per year. This is an amazing achievement.

This year's launch theme—'Big ideas, big fun, no limits: the creative road trip'—is very fitting. What a great theme to be promoting to Queensland students. The Ontour Inschools program exposes students to a range of challenging concepts and forms, evoking them with their big ideas. The idea that there is no limit to the creativity and inspiration that can come from live arts experiences is an important message for students.

The Centenary State High School has a strong record of fine performances under their belt due to the great workload, talent and guidance of their teacher Dale Partridge. Many Queenslanders' first contact with the arts is through the Queensland Arts Council Ontour Inschools program, which has been taking live performances into schools for more than 45 years. For many students it is a powerful learning experience and leads to lifelong enjoyment or involvement in the arts. The performance in schools program is now modelled around the world, and this is a fantastic achievement.

Exposure to the arts provides a creative vehicle to help us understand other people's experiences and perspectives. An arts education inspires students to explore and express their ideas in new ways, building confidence and increasing the learning capacity across all areas of the curriculum. It provides the foundation to foster a new generation of creative thinkers who can participate in and contribute to the global economy and help support a culturally vibrant society.

Our government, through Arts Queensland, contributes around $1.4 million to support the running of all Queensland Arts Council major programs. Some $210,000 is provided directly to support the Ontour Inschools program.

I would especially like to thank Mr Richard Morrison, who is the principal of Centenary State High School, and Mr Dale Partridge, the school's head of performing arts, for making this event possible last month. I also thank the talented students from the Centenary State High School.

Ambulance Services, Western Queensland

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (9.04 pm): I rise to speak on very a contentious issue, ambulance services in western Queensland. The LifePack 12 defibrillator is standard issue in every ambulance in Queensland bar western Queensland. The handing down of second-hand equipment to the west from coastal and metropolitan ambulances is a totally unsatisfactory situation, and it cannot be accommodated any longer.

In western Queensland we are currently using the old Heartstart 4000, the older Heartstart 3000 and the Zoll defibrillators that are antiquated in most areas of the world, but in western Queensland we use them. It goes to prove that the people in western Queensland are second-rate citizens. The people of western Queensland pay their ambulance levy the same as everybody else. They probably pay it

eight, 10 and 20 times, but they are getting second-hand equipment in their ambulances. The skills of paramedics in western Queensland are state-of-the-art; they are the world's best trained paramedics. These men and women deserve the best equipment, too.

The new LifePack 12 units monitor blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen levels. The units monitor everything that is going on in a patient at the time of their heart complaint. This modern piece of equipment does the monitoring for the paramedic. Why do we have to have second-rate equipment? Why do our local ambulance committees have to purchase this equipment, whereas the Department of Emergency Services supplies it to the other ambulances around the state? It is not good enough.

I call on the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Pat Purcell, to pay particular attention to this contentious issue straight away before we have a loss of life. Sometimes this old equipment might work and other times it will not work. We have paramedics who are state-of-the-art trained in medicine. They take the people to the hospitals where their lives are saved and they can get the best treatment for them. But, no, they are using second-hand equipment. It is a bit like the second-hand ambulances we get, too; they are passed on.

I say tonight—and I will continue to say it until we get the situation reversed—that we need to get this new equipment, which is fair and equitable to all of Queensland, so our paramedics can use the best equipment possible. The important factor here is that the people of western Queensland are no different to the people in south-east Queensland.

Time expired.

Mental Health Week

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (9.07 pm): This week is Mental Health Week. I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight a program that aims to reduce the incidence of mental health issues amongst young people. Depression and anxiety are terrible afflictions that can have a dramatic impact on an individual, their family and friends, and the wider community. It inhibits social interaction, constrains personal development and personal relationships, and can become a major burden on the community through direct costs in our health system, through lost productivity in workplaces and in a diminished quality of life for those afflicted. Governments and health authorities across Australia recognise that early intervention is crucial to avoid long-term problems and to stem the tide of human casualties that arise from these and related psychological conditions.

I, along with most members of this House, recently received a letter from Jeff Kennett, a former premier of Victoria, now a prominent advocate for mental health issues and services, particularly as they relate to young people. Mr Kennett is the chairman of beyondblue, a national organisation that is dedicated to addressing issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance abuse disorders in Australia. His letter outlined beyondblue's latest initiative, which is a program titled KidsMatter. KidsMatter is an early interventionist mental health program aimed directly at primary school children. It specifically aims to help young people deal with anxiety and stress by equipping them with skills that can help them for the rest of their lives. These skills will help them cope with the debilitating conditions of depression and anxiety.

The program is implemented at school level and involves the development of a plan that addresses the specific mental health needs of students, including the development of social and emotional skills. It also provides education and support for parents, early intervention support for students at risk and their families, and programs which seek to develop a positive school community.

I am pleased that the Queensland government has recently announced its commitment to funding beyondblue's programs to the tune of $3 million over the next five years. This funding will greatly assist with the effective implementation of programs such as KidsMatter. This is a fantastic commitment from the state government and one which I am proud to wholeheartedly support.

Burnett Electorate, Mental Health Care

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (9.10 pm): I am pleased that the member for Nudgee raised the issue of mental health. The need for proper mental health care is obvious these days. Without proper mental health care, lives are placed unnecessarily at risk. Families are put under tremendous pressure trying to care for loved ones who are mentally ill, and sometimes that pressure becomes so great that it rips those families apart. Relationships are destroyed and the physical and mental health of the carers is often ruined. So it is imperative that a basic level of mental health care is provided to all communities.

Unfortunately for the residents of Bundaberg and Burnett, that basic level of mental health care is missing. It has been missing since the health minister, the Hon. Stephen Robertson, in one of his first acts after he was sworn in in August 2005—just over a year ago—closed the mental health in-patient facility at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Sixteen in-patient beds were shut down without any community consultation. Sixteen in-patient beds were shut down without any consultation with staff.

This downgrading of the mental health service in the aftermath of one of this country's worst-ever health disasters and when there is the greatest need for in-patient care shows a heartlessness and callousness which is difficult to understand. Since that closure we have heard a variety of reasons why it has remained closed and promises of when it will open. All of those promises have been broken.

We have had the health minister and other Queensland Health bureaucrats telling us that the reason for our unit's closure was the unexpected resignation of a principal house officer and the difficulty in attracting other senior medical staff and specialists within the service. Our minds, however, were temporarily put at ease when we were assured that the unit would reopen once the clinical director, Dr Naeem Jhetam, arrived. After our community waited patiently, finally Dr Jhetam arrived this August. Two months on and the in-patient facility remains closed.

Last week I sought answers when I met with the acting district manager, Mr John Wylie. He informed me that the unit would not realistically be open until the end of this year and to expect that the facility most probably would be up and running in approximately six months time. The reason this time, I am told, is that the mental heath unit is in need of renovation and will not achieve accreditation until those renovations are completed. This is the first time I have heard this excuse. It is a new one. The time for excuses is over. The time for action is at hand. The families of Bundaberg and the Burnett deserve a proper and fully functioning mental health in-patient facility.

Biggera Waters Police Beat

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (9.13 pm): I am pleased to inform the House that on 4 September the minister for police, the Hon. Judy Spence, officially opened the Biggera Waters police beat. The official opening was attended by Assistant Commissioner David Melville, Superintendent Brett Pointing, officers from the Runaway Bay Police Station, including Senior Sergeant Murray Underwood and his wife, Suzanne, volunteers in policing and community group representatives.

The Biggera Waters police beat, at a cost of $541,000, was announced in the 2005-06 state budget as part of a three-year $10 million 2004 election commitment to build 25 new police beats across the state. Residents have long supported the creation of a police beat. The Biggera Waters police beat, now located in Ocean Street, is a terrific result for the area. It is just 500 metres away from the Biggera Waters State School and is close to local businesses and the Biggera Waters shopping centre.

Finding a suitable location for the police beat is an operational matter. A huge thanks must go to Senior Sergeant Murray Underwood for his outstanding efforts in finding a suitable premises. His stewardship of the Biggera Waters police beat has been fantastic.

Senior Constable Sharon Thompson and Constable Stephen Cook have been working at the police beat since its opening and will continue to do so until a permanent officer is appointed. These officers have been working closely with the Biggera Waters community to address issues such as road safety and general crime prevention. Their services are a welcome boost to the policing services in the region, as both Runaway Bay and Biggera Waters have experienced significant growth in recent years.

With its own marked police vehicle to respond to calls for service and conduct patrols in the community, this beat will boost the policing service already provided by the Runaway Bay Police Station. The Biggera Waters police beat is the first of five new police beats in our Gold Coast region, with properties in Jacobs Well, Arundel, Pacific Pines and Edens Landing all being refurbished.

The Beattie government is committed to improving community safety, and the 45 neighbourhood beats that have now been built across the state are helping officers develop strong community-police partnerships to further drive down crime rates. But that is not all. I am pleased to announce that another police beat was promised to the electorate of Broadwater. Funding has been committed, and I am confident that Senior Sergeant Murray Underwood will find another perfect location that will further improve policing in the area. I look forward to delivering on this commitment to the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate local ALP branch members Tom and Betty Harrison on recently celebrating their 50-year wedding anniversary. Congratulations, Tom and Betty.

Toowoomba South Electorate, Birthing Facilities; Young Women's Place

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.16 pm): One of the choices that should be available to young mothers and families in the birthing of their babies is a model of care based upon the services of an experienced midwife. It is an important choice. A good target would be that at least 10 per cent of mothers should be able to have that choice. There were a number of recommendations in the rebirthing report that was delivered to Queensland Health some time ago. Many of those recommendations have not yet been put in place.

The issue I want to speak about tonight is the need for a family birthing centre at the Toowoomba Base Hospital. It is one of the bigger hospitals in Queensland. Large numbers of babies are born there. Queensland Health has been so slow in developing this midwifery model of care.

We heard a speaker tonight talk about $1 million being allocated to the Townsville Hospital birthing unit. It is important that Toowoomba, as a major regional centre, get adequate funding to not only institute this model of care but also provide the necessary facilities. It is quite a simple facility. It is a family-friendly room that provides the environment for that model of care. For births assessed as low risk, this is a very safe way and happy way for young mothers to have babies. Because the facility is in a major hospital, if a complication arises—it is an unlikely event because they have been assessed as low risk—the mother can receive attention quickly. I call on the Minister for Health to step in and have a look at what is holding things up in Toowoomba. Why have we been unable to get this birthing unit?

The other thing I want to talk about is Young Women's Place in Toowoomba. It provides a marvellous service for young women who are in very vulnerable circumstances, particularly very young girls who get pregnant and face difficult circumstances, be it violence, drugs or family background. They virtually come in off the street. One of the success stories of Young Women's Place was the provision of funding for a midwife. That has just been taken away. It has been an ongoing battle to get continued funding for this service. I want to keep fighting for it. The service needs to be maintained and the funding maintained.

I have talked to some women who are marvellous examples of being helped by Young Women's Place to have their babies and get their lives back on track. Some are now on P&Cs, happily married and having other children. It has been wonderful. Because of their vulnerable position they will only go to Young Women's Place. They will not go to the hospital because it is too daunting. Because of their circumstances they need this service. I urge the minister when he meets with the group next week to give this every consideration. It is a wonderful service.

Bribie Island Ambulance Station

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.19 pm): The Bribie Island community has always been proud of the local Ambulance Service and now they have even more to be proud of with the Bribie Island Ambulance Station this year being awarded the best ambulance station in Queensland. This prestigious award was announced on 12 September during the commissioner's Star Care Awards for Ambulance Week 2006.

It is awarded to the station that promotes a friendly, welcoming environment to community members and is conducive to staff development. This station meets and exceeds the state's workplace legislation requirements and promotes an atmosphere consistent with the objectives of the Queensland Ambulance Service. QAS Commissioner Jim Higgins said that the Bribie Island station was judged best ahead of 35 ambulance response locations in the region and was among six stations nominated for the state award.

The local paramedics under the stewardship of acting OIC Pat Lynch can hold their heads up high. The station excels in its camaraderie and staff consistently demonstrate teamwork which ensures effectiveness and efficiency of emergency response to the sick and injured in the community. Other ambulance staff include Scott Brady, Ken Crowley, Mark Gavin, Cliff Harrison, Victor Hewett, Wayne Jackson, Michael Jones, Bob Klaer, John McErlane, Alan Mole, Simon Morrison, Casey Robinson, Damien Storey Wood, Peter McCarney and Peter Quirk. Best station is always a highly contested award in the QAS, and my congratulations go out to our Bribie Island paramedics on a fantastic effort in 2006.

On a recent visit to the Bribie Island Ambulance Station I also congratulated local ambulance committee, or LAC, member John Oyston on being awarded by the commissioner for 10 years of service. This certificate of appreciation was deserved recognition for John, who founded the Bribie Island LAC in 1996 and remains an active member today. John Oyston served as a permanent ambulance officer in New South Wales and the ACT for 38 years before retiring to Bribie Island in 1986. Due to his extensive knowledge and experience, he was also appointed rescue coordinator of VMR, formally Air Sea Rescue, in 1990. Although John is no longer actively involved in this role as he suffered a stroke seven years ago, he has been awarded life member of VMR Bribie Island. Mr Oyston said that he enjoyed the past 10 years with the Bribie Island LAC and it was a pleasure to work with the dedicated committee and the ambulance staff. The Bribie Island LAC now has seven members who fundraise for the Ambulance Service and act as liaisons within the community. Their role in assisting the local paramedics in fundraising for equipment, training and education and awareness materials is invaluable and I thank them most sincerely.

Springfest

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (9.21 pm): Spring in Currumbin heralds a period of celebration and high activity, with locals and visitors alike turning out in record numbers to participate and enjoy the diversity of cultural talents on show. However, none can boast the longevity and success over many years of Springfest. Covering a range of events from August to October, including junior and senior idol contests and baby competitions, a popular art festival and a grand parade, Springfest has something for everyone. Frank Hayhurst, the dedicated octogenarian behind this community festival, is once again to

be congratulated on a magnificent effort, as is tireless volunteer Bev Hammond. Frank lost his beloved Dot, who passed away during September, yet somehow in spite of experiencing terrible grief Frank soldiered on. Our region is deeply indebted to Frank's contribution, one that engenders true community spirit.

Swell Sculpture Festival spoiled us during September for the third consecutive year, displaying spectacular sculptures along the picturesque Currumbin foreshore. Curators and founders Kylie Mitchell-Smith and Natasha Edwards this year received funding from the state government through Arts Queensland and Kate McDonald wound up the festival with a visually sensational parade of 350 lanterns, drummers and dancers lighting up the night skies along Currumbin Beach. Winner of this year's people's choice award was Mudgeeraba artist Ivan Lovatt for his owl *Merlin*. In the Bin Short Film Festival, the brainchild of Jed Cahill, ran over five nights in September, offering a rare opportunity to view some of our best upcoming talents for a tiny price. Remember the drive-in movies? Well, this series of short films is reminiscent of them, except there is no car as you take your picnic chair or rug and sit amongst lovely parklands opposite Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Not held in my electorate but most worthy of note were the VIII Special Olympics Australian National Games held on the Gold Coast last week. A record number of athletes, carers and spectators were in town to compete in 10 sports. I took the time to watch some of the events at Pizzey Park and found myself in awe of the dedication and commitment of these courageous participants. Watching the concentration on their faces and the pride of their families who were in the auditorium was a humbling experience. From humble beginnings in Eunice Kennedy Shriver's backyard, today the Special Olympics serves more than 2.3 million children and adults in more than 160 countries. Their oath, 'Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt,' was lived out fully.

The Currumbin Senior Women's Dragon Boat Crew, the Currumbin Divas, are to be congratulated on scoring a bronze medal in the 200-metre event at the 2006 International Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew World Championships in Toronto in August. With over 3,000 competitors from 12 nations and regions, coach Fay Railings said the home-grown Currumbin Divas were thrilled to actually make it to the event, let alone come back with a medal. It just goes to show that the scenic beauty of training and paddling in Currumbin Creek can result in a prestigious medal. The girls took me out for a celebrity sprint in their boat and it was a truly powerful experience. Viva Currumbin!

Death of Mr S Irwin

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (9.24 pm): It is with a still heavy heart that I rise this evening to speak about the life and death of one of the greatest conservationists of our time—Steve Irwin. Many people describe Steve Irwin as a larrikin, inspirational, spontaneous. For me, the best way I can describe Steve Irwin is formidable. He would stand and fight and was not prepared to be defeated when it came to looking after our environment. He was not prepared to be defeated when it came to ensuring the conservation of endangered species, whether that be in Australia or in other countries. When he wanted to get things done—whether that be his expansion plans for the zoo, providing aid for animals affected by the tsunami and the cyclones, organising scientific research or buying land to conserve its environmental and habitat values—he just did it and woe betide anyone who stood in his way. I am not sure I have ever met anyone else who was so determined to get the conservation message out across the globe, and I believe he achieved his aim. What I admired most about him was that he lived the conservation message every day of his life.

The biographical details of Steve's life have been well documented by the media over the past couple of weeks. I did a Google search on Steve Irwin this afternoon and it came back with 16.2 million hits. The creation of Australia Zoo, the filming of wildlife documentaries and his appearance on television shows mean that over 200 million viewers in over 30 countries around the world all came to know Steve Irwin, his equally adventurous wife, Terri, and their two kids, Bindi and Bob. And the world has taken them into their hearts.

Steve's parents, Bob and Lynn, passed on their love of the Australian bush and their passion for rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. Steve took their passion and turned it into a worldwide crusade. The founding of Wildlife Warriors Worldwide in 2002 provided Steve and Terri with another vehicle to raise awareness of conservation by allowing individuals to become personally involved in protecting injured, threatened or endangered wildlife. It has also generated a working fund which helps with the wildlife hospital on the zoo premises and supports work with endangered species in Asia and Africa.

Research was always high on the agenda with Steve, and his work has enabled a far greater understanding of crocodile behaviour, population and movement patterns. Working with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the University of Queensland, Steve was an integral part of the world-first Crocs in Space research program. His work will live on and inform us for many, many years to come. I know the people in the electorate of Glass House want the world to know how much he was loved and respected. Steve was a great supporter of local businesses, schools and community groups and his generosity of spirit was always in evidence.

Whilst this is a significant loss for us, our hearts go out to his family and the Australia Zoo family. It must be difficult to work at the zoo every day with his larger than life persona still very much evident. Everyone must still be waiting for him to walk through the gate or to speak to them on the radios. His presence is everywhere. I am hoping that Steve's presence lives on in the hearts and minds of generations of wildlife warriors to come. We have lost a great man in Steve Irwin. It is a great loss to the conservation movement. My heart and the heart of everyone here goes out to his family.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.28 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson