



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2006

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

PRIVILEGE

Matter Raised—Conduct of Minister, Misleading the House

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising under my obligation as the shadow minister responsible for disabilities and pursuant to section 1 and 4.1 of the *Code of Ethical Standards*. On Wednesday, 11 October 2006 the Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth stated in the House—

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 second 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.

I seek leave to table a copy of a statutory declaration of Carole Joan Hall, a TV producer from *A Current Affair*, together with supporting emails and a letter to the Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: That is incorporating a letter to myself?

Mrs STUCKEY: Yes.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Letter from Ms Stuckey to Mr Speaker dated 1 November 2006 and enclosures.

Mrs STUCKEY: On 2 October 2006 the minister, through his press secretary, was by telephone asked to appear on an *A Current Affair* forum to discuss the issue of autism. Through his press secretary the minister deliberately decided not to accept the invitation. His department also refused a similar invitation. On 10 October 2006 the minister, through his press secretary, was again by telephone invited to be interviewed by *A Current Affair*, an invitation forwarded by email at 12.02 pm and 5.31 pm on that day.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, can I ask you to take your seat for a moment. You have written to me as a matter of privilege and I accept that and will consider the matter of privilege, but it is not a matter suddenly arising. I rule that I will accept your letter, which I will consider as a matter of privilege, and we will leave it there.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that today I received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report No. 5 for 2006; Results of Performance Management System Audits of Capital Works of Departments of Corrective Services, Education, Health and Housing*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland Report No 5 for 2006, Results of Performance Management System Audits of Capital Works at departments of Corrective Services, Education, Health and Housing.

PROCEDURE

Speaker's Ruling—Matters of Privilege

Mr SPEAKER: I would like all members to listen to what I have to say in regard to matters of privilege. Standing Order 269 provides the procedure for raising a matter of privilege and states that with the exception of matters suddenly arising a member must write to the Speaker.

Standing Order 269(3) provides—

A member must formulate as precisely as possible the matter, and where a contempt is alleged, enough particulars so as to give any person against whom it is made a full opportunity to respond to the allegation.

I wish to make my policy on such matters very clear to members. The standing orders require members in their correspondence to provide particulars.

In the case of allegations of deliberately misleading the House, which I understand to be the most common matter raised by members, I expect as Speaker sufficient particulars of not only the allegedly deliberately misleading statements, but particulars of the evidence against which an allegation is to be judged. The letter should provide clear analysis demonstrating that any statements made were not only misleading but also deliberately misleading.

Standing order 269(5) permits the Speaker in considering a matter to request further information from the complainant. I advise members that I will not hesitate in writing back to members requesting further particulars.

Can I also note that sessional orders provide a time for matters of privilege to be raised. The standing orders also provide that once a matter is referred it cannot be referred to in debate in the House. I take a very dim view of members not complying with the spirit of standing and sessional orders by not raising a matter of privilege but using another time on the business program, such as matters of public interest, private members' statements or the adjournment debate, to raise and air matters of privilege.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

Discharge of Mr S Hinchliffe; Appointment of Ms A Palaszczuk

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 11 I advise that the member for Stafford has been replaced on the panel of temporary speakers by the member for Inala.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Public Dental Services

Mr Hobbs from 730 petitioners requesting the House to stop limiting the number of public patients that dentists employed by Queensland Health can treat and to ensure provision of adequate funding to treat those public patients; immediately pass legislation to allow the operation in Queensland of the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme which is designed to alleviate shortages of dentists in rural and regional areas; and to immediately allow the public sector dentist based in St George to open clinics in Dirranbandi and Mungindi and appoint two dentists to the vacant positions in Roma.

Runaway Bay, General Practitioners

Ms Croft from 120 petitioners requesting the House to advise the Federal Government that the shortage of General Practitioners in the Runaway Bay area is significantly impacting on local residents and the remaining doctors, and request that the Federal Government declare this a District of Workforce Shortage in an attempt to attract more doctors.

Kulangoor, Landfill

Mr Wellington, two petitions, from 631 petitioners in total, requesting the House to ensure that, when the application for the Maroochy Shire Council's new proposed landfill site at Ferntree Creek Road, Kulangoor is submitted, the Government thoroughly scrutinises and rejects it.

Elanora, On-off Ramp

Mrs Stuckey from 332 petitioners requesting the House to build an on/off ramp at 19th Avenue, Elanora as this would relieve a tremendous amount of the traffic currently using Exit 92 of the M1 motorway and would also allow residents to safely access K.P. McGrath drive.

Rosedale, Urban Footprint

Mr Nicholls from 98 petitioners requesting the House to amend the Urban Footprint for Rosedale so that the properties No. 507 to No. 323 inclusive on the western side of Grieve Road, Rosedale fall within the Urban Footprint, similar to those on east/south end.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled—

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie)—

- Service Delivery and Performance Commission Annual Report 2005-2006
- Office of Parliamentary Counsel Annual Report 2005-2006
- Office of Public Service Commissioner Annual Report 2005-2006
- South Bank Corporation Annual Report 2006
- Queensland Integrity Commissioner Annual Report 2005-2006
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2005-2006

- Report on visit to New Zealand by Premier Peter Beattie 27-29 October 2006
 - Report by Dr Heather Beattie on visit to New Zealand 27-29 October 2006
- Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms Bligh)—
- The Coordinator-General Annual Report 2005-2006
 - Gladstone Economic and Industrial Development Board Annual Report 2005-2006
 - Queensland Water Commission Annual Report 2005-2006
- Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (Mr Fraser)—
- Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust Annual Report 2005—2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Water Projects

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): We are getting on with the job of funding water infrastructure for all of Queensland. This morning Andrew Fraser, the minister for local government, has approved \$49 million for 41 water projects across Queensland—from a four-megalitre reservoir on Thursday Island to upgrades in Cloncurry and funding support for a desalination plant to address dire need in Miriam Vale. This funding is about securing the water supply for all of Queensland, and it confirms our strong partnership with local government across Queensland.

Also this morning the minister for local government has approved a 35 per cent subsidy to the Brisbane City Council—estimated to be approximately \$4.3 million for the \$13 million Caltex water substitution project. This project will free up 4.5 megalitres of water per day that was being taken from the drinking water supply.

I also inform the House that my government has provided \$49 million to the Gold Coast City Council Pimpama waste water treatment re-use and recycle project. That is the biggest ever grant to a local government in the history of Queensland for water infrastructure. This project won an International Water Association award last year and has the potential to reduce demand on drinking water by up to 85 per cent per household.

From the Gold Coast to the Gulf of Carpentaria, we are providing the funds to secure our future water supply. I congratulate Andrew Fraser on his initiatives. Well done.

Health Action Plan

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): It is now one year since I released the five-year Health Action Plan—Queensland's blueprint for reform, better patient care and a healthier Queensland. We have come a long way in just 12 months as we continue to reform and better resource our hospital system, but we still have more work to do. There is still much work to be done, but we are improving the system—employing more doctors and nurses and allied healthcare workers and giving them the resources they need to do their job.

The Health Action Plan marked the biggest single injection of health funding in the state's history—a \$6.4 billion package in just over five years. This year, my government boosted the Health Action Plan to an unprecedented investment of \$9.7 billion over the next five years. The Health Action Plan demonstrates that we are taking problems in the health system seriously. It shows our commitment to reform to meet the growing needs of Queenslanders now and into the future.

One year on, I am proud to say that we have not only achieved many targets but have also exceeded them. We have recruited more clinical staff than we promised last year, with 448 more doctors, 1,826 more nurses and 636 more professional and allied health workers. We have made Queensland Health a better place to work by implementing a 'zero tolerance' to bullying policy, reinforced through a new code of conduct and a workplace investigations unit. We have also given clinicians greater power to make decisions about health services. We have upgraded facilities and opened more beds to care for Queensland's growing population.

We have examined health services around the world to help us create a better, smarter system. We have increased our focus on health interventions to keep Queenslanders healthy and out of hospital, and we have invested additional funding in key areas including elective surgery, emergency departments, intensive care, cancer and cardiac services, mental health and chronic disease. Importantly, we have worked to regain the trust of our staff and patients by providing better, safer health services and by being open and transparent about how we provide them. We now report regularly and publicly on health system performance, including staffing, activity and waiting lists.

It does not stop with the Health Action Plan. In recent months we have made further commitments over and above those contained in the Health Action Plan. These include a new 400-bed Queensland Children's Hospital, a 750-bed university hospital at the Gold Coast, a 650-bed capacity tertiary hospital at the Sunshine Coast, and elective surgery centres at Redcliffe, Caboolture and QEII.

My government remains firmly committed to improving the public health system in Queensland and ensuring that Queenslanders receive safe and accessible health services into the future. The Minister for Health will further inform the House of his progress with respect to the Health Action Plan and the reform agenda for Queensland Health over the past 12 months but I thank him publicly for his commitment and dedication to improve the health services to Queenslanders.

Election Commitments

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): When the House last sat, I provided an update on the delivery of 79 initiatives I announced the Queensland government would deliver in its first 100 days of this term. I am delighted to be able to inform the House that we are continuing to meet our targets, having already delivered a good number of the initiatives within the first 50 days of being returned to government in Queensland.

The following initiatives have now been completed. We have passed legislation to accelerate the acquisition of the site for the new Yeppoon Hospital. Construction has commenced on the southern regional pipeline. We have nominated the six regions to host centres of enterprise in key areas of industry strength to seize upon opportunities for economic growth. Site planning has commenced for five bridges and the resurfacing of 71 kilometres of the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Banana. We have developed an integrated strategy to assist development of the industrial and enterprise precincts in the western corridor of south-east Queensland.

The new Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at Queensland University of Technology has been opened, as has the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology at the University of Queensland. We have also finalised the Queensland College of Wine Tourism at Stanthorpe. We have inducted 225 new police and commenced the scoping and design work for the rollout of new and upgraded police stations.

We are building a better Queensland. 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, education by more than 55 per cent and welfare and housing by more than 110 per cent.

Today I am pleased to provide the House with a detailed update on the government's first 100 days program at its halfway mark. I seek leave to incorporate full details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Health

A year on from the release of the Health Action Plan—we're continuing to deliver on a better health system.

1. Sunshine Coast Hospital—Since I last provided an update to this House we have executed the Heads of Agreement to purchase the new Sunshine Coast Hospital site. Contracts for sale will be formalised by the end of this month.

Action: An initial project team has been established to be augmented by additional resources following recruitment and procurement stages. A draft proposed master program for the project has also been developed.

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

Action: The Co-ordinator General interdepartmental site working group was established in September with their first workshop conducted on 9-10 October where the hospital site option was confirmed. A Project Team within the District is currently being established.

Queensland Health and the Gold Coast University are committed to undertaking the joint master planning of the university and hospital with the objective of ensuring optimal integration. Initial meeting to progress this further was held on 24 October 2006.

3. 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 established in October to complete an examination of planning requirements with consultants engaged to assist with the scoping and design work for the majority of projects. It is anticipated that remaining appointments will be made by the end of this month.

4. 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: Recruitment of additional staff well underway with all Principal House Officer (PHO)/Registrar positions filled for 2007 at both Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospitals. The additional Orthopaedic Surgeon position was interviewed for in late October 2006, finalisation of recruitment is underway.

Plans are in place to start the additional operating sessions before the end of the first 100 days. Plans to upgrade the recovery area have been endorsed and it is anticipated that construction will commence by January 2007.

5. Promise: Appoint Dr Alan Isles to lead the consultation process for the creation of the new Queensland Children's Hospital.
 Action: Dr Allan Isles commenced in his new position as Clinical CEO of the Queensland Children's Hospital on 11 September 2006. Since his commencement he has been involved with the establishment of a Steering Committee which in turn has agreed on a way forward to address issues such as governance and service planning.
 Work has progressed on the transfer of Paediatric Cardiac Services from the Prince Charles Hospital with the development of a project plan and the drawing up of a service plan.
 6. Promise: Create a separate Medical Board to focus solely on doctor registration issues.
 Action: The necessary legislation was introduced on Tuesday (October 31). An acting CEO for the new Office of the Medical Board will be appointed within the 100 days.
 7. 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.
 8. Promise: Advertise nationally and internationally for extra staff to boost paediatric cardiac services at Prince Charles Hospital.
 Action: Queensland Health's national recruitment strategy was launched in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Annual Scientific Meeting in Hobart on 12 to 15 October 2006 with promotional material produced by the Prince Charles Hospital. Our international campaign is being run in conjunction with medical conferences in the United Kingdom and New Zealand this month.
 9. Promise: Introduce legislation to accelerate the acquisition of the site for the new Yeppoon Hospital.
 Action: The Yeppoon Hospital Bill has been passed by Parliament.
 10. 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: By continuing our aggressive recruitment campaign we have successfully increased those totals previously announced to recruit 448 extra doctors, 1,826 extra nurses and 636 extra allied health professionals.
 Ongoing advertising for all health professions internationally and nationally is continuing. Conferences and trade expos are well represented by the Queensland Health Recruitment Unit (QHRU) and Recruitment Assessment Placement Training Support (RAPTS).
 11. Promise: Offer jobs to all students graduating as nurses.
 Action: Queensland Health has conducted visits to Universities to inform graduates on how to apply via the Graduate On-Line Recruitment web based application system.
 838 nursing graduates have accepted offers of employment into start-of-year 2007 positions. The number of acceptances is likely to increase with second round of offers continuing.
 12. 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: Numerous consumer focus groups across Queensland are planned over the next eight weeks. The Consumer Health Council will be developed in early 2007.
 13. 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 released (as always) early this month.
 14. Promise: Finalise negotiations with Griffith University for the establishment of a third Queensland Academy at the Smith Street campus on the Gold Coast focused on Health Sciences.
 Action: The initial meeting with Griffith University took place in September, 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
15. 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 in early September. The Government is now preparing to publish the initial report.
 16. 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 soon.
 17. 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 Building Act will be amended to introduce mandatory requirements for new housing to achieve initial water saving targets. The Government is likely to introduce stricter targets for some new residential developments in South East Queensland by early 2007.
 18. Promise: Commence construction on the Southern Regional Pipeline.
 Action: On October 18 the Deputy Premier and I witnessed the installation of the first pipes being laid for this vital project.

19. Promise: Commence site works for Gold Coast desalination plant.
Action: Site works are continuing with a formal contract to be signed in November.
20. Promise: Commence site works for Western Corridor Recycling Scheme.
Action: Site establishment commenced in early September. Pipe deliveries for the Bundamba to the Swanbank section commenced on 17 October 2006.
21. Promise: Commence action to obtain easements to set in place the South East Queensland water grid.
Action: The first set of acquisition notices for the pipeline easements for the Western Corridor Recycling Scheme and the Southern Regional Pipeline Project have been issued.
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.
22. 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: The Coordinator-General declared these projects to be Significant on 20 October 2006 and we plan to release the draft terms of reference for each environmental impact study before the end of the 100 days.
- 23a. 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.
- 23b. Promise: Negotiate arrangements for raising of Hinze Dam.
Action: The Coordinator-General declared the project to be Significant on 20 October 2006. The Gold Coast City Council selected the alliance partners for planning and construction on 2 October 2006.
24. Promise: Complete drilling of the initial production bores of the Nambour/ Landsborough Basin.
Action: Four initial (test) bores are on target to be completed by mid December. If productive, these bores will provide additional supplies which will contribute to the South-East Queensland water grid.
25. Promise: Finalise report and act on recommendations from the Toowoomba Water Futures Taskforce.
Action: The taskforce has met twice—on August 14th and October 11th—and is scheduled to meet again early this month. By mid November it aims to have established the amount of water needed by Toowoomba up to the year 2050 and options for immediate action.
The Taskforce expects to be in a position by the end of the month to provide advice to the government on the preferred direction to secure Toowoomba's immediate and future water supplies.
26. Promise: Progress geotechnical and environmental studies on the Eden Bann and Rookwood Weirs.
Action: Field work for a turtle study has commenced and on site visits have been conducted by Natural Resources and Mines, drilling consultants and cultural heritage custodians for site clearance.
27. Promise: Complete First Stage of the Burdekin to Moranbah pipeline.
Action: Pipe laying 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 has been completed and work has started on the southern pipeline from Moranbah to the Dysart area.
28. Promise: Conduct preliminary feasibility study of Connors River Dam.
Action: Approval by the Governor will be sought early December. We have commissioned SunWater to undertake a "fatal flaws" analysis as the preliminary feasibility study. This will occur within the 100 days.
29. 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 1971. Declaration expected by end of November.
30. Promise: Commence acquisition of corridor to connect Rockhampton and Gladstone supplies.
Action: We have completed investigations to determine the optimum alignment of the Stanwell (Rockhampton) to Gladstone Corridor Investigation Study.
Following community and landowner consultation between mid November and early December 2006 we intend to recommend to the Governor in Council declaration of the corridor as a State Development area. Following declaration, acquisition of the corridor will commence.
31. 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 early 2007.

32. 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

33. 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.

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

Action: We have awarded preferred developer status to Chalco and are now finalising agreements with Chalco and the Aurukun community on the feasibility study.

35. 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 met on 23 October and considered Queensland new technologies in the generation of clean power from fossil fuels. This includes Stanwell Corporation's Zerogen project, a leading-edge demonstration project to efficiently generate power from coal and to capture and sequester the carbon dioxide produced.

36. Promise: Amend the State Development and Public Works Organisation 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 during the 100 days.

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

Action: The six regions have been nominated as Cairns and Far North Queensland; Townsville and North West Queensland, Mackay and Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Central West, Wide Bay Burnett and Darling Downs and the South West. Key areas of industry strength have been identified and a model will be announced prior to the end of 2006.

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

Action: An approach is being developed for implementation of the mineral exploration initiative and the collaborative drilling initiative, and a list of potential private sector partners has been developed. Guidelines and related contracts will be available for implementation of these initiatives. Submission of proposals for grants under this program will be sought during the first half of 2007.

These initiatives have been placed in a four-year plan, budgets have been assigned and arrangements are being made to acquire geophysical data in conjunction with Geoscience Australia and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Timing of data acquisition will depend upon the availability of contractors and weather conditions.

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

39. 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 were released on 11 October 2006.

I announced on October 8 that business cases for both the Airport Link and the Northern Busway show that both projects are viable. The State Government is funding construction of the busway and the Airport Link will be 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.

40. 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. Early track works have commenced.

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 the contract is expected to be awarded late November.

The second track between Ormeau and Coomera has been completed and is operational.

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

41. 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.

42. Promise: Take investment decision on Springfield Road rail corridor.

Action: This will be made within the 100 days.

43. 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 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.

44. Promise: Commence site plans for five bridges and resurface 71km of the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Banana.
Action: Site works for highway resurfacing have started and the actual strengthening and resurfacing works will commence on 6 November 2006. Design for all bridges was completed in early October 2006, with works already commenced on the first two bridges west of Banana.
45. 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: We will establish a rigorous process based on international best practice that will include external checks and regular review of the risks faced in each portfolio.
46. Promise: Develop an integrated strategy to assist development of the industrial and enterprise precincts in the western corridor of south east Queensland.
Action: This strategy was completed on 27 October 2006. I anticipate being able to make major announcements as a result of the strategy within the 100 days.
47. 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.
We have just received a request from Maroochy Shire Council. Preliminary planning for a possible Maroochydore Station will also be completed in a similar time frame. We are now able to initiate investigations and will continue to protect the existing alignment.
Detailed planning will then start, with completion due in late 2007.
48. 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 to Queenslanders on December 2.
49. 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.
50. 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 on September 25th at The University of Queensland.
51. Promise: Open the new Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at Queensland University of Technology.
Action: I was proud to launch the new \$70 million Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) based in a state of the art facility at the Queensland University of Technology's campus in the Kelvin Grove Urban Village last week.
52. Promise: Open the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology at the University of Queensland.
Action: The Institute was also opened last week.

Jobs, industry and skills

53. 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: User Choice contract allocations have been made to training providers ensuring that funding is available for an additional 1,000 apprentices and trainee training places.
54. 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.
55. Promise: Introduce legislation to support \$1.1 billion Queensland Skills Plan.
Action: We will introduce the legislation this year.
56. Promise: Establish 10 new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland.
Action: Leases have been established at all ten locations across Queensland.
The first Skilling Solutions Queensland centre is scheduled for opening in Hervey Bay by early December 2006, with the remaining centres being rolled out from early 2007.
57. 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.

The three new training centres of excellence will not necessarily 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.

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

Action: Work has begun to identify the key industries to be considered in establishing the School Industry Trade Centres.

59. 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 on the 2007 school year.

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

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

Action: Construction of the college has been completed. Fit out is being finalised and will be completed within the 100 days. Training has already commenced and industry has accessed the college for a number of specific events

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

Action: The Government is working 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).

62. 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.

63. 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 \$50m were released. Applications close in two days and we expect to be able to announce successful schools within the 100 days.

Guidelines for access to the \$850m will soon be complete and ready for cabinet consideration.

64. 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. The facility at Toowong is being redeveloped and is on track for start of school 2007.

65. 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. For 2007, the Academy will operate from temporary accommodation on our partner university's site at QUT Kelvin Grove. Renovation of K block is on track and will be completed by the end of November.

66. 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 are on track to be concluded within the 100 days.

Community, social, and law and order

67. 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 and is 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.

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

Action: 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 before the end of the year.

69. 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: As I advised on 11 October 2006 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 understand that former Members are liaising with the Clerk and the Speaker will be advising me of progress in these repayments.
70. Promise: Introduce legislation to outlaw ticket scalping at major sporting and entertainment events in Queensland.
Action: This legislation is now before the House.
71. Promise: Induct 220 new police before the end of the year.
Action: By October 25th, 225 new police officers had been sworn in since the State Election.
72. Promise: Ensure ongoing increases in police numbers to keep pace with Queensland's rapid population growth.
Action: With the recent increase in new police sworn in, this is promise is being met.
73. 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.
74. 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: State Cabinet approved these new laws on Monday October 30. The legislation will be introduced to parliament tomorrow (November 2).
75. Promise: Commence scoping and design work for the rollout of new and upgraded police stations.
Action: This has already been achieved with work underway to plan the upgrade works and the search for suitable sites on which to build the new stations.
76. Promise: Open the new Gympie Police Station and Rainbow Beach Police Beat.
Action: The Gympie Police Station became operational in mid-October. Rainbow Beach Police Beat became operational on October 30.
77. Promise: Introduce laws to ensure children can't legally obtain spray-paint cans.
Action: State Cabinet approved these new laws on Monday this week. The legislation will be introduced into the House on Thursday (November 2).
78. Promise: Enact legislation to outlaw drink spiking.
Action: The legislation was passed by Parliament last night (October 31).
79. Promise: Enact legislation to authorise courts to apply electronic monitoring devices to persons previously convicted for paedophilic offences.
Action: The legislation was passed by Parliament last night (October 31).

New Zealand Trip

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): Earlier today, I tabled a report on my recent trip to New Zealand as well as a report by Associate Professor Dr Heather Beattie. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, on Sunday I returned from a two-day trip to New Zealand designed to help boost the strong trade and economic relationship between Queensland and New Zealand.

I visited Auckland and Rotorua holding a number of meetings with key political and business representatives including Prime Minister Helen Clark.

New Zealand is one of our nearest neighbours in the Asia Pacific region and a valued trading partner.

They are our seventh largest export market and our eighth largest source of imports.

Our Government has worked hard to build a strong relationship and this provided an avenue to explore further opportunities for Queensland business.

Some of the features of the trip included—

A function in Auckland with the Minister for Immigration, Communications, Information Technology and Associate Minister for Economic Development, David Cunliffe.

The function was also attended by a range of local business representatives.

As well as promoting opportunities available in Queensland I also discussed our progress on Smart State initiatives and potential areas of collaboration including transport infrastructure, power generation and biotechnology.

I also held meetings with a number of businesses keen to explore opportunities in Queensland including Industrial Research Limited—one of New Zealand's key Crown Research Institutes that undertakes research and development in manufacturing, energy and natural products processing.

Another key highlight was a visit to the Starship Children's Hospital in Auckland.

Starship Children's is the principal paediatric tertiary referral hospital for New Zealand.

I was keen to view the work being undertaken at this hospital and its relevance to plans for our own new Queensland Children's Hospital.

The Queensland Children's Hospital will become one of the world's best, offering general and tertiary services and Starship Children's has an excellent reputation so I was interested to see what we could learn to further enhance the services we offer to our patients.

Specifically New Zealand's cardiac service for children was previously located in an adult cardio-thoracic hospital and moved to the Starship Children's Hospital.

We plan to undertake a similar move, shifting paediatric cardiac services from The Prince Charles Hospital to the Queensland Children's Hospital.

The Queensland Children's Hospital will be built on the Mater Hospital campus and will be a Queensland Health hospital managed in conjunction with Mater Health Services.

I also met with Prime Minister Helen Clark in Rotorua and accepted an invitation to address the 90th Anniversary New Zealand Labour Party Conference.

We discussed a range of issues including the Government's intention to upgrade the Auckland rail network and the potential involvement of Smart State know-how, greater cooperation on research and technology, and greater collaboration and commercialisation on clean coal technologies.

More than 500 delegates from across New Zealand attended the conference so it provided a great opportunity to push our Smart State credentials.

I also spoke on the impacts of climate change in Queensland, our economic strength and opportunities for tourism and investment.

I also highlighted further potential areas of cooperation between Queensland and New Zealand, including the important areas of transport infrastructure, clean coal technology, biotechnology and climate change.

Annual Reports 2005-06

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): I tabled a number of annual reports this morning from my department and agencies. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet provides myself and Cabinet with strategic policy advice and support services in relation to executive Government and machinery of Government matters.

My Department has been assisting in the recovery from Tropical Cyclone Larry, including the establishment and management of the Tropical Cyclone Larry Relief Appeal.

My Department has coordinated Queensland's input into the Council of Australian Government's agenda for ongoing health workforce reforms and skills, the Obesity Summit and assisted with the Queensland Road Safety Summit.

My Department continues to play a key role in coordinating the Government's counter-terrorism initiatives, having released Counter-Terrorism—An Action Plan to Safeguard our Communities outlining the State's immediate counter-terrorism priorities following the 2005 London bombings.

The Terrorism (Preventative Terrorism) Act 2005 was developed to implement a Council of Australian Government's agreement that all states and territories would enact legislation to strengthen counter-terrorism laws.

Mr Speaker I would like to draw to the attention of the House that the Service Delivery and Performance Commission's Annual Report for 2005-06 is its first such report.

The Commission was established on 10 November 2005 to review and improve service delivery and performance across the public sector.

Since its establishment, the Service Delivery and Performance Commission has completed three reviews. I tabled the reports on these reviews in the House on 12 October 2006.

The Commission will continue to undertake reviews targeting specific areas of public administration and aims to provide efficiency savings of \$20m in 2007-08, rising to \$100m per annum by 2010-11.

During 2005-06, the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel drafted 77 Government Bills and 371 instruments of subordinate legislation. Several significant items of legislation produced related to child safety, counter-terrorism, water and transport.

The Office continued to implement changes to the style and presentation of legislation during 2005-06. Legislative styles are currently undergoing a two yearly review.

During 2005-06 the Office of the Public Service Commissioner reviewed the management of complaints in agencies, implemented the Government's recommendations targeted at promoting child safe workplaces across agencies, and reviewed the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994.

South Bank Corporation has reported that with 180 events held at the South Bank Parklands there were a record number of visitors, increasing from 6.3 million in 2004-05 to 6.7 million in 2005-06.

The Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre hosted 876 events, drawing more people to the South Bank precinct.

Mr Speaker, these reports are indicative of the work undertaken by the Government over the past year. I commend these reports to the House.

Prayer for Rain

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): Tomorrow morning, I will be at St John's Cathedral to launch 'Water: A time for prayer'. The Christian churches of Brisbane have come together and will dedicate 5 to 12 November to pray for rain. Queensland is enduring the worst drought in 100 years. The effects have been catastrophic for many of our farmers and primary producers, but the effects of this drought do not stop at the farm gate. As water levels continue to drop and our paddocks, pastures, parks and gardens turn to brown, all of us have had to re-assess how we consume our most precious resource.

Earlier this year I invited the leaders of our Christian churches to lend their support in the fight against drought by encouraging members of their congregations to pray for rain. I thank them for their response in coming together and dedicating a week of prayer to rain. A large wooden cross will stand in a pot filled with dry earth to symbolise the week of prayer. This cross will reside at the Parliamentary Annexe until 13 November.

This initiative is not restricted to Brisbane. The heads of Christian churches throughout the state have responded enthusiastically to the call to galvanise the power of prayer at this critical time. I have also written to the leaders of other religious communities asking them to support this effort as well.

The government is working hard to meet the challenges of the drought and will spend billions of dollars to drought proof south-east Queensland as much as is humanly possible. We are well underway to establishing that water grid. We have joined forces with councils across south-east Queensland to build pipelines between dams and move water from one area to another, depending on need. But as I have always said, we cannot make it rain. I encourage members and their constituents to support this week of prayer. Let all Queenslanders pray for rain.

Council for the Australian Federation

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.49 am): On 13 October 2006 state and territory Premiers and Chief Ministers held the inaugural meeting of the Council for the Australian Federation. At that council meeting, I highlighted to my colleagues my concern about the extraordinary expansion of Commonwealth powers in the latter half of the 20th century and, in the face of this, the failure of the Senate to fulfil its charter as the state's house. I mooted the possibility of reform to the Senate—à la the German Bundesrat—that would result in state and territory leaders providing membership of the Senate, thereby ensuring that states' rights and interests are truly represented. My colleagues agreed that it is imperative that we find a more effective model of cooperative federalism that is suited to the 21st century.

I conferred with South Australian Premier, Mike Rann, yesterday, who is in India on a trade mission, and we agreed that it is time for a constitutional convention specifically focused on the future of the Australian Federation. We know that the public is tired of arguments between different levels of government regarding duplication and gaps. They want a model of cooperative federalism that works.

I wish to ensure that Queensland provides leadership in what I hope will be a national debate. Our state, more than any other, represents the diversity of Australia: we are the only mainland state where more people live outside the capital city than live in it. We understand the different and common challenges of a remote, regional and urban community. Consequently, I have secured Queensland as the location for the headquarters of the secretariat of the Council for the Australian Federation. When the council next meets in February 2007 here in Brisbane we will provide a paper to invigorate this debate and foreshadow the benefits of holding a constitutional convention in early 2008. I also table the communique from the inaugural council meeting. It provides evidence of the breadth and significance of the issues facing states and territories and the opportunities provided by this new council to deliver a new style of cooperative federalism in Australia.

Tabled paper: Communique dated 13 October 2006 from Council for the Australian Federation.

Smithsonian Fellowships

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.51 am): A significant aspect of the Smart State Strategy is developing strategic alliances and making the right international connections. One of Queensland's most important alliances is with the world's foremost research and museum complex, the Smithsonian Institution. I of course attended and had the pleasure of awarding the 2006 Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowships at the science and innovation reception last night. I want to thank those members who attended. I seek leave to have details in relation to the fellowship and the reception incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Fellowship Program is now in its sixth year and provides up to \$90,000 each year to enable three Queenslanders to undertake research at the Smithsonian.

This year's Fellows illustrate the multifaceted nature of this relationship, which encompasses the natural and social sciences, the arts, education and outreach.

The 2006 Fellows are:

- Associate Professor Richard John, of the School of Environmental and Applied Sciences, at Griffith University;
- Dr Emma Collier-Baker, a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland; and
- Ms Bernadette McCormack, the Visitor Experience Manager at the Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich.

Associate Professor John's research focuses on enhancing the Griffith Science Education Alliance—Science Outreach to Queensland Schools, an initiative in which he has a lead role.

He will work with the National Science Resources Centre in Washington DC to learn about its strategies for engaging school districts in science education and outreach, and assess their relevance to Queensland.

Dr Collier-Baker's project extends her research into the Evolution of Mind: the Representational Capacities of Apes.

She will research the cognitive capacities of orang-utans, gorillas and gibbons at the Think Tank at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park.

Ms McCormack's research focuses on the role and impact of public programs in museums.

She will work with the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History on a major review of that museum's public programs, and undertake a comparative study of public programs at the American History Museum and the Workshops Rail Museum.

I am sure that Members will join me in congratulating the 2006 Fellows, and wishing them well on their future endeavours.

Trade Mission to the Middle East, United Kingdom, Monaco, Italy and Berlin

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.52 am): As Australia's fastest growing overseas goods exporter in 2005-06, it is clear that our message that Queensland is a capable and attractive trade and investment partner is being increasingly recognised overseas. To reinforce this message, I will be leading a trade mission between 6 and 19 November 2006 to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Monaco, Italy and Germany. This mission will consolidate Queensland's strong economic relationships in established European markets, whilst positioning our state for even stronger future growth in the emerging markets of the Middle East.

During Export Week 2006, my government announced its intention to enhance Queensland's presence in the Middle East by establishing trade representations in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates—the UAE—and in Saudi Arabia. These two oil-rich economies are growing at an unprecedented rate, and their governments are investing heavily in developing their education, health, housing, utilities and transport infrastructure systems. In Saudi Arabia alone, current infrastructure and public sector building programs are estimated to be worth some \$A304 billion.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are markets that Queensland cannot afford to ignore. In fact, Queensland's representation in Abu Dhabi will be a first for any state or territory in Australia.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I interrupt for a moment. There is a lot of audible conversation and movement on both sides of the chamber. I ask people to desist. The Premier has the floor.

Mr BEATTIE: I was talking about Riyadh and our representation there. In fact, Queensland's representation in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi will be the first by any state or territory in Australia.

While reinforcing Queensland's commitment in the Middle East by formally announcing trade representations in both markets, my mission will also focus on creating opportunities for business by promoting Queensland's reputation for providing innovative and responsive large scale construction and infrastructure services.

Queensland's Smart State status is another message that my mission will focus on delivering in Europe. Queensland shares strong similarities to developing regions in Europe and our commitment to promoting knowledge intensive industries and investing in innovation. Queensland is becoming increasingly known for its strong capabilities in information and communication technologies, satellite navigation systems and biotechnology.

My trade mission will be visiting the Lombardy region of Italy where I will be signing a key bilateral agreement to encourage formal collaboration in these Smart State technologies. We will also be examining a number of opportunities consistent with my government's aim to bolster Queensland's knowledge based industries. This includes encouraging increased collaboration between Queensland and the Piedmont region where we are working with the Torino Wireless Foundation on increasing the international competitiveness of the state's ICT sector. With preparations for the 2012 London Olympic Games advancing, the time is right to capitalise on Queensland's expertise in sport and sport related services. We are visiting officials from the London 2012 organising bodies to promote Queensland businesses and so on. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In keeping with the sport focus, I will also be advancing Queensland's plans to bid for the 2011 IAAF World Athletics Championships in Monaco.

Finally, the trade mission will spend a short time in the German capital Berlin to learn more about the operations of the German Parliament's 'bundesrat', and to meet with senior government representatives.

As I shared with my Parliamentary colleagues last sitting, the bundesrat is the equivalent of the Australian federal Upper House but where State Premiers or their Ministerial representatives can ensure States' rights and interests are properly served in the laws going through the lower House.

Traveston Dam

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.55 am): I can inform the House this morning that the communication process for the residents affected by the Traveston Crossing and Wyaralong dams is progressing. More than 1,000 landholders have been sent personalised packs detailing the dam impacts on their own properties. I appreciate that this is a very emotional issue and that inevitably people will have concerns when they receive this material. We have endeavoured to explain the process and the implications as clearly as possible through one-on-one contacts wherever possible, the 1,000 individualised packs and access to a 1800 number. On Friday I will be in Gympie to meet with residents. Local mayors, federal MPs and federal ministers were all contacted yesterday.

Yesterday, the Queensland Water Infrastructure company undertook face-to-face meetings with many residents. The 1800 number linked to the dam packs is already taking calls. As at 8 am this morning there had been more than 50 calls. Of those, about 75 per cent had already received their pack and were wanting to discuss their individual issues further. This number of calls to the 1800 number is expected to increase today as more and more people receive those packs. Among those with whom the water company representatives met yesterday were principals of the school at Kandanga and Federal. They also met with Kandanga residents, the publican and the members of the Kandanga Bowls Club. As I said yesterday, the impacts of these major projects are unfortunate. However, the government has an obligation to deliver water security for the people and the industry of the whole region.

The Queensland Water Infrastructure company is to meet with the Cooloola Shire Council tomorrow and with Noosa and Maroochy Shire Councils over the next few days. Queensland Water Infrastructure company representatives spoke with every affected landholder at Wyaralong yesterday. They are each receiving individual packs as well.

Hospital Performance Report

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.57 am): Today I table the first comprehensive quarterly hospital performance report compiled by Queensland Health. This report contains a range of data, including the September quarter's elective surgery performance as well as several other key indicators on our public health system. The complete elective surgery performance report is available on Queensland Health's web site.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health Hospital performance report September quarter 2006

Over the past three months, Queensland's public hospitals set a record for total activity, treating more than 467,000 patients. Last quarter, Queensland Health treated 324,517 people in accident and emergency, admitted 96,141 patients for day-only procedures and operated on 108,525 overnight patients. There were also more than two million occasions of outpatient services. What this means is that our public hospitals are busier than ever and treating more Queenslanders than ever before. Some 28,916 people had their elective surgery performed over the past three months—an all-year high and an increase of 2.4 per cent on the September quarter 2005. Many of our regional hospitals had a bumper year for elective surgery.

For instance, Bundaberg's elective surgery increased by 53 per cent or 203 patients compared with the same quarter last year. These statistics demonstrate the solid recovery that Bundaberg Hospital has undergone over the past 12 months. Gold Coast recorded an increase of 31 per cent or 689 patients, and Logan's elective surgery activity grew by 28 per cent or 217 patients. Our public hospitals also set a record for the number of day-only patients treated and the number of patients who stayed in hospital for more than one day. Patients treated during the period—covering accident and emergency and all hospital admissions—totalled a record of 467,123. At no time have our public hospitals treated and cared for so many patients in a three-month period.

Despite this record activity, public hospitals continue to be challenged by ongoing and unprecedented demand for elective surgery. Whilst we are treating more and more category 1 and 2 patients—the most urgent cases—the number of people waiting longer than recommended for surgery has marginally increased from the previous quarter. In the September quarter 10,716 category 1 patients received operations, 725 more than the same time last year. However, the percentage of 'long waits' has increased by 0.9 per cent to 11.9 per cent. Similarly, 12,909 category 2 patients had their surgery—204 more than the same time last year—but the percentage of those waiting longer than recommended increased 1.5 per cent to 22 per cent. The percentage of category 3 'long waits' was stable at 32.9 per cent.

Factors impacting on waiting lists are specific clinical workforce shortages, particularly in vascular, plastic and reconstructive, orthopaedics, neurosurgery and theatre nursing. However, perhaps the single biggest factor impacting on elective surgery continues to be growing demands on our emergency departments. Our public hospitals will always prioritise patients requiring life-saving emergency operations. That means if hospitals experience an influx of critically ill or injured patients who require immediate surgery clinicians are often forced to reschedule elective surgery patients. This is a necessary part of running busy public hospitals.

An indication of the growing demand for emergency surgery is that August was the busiest month on record for emergency departments, with 77,000 patients seen in our top 21 hospitals. Overall, our emergency departments treated 324,517 people in the last quarter, an increase of four per cent on the September quarter 2005. Bundaberg was again a top performer, dealing with 20.2 per cent or 1,398 more ED patients than the same quarter last year. Townsville's emergency department activity increased by nine per cent or 1,177 more patients over the same period than in 2005. Rockhampton with 7.7 per cent, Redcliffe with seven per cent, Ipswich with 6.6 per cent and Gold Coast with 6.3 per cent also recorded notable increases. Significantly, the number of patients seen at Caboolture emergency department increased from 8,591 to 9,219—an increase of 7.3 per cent.

August also set a record for the largest number of hospital admissions, with 71,079 patients admitted and treated. Notwithstanding the record amount of activity, the number of elective surgery patients waiting longer than recommended is not at an acceptable level. That is why we will continue to aggressively recruit to Queensland Health's key clinical vacancies and open three dedicated elective surgery centres worth some \$169 million as soon as possible. These centres at Redcliffe, Caboolture and QEII hospitals will focus solely on elective surgery patients without being compromised by competing demands brought about by emergency departments. We are building new and upgrading existing emergency departments across the state, including the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Cairns and Princess Alexandra Hospital. We are also opening an extra 1,359 beds in five years up and down the coast, including 339 last financial year. And we are planning for three new tertiary hospitals.

Today's inaugural hospital performance report is another example of our commitment to openness and accountability regarding the challenges being faced by Queensland's public health system. It details an unprecedented level of current data providing a comprehensive snapshot of how our health system is performing. It is a far cry from the days of the coalition government, which hid even basic information such as waiting lists to keep Queenslanders in the dark. We will not shy away from the challenges we have in health. That is why we are releasing this information for everyone to see. What this report graphically shows is that our public health system is not a Third World service. It is not crumbling. In fact, it is working harder than ever before. What we are doing is getting on with the job of treating more Queenslanders; opening more hospital beds; employing more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals; expanding emergency departments; and building new tertiary hospitals in major growth centres like the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast to meet the increasing needs of our growing and ageing population.

Narangba, Binary Industries Fire

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.04 am): The fire at Binary Industries at the Narangba Industrial Estate in August 2005 was an example of excellent firefighting skills under enormously difficult and dangerous conditions, and the officers and firefighters involved should receive our heartfelt thanks. The response involved 22 appliances and 74 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service personnel. There was exceptional cooperation between the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Ambulance Service, Emergency Management Queensland, the Environmental Protection Agency, Energex, Origin Energy and the Caboolture City Council. I also want to give my heartfelt thanks to the Salvation Army, which set up on the night of the fire and the days after to look after the workers on site. It was a collaborative effort to ensure the safety of staff responding to the emergency and the community and to minimise the environmental impacts.

During the course of the response the scientific unit of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service monitored air quality, with testing revealing only very low levels of airborne contaminants. One firefighter was taken to hospital on the night for treatment for smoke inhalation. Other than that employee, there have been no absences from work as a result of any injuries from the fire. I can advise the House that a letter of complaint was received from a firefighter who was concerned about his exposure to chemicals at the fire.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service commenced an internal investigation into the allegations. The internal investigator provided a draft report that was reviewed and it was determined that the original terms of reference were too narrow; the draft report raised wider issues involving technical and operational complexity and the internal investigator did not have operational experience that qualified him to comment on those issues; organisational policy required the appointment of an

external investigator to investigate such a large-scale and complex event; and the draft report did not use accepted investigation methodologies for such a complex event. The draft report was not completed and the recommendations were not accepted.

In accordance with Queensland Fire and Rescue policy, an independent investigator—in this case, a company called Verifact Commercial Investigation—was commissioned in March 2006 to conduct an investigation with wider terms of reference. The person who undertook the investigation for Verifact is a retired inspector of police who is an experienced investigator with an operational service history, an ideal background to investigate this type of incident. Verifact finalised its report in June of this year. The Verifact report contains the following conclusion—

The evidence will show that the welfare and safety of all personnel, the community and the protection of the environment were paramount considerations addressed by management and affirmative actions continued throughout the incident.

I understand that more recently the same firefighter made a formal complaint to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. My department received advice on 26 October 2006 that Workplace Health and Safety Queensland will not be instituting proceedings arising out of its investigation of the matter. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service accepts that elements of incident management could be improved. In an uncontrolled emergency environment involving a large number of firefighters, that is not surprising. Of the 19 accepted recommendations in the Verifact report, 10 recommendations have been implemented, with implementation of the remainder underway.

The government has nothing to hide in this matter, but we acknowledge that there is continued interest in this matter. As such, I seek leave to table copies of the following documents: a chronology of events; the January 2006 uncompleted internal report; terms of reference for the Verifact investigation; the Verifact report; and implementation progress of the recommendations from the Verifact report.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Chronology of the Binary Investigation

Tabled paper: Report dated January 2006 titled Narangba Binary Chemical Fire 25 August 2005

Tabled paper: Letter dated 22 March 2006 from Ian MacKenzie, Acting Commissioner, Emergency Services, to Dick Turpin, Verifact, regarding Binary chemical fire

Tabled paper: Verifact Commercial Investigation report

Tabled paper: Document dated 26 October 2006 titled Binary recommendations from Verifact Investigation Implementation progress.

Building Projects

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.08 am): Since the election this government has been getting on with the job of delivering construction projects to Queensland. I am pleased to be able to advise the House that a \$35.6 million contract has been awarded to Queensland based firm Watpac Refurbishments to revive the Health and Welfare Building at 63 George Street. This is part of a three-stage project to give this building a new lease of life and provide, in total, 10,600 square metres of refurbished office space. Stage 1 of the project—the decontamination and internal demolition of the building—was completed in March. Further stages will see floors 1 to 9 of the David Longland Building refurbished and the two buildings amalgamated into one.

The new home of the Titans, the \$160 million stadium at Robina on the Gold Coast, is rapidly taking shape. The Department of Public Works is managing the construction of the 25,000 seat stadium. Construction work is progressing well, with bulk earthworks and piling complete and a significant number of the western stand's structural steel and precast concrete seating slabs erected during the past month.

As many members of the House would know, the \$291 Millennium Arts Project has been delivered on time and on budget, while the Old Museum Building Concert Hall refurbishment and restoration is 95 per cent complete. This government has also been getting on with the job of providing valuable infrastructure for Queenslanders. In Brisbane, the Department of Public Works has commissioned a project manager for a \$63 million bridge that will provide a pedestrian and cycle link between Tank Street and the new Queensland Gallery of Modern Art at South Brisbane.

I can also reveal that across the state 192 prep school accommodation facilities have been completed and 132 are under construction. Since the election there have been 75 roofs replaced because of asbestos concerns.

Furthermore, this supply of infrastructure and services to Queenslanders is continuing at a great rate. In the month of September, over \$60 million worth of tenders were awarded by the Department of Public Works for projects statewide. As I said, this government is getting on with the job.

Road Safety

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.11 am): I regret to say that Queensland motorists have been given a very bad report card for their driving during the school holidays last month. Once again, police conducted the statewide road safety blitz called Operation Spring Break during the spring school holidays. From 20 September to 9 October, police were out in force, focusing on speeding, drink driving, driving while tired and seatbelts. During the operation, police breath tested more than 170,000 drivers and spent a combined total of 56,188 officer hours patrolling Queensland roads.

The results of Operation Spring Break are concerning. Despite the unprecedented focus on road safety and our climbing road toll, police recorded significant increases in every offence category. Speeding offences jumped 23 per cent compared to last year's operation. Almost 19,000 speeding offences were recorded.

The worst area was the Metropolitan North Region, where more than 6,500 speeding offences were detected by police. In the Pine Rivers district, police detected a vehicle travelling at 165 kilometres per hour in a 100 kilometres per hour zone. The driver was unlicensed and more than three times over the legal alcohol limit.

In Toowoomba, police detected a driver travelling at 133 kilometres per hour in a 100 kilometres per hour zone. That driver was also unregistered and uninsured and had false plates and a false registration sticker. Another Toowoomba motorist was caught travelling almost 20 kilometres per hour over the speed limit in a 60 kilometres per hour zone with a six-week-old baby in the car.

Statewide, tickets for people not wearing seatbelts jumped almost 13 per cent to 1,319. Drink-driving offences rose almost nine per cent to more than 1,700 offences—all of this while 18 people lost their lives on our roads during the school holidays.

North Queensland recorded the highest number of fatalities, with six people losing their lives in road crashes. Already this year, 271 people have been killed on our roads—six over the weekend alone—which is eight more than at the same time last year.

This latest road safety report card is not one that we should willingly accept. There is only so much the police can do. Drivers must start taking responsibility for their actions. This month, police will commence Operation Check-It, which will focus on unroadworthy vehicles or those with defects. The Christmas road safety campaign will start on 13 December and will run until 2 February, incorporating Operation Back to School.

This government is committed to making our roads safer, not just on the holidays but every time someone gets behind the wheel. I am looking forward to introducing legislation to parliament this week that will further improve road safety by enabling the confiscation of vehicles from repeat drink drivers and those who continue to drive illegally modified cars or while unlicensed, unregistered or disqualified.

Clean Coal Technology

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.14 am): Queensland is leading the world in clean coal technology. A world-first demonstration power plant located outside Rockhampton, proposed by the government owned Stanwell Corporation, has taken a major step forward. This week, Stanwell launched the environmental impact study phase of this groundbreaking project.

If it meets all requirements, the ZeroGen project will be the first in the world to integrate the technologies of coal gasification and carbon capture and storage to produce baseload electricity with low CO₂ emissions. It could capture and store up to 420,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. That is the equivalent of taking 93,000 cars off the road.

The EIS is a significant phase and ZeroGen is a significant project not only for the national and international power and coal industries but also for the local community. It will create up to 700 jobs in the construction phase and up to 150 permanent jobs during its operation.

The project has the potential to achieve deep cuts in CO₂ emissions. Coal gasification is the cleanest method for converting coal's energy potential into electricity. Carbon capture and storage is an innovative technology that allows carbon dioxide to be safely stored underground, reducing greenhouse emissions. Under this proposal, the CO₂ will be piped underground through central Queensland to a site near Springsure.

Stanwell proposes to store the CO₂ underground in saline aquifers in what is called the northern Denison Trough. Mind you, all of this is subject to the important environmental impact study. This area has been identified as an ideal test site, because the sedimentary basin has successfully trapped natural gas and naturally occurring CO₂ for millions of years.

Coal gasification is the cleanest method for converting coal's energy potential into electricity. If Stanwell's ZeroGen project gets the green light, it will be a major coup for the Smart State, for the coal industry and for our ever-important environment.

Queensland Skills Plan

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.16 am): Skilling Queensland students for the jobs of tomorrow is a key priority of our government. Our students' skills need to match the needs of industry, particularly in high demand areas such as construction, manufacturing and engineering. We have had tremendous success so far and our Queensland Skills Plan provides the framework to move ahead.

I am pleased to provide an update on the progress of the Queensland Skills Plan, and I table this progress report for the interest of members of the House.

Tabled paper: Department of Education, Training and the Arts, Queensland Skills Plan Quarterly Report, Edition 1, October 2006

Queensland continues to lead the nation in training skilled tradespeople, with the latest figures showing we now have record numbers of school based apprenticeships and traineeships. The latest available figures covering the 12 months to 31 March 2006 from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research show that there has been a massive jump in the number of students starting apprenticeships. During this 12-month period, the number of young people starting a school based apprenticeship in Queensland grew by 27.5 per cent to 6,500. That is more than 40 per cent of all the school based apprenticeships in Australia. We outstrip all other states and territories by a long way. Victoria has the second highest number, with around 20 per cent, followed by South Australia on 11 per cent.

This demonstrates that our government's approach of giving students more choices and flexibility during their senior years is working. It also suggests that the message is getting out to young people that a trade apprenticeship offers a rewarding, secure and well-paid career.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of Queenslanders starting apprenticeships in traditional trades. In the 12 months to 31 March 2006, the number of apprenticeships in traditional areas, such as construction, has increased by over 25 per cent to 12,100 apprenticeships. This is a tremendous outcome and demonstrates that our ongoing investment to overcome skills shortages is paying dividends.

It is disappointing that the Australian Fair Pay Commission has ignored our calls for an immediate pay rise for apprentices. Instead, the commission decided to undertake a wage review in 2007, focusing on minimum wages for apprentices and trainees. This approach fails to address one of the major barriers to attracting and retaining apprentices—the low wages that they receive in comparison to those of other occupations. Queensland is getting it right in its approach to solving the skills shortages and our \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan will further strengthen these outcomes.

Child Safety

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.19 am): Child protection in Queensland has come a long way since the CMC's investigation and report in 2004 and the decision to establish the new Department of Child Safety. The Premier and I announced last week that foster-carers' allowances would increase by as much as \$100 a fortnight per child. This improvement is the 104th recommendation now in place from the 110 recommendations made by the CMC. Mr Speaker, I take a moment to recognise your very great contribution in the previous term of this government when you yourself were the Minister for Child Safety.

With the final six recommendations in progress, it is timely to look at how much has been accomplished and where more improvements are needed. The government has doubled the budget to now over half a billion dollars, increased staff numbers to 2,170, instituted structured decision making to ensure a consistent basis for child protection decisions and set up an entirely new IT and records management system.

With 35,000 to 40,000 notifications a year and 6,300 Queensland children in care, the big question is: what is wrong with the too large number of parents who are not providing a safe home for their children? The department has a policy, supported by legislation, that prefers reunification wherever possible. I have asked for this policy to be reviewed. There surely comes a point where, despite government and community agency support, parents who cannot convincingly demonstrate that they

can—and will—provide a safe and secure environment should lose their rights. Particularly for young children, if the parents are not able to get their act together within a reasonable period of time, the children should have the chance of a permanent placement or of adoption.

This is a very difficult and emotive issue, and I will be seeking views from a range of very different stakeholders, including children who have been in care. We also need to better listen to and support our staff and, in particular, our foster-carers. Presently we have just over 3,000 carers. They are amazing people with extraordinary experience and should be more respected and better listened to than they have been in times past. I am also keen to get the IT system fully up and running. Only then will we be able to report regularly to the broader community on child safety matters.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointments

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.22 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

The member for Stafford, Mr Hinchliffe, be discharged as a member and chair of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and the member for Inala, Ms Palaszczuk, be appointed as a member and chair of that committee; and

The member for Inala, Ms Palaszczuk, be discharged as a member of the Public Works Committee and the member for Cleveland, Mr Weightman, be appointed to that committee; and

The member for Cleveland, Mr Weightman, be discharged as a member of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and that the member for Murrumbidgee, Mr Wells, be appointed to that committee; and

The member for Murrumbidgee, Mr Wells, be discharged as a member of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and the member for Ipswich, Ms Nolan, be appointed to that committee.

That is a temporary solution until the member for Kurwongbah, Mrs Lavarch, returns.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Water Supply

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.24 am): Yesterday in this House we saw an exercise in information management, which the Beattie government has become very good at. Every member was provided with information packs of propaganda, with lots of colour photos, maps and diagrams, about what the government is going to do. The fact is that it has done nothing at either of the sites that were the subject of the propaganda, but it was all designed to hide this other document which was not tabled until after question time.

The Deputy Premier in a very sneaky strategy came in after question time and tabled this document—the report from the Queensland Water Commission on the progress of the projects that are going to prevent Brisbane from running out of water. The reason the government had to be sneaky about it is that this document illustrates that even before physical work has started on many of those projects they are running months behind. It means that the panic about Brisbane running out of water has gone up a notch. This is information that the government did not want people to see. The government waited until the media had left, waited until the focus was off the parliament, before it snuck this piece of information into the parliament.

The Premier has called all Queenslanders to pray for rain tomorrow and over the weekend, and I support that call. And well might the Premier pray for rain because he does not have any other options left. So profound has been the failure of this government to provide a water supply for the people of Brisbane that praying for rain is the only option left for Peter Beattie. Unless we get rain, unless those prayers for rain are successful, it is becoming increasingly obvious that Brisbane will run out of water before the Beattie government can deliver those projects that are supposed to ensure a water supply that every Queenslanders should have a right to.

Time expired.

South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (10.26 am): The South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre provides a valuable service to people not only in my electorate but also in neighbouring electorates. They do a tremendous job advising on all areas of law, such as criminal, family, property and employment law. Led by Sandra Padgett and her team of solicitors, these lawyers are committed to social justice and providing advice to people who simply cannot afford legal advice.

Since 2001, the federal government has funded the legal service through its Community Partners Program, which enables the service to provide free legal advice to Queensland workers—employees and subcontractors. Should it come as any surprise that the Howard government now wants to cut this funding? That is right. At the end of this month there will be no more funding for any employment legal advice. We have already had one meeting with the office of the minister for industrial relations, the Hon. John Mickel, to discuss this issue.

But why should the state always continue to pick up from the Commonwealth? We have seen it time and time again. First there was a Commonwealth cut in funding for SAAP services. Then there was the cut in services for disability respite services. Now it is the cut and run mentality for community legal services. When will it stop? The loss of federal funding will have an enormous impact on low-income employees throughout Queensland.

The south-west legal service has already provided employment legal advice to over 1,500 people this year from as far west to Toowoomba to as far south as Logan. Based in Inala, this is an important legal service, providing a much needed service to working men and women. It is not too late for the federal government to honour its responsibilities and reverse its decisions in the interests of working men and women in my electorate and in south-east Queensland.

Plane Crash, Raglan

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.28 am): Tragically we were advised last night of a plane crash at Raglan just north of Gladstone. Included in some of the probable causes was inclement weather, ironically, but other circumstances are being investigated. To date no names have been released, but they are believed to be mineworkers coming home after their shifts.

On behalf of all of us here, I wish to place on record our condolences to the families affected. Such tragedies affect not only the families directly but also the communities who support those families. I am sure that, irrespective of where those passengers lived and worked, this tragedy will have a large impact on the families affected and those who worked with these loved ones. On behalf of all of the members here in this parliament, and certainly on behalf of all of the residents in the Gladstone-Calliope region, I pass on our condolences, our prayers and our thoughts to those who are affected, and we trust that they will be supported through this difficult time.

Breast Cancer

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.29 am): The cause of breast cancer is unknown. However, what we do know is that being a woman and increasing age are the two biggest risk factors. A breast screen is one of the best ways of finding breast cancers early and early detection can mean the difference between life and death. Funded by the state government, a regular breast screen around every two years is strongly recommended for women aged 50 to 69 years. Those women aged 40 to 49 years and 70 or over are also able to access these free services.

A friend of mine, Lucette Litchfield, suggested that we host a pink ribbon breakfast on Bribie Island to raise money for breast cancer research. Over 30 people attended and paid \$10 for a quality breakfast. A raffle was conducted and with the help of volunteers and generous businesses we raised \$440.

Bribie Island sponsors included: the *Bribie Weekly*, Healthy Life, Silver and Semi Precious, Bribie Island Hotel, Book City, Banksia Florist, Bribie Select Meats, Cafe Bella, Bribie Specialised Poultry Takeaway and Deli, Brumby's, Bribie Island Bowls Club, Bellara Pharmacy, Retravisio, Donut King, Caltex, Lulu's Party Shop, Bognar Jewellers, Mayeda, Castle Glen Liqueurs, Cornetts, LiquorLand at Woolworths, the Big Bun and Prices Plus.

Mainland sponsors were McDonalds at Bribie Interchange, Spotlight at Morayfield, and R and R Hire Services. Volunteers included Brad, Lucette and Kiah Litchfield, Michael and Jean Prime, Rohan Delaney, Dylan Smith, Dale Matheson, Ben Howe, Ashleigh Adams, Judi Webster and Amber Hartley.

Pearl Duncan was our guest speaker and proved to be the perfect choice. She is a breast cancer survivor and has dedicated her life to help increase Aboriginal participation in education. In 1997 she was recognised for her unique teaching experience and was appointed to the National Aboriginal Education Committee. Throughout her career, Pearl has been committed to academic excellence, completing a Masters Degree in Education in 1990. Now retired from paid work, Pearl is completing her doctoral thesis at the University of Queensland. In recent years Pearl held a number of leadership positions in academic institutions, was a lecturer at Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education and Head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit of the Queensland University of Technology. In 2003 she was awarded the Centenary of Federation medal and was Senior Australian of the Year for Queensland in 2004. The Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarship for Indigenous Teacher Trainees at Queensland University was established in her honour in 2005. Pearl is a powerful role model and she certainly inspired us on the day.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Traveston Dam

Mr SEENEY (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Yesterday the Deputy Premier said that the Traveston Dam bungle had become good news for everybody. The comment was very similar to comments that former minister Henry Palaszczuk made on 24 May when he answered questions about the failure to find suitable foundations at the original site.

I table for the benefit of the House the *Hansard* record of the answer that he gave to that question when he said that they had found rock.

Tabled paper: Copy extract from *Hansard* dated 24 May 2006 page 1889.

R-O-C-K, he said. They had found rock. Since then, according to the propaganda that was tabled yesterday, it would appear that the dam wall has been moved over a kilometre upstream in search of a site. Why should anyone believe the good news that was trumpeted yesterday is anything more than political propaganda to justify a political decision that was all about producing a political outcome rather than an efficient water supply for south-east Queensland?

Mr BEATTIE: I am absolutely delighted to answer this question. One of the good things about this term is that at least this opposition leader has the guts to ask me questions, which means that I enjoy question time. I want to start by saying thanks.

The second thing I want to say in terms of the point made by the former minister, who is now in a better place—

A government member: Paris!

Mr BEATTIE: Paris or wherever he is—away from politics. What he basically said was, yes, we did find rock.

Ms Bligh: And we could have built it there.

Mr BEATTIE: And, as the Deputy Premier said, we could have built there.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Wait a minute; just listen. Just because the Leader of the Opposition has the courage to ask the questions does not mean that he can be rude as well. Let me answer his question. There was rock there. We could have built it there.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, let us hear the Premier's answer.

Mr BEATTIE: We would have been very happy to build it there. We also found rock somewhere else. Guess what? It was cheaper to build it there. It was better to build it somewhere else. So why would one not go to the second site? The truth is we could have built it at either site.

Mr Seeney: Rubbish!

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on. Wait a minute. You guys want it both ways. We went about this in a very open way. We had a public meeting about it. We had all sorts of debate about this. We indicated that we were going to do more work. We said that all the way along the line. If we are going to have a transparent process it has to be accepted that if engineers come up with better options we will choose those better options. That is what we did. Was Henry Palaszczuk right? Yes, he was. Was the Deputy Premier right yesterday? The answer is yes, she was.

The reality is that engineers can come up with better options when they do the evaluation. That is what we told those opposite we were going to do. Those opposite cannot come in here and bag us if we say we are going to go and do further work and then at the end of that work make some decisions based on it. Of course if we find better rock we will do it.

Mr Seeney: You made the decision beforehand.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on.

Mr Seeney: You made the decision at the start.

Mr BEATTIE: Now listen, the Leader of the Opposition might have more courage but he is also louder. Just give me a chance to answer the question. Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting to me that if we find a better option we should ignore it? What sort of a stupid decision is that? The Leader of the Opposition would be the first person to say that the Deputy Premier had got it wrong if she had ignored the engineering advice that we had found rock again and we could do it better.

I have been through this with the Deputy Premier. I think what they have done is correct and I would think that the people of Queensland would expect us to go to a better site. If there are two positions where there is rock—

Mr Gibson: Go to Borumba. That's a better site.

Mr BEATTIE: Please don't be rude to your own leader. He is asking the questions. Please don't be rude. If the reality is that there are two sites where there is rock, you choose the best one. It is not rocket science; it is rock science.

Mr Seeney: It is rock science—and you didn't have much of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Let us get back to parliamentary science. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Seeney: Not a lot of rock and not a lot of science either.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, your question.

Water Projects

Mr SEENEY: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. Yesterday the Water Commission reported that a significant number of essential projects necessary to address the water crisis have already fallen behind schedule. The report referred to additional contingency plans to mitigate against the delay. With level 4 water restrictions beginning today and his projects falling behind already, can the Premier confirm that these additional contingency plans mean that tougher water restrictions will be introduced sooner?

Mr BEATTIE: Can I go through this at some length, because it is really important that we understand what happened here. I brought in a regulation, which those opposite may recall they voted against, and in it I set a number of time lines. What was required was that councils would report on how they were progressing. What the Deputy Premier released yesterday was the first of those reports.

When members go through those reports they will find that there are two projects that were within the domain of the state government. One was the desalination plant for the Gold Coast, in relation to which we are in partnership with the Gold Coast City Council. That will be delivered on time. There will be a delay, for various reasons, in the early stages of it but that time will be caught up. Let us be clear about that. I will confirm this with the Deputy Premier.

Ms Bligh: Yes, the corridor.

Mr BEATTIE: In terms of the corridor, the position was that we slipped a month behind in the early stages but it will catch up at the end. So both these projects have fitted within the time schedule at the end. In relation to the western corridor, I did say—and the Leader of the Opposition may recall this—

In particular we are becoming increasingly concerned about possible slippage in the western corridor recycled water scheme—

I actually said this—

which is why we took it over.

That is in *Hansard* on 8 August. That is what I was concerned about. I said—

We will need to take further action.

This is why I introduced the regulation. We did it; we actually took it over. We believe that we can still deliver it on time. It has slipped behind about a month but we will basically catch that up.

In terms of the other projects—and I will just go through them—this is about additional contingencies that the Leader of the Opposition asked about. The Queensland Water Commission is continuing to investigate options for alternative supplementary supply or demand savings. It may be possible—this is the South Pine River water harvesting—to obtain additional volumes of up to 10 to 30 megalitres per day by water harvesting from a small pumping pool in the South Pine River to the North Pine Dam; Moogerah Dam; Swanbank water allocation for urban use. Investigations are underway to ascertain if a water allocation currently used to supply Swanbank Power Station could be made available even for a temporary period for urban purposes. This project would come on line once recycled water was made available for Swanbank in August 2007. In relation to increased groundwater aquifer extraction, investigations have commenced into expanding the aquifer project beyond Brisbane into south-east Queensland. It is possible there may be an additional five to 10 megalitres.

Mr Seeney: Does it mean tougher water restrictions?

Mr BEATTIE: No. What I have indicated to you is that they are three options for additional water. We believe that we can manage it within the current scenario. I have given an indication that we still believe we can meet the deadlines for the two state government projects. I will need to double-check some of the details in relation to the desalination project. I will confirm with the Deputy Premier the details of the desalination project and I am happy to confirm in a subsequent answer that both of those will be on target. In terms of the other matters, they are reports from councils that have come in to the Water Commission and they are their current position. We believe that the Water Commission needs to continue to work with councils to accelerate progress.

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

Ms JARRATT: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Staying with the important topic of water, could the Premier please advise of progress on the government's election commitment to expand the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme statewide?

Mr BEATTIE: Just on desalination to correct the record, I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that it will be completed on time but it will be commissioned in three stages. That is basically the difference. It starts with 30 per cent supply and it will be commissioned in three stages. So I have given the Leader of the Opposition the answer. We believe that both of those will be on target, and we believe we can catch those up. They will be done slightly differently but caught up. I have indicated to the Leader of the Opposition details of the additional contingency plans for the delay. Let me come back to the member for Whitsundays.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms Bligh: We'll invite you.

Mr BEATTIE: Let us make that a public invitation. You will be invited to both the openings and we will have you at every stage. As I said, this is not rock science; this is about producing water and we will have you at each stage.

I thank the member for Whitsunday for her question. My government is committed to helping Queenslanders save water and save money. From 1 July this year, the government has offered rebates on rainwater tanks, water-efficient clothes washing machines, showerheads, dual-flush toilets, greywater devices, pool covers and rollers to residents in 22 local council areas in the state's south-east. The response from the public to this Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme has been greater than we anticipated. Within the first three months, the government received more than 32,000 applications. Applications continue to pour in.

The community's response to the severe drought has been fantastic. The water saved in the south-east corner since the introduction of water restrictions in May last year is now more than 130,000 megalitres. By saving water, residents are not only sustaining our water supplies but also saving themselves local council water charges. The government recognises that the drought has impacted on large parts of the state. We also recognise that people across the state need to be encouraged to save water.

During the recent state election campaign—as the members for Hervey Bay and Whitsunday know, because I made these announcements in their electorates—I announced the government's commitment to extend the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme statewide. The government's pledge was to commit \$20 million over two years to this extension. That funding has been approved and I can announce today that applications under the statewide extension will be accepted from tomorrow. Rebates will be available on the purchase of rainwater tanks and other water-saving devices from the date I announced the election commitment—which was 16 August. That means residents across the rest of the state with proof of purchase on that date or later will be eligible to apply for a rebate. The hotline number for the scheme is 1800243585.

I say to the members for Whitsunday and Hervey Bay that we are delivering on what I promised in both of their electorates on 16 August. I would encourage people of regional Queensland to be as enthusiastic as those in the south-east corner so that we continue to deal with climate change and the drought and we get on with building the water grid. We are determined as much as we humanly can to drought-proof this state.

Lord Mayoralty

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his great insight and wisdom yesterday in his glowing endorsement of Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman and the excellent work Councillor Newman is doing to get stalled infrastructure moving. Could the Premier advise the parliament whether Labor Party rules allow him to endorse candidates from other parties to run against any yet-to-be-named Labor candidate for the lord mayoralty of Brisbane?

Mr BEATTIE: Let me be really clear: one Liberal I will not be endorsing is the member for Moggill. Let me be really clear about that—and nor does his own party. I have a letter here dated 10 October 2006 from the chairman of the Broadbeach branch of the Liberal Party. It said—

The meeting discussed primarily the Robina Pre-selection and the abortive and disgraceful State Election campaign.

It continued—

Our meeting resolved that **Dr Bruce Flegg failed miserably** in his leadership during the State Election Campaign, and that he should better stick to medicine.

This is the Liberal Party. I have to say that the Labor Party would never say this about the Leader of the Opposition. This letter is so hot that I am having difficulty hanging on to it. I have to tell the House that I have never seen the like of it. The heading is 'The Spill of the Parliamentary Leader'. I understand that the new member for Robina will be the leader by June next year, and I want to wish him well. We look forward to the challenge that will take place here.

Can I say to the Leader of the Liberal Party that people in glass houses should not throw stones. It is a very bad precedent. I believe the people of Queensland should know what is going on in the Liberal Party, and I want to thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for the question because I was not quite sure how I was going to get this information on the record. So I table that letter for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter dated 10 October 2006 from Edward Caragan, Chairman, Broadbeach Branch, Liberal Party (Queensland Division) addressed Dear Member of State Council regarding 2006 state election campaign.

I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for his dorothy dixer, but let us come back to the Brisbane City Council.

Ms Bligh: You wrote it, didn't you?

Mr BEATTIE: Jim Soorley did not write it. Just stop it! I do want to say a couple of things. I have made it clear that I believe a strong Labor majority at City Hall is important for the future of Brisbane, and I said that yesterday. Obviously, we have worked in partnership on the airport link. The King George Square busway is something that the minister for transport has pursued. We did have some issues. I have to say that we needed Maureen Hayes to deliver TransLink. That was a major cooperation. Maureen Hayes has done a fantastic job. She was the person who worked for that. I have to say that it would not have happened if Jim Soorley was running it on his own, but Maureen Hayes did deliver it.

We did put big dollars into the Inner City Bypass. It would not have happened without our cooperation. I have to say that the Labor councillors at City Hall have been superb and I want to put on record my appreciation for Maureen Hayes. She had an enormous task in putting up with some of the difficulties she did. As I said publicly yesterday, a Labor majority at City Hall is important for cooperation between the Brisbane City Council and the state government. The Transport Minister Paul Lucas has worked incredibly hard with the current Lord Mayor. Our job is to deliver for the city. The Leader of the Liberal Party wants to make fun of it. I am very happy to say that we will work with a Liberal Lord Mayor and a Labor council. If that is what the people of Brisbane decide, we will work with them in the interests of this city. I want to be very clear: I said clear things about Jim Soorley yesterday, but I want to put on public record that none of this would have happened without Maureen Hayes.

Election Commitments

Mr HAYWARD: My question is directed to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Can the Premier update the House on the government's progress on its first 100 days initiatives?

Mr BEATTIE: Before I do that, let us have a bit of an update. Ken, you have been a member 20 years today. Congratulations. So has Dean Wells.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Do you know what is wrong with you guys? You get so excited. All I can say is patience is a virtue that none of you have. There are three of you, with a twenty year anniversary today and that includes the member for Warrego. I know it is your birthday. Just relax, would you, Digger?

I was about to say before I was so rudely interrupted by the excited member for Warrego that there are three of them in this House—Ken Hayward, Dean Wells, who is not in the House at the moment, and of course the member for Warrego. Congratulations to the three of you. I would never be so small-minded as you are to forget you.

One of the things that Ken Hayward has done is take a very serious role when it comes to public accounts. I note that the serious remarks he made last night in relation to the former Auditor-General just show that he is on the ball. Congratulations, Ken. Well done. And the member for Warrego is all right too.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I was as generous as I could be. Stop when you are ahead. You can reflect in the member for Gregory's time.

I thank the member for his question. We now are a little over the halfway mark in delivering our first 100 days of initiatives. As the House is aware, during the election campaign I pledged to deliver 79 significant initiatives within the first 100 days of this government if we got re-elected. Today I have released the second update on the projects and I am pleased to be able to inform the House that all of the initiatives are well advanced and on track. Many of the promises have already been met within just 50 days of our re-election. A complete update is available to the House, but I want to bring the attention of members to some of the promises now met right across the state.

This is a government that delivers. Construction has commenced on the southern regional pipeline. Last month the Deputy Premier and I witnessed the installation of the first pipes being laid for this vital project. The member for Bundamba and the member for Inala were there as well.

On law and order, I committed the government to employing an additional 220 new police in our first 100 days. We have already met that target. We have done that. Judy Spence, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and I were at the induction of 225 new sworn police officers by the end of October. That has already happened. The Gympie Police Station is now operational, as is the Rainbow Beach police beat and scoping and design work for the rollout of new and upgraded police stations. We have nominated six regions to host centres of enterprise in key areas of industry strength to seize upon opportunities for economic growth.

With regard to our roads, site planning has commenced for five bridges and the resurfacing of 21 kilometres of the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Banana. We have developed an integrated strategy to assist development of the industrial and enterprise precincts in the western corridor of south-east Queensland. The new Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation at QUT has been opened, as has the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. Honourable members can see the commitments to biotechnology. As I mentioned earlier today, we are also on track in our reform and rebuilding of Queensland Health. We have introduced legislation to fast-track the acquisition of the site of the new Yeppoon Hospital. We have extra doctors and nurses. We are on target to deliver what we promised.

Water Infrastructure

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. I ask: given the Water Commission's dire warning yesterday that water infrastructure projects were behind schedule, increasing the region's supply risk, and that contingencies will be needed, is this the reason that she has raised with the business community the prospect of level 8 water restrictions being introduced next year?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I correct her on a number of fronts. In fact, the Water Commission documents that I tabled yesterday and which are available on the web site do not constitute a dire warning; they constitute, in my view, a very measured assessment of reports about 24 water projects that are required under the water amendment regulation. In fact, the Water Commission makes a specific point that, while it is important to ensure that each of these projects are monitored actively, there is no suggestion that we have reached any sort of critical point yet. However, we do need to keep on track, and I intend to do just that.

Secondly, I have to report to the member and to the House that I have never heard of level 8 water restrictions, never mentioned level 8 water restrictions, never known anybody else to mention level 8 water restrictions in the business community, school community, my family, my neighbourhood, the IGA at Wynnum or any other haunts I have been in lately.

Mr Johnson: It's not a laughing matter, Anna.

Ms BLIGH: No, it is not a laughing matter, which is why people should not come in here and make things up, because it does not contribute to the debate.

Level 4 water restrictions began today. I can confirm to the people of Queensland that there is no suggestion—none whatsoever—that we need to go beyond that at this stage. If we do, we certainly have not even contemplated something like level 8. I do not know where it came from. It sounds completely plucked out of the air. As I said, the member makes no contribution to a serious debate when she comes in here with figures plucked out of the air that are entirely made up. I am not sure on what basis the honourable member has come in here asserting that I have been talking to the business community or anyone else about such a thing. I can assure her and I can assure the House that I have never heard of such a level. I have never contemplated it and I have never spoken about it.

I conclude my remarks in answering the question by encouraging members to get a copy of the water regulation. This regulation will be the subject of regular reports by all of the water providers who are named in it. I will be reporting those to the parliament and they will be available on the web site. Honourable members could not find a more transparent and accountable system of monitoring the progress that the government is making on the major parts of delivering our water grid.

When members listen to some of the people opposite and some of the comments they have made in the public arena over the past couple of days, members should also remember that the Queensland opposition and the members opposite voted against every single one of these projects. They might be out in the public arena today whingeing about the rate of delivery, but if they had their way they would not be doing it. They would be having level 0. They would not have delivered on one of these projects. Do not listen to the false cries of pain and anguish about the progress of these. Members opposite voted against every single one of them.

Water Infrastructure

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. Can the minister update the House on the status of other major water projects in regional areas of the state?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and for her interest not only in her own area but also in the really serious water issues beyond the south-east corner. There has been a lot of discussion in the last couple of days about the projects that are important and critical to water security for the south-east corner, but I am pleased to have an opportunity to advise the House that the government's efforts are not restricted only to this area. As honourable members will have seen during the recent election campaign, we made commitments in relation to water right across the state. The Premier has announced delivery on one of these today in relation to the rebate scheme.

I advise the House that, in terms of other projects, contractors have now been commissioned to progress geotechnical and environmental studies on the raising of the Eden Bann Weir and the construction of the new Rookwood Weir on the Fitzroy River. Amongst other things, the studies will address issues relating to flora and fauna and cultural heritage. Pipe laying will be completed for the first stage of the Burdekin pipeline within three months. In addition, the eastern pipeline from Moranbah to Coppabella has reached the practical completion stage. Work has also commenced on the southern pipeline from Moranbah to the Dysart area.

Community and landholder consultation for the establishment of the corridor will start later this month to facilitate the connection of Rockhampton and Gladstone water supplies. Investigations for the identification of a broad corridor for a pipeline or channel from Burdekin to Bowen for the Water for Bowen project will commence prior to the end of 2006. The project is proposed to be declared a significant project under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act sometime in November.

In order to complete my answer to the previous question asked by the member for Maroochydhore, I advise members that the analysis from the Queensland Water Commission in relation to progress on the water projects, as I said, far from being dire is, in fact, along these lines: in the worst case analysis south-east Queensland dams are likely to remain at sustainable levels in the event of a continued extreme drought after taking into account the time frames and volume forecasts set out in the September reports. That is something we need to take very seriously, but it does not constitute a warning that the sky is falling, and it does not help the debate to have that exaggerated in here.

Davies Report

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his answer to my question yesterday regarding persons charged since the Davies report—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members of the government, because of the discussion that is being had we cannot hear the question. I ask you to desist.

Mr McARDLE: I will commence again. I refer the Premier to his answer to my question yesterday regarding persons charged since the Davies report and I refer him to his letter of 1 December 2005 to the police commissioner in which he referred to Commissioner Davies' recommendation that Dr Darren Keating be referred to the Queensland Police Service for investigation and possible further action. I ask: has the commissioner yet determined whether Dr Keating should be charged and, if not, what is the cause of this 11-month delay?

Mr BEATTIE: As I indicated yesterday, I gave the honourable member an answer to the best of my recollection. In terms of matters before the police, as the member knows because we are both lawyers—at least that is the allegation made against him for which I am happy to defend him—matters pertaining to police are determined by the police. I thought that ever since the Fitzgerald inquiry both sides of politics understood the separation of powers. I cannot tell the member what the position is in relation to the matter.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on. I am happy to give the member a serious answer. If he wants to talk about the seniors I am happy to do that too. That was part of the earlier question so I was not sure which part to answer. If he wants me to give him a serious answer, he knows as well as I do that whether someone is charged is determined by either the police or, depending on the matter, the DPP. While I am Premier there will be no political interference from either him or me about who is charged. He understands as well as I do—

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Hang on, wait a minute.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, but you have asked the question. Can I just suggest that we have respect for the minister who is answering it. I ask the Premier to continue.

Mr BEATTIE: It is a different thing to come into this House and report on decisions that have been made either by the DPP or by the police. If a matter has been referred by an inquiry to the police, there is no harm in reporting that that has been referred for consideration. The discretion that is exercised is then a matter for the police or the DPP. In terms of these matters, as I understand it, Dr Keating has left the service of Queensland Health. What position the police have made in determining any of those issues is a matter for the police. If the member wants to raise the matter with the police minister, I am sure she would make appropriate inquiries and advise the House, which is the normal process. But we do not get involved in the actual decisions. We try to be as helpful to this House as possible. I would invite the member tomorrow to ask the police minister or, if he wants, to write to the police minister. I am sure that she could make appropriate inquiries and give him a formal advice, but it will be the advice of what the police commissioner has done.

I wish to make it really clear: there will be no political interference from anybody—either from me, the police minister or the member opposite. We will do this in accordance with the rules. I do not know the position, but we are happy to find out. If the member wants that to be pursued, we are happy to do so.

Public Orthopaedic Services

Mr McNAMARA: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the minister update the House on the progressive restoration of comprehensive public orthopaedic services at the Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question and certainly acknowledge his relentless campaign to improve services at Fraser Coast health facilities. The member will recall that public orthopaedic services in the Fraser Coast Health Service District were suspended in May 2005 following concerns about the delivery and quality of care provided. Since then Queensland Health has been working closely with senior clinicians and the Australian Orthopaedic Association planning for the resumption of full orthopaedic services. Today I am pleased to report that limited primary orthopaedic trauma and outpatient services have already recommenced at Hervey Bay Hospital. I can also confirm that Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals are on track to resume full orthopaedic services, including elective surgery, early next year.

We have recruited four additional visiting orthopaedic specialists plus new junior medical officers to staff the service. Clinical rosters, on-call arrangements, theatre and outpatient clinic schedules have now been finalised. The district has already recommenced accepting referrals for orthopaedic services as well as fracture clinics at Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals. Also, from 13 November a limited range of elective orthopaedic surgery as well as outpatient clinical services will recommence at the two hospitals. This is all good news for the people of the Fraser Coast.

Of course, some people may question why we are taking a progressive approach to the restoration of full orthopaedic services on the Fraser Coast. The answer could be summed up in two words: patient safety. We are determined to get it right by having senior clinicians involved in careful and detailed planning of the orthopaedic services we will provide on the Fraser Coast. We are also determined to ensure that those services provide patients with the highest standard of care. So I want to thank all senior clinicians and Queensland Health district staff who continue to work cooperatively towards the re-establishment of full public orthopaedic services on the Fraser Coast. In particular, I want to mention Dr Peter Brazel and Dr Simon Journeaux of the Australian Orthopaedic Association plus representatives of the Wide Bay Division of General Practice. What we are achieving together on the Fraser Coast demonstrates our commitment to giving clinicians a greater say in health decision making to achieve better service delivery outcomes and more sustainable services in the long term.

Woodford Correctional Centre

Mrs PRATT: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Minister, the rotational roster at Woodford correctional facility began on 16 October and staff morale is sliding into oblivion. Officers with experience of up to 20 years are struggling, not coping and are very unhappy. I believe we need the minister to intervene immediately. A casual is running N12. He has no idea how to run a unit. They—the workers—seem to be working in a dream. It is very dangerous. These are not my words, Minister, but the words of experienced staff within the facility. Will the minister investigate the situation at Woodford correctional facility to ensure that no staff crisis manifests itself within the facility because of these new rotational rosters?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, I welcome to the parliament today teachers and students of the Silkstone State School in the gallery from the electorate of Ipswich, which of course is ably represented in this parliament by Rachel Nolan.

Ms SPENCE: I am happy to answer the question. For the benefit of all members of the House, the corrective services department has introduced rotational rosters for all of our prison officers over the last 12 months. We have had an extensive program of discussing the introduction of these rosters with the QPSU. I know that many prison officers around the state did not like the concept of a rotational roster. What this means is that we are asking our prison officers to be more flexible in their workstations in the prisons. For example, a prison officer who has worked in B block might now be asked after six months to move to A block or they might be asked to move to C block. It has been a very hard change for some prison officers who have been in B block for 20 years to be asked to move around the prison, but we think it is good practice to multiskill all of our prison officers rather than just leaving them in one place for such a long time. So that is what the rotational roster means.

Of course not all prison officers have objected to it or found it difficult. A lot of them have embraced it and a lot of them have enjoyed taking on new skills and learning how to operate in different areas of the prison. Woodford prison was the last prison to introduce the rotational roster and, as the member said, it was introduced last month on 16 October. The rotational roster has been working well in all of the other prisons that have come online in the last 12 months. I am not surprised, I guess, that there are few officers left in Woodford prison who are not happy, because they certainly fought against this rotational roster system for a long time. I am sure for a few of them it is going to take them a long time to accept the new system.

I visited Woodford prison myself last month. I did an extensive tour of the prison and talked to many prison officers. I think the majority of the prison officers at Woodford prison have come to accept the new system. I personally felt that morale was very good at Woodford prison during my visit. I have talked to the director-general since the introduction of rotational rosters at Woodford prison and he informs me that it is all going very well at Woodford and morale is very high. Obviously the member who asked the question has a message from one prison officer who is unhappy, but that is certainly not the message that I have been getting from the department.

Public Housing

Mr WENDT: My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology. Minister, in the relatively short time I have been the member for Ipswich West I have received many alarming reports from low- and moderate-income earning constituents who are struggling to either find rental accommodation or pay rent in the private market. Is the minister aware of this and could he identify the causes and what can be done to assist my constituents?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his interest in what is rapidly becoming an issue that is confronting middle-income earners and low-income earners in Australia, and that is the collapse of the private rental market. If members want some evidence of that, last week the Residential Tenancies Authority put out its report. Back in 2000 some 80 per cent of three-bedroom homes in the rental market were below \$800 in bond—that is, less than \$200 a week. Today that figure is 29 per cent. In other words, there has been a net loss of some 50 per cent. Half of them have gone out of the market. It has hit the constituents of the member who asked the question in that there was a large market, as he has advised me previously, in his electorate where those common three-bedroom homes were available for less than \$200. The causes of it are many, none the least of which is the fact that the federal government has persisted with the dogma and the practice of rent assistance which has not been increased during that period of time.

Basically, the level of assistance has stayed at the same rate, yet the rents have escalated. So that assistance is now of little value to people. It is no wonder they are coming to the member's office and rightfully complaining about it. People have borrowed more money in order to get into these houses. The rents have gone up accordingly. The level of rent assistance has not kept pace with those increases. Those people then start knocking on the door of public housing. That is why people are contacting the member on this issue.

Every member of this parliament ought to confront this issue very quickly. The federal government has been able to get away with the privatisation of public housing by stealth. This issue is very, very real. Despite the warnings of its own Productivity Commission on two occasions that I know of, the federal government took \$400 million out of public housing. Yesterday I met with the HIA, which is very concerned about the absence of an affordable private rental market. I have received no support for Home Link, which is about getting 1,000 privately owned, brand-new houses on the market in Queensland in a partnership between the federal, state and local governments. I have heard not a murmur of support from those opposite. No-one is taking up the cudgels with the federal government. To his credit, Mal Brough says that he wants to talk to me about it, but that is about as far as we have got.

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Water. I refer to today's announcement that the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme will be expanded from tomorrow, and I ask: will there be any new initiatives within this scheme that caters specifically for rural people? If not, can the minister guarantee that the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme will be the same for all Queenslanders as it is currently for those in the south-east corner of Queensland?

Mr SHINE: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I am sure the honourable member is aware, in the current circumstances the government is committed to securing additional water supplies. However, of critical importance to ensuring that Queensland copes well in the worst drought on record is how demand is managed. Therefore, the government is committed to conserving our existing water supplies. It has a range of programs in place, and the member has referred to one of them. The Department of Natural Resources and Water is playing an active role.

The water conservation schemes that are operating currently in south-east Queensland include the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which has been referred to. The Premier also referred to that in some detail earlier today. There is also the Home WaterWise Service scheme, which is a \$50 million subsidised plumbing service to retrofit up to 150,000 homes in south-east Queensland by September 2007. There is also the South East Queensland Irrigation Futures scheme, which is a dedicated scheme for irrigators in south-east Queensland that provides direct financial support for water-saving measures. There is also the pressure and leakage reduction scheme of \$32 million. The government has provided financial assistance to councils in south-east Queensland to reduce water losses from leaks—

Mr HOPPER: I rise to a point of order. My question was: is it the same for all Queenslanders?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SHINE: For example, audits of irrigation systems, field trips and workshops—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask those members who are collectively and in an orchestrated way trying to disrupt the minister while he is answering to please desist.

Mr SHINE: The incentives include replacing or upgrading irrigation systems. There is \$32 million allocated out of \$80 million for that. That is a 40 per cent subsidy. There is the water-saving devices program worth \$10 million for government buildings and public housing. There are other ongoing schemes that are in place across the state. The government also funds the Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative, which subsidises improvements to water use equipment for producers.

Arson

Ms MALE: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The ongoing dry conditions are creating dangerous conditions for fires. Could the minister advise the House what the Police Service is doing to work with the community to crack down on arson offences?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for Glass House for the question. I know her electorate was affected by an arson attack with the fire at the Caboolture State School last week. The reality is that this year in Queensland 750 arson offences were reported. Thirty-one of those offences occurred on state school premises. Of course, that has caused millions of dollars worth of damage to those schools. That is not the worst of it. Those offences have also caused the loss of many important records relating to the history of those schools.

Being a former schoolteacher who has been through arson myself, I know how dreadful it is for teachers to lose all of their teaching resources and for the students to lose their valuable work. So far this year, 750 offences have occurred. Last year in Queensland, 1,480 arson offences occurred. Over the past four years the number of offences has dropped slightly. Police are doing a very good job of cracking down on these arson offences and catching the arsonists.

The police are very concerned about the climatic situation in Queensland at the moment. With the state experiencing a long, dry winter and water restrictions, any arson attacks in the future may cause very severe damage. That is why we want to emphasise to people that we have an arson reward scheme. People only have to ring Crime Stoppers on 1800333000 and give Crime Stoppers some information that leads to an arson arrest and they may be eligible for a reward. The arson reward scheme has been put together in conjunction with the Insurance Council of Australia, the Queensland Police Service and Crime Stoppers. We encourage Queenslanders to come forward with information about arson offences because, seriously, if the police are going to arrest these arsonists, the general public are the best source of information for them.

Today, the Police Service is appealing to the public for any information particularly about an arson attack on Amart All Sports on Redland Bay Road, Capalaba on 17 April this year. That arson attack caused \$3 million in damage to the business and it remains unsolved. The Police Service is also continuing its investigations into a fire that destroyed a Ford Festiva at Berserker Street in Rockhampton in July this year. Neighbours attempted to extinguish the fire after one or more people apparently doused the vehicle with petrol and set fire to it.

As we are going into level 4 water restrictions in the south-east corner, I remind people that arson is a crime that causes not only a lot of financial damage to people but also a lot of hardship to all members of our community.

Traveston Dam

Mr GIBSON: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. The minister's hastily compiled plan for the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam announced yesterday is the fourth plan released by her government. Why did the minister release plan D when further major test drilling is still being undertaken to determine whether the watertable will preclude construction at her latest site? How many maps and plans does the minister have in her top drawer? Why should the people of the Mary Valley be forced to suffer when not a single cost-benefit or environmental study has been started, let alone completed on this project?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question.

Mr Johnson: I bet you do.

Ms BLIGH: I do. I am very pleased to have an opportunity—

Mr Mickel: He gets a new tie and he gets excited.

Ms BLIGH: Unfortunately, I have to report that I have seen that tie before. I am very pleased to answer this question. I am very happy to talk about the facilities that we are building at Traveston right now or at any other time.

As I understand it, the first part of the question was why did we release further planning documents yesterday. I am a bit bemused by the question. What the Premier told people and made public when he went to the meeting in July this year was that we were committed to building a dam at Traveston. He provided what were, at that stage, the best known possible boundaries, but he indicated that, of course, those boundaries would now have to be confirmed by very in-depth geotechnical work. That happens on every major project. When the minister for transport announces that he is going to build a road, he gives an indicative corridor—

Mr Lucas: Or corridors.

Ms BLIGH: Or corridors options. He then goes out with engineers and they do drilling and they go into some depth about what is possible. It is not unusual in any project to change as you do that planning.

Mr Seeney: Buy the wrong houses, Paul?

Mr Lucas: The ones who live in the study area are in hardship places.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Leader of the Opposition, rather than have a discussion across the chamber, can we hear the minister, please?

Ms BLIGH: As the Minister for Transport has just confirmed, it is not unusual in transport projects and it would not be unusual in other major projects for houses to be bought in the study corridor if there are hardship circumstances or the residents sought the buyer, and that is what happened in this case. And thank goodness for that, and we are going to keep doing it.

I confirm for the member for Gympie that the documents released yesterday are the final boundaries for the proposed dam, the boundaries on which the EIS will now be undertaken and the boundaries on which the federal government will make its assessment under the EPBC. There may well need to be some—and I said this yesterday—changes in relation to road alignments as we now go through the further planning. But, in relation to the dam, this is the final set of boundaries. I have to say that I am very surprised that the member for Gympie sees so little value in a facility that is going to prevent the flooding of properties of the Gympie people, whom he represents.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can I remind the member for Gympie that this is an emotional topic for him. He needs to control himself and conduct himself with decorum in this House.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Excuse me. I see that as a reflection on the chair, member for Gregory, and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr Johnson: Mr Speaker, I apologise and I withdraw.

Ms BLIGH: I am sorry that because of the range of interjections I do not have more time to answer the member's question. But I am happy to provide him with any briefings or discuss the issue with him at any time.

Electricity Theft

Mr WETTENHALL: My question is to the Minister for Mines and Energy. There have been a number of reports lately about people who have been stealing electricity in order to cultivate illegal drug crops. In northern Queensland recently, stolen electricity was used to power one of the state's largest hydroponic drug crops. Can the minister please inform the House what steps Ergon Energy is taking to address this very serious issue?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Electricity theft is not only illegal but also downright dangerous. It is a very serious issue and can cost the industry in Queensland up to approximately \$30 million and also cost people their lives. The Queensland government owned corporation Ergon Energy has launched a crackdown on electricity theft. Indeed, three cases have been netted in as many weeks, including one near Airlie Beach.

Under changes to the Queensland Electricity Act, inspectors with Ergon Energy now have the power to investigate and prosecute electricity theft and illegal reconnections. An inspector has been appointed to head a program that will tackle head-on those unscrupulous and reckless people who steal from the vast majority of honest electricity users.

Stealing electricity and tampering with electrical equipment and infrastructure can cause serious injury and, as I said, even death. There has already been one recorded fatality in Queensland involving the theft of electricity to cultivate an illegal drugs crop. People who do this are not only endangering their lives but also putting the safety of others in the community at risk.

Although it is difficult to quantify, international research estimates that up to two per cent of electricity distributed and sold is subject to theft. In Queensland, that is up to \$30 million. The unlawful taking of electricity carries heavy penalties in our state, with a maximum fine of \$75,000 or six months jail. I make no apology for tough penalties. Electricity theft is a serious issue and offenders should feel the full force of the law. I urge people to be our eyes and ears and if they notice suspicious activities to report them to Ergon Energy or the police immediately.

Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Child Safety DVD

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Education. The Daniel Morcombe Foundation has produced a child safety DVD titled *Foundation Red*, which is available to the public free of charge. Everyone I have spoken to who has seen the DVD says that it is a brilliant and powerful short message and a must see by all children. I understand that a number of school communities have been so moved by the child safety message that they have shown this DVD in their schools. Will the minister support other Queensland schools showing this free DVD to their students?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the honourable member for his question and I also thank him for providing me with a copy of this DVD. As the Premier said yesterday, we all pass on our best wishes and condolences to Bruce and Denise Morcombe, who are really working to create something positive out of what was obviously a terrible situation—the loss of Daniel. They have set up the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. They are promoting child safety and offer support to other victims of crime, and I think this is a tremendous initiative.

I am aware that as part of their foundation's commitment to child safety and children's personal safety they have produced this DVD to educate our children. I have not had a chance to see the DVD yet, but I understand that it features nationally recognised identities and is a very positive resource. I also understand that the foundation has written to schools and is providing the DVD free of charge, and a number of schools have already taken the foundation up on this offer. On the Sunshine Coast, for example, Cooroy State School has shown the DVD to its students and Peachester State School has also ordered a copy.

Our schools have access to a range of resources to engage young people in learning about and thinking about their personal safety. While it is up to individual schools to decide which resources they are going to use, this DVD certainly adds to their options. I commend the foundation for initiating this resource and thank the honourable member for drawing it to my attention.

Asbestos Roof Replacement Program

Mrs ATTWOOD: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. I refer the minister to the government's \$120 million Asbestos Roof Replacement Program. In July this year the minister announced in a media statement that it is likely that as many as 560 asbestos roofs in state schools could be replaced by the start of the 2007 school year in February. Are we still on track to achieve this goal?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the honourable member for her question. I have good news for Queensland schools. I am pleased to advise members—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WELFORD: They're characters, aren't they? I suppose they have to draw something from sitting over the other side. It is a lonely existence.

Mr Beattie: I can see you're the Minister for the Arts!

Mr WELFORD: A few performances. I am pleased to advise members that in relation to the goal we have been seeking not only has it been achieved but we have smashed it. In late September we racked up another milestone in the Asbestos Roof Replacement Program when we replaced roof No. 500. Last weekend we replaced roof No. 571. By the end of this year we will, weather permitting, replace roof No. 600. This program is a great example of our government delivering on its commitment to Queenslanders. We have been working hard to get these roofs replaced as quickly as possible, and the rate of progress is a credit to all involved.

Mr Schwarten: Good old public works department.

Mr Beattie: Yeah, good minister.

Mr WELFORD: We are now well past the halfway mark—less than 18 months since the program commenced. Our government is the first in the state's history to comprehensively address this issue and provide funding to replace every asbestos roof in every Queensland state school.

Mr Schwarten: And the expertise of the Department of Public Works.

Mr WELFORD: Sounds like Monty Python.

We have been able to accelerate the program by getting specialist tradesmen on board to work weekends as well as school holidays. Today I can provide members with a list of another 69 asbestos roofs at Queensland state schools which are being scheduled for replacement during the upcoming summer school holidays. Tenders will be called for this work to be undertaken in December and January when students are not present. I seek leave to table that list of 69 roofs.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: List titled 'Asbestos Roof Replacement Program'.

This work in December/January will take the number of roofs replaced under the Asbestos Roof Replacement Program to more than 660 by the start of the 2007 school year, more than two-thirds of the way through the program. However, to achieve these targets we are relying on the continuing fine weather and the availability of skilled tradesmen organised by the Department of Public Works.

Mr Schwarten: At last he said it!

Mr WELFORD: It is about time they got their act together. By any measure this is an outstanding achievement. When we make a commitment, we deliver.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has concluded. I welcome to the public gallery today students, teachers and the P&C president from the Tullawong State Schools in the Glass House electorate represented in this House by Carolyn Male.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Restrictions

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (11.30 am), by leave: I wish to advise the House that I have sought confirmation from the Queensland Water Commission about the existing levels for water restrictions. The commission has confirmed that there are currently five levels of water restriction recognised by the commission and all of the councils in south-east Queensland. I confirm that there is not only no such thing as level 8, but also there is no such thing as level 7 or level 6.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 31 October (see p. 343).

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (11.30 am): I rise to support the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 which amends the Health Services Act 1991 to give effect to structural changes to the administration of Queensland Health following the announcement of the consolidation of health service districts from 37 to 20. The bill also includes a set of guiding principles reflecting key elements of the reform agenda, clarifies the functions of the chief executive officer, general managers and district managers and establishes a health executive service.

This bill will ensure that the community continues to have informed participation in health service delivery, which means that services can continue to improve. As I have said, the number of district health services is to be reduced from 37 to 20. These health community councils will be community based advisory bodies able to focus on quality and safety of health services, engage with the community and also look at aspects of education and integration.

The bill also amends the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 to give effect to recommendations of the ministerial task force on recruitment, assessment and registration processes for international medical graduates in areas of need; the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001 to give effect to the Public Service Dental Workforce scheme that was established by the Australian health ministers conference to address a national shortage of dentists in the public sector; and 12 of the health practitioner registration acts to replicate arrangements under the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 that provide for the short-term registration—of up to five weeks—of registrants in Queensland.

I want to deal specifically with part 20 of the bill which amends the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 to address a number of operational difficulties identified by researchers, schools of anatomy and tissue banks in Queensland.

In 2004, the Transplantation and Anatomy Regulation 1994 was reviewed and remade as a new regulation. During the review, stakeholders requested that a number of operational issues be addressed in relation to this act, including: the barriers imposed by the existing legislative requirements for the taking of muscular or oral tissue samples for scientific purposes; the need to clarify that schools of anatomy can loan bodies and body parts to other schools of anatomy; allowing schools of anatomy to recover reasonable costs involved in loaning bodies or body parts; and allowing bone banks to recover the costs of off-site irradiation.

The Transplantation and Anatomy Act sets out the circumstances under which an adult may donate regenerative tissue for the purposes of transplantation and other therapeutic purposes as well as for medical and scientific purposes. Researchers have reported that the existing legislative requirements have proven to be impractical in so far as they relate to the donation of tissue for scientific purposes. In order for a regenerative tissue biopsy to be taken from an adult donor, three medical practitioners must be on hand: one to inform the research subject about the effects of the biopsy; another, who must also be a designated officer—that is, a medical superintendent or medical practitioner authorised by the medical superintendent—to witness the consent process; and a third medical practitioner to remove the tissue. The underlying objective of these arrangements is to ensure that the donor is able to give informed consent.

However, researchers have reported that the requirements are unduly onerous and as a consequence have inhibited their ability to undertake research involving muscular and oral tissue. It was therefore requested that the process for the taking of samples for research purposes be reviewed with a view to simplifying the process without compromising the safeguards established to protect the welfare and rights of donors who wish to participate in research.

Part 7, the prohibition of trading in tissue, of the Transplantation and Anatomy Act sets out a number of offence provisions which prohibits the unauthorised sale or purchase of human body tissue. Under section 42A of the act a prescribed tissue bank has a limited exemption from the prohibition on the selling of human body tissue—that is, to enable these facilities to recover the costs associated with removing, evaluating, processing, storing and distributing donated tissue.

Bone is the second most commonly transplanted tissue, second only to blood. It has been estimated that between 200,000 to 300,000 people worldwide receive bone transplants each year, which is more than 25 times the number of people who undergo kidney transplants and 100 times the number who undergo heart transplants.

Sterilisation of human bone tissue through irradiation is a critical part of the bone transplantation process. However, the Queensland Bone Bank does not have the specialised facilities necessary to undertake this process. Instead, it contracts with a third party for off-site irradiation.

The wording of the definition of processing for the purposes of the exemption under section 42A is currently limited to activities carried out at the tissue bank. As a consequence, the Queensland Bone Bank cannot recover any of the costs associated with the off-site irradiation of human bone tissue. The Queensland Bone Bank therefore requested that this anomaly be addressed.

The bill also inserts a new division into part 2 of the Transplantation and Anatomy Act to simplify the process for the donation of tissue for research purposes by a person over 18 years of age. The amendments make it an offence for tissue to be removed from a living person's body for research unless: the donor is an adult; the tissue to be removed is skeletal muscle tissue, oral tissue or perioral tissue; the tissue is removed by a medical practitioner or a dental practitioner; the research is approved by a human research ethics committee established in accordance with requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council; and the donor's consent is obtained in accordance with the council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. The taking of regenerative tissue by an appropriately qualified practitioner is a relatively simple procedure which involves little risk for the person.

This bill also clarifies the process for schools of anatomy loaning bodies or body parts to other schools of anatomy for teaching purposes and for them to recover reasonable costs.

It should be noted that extensive consultation with stakeholders was undertaken including: the Dental Board of Queensland; the University of Queensland (Medical Research Ethics Committee); and schools of anatomy at the University of Queensland, Bond University, Griffith University, James Cook University and the Queensland University of Technology.

There are many other acts of significance that this bill chooses to amend, including the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001 and the Mental Health Act 2000, to enable the classified patient scheme to be applied to persons detained in lawful custody but not yet charged under prescribed statutes, and various other provisions. I understand other speakers have already spoken to those so in that case I look forward to the benefits that these changes will bring to the outcomes for public health and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I acknowledge in the public gallery students, staff and members of the P&C from Silkstone State School in the electorate of Ipswich which is represented in this chamber by the government whip, the Hon. Rachel Nolan.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (11.38 am): We have all heard what this bill addresses—dentists, doctors and so on—but the part that I would like to mention is where it addresses the banning of smokeless tobacco. I would like to make a few points in relation to this because I believe there is some misleading information out there that I do want to correct. I know this bill will go through, I cannot stop that happening; however, I want to put a few things on record.

I do not think a lot of people realise just how many people chew tobacco or dip snuff, as it is called. Most people who chew tobacco do not make it widely known. It is not something that we actually see them doing, whereas we see people smoking cigarettes and we can smell and see the smoke. Our new smoking laws have been brought in which we all definitely agree with.

One thing that concerned me is that the minister said yesterday that Nicorettes are even given out in hospitals. That says that the minister actually recognises that nicotine is a very strong addiction and that people need help to get off it. I have heard people say it is a stronger drug than heroin itself, and I think that is very true.

What will happen is that, because chewing tobacco will now be illegal, all the people who chew it will immediately start smoking because there will be no other way for them to get the drug they need and in the right amount. So we could actually create a lot more cases of lung cancer and a lot more issues. This is a right that people have had all their lives. People who chew tobacco have chewed it all their lives. They call it dipping snuff. A lot of people on rodeo circuits and camp drafts have little tins in their back pockets; that is chewing tobacco. That will now be taken away from them. They will not be able to purchase it.

The federal government actually stopped the sale of chewing tobacco in 1989 so everyone had to import it. The government has gradually put tariffs on that. People from customs talk about the headache caused by chewing tobacco. The tariff has been increased to \$250 a kilo and that has priced it out of the market; however, people are still so addicted that they pay the tariff. The chewing tobacco arrives at the airport, customs ring and they pay that tariff—all because of their addiction for the drug that is now going to be taken from them.

Chewing tobacco is exactly the same as Nicorettes and smoking aids and patches that can be bought in a chemist. We could have parents thinking that their children are chewing chewing gum when in fact they are having a cigarette and getting a nicotine hit. I cannot understand the emphasis put on abandoning chewing tobacco in Queensland, while Nicorettes are made so freely available. We have to seriously look at the whole health industry. Why doesn't the government get a bit fair dinkum? Look at the drinks that teenagers can now buy, such as vodka cruisers. What are they doing? They are promoting alcoholism; they are promoting the intake of a drug that is addictive.

We have to get serious here. If we are going to clean up every little aspect, let us tackle obesity. People are born with different metabolisms—there is no doubt about that—but what goes in the mouth affects people. They have the choice as to how much they eat and how big they get. That is exactly the same. This is a choice that is being taken away.

I have a few facts here. Almost everyone knows that smoking is unhealthy, but a lot of people still smoke to get nicotine from tobacco. Few people realise that it is the smoke—not the nicotine or the tobacco—that is so unhealthy. The dominant message to smokers is that they must quit or die; there are no other options. But there are options for people who cannot and will not stop using nicotine because it is such a powerful drug. Using modern smokeless tobacco products can reduce the risk of tobacco use by about 99 per cent compared to smoking.

These products include moist snuff—which is sometimes called by its Swedish name ‘Snus’—and chewing tobacco. These do not have to be chewed and then spat. Many modern products require no spitting and they are as easy to use as a breath mint. Using pharmaceutical nicotine products would probably provide a similar reduction, but unfortunately the available nicotine patches and gums are not designed to be good long-term alternatives to tobacco smoking. Of course, this does not mean that someone who does not use nicotine should start using smokeless tobacco. It is easier, cheaper and much healthier not to use nicotine at all, but if it is used the worst possible method of using it is smoking.

We can still go to a shop, a service station or whatever and buy a packet of cigarettes. The smoking laws have come into place in Queensland, but if we are going to get fair dinkum here, let us get fair dinkum. Why pick on this one little area? It will hurt a lot of people out there. The government will cause all those chewers to start smoking—that is exactly what they will now do. They need that nicotine hit, and the only way they are going to get it is by smoking cigarettes. Thus, death will be brought on a lot quicker. Switching from cigarettes to smokeless tobacco is almost as good as quitting entirely, and it is certainly much better than trying to quit and failing. Suggesting that nicotine users have an option other than quitting entirely is controversial, but it should not be.

Almost all of public health is devoted to reducing risks and harms, not eliminating them entirely. The term ‘harm reduction’ is most often used in the context of clean needles for injecting drug users or other things, but we think the best analogy is seatbelts. Instead of telling people they should quit driving—or at least minimise it and perhaps only drive to work but never go out for fun—we try to make cars and roads as safe as possible. Similarly, we do not tell people to quit playing hockey or cycling. Instead, we try to get them to wear helmets. Although we try to reduce the risk to recreational drivers, hockey players, heroin users and sex workers, most health officials single out tobacco users and tell them they simply must quit. They go so far as to tell them that smokeless tobacco is as bad as smoking. What I am trying to say is that it is not as bad as members may think, and people have to realise that.

I met with a federal member and we spoke about this at length. I took a lot of data that backed up what I was saying. That federal member suggested that we ask the health committee in the federal parliament to look into the actual effects of smokeless tobacco and the harm it actually does to people.

I have a letter here that a friend of mine, Dave Fullerton, who has chewed tobacco all his life, wrote to the minister for revenue and Assistant Treasurer. I will read part of this letter and it might help members see where these people are coming from. I want to represent these people today because they do have an issue. They will be forced to smoke cigarettes because of this legislation that is going through the House today—and most of them will do that.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, they are addicted to a drug that is exactly the same as smoking and it is the smoking that kills them. This letter says—

I have recently been shown a comment made by you in relation to smokeless tobacco and smoking tobacco being categorised as the same customs rate. I would like to take the opportunity of rebuttal as I believe the matter deserves further examination.

Firstly you said, **“There is a concern that there may not have been any sustainable tax policy reasons for the significant disparity between these rates.”**

Different sections of the Federal government have constantly had a hand in changing the laws on smokeless tobacco since 1989. This is simply because each year there are new employee and new positions created resulting in a lack of communication and understanding of how we arrived at the smokeless tobacco policy we now suffer.

I would suggest that the reason for the disparity of rates is as follows.

- Smoking tobacco and smokeless tobacco are similar as sheep are to a wool jumper. I say that because they are a different physical makeup and are used in a completely different manner resulting in many medical reports claiming that smokeless tobacco is up to 98% safer.

He then attached some web sites to look at. Mr Speaker, I table that letter here in parliament so that anyone can look at it.

Tabled paper: Letter dated 29 september 2006 from David Fuffarton to Ruth Gibson, Chief of Staff, the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer regarding smokeless tobacco and smoking tobacco.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order! Member for Darling Downs, can you please address the chair correctly.

Mr HOPPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg your pardon. I apologise for that. Let me just say that there are probably more people out there who chew tobacco than most people realise. I would ask members to seriously consider what is happening here. These people will now be put in a situation where they have nowhere else to turn. They will buy cigarettes and they will start smoking and smoking will kill them a lot quicker than chewing tobacco.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.48 am): The Health Legislation Amendment Bill amends a total of 19 acts in the Health portfolio. The most important ones are probably those that affect the registration and training arrangements for doctors, particularly as we face a severe shortage of doctors in many of our public hospitals but also in other parts of the state in general practice and so forth.

The bill covers a number of other points, and I want to make a couple of comments in relation to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act. I do not wish to discuss the act itself but the wonderful service that families provide to other human beings through organ donation for transplants. I have had the privilege at times of attending an annual service where the families of those who have donated attend and the recipients and their families attend. It is quite a moving ceremony. One of the greatest gifts that people can provide—and it is in very sad circumstances at times—is the gift of transplant organs. It is a good service. Not only those who do the transplants but also those who organise them have great compassion. I have always had great admiration for them.

I want to thank the staff at the Health Quality and Complaints Commission. I have recently had dealings with it on behalf of some people in Toowoomba. I can only say that the attention that I have received was excellent and it did provide a good avenue to endeavour to resolve a particular issue.

The issue of doctor registration often brings with it the issue of overseas doctors and so forth. I want to make the point—and I have made it in this parliament before—about our medical schools and about training enough of our own young people to be doctors. In terms of medical training, not long ago in Queensland we only had the University of Queensland, which used to offer an undergraduate medical degree. That university now offers a postgraduate medical degree. There is the James Cook University, which offers an undergraduate degree system, and I had the pleasure of being associated with getting that started. There is the Griffith University, which now offers a medical course—and it endeavoured for many years to get that put in place—and there is a course through the Bond University.

It seems terrible that Australia has to bring in so many doctors from overseas. On so many occasions we are bringing them from countries that are almost Third World countries that have a desperate need for doctors themselves. Yet here we are with a relatively wealthy economy going out and bringing people to our land to provide the services that our people should be providing. There are many ways that we can do it—and I see the minister is making some comment about the numbers we should have, and I agree.

Mr Robertson: We should be a net exporter of doctors.

Mr HORAN: We should be producing enough doctors. The entrance to medical school was restricted to the OP1 level of entrance. However, I feel that many young people who graduate from high school with an OP2, 3 or 4 would be quite intelligent and capable of being doctors. Many of the senior specialists we have today are people who entered university under a previous system and some of them received two Bs and three Cs for senior and they have gone on to become eminent specialists. I think it is important that we try to attract those people who really have the desire to be a doctor, who have the intelligence and ability to be a good GP or who have the ability to move on and become a specialist in a particular area and make a real contribution.

I do not mean to be critical of the University of Queensland, but I believe that the postgraduate system denies a large number of doctors' medical years to the nation. There are some 14 medical schools in Australia and five of them offer postgraduate medical degrees. For example, the University of Queensland has around 240 graduates in each year. If a person wants to do medicine there they must first go and do nursing, science, physio or pharmacy. They deny another 240 Queensland kids from being able to go to uni to undertake those particular courses as they do not intend to be a pharmacist or a physicist because they intend to go on and do medicine.

Looking at the average age of those doing the postgraduate course, when it was first introduced a few years ago it was quite high. Now I understand the graduating age is around the 30- to 32-year mark. Compare that with the Townsville university which offers an undergraduate course. A 17-year-old from the Hughenden State High School could get into James Cook, do their five- or six-year course and they will be 22 or 23 when they graduate as a young doctor. They will have the best years of their life—their twenties—ahead of them and the rest of their life from 22 or 23 on to 65 or whatever to contribute to medicine. However, those who graduate from the postgraduate course at UQ probably have 10 years less to contribute to medicine because they are graduating at an average age of 32. Multiply that by 240

graduates each year and 2,400 years of doctoring are lost to the nation and the state every graduating year. Then multiply that by the five other postgraduate schools in Australia and honourable members will see how many doctor years we are losing in the medium to longer term.

I think that is something that needs to be looked at. I know and understand that the quality of graduates from the UQ is outstanding, often times because they have done a previous course. There are people going in there who have been vets or who have PhDs et cetera. It does not matter if a person has a particular degree, they should still be able to have a go at being a doctor. I still believe that if it were an undergraduate course postgraduate students would still be accepted and that would be a better way of doing things. It would make a better contribution to the state. That is one of the issues we are facing. We need to get young doctors out there and quickly. They need to provide a longevity of service to the community. It is a social issue that needs to be looked at and addressed. When we have huge doctor shortages, can we afford the luxury of running postgraduate courses where people are graduating at an average age of 32 instead of 22 or 23?

Returning to the registration acts, as the minister said in his second reading speech, they are mostly designed to provide greater opportunities for recruitment of medical and allied health professionals. I have mentioned in this place before some of the problems that we have suffered at the Toowoomba Hospital. I have also mentioned generally that one of the reasons for the shortage that has occurred in the Queensland hospital system is the culture that developed in Queensland Health. We have heard talk of a culture of bullying or simply a culture whereby clinical people did not feel that they were being listened to or that they were the ones making the decisions in matters clinical.

A lot of the problems at the Toowoomba Base Hospital started in about 2000 or 2001 when the Beattie government sent in the razor gang. Beds in the intensive care ward were cut from 16 to eight and a coronary ward was brought in to take up those eight beds. A number of staff left and a great dissatisfaction occurred as a result. Once a hospital starts to lose the confidence or the willingness of its workforce, particularly of visiting medical officers, it loses a large percentage of the workforce. The workforce at the hospital consists of, importantly, the full-timers and permanent staff, but it also includes the contribution of visiting medical officers who are giving back to the system that actually trained them. It is important.

A lot of these visiting medical officers provide a four-hour or eight-hour session every week. They might do outpatients one week and surgery or treatment the other week. That contribution has always been a very important part of the public health system. They get paid on an hourly basis, but they are prepared to leave their private practice and go to the hospital and provide that service. At the same time they also provide teaching opportunities to the younger registrars and doctors and pass on what they have learnt.

That has been one of the fundamental reasons for the shortage of doctors in the Queensland hospital system. We have to have a system where people want to go to work, that they want to be part of the system so they can impart their knowledge. They want to be respected for what they are and not pushed around or be part of a system whereby team leaders interfere with clinical decisions or whereby they feel that issues they want to discuss are not being discussed and that the system is taken over by bureaucracy.

I know it is a difficult mix to get at times. Within a hospital system there are budgets which must be worked to. They cannot just blow the budget. There is going to be criticism from the opposition and others and there is also the estimates process to face. There is a certain responsibility to ensure that on a month-by-month basis the hospital budget is working and working well. The managers of the hospitals have certain tasks to do to ensure that they try to stay within those budgets.

However, it is the task of the government to provide an adequate budget for the hospitals and to provide an adequate budget for the health system so that all hospitals can operate in a good clinical practising way. One problem at the Toowoomba Hospital for some time relates to the area of mental health. I was very sad that the director of mental health was taken from that hospital to be the acting director of mental health for Queensland. I know, because he told me personally, the efforts that he made in order to get back and put time in at the hospital. But if a person is the director of mental health for Queensland and is also the director of psychiatry at the Toowoomba Base Hospital and also has a private practice in another city, it would be very difficult for them to be able to give the time that they need to give, bearing in mind that this mental health unit has 57 in-patient beds that services the area from Gatton out to Birdsville with mental health services and outreach mental health services. Also located in the area is the Baillie Henderson Hospital, which is a major hospital for chronic long-term and forensic mental health. Therefore, Toowoomba is a reasonably important area of Queensland in terms of mental health.

The Toowoomba Hospital should have eight mental health specialists, yet there have been considerable problems. The numbers have been down to as low as two and have always staggered around three or four. At times they have tried to make the numbers look good by having conferencing

from VMOs from Brisbane and elsewhere. However, I want to go through some of the problems that have occurred in terms of registration and deemed specialists in order to demonstrate how we have to look after the specialists that we can attract in the first place so that they stay and do not leave.

These people want an opportunity to discuss issues. If someone is a full-time doctor at a hospital like that, they want to be able to discuss the clinical issues that concern them with the management staff. They want to feel as though they have been listened to and that their concerns have been taken notice of. They do not want to be pushed into issues which they feel make their practice unprofessional or unsafe—for example, direction on how long to spend seeing a patient, particularly for a first visit. If these professionals are going to prescribe drugs for medically disturbed patients and children, sometimes they want longer than 30 minutes with them to know exactly what the issue is so that they can prescribe correctly. They do not want to be asked to write scripts for patients who have not been seen by a doctor for more than one year. They want to see those patients before they write scripts. Some of these problems have been so serious that there has been a direct line established to the director-general's office, and I think that the staff have appreciated that that has been provided for complaints of this sort. I think that is going some way to help address their issues.

There is also an issue with team leaders who are put there for operational purposes. The clinical practitioners are upset when those team leaders make decisions that overlap into clinical areas—for example, being asked to stop seeing a patient in the case of an emergency only to find that the other patient is not an emergency. One real problem at the Toowoomba Base Hospital mental health unit is the lack of a director of the child and adolescent mental health service. That unit was in chaos when it was closed down with some 40 minutes notice. These are examples of why it is very hard to attract people to these places and positions. The registration and professional issues contained in this bill will not work unless we can provide directors and unless we can adequately staff these major regional areas.

Because there is no director of adolescent mental health, in some cases young people are staying in care for as long as 12 months when they should not be. Because the specialists are not in place, people are languishing in these beds when there should be an average length of stay of 10 to 12 days. However, people have been languishing for up to three months. If there were an adequate number of staff, maybe they could have been treated, reassessed and moved on to community mental health services or, if necessary, moved on to Baillie Henderson if that is where the right treatment was. I am pleased to see that a director has come to Toowoomba from New Zealand. I hope that that brings some stability and leadership within the unit.

We have to ensure that our clinical standards are optimised and not compromised at all because of the particular structures of management. We have to ensure that we do not have a shortage of qualified staff, and we have to get a child and youth service. If Toowoomba has some of those things, then people would be more likely to apply for positions. The Toowoomba Hospital used to be the sort of place where people loved to go because it is a beautiful city and it is a great hospital and they wanted to go there. Those things attract clinical people.

I have mentioned the dedicated line that has been put in place, but I want to talk about the issue of the deeming and deemed psychiatrists. There are staff who are supposed to supervise these deemed specialists. When they are deemed they have to be under supervision. That is normally the condition of their deeming. But there are some senior staff who were not even told that they were supposed to supervise these people, and very often these people, I believe, from what I have been told, have not received the supervision that they should have had. For example, we have had deemed specialists recommending ECT and getting a second opinion from another deemed specialist and it is then taken to the tribunal for final approval. One wonders whether the tribunal is aware that this lack of supervision has been occurring. I hope that the comments I have made in this debate can be of some assistance to the minister, because I have been following this issue for a long time. It is very important that a big regional centre like this with the three levels of mental health in the city and the whole south-west gets the staff, the leadership and the direction that it needs in order to provide the necessary mental health services which are so important.

Finally, the minister provided some figures this morning on elective surgery, and this relates to the number of staff. The minister himself has mentioned on occasions the number of staff, the number of operations and so forth. I just think it is a tragedy that we have slipped back with category 1 patients where 11 per cent of—

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr HORAN: It is to do with the doctor numbers. The person sitting in the chair will make the decision as to whether it is relevant. But it is now back at 11 per cent when for so long it was five per cent or less than five per cent. On 30 June 1997 that five per cent was achieved for category 1. Category 2s are still at 20.5 per cent. They should be less than five per cent.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr HORAN: We put the system in place. We achieved five per cent for category 1s by 30 June 1997 and 10 months into the second year we had category 2s down to around 80 per cent, and that is where it still languishes. What a tragedy that we now have category 1s at 11 per cent long waits and we now still have—

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Before calling the member for Nicklin, I recognise in the public gallery students and staff from the Silkstone State School in the electorate of Ipswich, represented in this parliament by Rachel Nolan.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.08 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I note that this is a genuine attempt by our health minister to try to get more qualified doctors, more qualified nurses and more qualified dentists and health professionals to come to Queensland to try to relieve the enormous pressure that our medical people are currently under at the moment.

The minister certainly needs to be congratulated on his attempts to try to get more professionally medically trained people to come to work in Queensland. I also believe that the federal government has a very important role to play and cannot just simply pass the buck to the state government. In the past federal governments have financially supported the provision of dental services in the states. We saw significant benefits from a previous federal government that put money on the table to help respond to the dental problems that we have in Queensland. I hope that a future federal government will also put money on the table to assist Queensland to improve its delivery of dental services.

I would like to take a few moments of everyone's time to share with them some concerns that I have about Nambour Hospital. Recently Nambour Hospital saw a significant increase in the number of health professionals. Unfortunately, there is a major problem with the provision of adequate car parking space for staff at Nambour Hospital. More importantly, there is a major problem for people who want to visit their loved ones who are patients at the Nambour Hospital. Many years ago the Maroochy Shire Council spent ratepayers' money on purchasing a very significant parcel of land right beside the Nambour Hospital to, can I say, help out Queensland Health. At the time there was an acknowledgement—and it had been acknowledged for many years—that there was not adequate car parking available at Nambour Hospital.

The reality is that time has moved on and the current council has indicated that it is exploring the opportunity of selling this very important and strategically located parcel of land. I understand that negotiations have been ongoing for some time. I thank the minister for the recent meeting that we had with him and his senior departmental staff to try to see if we can move forward on this very difficult issue of providing adequate car parking for staff and visitors to patients at Nambour Hospital. I really worry that, if an agreement is not able to be reached between the state government and the Maroochy Shire Council and a proposal cannot be made in the near future for an immediate solution to providing additional car parking spaces for our staff and the loved ones of patients at the Nambour Hospital, the Maroochy Shire Council will say, 'Sorry, we can't reach an agreement. The land is now on the open market for sale.' I dread to think what will happen if that very important and strategically located parcel of land is sold off by the Maroochy Shire Council and is no longer available to help Queensland Health provide the important car parking spaces that that land provides currently.

On earlier occasions I have stood in this chamber and said that I believe that the state government, just like every other businessperson in Queensland, has a responsibility to provide adequate parking. It should not be up to local councils to have to provide parking around schools or hospitals. We were very fortunate that a previous Maroochy Shire Council was prepared to spend ratepayers' money to purchase land for car parking. I understand that at the time there was also financial support from the then state government to buy this very strategically located parcel of land. So I use this opportunity to urge the minister to have the department urgently consider the situation and try to come forward with a practical solution to the parking problems that exist at Nambour Hospital. Staff want to come and work at Nambour Hospital. There has been a significant increase in the number of professionals coming to work at Nambour Hospital. That has really accentuated the problem.

Unfortunately, many staff are now receiving parking fines because of the difficulties involved in parking for the duration of their shift. In the past, many staff would duck out at two-hourly intervals and move their cars. I understand now that the car parking requirement in the Maroochy shire is that it is no longer possible for those people to undertake that short manoeuvre.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I have been fairly lenient this afternoon, but I ask that you return to the provisions of the bill before the House.

Mr WELLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for your tolerance. The minister is aware of my sentiments and those of my constituents. I am certainly very keen to have a possible resolution to the problem before Christmas. I am due to have a meeting with the staff next week.

The Nambour Hospital staff do a wonderful job. I commend the minister for his initiative to try to get more professional health workers to come and work in the many hospitals and dental facilities in Queensland. I hope in the minister's response he can also comment on the reasons overseas nurses who have applied for registration have experienced significant delays in trying to have their applications processed. I commend the bill to the House. I look forward to it proceeding to the consideration in detail stage.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (12.15 pm): I am delighted to rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister and his staff and the departmental staff on bringing this important bill to the House. My electorate of Hervey Bay has certainly been at the forefront of the challenges and reforms facing health care in Queensland. The explicit issue of the recruitment, assessment, registration and retention of health professionals is one of the matters of highest importance to my constituents.

This morning, in answer to a question without notice from me, the minister outlined to the House the ongoing process of restoring orthopaedic services to the Fraser Coast. That is a critical issue of importance. I would again like to thank the minister for working with me and the locals who made this process happen. We have painstakingly built the building blocks for a safe and sustainable orthopaedics service that will be a far better service than the service that used to operate prior to the suspension of orthopaedics in May last year.

The local involvement in the process and planning has been exemplary. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Dr Sean Mullen, a local orthopaedic specialist, who led the planning process for restoring services; Dr Sean Rudd from the AMA, who has been very, very supportive of making sure that orthopaedics are restored to the area; and Kerry Winsor, the district health manager, whose attention to detail in relation to safety planning is first class and who certainly deserves congratulations for her role. I also pay tribute to Meryn Pease, the Director of Nursing at Hervey Bay Hospital. She played a very important role in making sure that when we attract the required specialists to do the orthopaedics work we also have in place the specialist nursing staff to maintain that service.

An orthopaedics service is particularly important in my electorate. Twenty-six per cent of the people in my electorate are aged over 65 and 25 per cent of them are aged under 17. Orthopaedics is most critical for the young and the elderly as they are the people who break bones more than any other sector of our society. So having a safe, secure and available orthopaedic service is a very high priority. I am delighted that, through this process of proper accreditation and of obtaining four additional visiting orthopaedic specialists plus new junior officers, that service is well on the way to being restored. I am delighted that the bill is addressing those issues in relation to safety, recruitment and assessment so clearly.

I would also like to touch briefly on another aspect of the bill which was again mentioned this morning, and that relates to dental care. There are probably few areas of public health where the flim-flam of the opposition is more brutally exposed than dental care. Currently, somewhere in the vicinity of half a million low-income earners in Australia are waiting for dental care. That waiting list will continue to grow as the federal government refuses point-blank to accept that it has anything to do with the situation.

Last week the Australian Council of Social Services released a report into the state of dental care across Australia. It makes alarming reading for anyone who is interested in the state of dental care in our cities. It found that 40 per cent of Australians could not access dental care when they needed it, that the average waiting time for dental care across Australia is 27 months and, in many cases, five to six years. That is certainly the case in Hervey Bay. I do not shy away from that figure. We have waiting times for some aspects of public dental care of up to five years or more. The difficulty is that the report also found that, by 2010, there will be a shortage of 1,500 dental staff, which is equivalent to 3.8 million occasions of dental care. The report also found that the cost of basic dental care has risen dramatically—up 45 per cent since 1999.

It is completely unfair that in these economic boom times with \$17 billion federal surpluses so many Australians cannot afford to get their teeth fixed. The high costs for private dental care and the long waiting lists are matters that all levels of government must address. I think any fair-minded observer would say that Queensland has stepped up to the plate as the only state that has replaced the federal funding that was withdrawn by the Howard government.

We heard some straight-out deceit this morning from some members of the opposition who said, 'The program was introduced by Keating and it lapsed.' That is rubbish. What happened was that the Liberal government, upon election, decided, 'We're not going to keep paying for that,' and pulled the funding. Queensland has stepped up to the plate and has replaced that federal funding, but other states have not. Across Australia we are staring at a crisis in dental care. ACOSS, which put forward a plan to address the issue, estimates it would cost something like \$798 million a year to address the waiting lists for dental care across Australia.

It is an absurdity for the opposition to sit here and say that it is up to the Beattie government to fix what is clearly a national problem. Until dental care is brought properly within the purview of the medical system, until dental care can be properly claimed, this problem will persist. A visit to the dentist costs more than an average visit to a doctor. An average visit to a dentist costs \$100. That is not comparable to a quarter-hour visit to the doctor. Of course, many routine medical treatments can cost thousands of dollars with enormous gaps for people, even for those who have top level private health insurance.

The abrogation of responsibility by the federal government, aided and abetted by a state opposition that just does not care, is a disgrace and must be addressed. I congratulate the minister for doing what he is doing in this bill in terms of assisting and trying to encourage the training and retention of dentists. But the reality is that this is a problem too big for Queensland to fix, particularly when the shortage of dentists is a national issue. Unless more dentists are pushed through our universities, unless there is explicit funding from the federal government to train dentists and then to pay for occasions of dental care via a national medical system, this problem will persist. With those few short comments, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (12.22 pm): It is always a pleasure to rise to speak to health legislation, and that remains so with this Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I note that the bill's main objective is to provide opportunities for the recruitment of medical and allied health professionals. It specifically looks at the recruitment of overseas trained doctors to supplement our medical workforce in Queensland. I suppose we have to ask the question: why has Queensland Health developed a dependence on overseas trained doctors? Is it as simplistic as saying that it is just a lack of doctors? I have to say no, because we have to remember that an Australian trained doctor was available to take the position that Jayant Patel was appointed to by this government.

We have heard evidence that overseas trained doctors were preferred by Queensland Health because they were cheap and they were compliant. They cannot work outside the public health system so they are more likely to put up with the culture of bullying that existed, and still exists, within our public health system. That is evident in the whole Bundaberg health debacle.

I have a concern that a similar situation exists within Queensland Health with the casualisation of the medical workforce. I am specifically talking about the nursing workforce. I had an interesting conversation with nurse whistleblower Toni Hoffman in the lead-up to the election. The question I asked her was: how do we get more nurses back into the medical health system? How do we get more nurses working for our public hospitals? Toni said that one of the reasons we do not have enough nurses is the fact there are not enough permanent jobs—there are too many casual jobs—and that nurses, like everyone else, would prefer security of employment. One quote I can remember is: 'You virtually have to wait for a nurse to die before you can get a permanent job.' Nurses are just like everyone else. They like security of employment—they like to be able to salary sacrifice and they like to be able to take out mortgages. It is very difficult to do those two things if one does not have a permanent job.

The casualisation of the workforce leads to an ability by the managers to wind back someone's hours if they step out of line, speak out of turn or buck the system of bullying. So they can be punished by losing work hours. This is a situation that I will be looking at, along with my colleagues, over the next few years—and I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, for your latitude. In relation to the delivery of essential services such as health and a whole range of other issues, I believe that the casualisation of the workforce has some disbenefits.

In the last 2½ years Queenslanders have had a unique opportunity to discover how their public health system works and, unfortunately for many, they discovered that the health system has not worked—in fact, it has dismally failed them and their families. The latest elective surgery waiting lists today are further proof of that failure. I note that at Bundaberg 580 patients were treated in the September quarter of 2006. The minister has been boasting about a 53.8 per cent increase in the Bundaberg Base Hospital elective surgery throughput since the September quarter. That is the quarter directly after uncovering the worst public health disaster in Australia's history. In other words, the minister is giving himself a pat on the back for increasing the surgery throughput after a most complete and comprehensive meltdown of our public health system. The minister is starting from a very low base and has not released to the parliament the other waiting list—that is, the list that shows patients waiting to see specialists.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I ask the honourable member to please revert to the provisions of the bill before the House.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The provisions of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill relate to the hiring of overseas trained specialists. The hiring of overseas trained specialists, I presume, would decrease the waiting lists in our hospitals. Ex-royal commissioner Tony Morris QC, in an address to medical students at JCU in October last year in relation to the Queensland Health waiting lists, stated very importantly—

The most chilling part is the fact that people can die—that people do die—whilst waiting for treatment in this State's public hospitals ... there is strong anecdotal evidence that Queensland Health's misleading waiting lists have contributed to a significant number of deaths.

Mr Morris went on to say—

I have observed that, due to oddities in our legal system, Queensland Health has a licence to deceive. But that licence to deceive may also, in significant numbers of cases, be a 'James Bond style' licence to kill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I have asked the honourable member to keep his comments to the provisions of the bill that is currently before the House. I fail to see how the comments that he is making now are relevant to the bill before the House. It may help if he shows me how they are relevant. This is the second time that I have warned the member. I ask that he return to the provisions of the bill.

Mr MESSENGER: Page 64, part 8, clauses 120 to 126 speak to the amendment of the Mental Health Act. On 10 October 2006 the editor of the *Bundaberg Newsmail*, Lucy Ardern, stated that the people of Bundaberg and Burnett have the right to know when the mental health unit in-patient service will re-open and the reason for the delay. The adult in-patient facility has been closed for over one year now and during this period we have heard the health minister, Mr Robertson, and other Queensland Health bureaucrats telling us that the reason for our unit's closure was due to the unexpected resignation of a principal house officer and the difficulty of attracting other senior medical staff and specialists within the service. Our minds were, however, temporarily put at ease when we were assured that the unit would re-open once the clinical director, Dr Naeem Jhetam, arrived. After our community had patiently waited finally in August Dr Jhetam arrived. Two months on and the in-patient facility remains closed.

I recently sought answers when I met the acting district manager, Mr John Wiley, who informed me that the unit could not realistically be open by the end of this year and to expect that the facility would be up and running in approximately six months time. This time the reason given, I am told, is that the unit is in need of renovations to meet the relevant standards.

It would appear that the health minister and this government have once again misled the people of Bundaberg and Burnett which has caused unnecessary grief and damage to families, families who have loved ones suffering from mental illness. Mental health in-patients in Bundaberg have to be transferred to Rockhampton or the Sunshine Coast and that, in itself, poses problems for Emergency Services as well as the patients themselves and their families. Sometimes those patients have to be housed overnight in wards of the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Members can imagine the difficulty that a nursing sister would face in the ward proper, say a medical ward or a rehab ward, if a 20-year-old psychotic patient was housed there temporarily before that patient was transferred to a more appropriate facility.

In his second reading speech the minister talked about a shortage of medical practitioners to provide a medical service at one health facility and whether it is reasonable for that service to be provided at another facility. This is a reality at many regional hospitals, including Bundaberg. Many Bundaberg and Burnett residents have to travel to Brisbane hospitals for treatment.

Mr Reg Pegler would like this government to establish a shuttle bus service in Brisbane whose job it is to pick up the regional tilt train passengers—and I believe they are from Mackay right through to Gympie—who are travelling for medical appointments and treatments. A trip to the capital city for a rural or regional person can be extremely stressful at the best of times, but when that person is struggling with medical problems or serious life-threatening illnesses just the journey from the train station to the hospital or hotel can be a nightmare.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr MESSENGER: I was speaking about the provision of a shuttle bus from the regional trains from the perspective of the minister's comment about a shortage of medical practitioners at one particular health facility and whether it is reasonable for the service to be provided at another facility. That is quite an important service that the health minister might like to consider, especially for regional and rural constituents, many of whom travel to Brisbane to receive treatment. It is not just a frivolous or vexatious claim here in this House; it is a very important issue for many of my constituents. I travelled with my mum when she came from Bundaberg to Brisbane for treatment for cancer. Many of these people are suffering life-threatening illnesses and we need to find every way possible to lessen the burden on those people who cannot be treated by our health system in their home city.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): I acknowledge in the public gallery Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries ambassadors who are present at Parliament House today. The ambassadors are Mrs Wendy Erhart; Ms Alison Alexander; Ms Leeanne Gangemi; Councillor Tom Woods, the mayor of Waggamba shire; Councillor Bruce Scott, the mayor of Barcoo shire; Councillor John Wharton, mayor of the Richmond Shire Council; Councillor Mark O'Brien, mayor of Murweh shire; Mr Graham Davies; Mr Peter Milne; Mr Michael Brunner, the mayor of the Bowen Shire Council; and Lyn O'Connor.

Mr DICKSON (Kawana—Lib) (12.35 pm): I rise to speak on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I would like to touch on the provisions of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act concerning reducing exposure to tobacco smoke of members of the public. This is one issue that I believe has to be touched on. I recently went to the Victory Hotel with the member for Surfers Paradise.

It was quite interesting to walk into that facility where the law is being flouted. The barrier between where members of the public sit and eat their meals and where the smokers are supposed to be has gaps of over 2½ metres. It came to my attention after being there for some time that people were candidly walking around this facility with cigarettes in their hands where patrons are not supposed to smoke and then walking into areas where patrons can smoke.

The reality is that this is about policing. People do not care; they are telling the government to butt out—‘We are not interested in your legislation. We are not going to adhere to your laws’. I would like to see the minister take this seriously. Smoking is very dangerous and causes health problems for many people in our community. I support the government in relation to this because I believe that we have to work together to stamp this out. People are flaunting the law. The government has to jump on top of it. We have to force it to jump on top of it. The people who own these facilities, which are mainly licensed venues, are flouting the law. If we do not jump on them, nothing will be done.

A couple of years ago I travelled to Hong Kong. When one walks into the facilities in that country there is a cubicle where people who smoke have to go to smoke. They are not let out into the general public area. This is what I see as a law that is fulfilled. If people do the wrong thing they are dragged away. Here if a person does the wrong thing we do nothing. We have to treat this legislation seriously. That is why I bring it to the attention of the House today. It is a very serious matter that this law is not being adhered to. If we continue to let people flout the law they will continue to do so. I support the government in relation to this bill in this regard, but I ask the government to please take the issue seriously. We have to get on top of this. There are young people and mums and dads who stand outside these facilities.

These businesses say, ‘We are going to go backward if we do not let people smoke in certain areas.’ On the Sunshine Coast we have hotels that have actually banned smoking altogether. They do not go backward at all. It creates a family environment where people can take their family along, have a meal and enjoy the atmosphere of their local community. I would like to see this government push strongly ahead with this and come down very hard on these law-breakers.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (12.38 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have participated in this debate, most of whom retained some relevance to the legislation currently before the House.

I will be moving minor amendments to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 during consideration of the bill in detail. I table for the information of the House those amendments and supplementary explanatory notes which have been circulated.

Tabled paper: Explanatory notes to amendments in consideration in detail to be moved by the Hon. S Robertson.

A number of amendments to the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 are proposed to reinforce the provisions in the bill that allow junior medical officers to transfer to other junior medical officer positions provided that they give prior notice to the Medical Board. Key amendments I will move aim to ensure that junior medical officers who transfer to another junior medical officer position practise only in accordance with the supervised practice plan approved by the Medical Board for the new position.

The amendments achieve this in two ways. Firstly, the amendments require that, if a junior medical officer wishes to transfer to another junior medical officer position and a new supervised practice plan will be needed for the new position, the junior medical officer must apply to the board for approval of the new plan. The junior medical officer’s right to transfer on giving notice to the board is subject to the officer obtaining the board’s prior approval of the new plan. The amendments outline the process for applying for the board’s approval.

Secondly, the amendments clarify that the standard condition of registration which requires special purpose registrants to practise only in accordance with their supervised practice plan also applies to junior medical officers who transfer positions and have a new supervised practice plan approved by the board. These amendments are supported by the Medical Board and the Office of the Health Practitioner Registration Boards and will help ensure that policy objectives of the bill can be achieved. Other amendments to the bill correct some renumbering errors.

I will deal with a number of contributions made by members opposite. I cannot help but respond to the shameless contribution by the former minister for health, the member for Toowoomba South, Mike Horan, who dared bring up the issue of elective surgery waiting lists. This is the person who, when minister for health in the last coalition government, refused to publish waiting lists. The coalition deliberately hid them from public view. Why? Because they still remain the worst on record.

We had the member for Toowoomba South come in here today and try to offer us advice on how to deal with elective surgery waiting lists. As I have said, I am not particularly happy with the waiting list figures that were mentioned today, but they still stand well against the performance of the coalition when it was last in office. I cannot help but put that on the record once again because time and time again the member for Toowoomba South, in a very shameless and dishonest way, wants to critique us on waiting list figures when he presided over Queensland’s worst ever elective surgery waiting list figures.

I want to deal with a couple of other contributions. I was going to congratulate the member for Surfers Paradise on his appointment as shadow minister for health, but that will have to wait for another day because he is not here at the moment. The member for Surfers Paradise argued that there is a lack of incentives for health professionals to continue employment in the public sector. The simple fact is that the enterprise bargaining agreements in 2005-06 gave public sector health professionals significant salary increases and improved employment conditions so that doctors employed by Queensland Health are now, in many cases, the highest paid in Australia and, in most cases, the second highest paid. We have actually addressed that issue, as the member for Surfers Paradise should know. It is time he moved on and became somewhat more contemporary in his comments about the health system in this state.

The member for Surfers Paradise argued that Queensland Health's inability to undertake workforce analysis and planning has resulted in purely reactive initiatives to address health workforce issues. Again, over the past 12 months, Queensland Health has implemented a number of strategies to enhance its ability to undertake workforce analysis and planning. A centralised recruitment unit has been set up which, in consultation with each area health service, collects and analyses data about the medical, nursing and allied health vacancies, including critical vacancies. Each area health service now has dedicated case managers to manage the placement of doctors into critical vacancies. In addition, each area health service has established vacancy management strategies which include establishing medical workforce advisory groups to advise the general manager on critical medical workforce issues; establishing new positions to support management of critical vacancies and the case manager's role, including links to RAPS, medical recruitment agencies and districts which have been vital in this process; and establishment and support for collation and analysis of medical vacancies across the areas. Queensland Health has also entered into a standing officer arrangement with three recruitment agencies to assist in the placement of medical personnel in vacant positions. With those comments, I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2 (Commencement)—

Mr LANGBROEK (12.45 pm): I do want to speak to this clause but more as part of the amendments that have been circulated in my name because it is more an administrative matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): You are going to move an amendment at this point.

Mr LANGBROEK: I move the amendment circulated in my name—

1 **Clause 2 (Commencement)—**

Page 18, line 7, '4'—

omit, insert—

'4A'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, do you wish to speak?

Mr ROBERTSON: Is he speaking to it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Apparently not.

Mr ROBERTSON: No, except to say that we will not be supporting the amendment, whatever it means.

Mr LANGBROEK: This amendment is the safe working hours amendment but, as I said, I seek some clarification from the chair on whether I can speak to the amendment to do with clause—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is your second opportunity now to speak to the amendment you have moved, yes.

Mr LANGBROEK: I would like to move an amendment on safe working hours for doctors. Amendments have been formulated by the Queensland coalition in recognition of the submissions and lobbying from various medical groups in Queensland. Queensland Health and the unions recognise that fatigue impairs the capacity of its employees to provide safe services to patients and represents a risk to the safety of the employee. Through these amendments, we seek to establish safeguards and control measures aimed at reducing risk from fatigue to patients and staff to as low as reasonably practicable. This is a real strategy to reduce inappropriate medical working hours. I believe this is worthy of bipartisan support, but I note the minister has already indicated that the government will not support it.

The AMA, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation of Queensland and the Medical Board of Queensland have all made representations that we need to establish safe workplace standards by and for medical practitioners with a particular focus on managing workplace fatigue. This matter was

given some prominence in the Davies report of 2005, which noted that a consistent theme running through the evidence before the commission was the impact of unsafe working hours on clinical standards and patient safety.

An extreme example was that of Dr Andrew Doneman, who was a junior house officer at the Nambour Hospital. Dr Doneman was prosecuted for making, in layman's terms, a 'medical error' after working 16 hours into a 24-hour continuous shift. The Health Practitioners Tribunal made a number of findings about the case, saying that the hours were excessive but they were required to punish Dr Doneman because he should have refused to work such long hours.

This legislation aims to strengthen the rights of health professionals and patients. Health professionals are all too aware that our health system is in crisis. Knowing this, they self-inflict pressure to do their bit, to do what they can. Adding to this is the pressure from peers who similarly are aware of the crisis. This self and peer pressure needs to be addressed because the wonderful people in our health system sometimes just cannot say no.

Peer pressure on junior staff exists. Several reports have found this to be the case as well as the AMAQ. The proposal is to amend the health practitioner registration acts to require medical practitioners to have a mandatory rest break of a continuous eight hours in a 24-hour period. The features are explained in the explanatory notes that I have provided. Medical practitioners should not work continuously for more than 12 hours before taking a mandatory break of eight hours. The amendment includes an exemption that allows a medical practitioner to work beyond 12 hours but no more than 16 hours, based upon medical necessity. A determination of medical necessity would be the sole decision of the medical practitioner. Amendments would allow the bringing to prosecution of any person who attempts to coerce a medical practitioner to work beyond 12 continuous hours. If the person who attempts to coerce a medical practitioner to work beyond 12 continuous hours is a registered medical practitioner, then that action should be liable for prosecution and/or deregistration by the Health Practitioners Registration Board. The Beattie government has to accept past commitments it has made to deal with safe working hours for medical practitioners. This is a great way to do it.

While the Queensland coalition is supportive of the Alert Doctors Strategy, Queensland Health needs to put in place strict guidelines that enable safe rostering, allow doctors to work reasonable and fair hours and provide access to adequate breaks between shifts. We are seeing a system that places unrealistic demands on junior doctors in particular which could potentially lead to adverse outcomes. One of those outcomes is, of course, the continuation of doctors leaving Queensland Health in droves. If we better support our health professionals through better working conditions and strategies like these relating to safe working hours, we may be able to stem the flow and change the culture.

Mr ROBERTSON: I seek some guidance. I do not know how the member wants to proceed with this. Is he going to do each individual clause now or is that his overall contribution?

Mr Langbroek: I thought that because the ice pipes amendment is a separate issue I would deal with it when we come to clause 296.

Mr ROBERTSON: But in terms of safe working hours, this is it for the member's argument?

Mr Langbroek: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member has moved amendment No. 1 circulated in his name. He has had 10 minutes. Then he has had five minutes. So he has five more minutes should he so wish.

Mr ROBERTSON: Okay. That will take care of the safe working hours issue? Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for that clarification. We will not be supporting the amendments moved by the member for Surfers Paradise in relation to this particular issue not because we do not believe in the issue—we do. However, I think serious issues need to be raised about the practicalities attached to these particular amendments. My first question on which I seek clarification would be whether these amendments also apply to the private sector. Queensland Health is not the only game in town when it comes to the employment of doctors or the running of hospitals. There is also a private sector out there. Presumably the same issues relating to the working hours of doctors apply in the private sector as in the public sector. Therefore, presumably the position being put forward by the coalition would apply to these very stringent conditions on the private sector as much as they would on Queensland Health hospitals. To not do so would be inequitable and it would be hypocritical because we cannot have half of our health system working to a set number of hours and the other half not.

Mrs Reilly: And many staff work in both sectors.

Mr ROBERTSON: Indeed. As the member for Mudgeeraba pointed out, many staff actually work in both systems. I think that needs to be clarified.

It is also important to put on the record what Queensland Health has been doing in recognition of the issues of working hours of doctors. I think that, after hearing this explanation, members will agree that the approach that we are taking is far more sustainable than the heavy-handed regulatory approach being promoted by the coalition. The simple fact is that restricting hours in such a guillotine fashion by

the passing of legislation will probably result in a collapse of the system. The member opposite knows that we are faced with significant workforce shortages across-the-board when it comes to doctors. If we now restrict the hours that they work, then a number of hospitals and a number of communities, particularly in the smaller towns of Queensland, will no longer be able to provide the level of service that they currently do. I do not think that has been properly thought through. That is why the strategy being put in place by this government is far more sustainable in terms of reducing the number of hours worked by doctors and putting in place more sustainable shift rosters.

This is not just about the hours worked by doctors. There are a number of environmental factors which must be taken into consideration in resolving the issue. One of these factors does not exist in other industries that are taking action to address the issue. Many junior doctors are undertaking vocational training, which is not controlled by the state. Our government is not against legislating limits on hours of work for doctors. However, it would be foolish to address this without fully understanding the issues to be addressed and without basing the solutions on the latest evidence based research. For example, there are some circumstances where 16-hour shifts are appropriate. It depends upon what happens before and after that shift.

Queensland Health is undertaking work to develop a multifaceted solution to actually resolve the issues. As part of our Alert Doctors Strategy we will work with world renowned experts to implement an evidence based fatigue management framework for Queensland Health's doctors. We will undertake observational studies to truly understand the impact of existing work practices on patients and doctors, the levels of risk to patient safety and the feasibility of a range of potential solutions to this problem. It is unlikely that one solution will solve the problem in all circumstances. That is understandable when we are running a system with 120-plus hospitals that range from the major tertiary hospitals such as the PA or RBH to hospitals in remote parts of the state like Cunnamulla, Julia Creek or Cloncurry, which are often single-doctor hospitals. One size cannot—and never has in Queensland—fit all.

We will be trialling a fatigue management framework for doctors in a number of pilot sites and we will use the findings from these studies to implement such a framework throughout Queensland Health within—we hope—18 months. In the meantime we have proposed a new policy to address fatigue risks of doctors working long shifts. The proposed policy outlines the processes to be implemented if any doctor is engaged in 16 hours of continuous work. This will ensure that management is informed about work practices and encourages all members of the medical profession to address the problem. The relevant unions are currently considering this proposal.

I have already dealt with the question of whether this amendment will apply to the private sector. If it does not, this amendment is fatally flawed from a lack of consistency across the spectrum.

The other thing that I would mention—and I suspect the member for Surfers Paradise, given his previous profession, would also acknowledge this as well—is that on many occasions the answer to long working hours for doctors actually rests within the hands of the doctors themselves. This has been an historical cultural issue. We actually see it on those shows on TV, whether they come from the UK or America—and the situation is the same in Australia—of doctors working excessively long hours. There is a culture of that which in fact needs to change. We do not change culture simply by moving an amendment such as is being proposed. The issues are complex. The issues in many respects are cultural. If we are to have sustainable working hours, which we want to move to, then as well as embracing the principle of sustainable working hours for doctors we need local solutions. In a state such as Queensland with its diverse range of hospitals, that is fundamental to setting up practical systems that allow medical services to be maintained.

I do not want to be particularly negative towards the member for Surfers Paradise, but putting forward proposals such as this without contemplating the diversity of hospital environments that exist in Queensland is naive. That is why I would hope the coalition would support the Alert Doctors Strategy that we are putting in place which gives much more consideration to driving local solutions for local problems.

Mr LANGBROEK: The coalition is supportive of the Alert Doctors Strategy. However, the coalition would like more details and we would like aspects of the Alert Doctors Strategy to be enacted somewhat quicker than the minister indicated in his contribution. This is an issue which has been around for some time—for some years. I acknowledge, as the minister mentioned, that in many TV shows and historically there is this culture that doctors have to keep working and that senior doctors will say to junior doctors, 'That is what we had to do when we were your age. It is part of the trappings that come with junior medical practice when you are first registered.' That does not necessarily mean that it is acceptable or should go on unfettered and forever. That is why we have moved this amendment, which is supported by the AMA, as I mentioned, the Salaried Medical Officers Federation and the Medical Board of Queensland. They have all made representations about the similar issue.

I want to refer to the minister's query about whether it would apply across-the-board—

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. Can I just correct the member. I do not think it is accurate. I do not think it is correct to interpret the release of a discussion paper by the independent Medical Board as supporting the member's clause—his approach. That is important because the—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will correct that. I was not insinuating that the Medical Board was supporting this amendment. I said that the Medical Board had made representations about establishing safe workplace standards. I also want to deal with the minister's query about whether—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! It being 1 o'clock, we will break for lunch. The member can resume at 2.30.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr LANGBROEK: As I was saying just before the lunch break, the coalition is supportive of the Alert Doctors Strategy and we would like to see some more rapid action, I suppose, on seeing that Alert Doctors Strategy brought forward. This has been a way of doing it but, given that we are still speaking about amendment No. 1, that is all I want to contribute at this time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Darling): Order! Before putting the question, I would like to draw the House's attention to some visitors in the gallery today. We have students and teachers from Fairview Heights State School in the electorate of Toowoomba North, which is represented here by Mr Kerry Shine.

Non-government amendment (Mr Langbroek) negatived.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 65, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr LANGBROEK (2.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 After clause 65—

Page 38, after line 24—

insert—

'Part 4A Amendment of Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999

'65A Act amended in pt 4A

'This part amends the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*.

'65B Insertion of new pt 12A

'After part 12—

insert—

'Part 12A Registrants' working hours

'398A Meaning of work for pt 12A

'In this part—

work, for a registrant, means work in the course of practising the registrant's profession.

'398B Limit on continuous working hours

- '(1) A registrant must not work continuously for more than 12 hours.
- '(2) A registrant must ensure that, in any given period of 24 hours, the registrant has, or starts or ends, a continuous period of at least 8 hours during which the registrant is not working.
- '(3) A registrant does not contravene subsection (1) or (2) by working for a period or periods if the registrant—
 - (a) does not work continuously for more than 16 hours; and
 - (b) is satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that it is necessary to work for the period or periods because of a medical necessity.
- '(4) For this section, a registrant's period of work is taken to include meal breaks and other short-term absences.

'398C Asking etc. a registrant to work unlawful hours

- '(1) A person must not ask, direct or require a registrant to do something if the person knows, or reasonably ought to know, that by complying the registrant would, or would be likely to, contravene section 398B.
Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- '(2) If a person commits an offence against subsection (1) in the course of the person's employment, the person's employer also commits an offence, namely, the offence of failing to ensure the employer's employees do not contravene subsection (1).
Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- '(3) However, if a person commits an offence against subsection (1) in the course of the person's employment, it is a defence for the person's employer to prove that—
 - (a) if the employer was in a position to influence the person's conduct in relation to the offence, the employer exercised reasonable diligence to ensure the person did not contravene subsection (1); or
 - (b) the employer was not in a position to influence the person's conduct in relation to the offence.'.

I want to come back to the Alert Doctors Strategy and what the main thrust of the amendments are here in adding part 4A to the amendment of the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999. I have a number of press releases that I have received and I am sure other members would have received. The press release from the AMA says—

The 2006 nation-wide AMA Safe Hours survey shows onerous and unsafe working hours are still common with 62 per cent of hospital doctors falling into the significant and higher risk categories.

...

AMA Queensland President Dr Zelle Hodge said there was an urgent need to provide proper support for fatigued doctors.

'Medicine and society has changed radically from the days where it was considered acceptable for doctors to continue to work despite being fatigued ...'

'Medical care now is more complex and demanding, and patient expectations and the potential for litigation has increased.

I think these are things that we need to consider, and that is what the coalition has considered in framing this. The press release continues—

Dr Hodge said Queensland Health was finally acknowledging a need for alert doctors through the Alert Doctor Strategy pilot program designed to look at issues surrounding safe hours, possible solutions and how effective those solutions could be.

As I say, the coalition is supportive of the Alert Doctors Strategy but considers that waiting 18 months for more studies to be done is unacceptable. That is why we have moved the amendments that we have. I also have another press release from the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation Queensland. It states—

Dr Kane said while Queensland Health's *Alert Doctors Strategy* was a positive step forward in acknowledging unsafe working hours for doctors in Queensland, immediate action was needed to resolve the situation.

Again, that is what the coalition is proposing today with this amendment. State councillor Dr Alex Markwell from the ASMOFQ said—

'Junior doctors are expected to work onerous on-call hours without a proper break.

'What we are seeing is a system that places unrealistic demands on junior doctors, which could potentially lead to adverse outcomes ...

Finally, I have a letter from the chairperson of the Medical Board of Queensland, Dr Mary Cohn, to Dr Buckland dated 23 March 2005 which states—

... the Board noted that development, implementation and monitoring of a safe work hours standard was consistent both with its legislative functions and strategic direction ...

It continues—

... the Board has the function to *promote high standards of practice of the profession by registrants*.

I am acknowledging that the Medical Board is not necessarily endorsing these amendments, but we are saying that we believe that the amendments as moved are reflective of a broad number of organisations that represent doctors. I think in the previous amendment the minister asked me to clarify whether this was going to be for private doctors as well as public doctors. I can say that, given the title of the act that we are amending, I would think that it does apply to doctors across-the-board.

Mr ROBERTSON: We will be opposing this amendment for a number of reasons. The reason that I asked the member for Surfers Paradise whether this provision would apply to the private health sector as well as the public health sector is an important one. Frankly, the member for Surfers Paradise's response to my question in the affirmative as a result of the moving of the amendment in this particular bill is incorrect, because private hospitals in this state are governed by their own act. As a result of the clauses that he is moving here today, they would actually only apply to the public hospital system in this state—not the private health system, which would of course put the public hospital system at a great disadvantage compared to the lack of regulation of working hours in the private sector.

I beg your pardon. I have just received further advice. I stand corrected and I apologise, because it does apply to registrants. So therefore doctors in the private sector would be caught up by that. As a result of that, my next question would of course be what consultation has the member opposite had with the private health sector. Whilst he has every right to come in and move amendments such as this, it is usual that there would be some consultation with the industries affected by such regulation. I would be interested to know what the private health sector has to say about the immediate imposition of restrictions on working hours of doctors on the way that they conduct their businesses. I suspect that they would be less than impressed by such an approach.

We have canvassed a number of issues as to why we will be opposing this. I would just note that the other issue that is worthy of recording is that, in terms of the approach taken by the AMA, it refers to this report—that is, the AMA's Safe Hours, Safe Patients audit of 2006. That is actually a national study. I am not decrying the importance of what it is doing, but what this report indicates is that the issue of excessive working hours by doctors is actually a national issue. Once again, if we impose a restriction such as the member is doing—and it is very much a guillotine approach he is taking—by moving in this

particular direction, we actually put Queensland at a disadvantage compared to the rest of Australia at a time when he knows as well as I do that we are suffering significant workforce shortages in meeting increasing demand not just here in Queensland but Australia-wide.

Although I have indicated sympathy for the approach of restricting the hours of doctors working in our hospital system, this is not the way to go, and I suspect the member understands that as well. We are working with the AMA. It has indicated in-principle support for our safe working hours strategy. In fact, recently, along with my director-general, I met with the AMA to discuss this issue. The fact that the member recognises that we are taking positive steps, as does the AMA, is an indication that our approach is by far the more responsible approach. We will be opposing this amendment.

Mr LANGBROEK: In terms of consultation, the AMA, which I understand represents over 90 per cent of doctors—

Mr Robertson: But they don't represent the owners of the public or private hospitals.

Mr LANGBROEK: The issue is the safety of Queensland patients, the safety of Queensland doctors and the services that those doctors provide in an increasingly litigious world. We think that this is something that should be done sooner rather than later. As I say, I commend the amendment to those opposite.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 28—Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Seene, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Dickson

NOES, 46—Attwood, Barry, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jones, Kiernan, Lawlor, Lee, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clauses 66 to 85, as read, agreed to.

Clause 86 (Insertion of new ss 140A and 140B)—

Mr ROBERTSON (2.49 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 86 (Insertion of new ss 140A and 140B)—

At page 47, lines 23 and 24, from 'supervised'—

omit, insert—

'applicable supervised practice plan that—

- (a) accompanied the application for the special purpose registration; or
- (b) was approved by the board for the registrant under section 150AB.'

Mr ROBERTSON: This amendment amends the provision in the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 to make it a substantive condition of registration that special purpose registrants practise only in accordance with their supervised practice plan. The amendment clarifies that the condition also applies to junior medical officers who transfer positions and have a new supervised practice plan approved by the Medical Board.

Mr LANGBROEK: The coalition has no issues with this amendment, but I seek clarification on the issue of how confident we can be in the board following up these supervised practice plans in terms of resourcing and whether it is given the capacity to do it. What indication has the board given the minister that it can monitor the practice of doctors via monitoring these supervised practice plans?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Surfers Paradise for the question. The best way to respond to that is probably encapsulated in the legislation that I introduced in this place yesterday that sets up the new office of medical practitioner. By virtue of setting up that separate office to oversee the operation of the Medical Board—and without getting too far into that bill—there are, obviously, implications on resourcing that are currently the subject of a consultancy review into how that office would be set up and the resources that would be necessary. It is a contemporary issue that is being worked on.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 86, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 87 to 90, as read, agreed to.

Clause 91 (Amendment of s 149 (Grounds for cancellation))—

Mr ROBERTSON (2.51 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 91 (Amendment of s 149 (Grounds for cancellation))—

At page 50, lines 2 and 3, '150B(4) and 150C(8)'—

omit, insert—

'150AA(4) and 150AC(8)'.

This is a very simple amendment to correct numbering errors in the bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 91, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 92 and 93, as read, agreed to.

Clause 94 (Replacement of s 150A (Amendment or replacing certificate of special purpose registration))—

Mr ROBERTSON (2.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

3 Clause 94 (Replacement of s 150A (Amending or replacing certificate of special purpose registration))—

At page 51, line 14, '150B'—

omit, insert—

'150AA'.

4 Clause 94 (Replacement of s 150A (Amending or replacing certificate of special purpose registration))—

At page 52, after line 22—

insert—

'(4A) This section applies subject to section 150AB.'

5 Clause 94 (Replacement of s 150A (Amending or replacing certificate of special purpose registration))—

At page 54, after line 24—

insert—

'150AB Approval of proposed supervised practice plan

'(1) This section applies to a person mentioned in section 150AA(1) who wishes to transfer to a position that will require the person to practise the profession in accordance with a supervised practice plan different to that under which the person is currently practising the profession.

'(2) The person must apply to the board for approval of a proposed supervised practice plan for the person relevant to the position.

'(3) The application must—

(a) be in the approved form; and

(b) be accompanied by the proposed supervised practice plan for the person relevant to the position.

'(4) The board must consider the application and decide to approve, or refuse to approve, the proposed supervised practice plan.

'(5) If the board decides to approve the proposed supervised practice plan, it must as soon as practicable give the applicant notice of the approval.

'(6) If the board decides to refuse to approve the proposed supervised practice plan, it must as soon as practicable give the applicant an information notice about the decision.

'(7) If the board fails to decide the application within 14 days after its receipt, the failure is taken to be a decision by the board to approve the proposed supervised practice plan.

'(8) The person may not, under section 150AA, give notice of the proposed transfer to the position without first obtaining the approval of the board of a proposed supervised practice plan for the person relevant to the position.

'(9) In this section—

proposed supervised practice plan, for the person relevant to the position, means a plan prepared by the person, in consultation with the person's supervisor, that—

(a) is in the approved form; and

(b) has been signed by the person and person's supervisor.

supervisor, of the person, means the registrant who will have primary responsibility for the person's supervision while the person follows the proposed supervised practice plan for the person relevant to the position.'

6 Clause 94 (Replacement of s 150A (Amending or replacing certificate of special purpose registration))—

At page 54, line 25, '150C'—

omit, insert—

'150AC'.

Amendment No. 3, as per the previous amendment, corrects numbering errors in the bill. Amendments Nos 4 and 5 require that, if a junior medical officer wishes to transfer to another junior medical officer position and a new supervised practice plan will be needed for the new position, the junior medical officer must apply to the Medical Board for approval of the new practice plan. They also provide that obtaining the board's approval of the new plan is a prerequisite for junior medical officers transferring to another position. The amendments also outline the process for applying for the board's approval. These amendments, together with the amendment I moved to clause 86, will help ensure that the policy objectives of the bill can be achieved. Amendment No. 6 is simply a correction of a further numbering error.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 94, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 95 to 99, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr ROBERTSON (2.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 After clause 99—

At page 57, after line 29—

insert—

'99A Amendment of sch 1 (Decisions for which information notices must be given)

'Schedule 1—

insert—

'150AB

Deciding to refuse to approve a proposed supervised practice plan'.

This amendment amends schedule 1 of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act, which lists the decisions for which information notices must be given, to include decisions to refuse to approve a proposed supervised practise plan under section 150A to D.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 100 to 289, as read, agreed to.

Clause 290—

Mr LANGBROEK (2.55 pm): Could the minister clarify the application of proposed new section 26W(4) to licensed premises currently covered by section 26ZA? Why is it that these new licensed premises would be able to take advantage of both section 26W(4) and section 26ZA? This situation seems predicted by the proposed new subsection (9) to be inserted into section 26ZA by clause 292 of the bill. I referred to this in my speech in the second reading debate last night. Given that there are no penalties for someone drinking or eating and smoking in an area designated under proposed section 26W(4) nor penalties for the person who designated the area, can the minister clarify how the obligations of a licensee under section 26ZA to section 26ZC—buffers and smoking management plan et cetera—still apply?

Mr ROBERTSON: Sure. It will be my pleasure. The member believes that the proposed new subsection (9) to section 26ZA adds to the confusion about the effect of the proposed new section 26W(4)—

Mr Seeney: You're making this up.

Mr ROBERTSON: No, no. Try and follow me, Jeff. As a consequence, it encourages licensees to believe that they may designate a smoking area under proposed section 26W(4), thus avoiding their obligations under sections 26ZA and 26ZC.

Mr Seeney: It is too much.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is now obviously very clear for you. The proposed new section 26W(4) is there simply to remove any doubt that smoking is permitted in areas where eating or drinking cannot occur. This is not a new concept and has always been the case. The proposed changes do not encourage licensees to believe that they may avoid their obligations under the act. The amendments simply clarify that licensees have the option of providing an area where people can smoke and drink or where they can just smoke and that they cannot apply both options to the outdoor liquor licensed area. This advice has consistently been provided to industry.

Clause 290, as read, agreed to.

Clause 291, as read, agreed to.

Clause 292—

Mr LANGBROEK (2.58 pm): The amendment here still does not enforce a buffer between an enclosed place and a designated outdoor smoking area. I table a copy of a photograph of one of the establishments I mentioned last night in my speech in the second reading debate that clearly shows a smoking area with the concertina doors opening directly out from what was considered to be a walled or enclosed area.

Tabled paper: Photograph of particular licensed premises.

I note that section 26ZA(6) currently states—

Each designated outdoor smoking area must have buffers on its perimeter wherever it is adjacent to other parts of the outdoor area ordinarily accessed by patrons.

But this section does not say that no-one expected that an outdoor area would necessarily be able to be right next door to an enclosed area. Now we see in this picture, which I tabled, that an enclosed area with concertina doors can abut straight on to an outdoor smoking area and there are no buffers there at all. I ask for the minister's clarification of that.

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for raising this issue. I think the best way to approach it, rather than go into a detailed explanation such as I have, is to indicate that if as a result of—I was going to say the member's pub crawl, because he has been to a few by the sounds of it—issues such as this are raised, perhaps a better approach would be if I took that on notice and asked my department to investigate it. If it is an issue and if there is a gap, so to speak, in the legislative regulations—I have already indicated that I have envisaged that there will be a review by around about the middle of next year after 12 months operation of the new smoking restrictions—that might provide a more useful vehicle by which those issues can be considered. Those issues can be considered in the context of that review rather than try to explain what are very detailed provisions. If that is acceptable to the member for Surfers Paradise I will give that undertaking.

Mr LANGBROEK: The coalition would be happy with that. We understand that there will obviously need to be a period of review after the practical application of these laws and we acknowledge that some of the issues that I raised in my second reading contribution in relation to other establishments will need to be investigated. It is obviously important that all licensees comply because otherwise some licensees will be gaining an advantage. Obviously, as I said, there is frustration when laws are not applied. The coalition is happy with that approach. I thank the minister.

Clause 292, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 293 to 296, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr LANGBROEK (3.02 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 After clause 296—

Page 122, after line 10—

insert—

'296A Replacement of s 26ZQ (Production, sale or public display of cannabis utensils)

Section 26ZQ—

omit, insert—

'26ZQ Production, sale or public display of illegal drug utensils

'(1) A person must not produce, sell or publicly display an illegal drug utensil.

Maximum penalty—140 penalty units.

'(2) In this section—

illegal drug utensil means an object for smoking an illegal drug including, for example—

(a) an object for smoking cannabis sativa, colloquially known as a 'bong'; and

(b) an object for smoking crystal methamphetamine hydrochloride, colloquially known as an 'ice pipe'.'.

This amendment that we are proposing is to replace clause 296 with 296A to change the heading 'cannabis utensils' to 'the production, sale or public display of illegal drug utensils'.

When my coalition colleague, the member for Cunningham, was the shadow health minister he moved an amendment to the original Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act which was accepted by the government for inclusion into the legislation. The amendment related to cannabis utensils. The amendment can now be found at section 26ZQ of the act and it states that a person must not produce, sell or publicly display cannabis utensils. Subsection 2 goes on to define a cannabis utensil as an object for smoking cannabis sativa colloquially known as a bong. I am proposing an amendment to this section to expand the scope of the provision.

The Premier was quoted only last weekend in the *Sunday Mail* as wanting to ban the sale of ice pipes. Ice pipes are glass pipes used to smoke the deadly drug ice. This has happened in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia where retailers face hefty fines and even jail for selling pipes. In Queensland it is not illegal to sell or possess the pipes but anyone caught using them faces charges under the Drugs Misuse Act. The Premier was quoted in the *Sunday Mail* as saying that he was investigating how to ban the pipes, which are openly for sale at tobacco stores, shopping centres and markets, just as bongs were, which prompted the member for Cunningham to move an amendment to this very act.

The Queensland coalition says, 'Let us do it again.' The proposed amendment would replace the specific term 'cannabis' with 'illegal drug', effectively banning the production, sale or public display of bongs, ice pipes and other illegal drug smoking utensils. The term 'illegal drug utensil' is wide enough to catch any new type of illegal drug smoking device that may be produced in the future. As the member for Cunningham's amendment received bipartisan support I would hope that this amendment does, too.

Mr ROBERTSON: We will be opposing this particular amendment but not for reasons that would in any way allow anyone to suggest that we are not concerned about the problem of the use of crystal methamphetamine or ice in our community. Over the last number of weeks we have seen regular articles nationally on the problem of ice usage in our community. It is a matter that is of concern to the Beattie government, which is why, as the member for Surfers Paradise indicated, the Premier has suggested the establishment of a task force to look at this issue.

The issues from the perspective of Queensland Health are, however, somewhat complex for a range of reasons. The problem with the amendment being moved by the member for Surfers Paradise is that it is indeed very difficult to define what is being referred to as an ice pipe. If I can read this advice—

Ice pipes are pipes usually made of glass which are used by ice users to inhale or smoke crystal methamphetamine. If a provision as proposed by the opposition is included in the tobacco act it will not in any way be able to be effectively enforced unless there is an absolutely clear and watertight definition of what an ice pipe is. It is this definition that is problematic. The basic structure of an ice pipe and a tobacco pipe are the same. A substance is heated in a bowl with vapours or smoke inhaled through a tube. It is difficult to distinguish in a meaningful way between the literally hundreds of types of pipes currently for sale on the basis of their intended use. Unfortunately, simply defining ice pipes in the tobacco act will not solve the problem either as a definition will create a recipe for pipe manufacturers to subtly alter their structure and thus get around the law.

If we use the example in the *Sunday Mail* a couple of weeks ago where the photograph that accompanied the article showed, from memory, one or two glass pipes that apparently are commonly used for heating and inhaling the ice, the structure of that particular vessel, the fact that it is made out of glass, is irrelevant to what it enables a person to do to inhale ice. As I mentioned, in design it is no different from a normal pipe. Therefore, the problem is how does one define in legislation in a way that does not catch, if I can call them this, legitimate pipes. That is the problem. That is why the approach taken by the Premier is the preferred approach. It is about getting my department, the police, the Premier's department and other interested agencies into the room to discuss the practicalities of how we might address this problem and do it on the basis of good evidence.

That is what we do not have at this point in time in a way that allows us to move forward immediately with the strategy. Many things have been talked about in relation to the availability of pseudoephedrine, one of the precursors of methamphetamine. We need more data on, for example, the success of Project Stop, which is a very successful program between the government and the Pharmacy Guild to require people who wish to buy pseudoephedrine based products to provide photographic ID.

As a result of Project Stop, we have seen an increase in the number of convictions for operating these illegal laboratories. It has certainly enabled our police force to address this issue of backyard laboratories much more effectively than in the past. The challenge for us in this case is to actually roll out that project nationally. I have to say that we are somewhat frustrated by the lack of cooperation of some states in adopting Project Stop. As a result, because we have such porous borders between the states, the ability to purchase pseudoephedrine based products interstate and move them into Queensland is still a problem. That is not to say that Project Stop in itself has not been a success; it has been.

The fact that we have not accepted the amendment moved by the member for Surfers Paradise should in no way suggest that the Beattie government is not concerned about the apparent increase in usage of crystal methamphetamine in our community, because it is. But how we address it in a way that is meaningful, practical and legally sustainable is an issue that requires further consideration. Frankly, the amendment moved by the member for Surfers Paradise will not achieve that for the very reason that I outlined—and many people have put their minds to this as well—that is, that to date it has not been possible to adequately define what constitutes an ice pipe without having unintended consequences that go way beyond the issue of the inhalation of crystal methamphetamine.

Mr LANGBROEK: We have just heard a remarkable description that we somehow can define what a cannabis utensil is. I have been to lots of parties in my time where I have seen various drug-smoking utensils. As I understand it, in clause 296 as it is, we are able to define utensils for smoking cannabis but the ice pipe that was demonstrated in the *Courier-Mail*—and of which the Premier said, 'We will make sure we will get rid of these things'—is now not able to be covered by the definition as produced in this amendment because it is called an ice pipe and we are unable to define it.

The Beattie Labor government is talking about task forces, strategies and plans but it is once again being weak on drugs. Clearly, we have identified people who have said, 'We know what we sell these things for and people who buy them know what they are buying them for.' The Premier has also said that he wants to do something about getting rid of them. When the media asked him to get rid of them, he said he would. Now we have given the minister the chance to support this, as he supported the member for Cunningham on cannabis utensils.

We are talking about pseudoephedrine and sudafed, and there has been a national strategy to make sure that pharmacists do not sell sudafed or the precursors of pseudoephedrine to anyone who walks into their pharmacy. They have managed to prevent the sale or production of pseudoephedrine on a national scale. To try to somehow create a link to ice and the ice pipes, as we saw in the *Sunday Mail*, is really using weasel words. I do not accept it and I believe that the government could quite comfortably accommodate this amendment, as it did in regard to cannabis utensils only a couple of years ago.

Mr ROBERTSON: Just for a very brief moment, I thought we were actually going to have a very useful and productive debate on an important issue, but the response by the member for Surfers Paradise indicates that there is more style than substance to his argument. Having been to the types of parties that the member for Surfers Paradise has been to in the past, he will know exactly what I was

talking about—that in order to inhale this particular substance all a person needs to do is go down to the local Bunnings store and pick up the component parts. Everyone in this place knows exactly what I am talking about—just as the member for Surfers Paradise does.

It is all very well to be pious and say that this clause that I am putting forward indicates a seismic opening between the two sides of politics and that one side is weaker on drugs than the other. It does not, and the member for Surfers Paradise knows exactly what I am talking about. If he does not, I suggest that he confer with his colleague the shadow Attorney-General, who by trade is a lawyer and would know exactly what I am talking about in terms of the rules of evidence that need to apply to successfully convict on the possession of such utensils. The member for Surfers Paradise knows exactly what I am talking about.

There is no justification for accusing the Beattie government of being soft on the issue of crystal methamphetamine. What I have put forward is a very cogent argument on the impracticality of the amendment the member has moved and why it will not work. I have also indicated our commitment to establish that working party to find practical and legally sustainable answers to this issue of ice in our community. If the member for Surfers Paradise suggests otherwise, he would be less than honest with the people of Queensland.

Mr LANGBROEK: All I can say is that if we were able to do it for cannabis utensils—and, again, a person who wanted to smoke cannabis could also buy the various forms of materials needed at Bunnings—and especially with us having used the term ‘illegal drug utensils’ to cover this, we would have adequately covered the definition as per what the Premier was saying when he said, ‘We will make sure we stop the sale of these items.’ Once again, the coalition will assert that this is something that could quite comfortably be incorporated, as it was for cannabis utensils.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 29—Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Dickson

NOES, 45—Attwood, Barry, Bombolas, Boyle, Croft, Darling, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jones, Kiernan, Lawlor, Lee, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clauses 297 to 309, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Long Title

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 11 October (see p. 78).

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (3.24 pm): I rise to present the opposition position in relation to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2006. As outlined by the minister in her second reading speech, this bill seeks to legislate a permanent ban on recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland on purely animal welfare grounds based in part on the advice of the RSPCA. The minister highlighted in her speech the community response to the ban, saying that the government received more than 5,000 items of correspondence from people supporting the proposed ban and less than 50 in support of it. This was a rather obvious attempt to convince the House that there was very little, if any, opposition to the bill and that its introduction was not contentious. However, on Wednesday, 11 October during the first sitting of this 52nd Parliament, I presented a petition containing more than 5,000 signatures from petitioners right across Queensland requesting the House to overturn the decision to ban traditional duck and quail hunting and to launch an inquiry into the process involved in making this decision.

For the time being I will put aside the reason for the introduction of the bill but instead address the manner of its introduction and the abuse of due process that occurred. I have lost count of the number of times this House has heard the minister and members on the other side laud their supposed open and responsible government. Incredible as it seems, everyone from the Premier down claims to have a mortgage on accountability. We have witnessed some very high horses indeed being ridden when they have been asked to defend their actions. Openness, transparency and accountability are not the hallmarks of this government and never will be if it continues to follow the example that was set by this bill. I have been approached by members of the public who are very concerned not only about the decision taken to introduce this bill but even more so about the complete lack of consultation and negotiation that preceded its introduction. I had hoped that we might have seen a new approach from the government in this new term. I am therefore very disappointed that in the first sitting days of this new parliament a bill such as this has been introduced.

From 1985 in Queensland recreational duck and quail hunting was authorised on an annual basis under a conservation plan after bird numbers and seasonal and other conditions were assessed. The Queensland duck and quail management plan was due for public review in 2005. However, in August last year the Premier announced that this review would not take place. The failure of the review to proceed despite previous promises meant that no recreational hunting of ducks and quails would be permitted to take place in the future. This effectively signalled the end of a long established and traditional practice in Queensland. There was concern, however, from the green lobby that hunting could again be allowed at some time in the future if a new conservation plan was implemented or if the Nature Conservation Act was amended. This concern and this concern alone has prompted the drafting and the introduction of this particular bill.

It is unfortunate but, contrary to accepted practice and the government's own claims, there was little or no public consultation about the bill. The Sustainable Hunting Alliance has raised serious concerns regarding its introduction, saying that it was effectively disenfranchised and ignored during the process. In stark contrast, the RSPCA seems to have been very heavily involved in both the consultation and decision-making process, sitting on the minister's advisory committee for duck and quail management as well as the animal welfare advisory committee.

On the RSPCA web site Dr Hugh Worth speaks at great length about duck populations and how little effect hunting has on bird numbers. He says in part—

Duck populations are essentially self-controlling as they are mainly determined by water levels ...

I note that in her second reading speech the minister displayed a comparable, although not very original, view when she said, 'Duck populations are essentially self-controlling. Factors such as wetland availability and water levels influence the populations of Queensland ducks.' I am not arguing against the right of the RSPCA and Dr Worth to argue their case. Indeed, I have the greatest of respect for the RSPCA and its work. However, I will argue for the rights of those holding opposing views to be heard as well. What use is consultation if the result is predetermined?

The Sustainable Hunting Alliance claims that it was given only seven days by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to present its case. As members would agree, that is clearly an inadequate amount of time and makes it a rather farcical decision in view of this government's oft-repeated mantra of open and accountable government and the many promises it has given us of full and public consultation before any such legislative changes.

That the announcement of the ban was made by the Premier in the lead-up to the last election comes as no surprise in view of his obvious strong lobbying for the green vote at the expense of ordinary Queenslanders' rights and traditional practices. Too often in this great state political decisions affecting many Queenslanders are made in a transparent attempt to woo a minority vote, and this can only lead to accusations of rank, political opportunism, expediency and grubby deals being made to serve a political agenda rather than an environmental one. Perhaps if the government had followed due process and actually had as its first priority the preservation of our native fauna and its welfare as its primary aim this bill may have greater credibility. As it stands, however, it is just another example of a knee-jerk reaction to an ill-defined and contentious issue relying on misleading and rather emotive arguments to argue its case.

We have witnessed this behaviour previously, and I give members the example of the introduction of the wild rivers legislation and forecast possible closures of Moreton Bay fishing areas to both recreational and commercial fishers. Changes are proposed and stakeholders are promised that they will be fully consulted over the changes and that all views will be taken into account. What actually happens, however, is either stakeholder meetings are structured around a preconceived agenda, often with little or no possibility of change, or that those views contrary to the government's aims are ignored. We have witnessed this time and time again in Queensland over the past several years. People's rights are trampled on and their objections overridden by a bureaucracy blind to the effect on our way of life.

I mentioned earlier that I was disappointed that a new term had not brought a new broom and there does not seem to be a new commitment to accountability. I can only assume that the Premier is likewise disappointed. He is on record time and time again saying that he is determined that all

Queenslanders will have a responsible government under his stewardship. In a ministerial statement on accountability and integrity in government on 6 November 2002, the Premier demonstrated his commitment to this ideal when he said—

We cannot put a price on open and accountable government. Proper accountability is essential to effective representative democracy—it is a prerequisite for a government that serves its people properly.

In Queensland, the people are assured of integrity in government by an elaborate system of checks and balances, both within and independent of government agencies.

This quote was from *Hansard*.

The 2004 'Queensland Accountability Frameworks' from the Office of the Public Service Commissioner contains this definition of accountability—

Mr LEE: I rise to a point of order. Surely there are some issues of relevance here. I for the life of me cannot see any—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): No, there is no point of order.

Mrs MENKENS: The reason I am talking about the process is that I am concerned. We are very concerned about the process involved within the actual presentation and bringing about of this legislation. The 2004 'Queensland Accountability Frameworks' from the Office of the Public Service Commissioner contains this definition of accountability—

Accountability involves rendering a formal account to someone, such as Parliament or a superior, on how—and how well—one's responsibilities are being met, on actions taken to correct problems and to ensure they do not reoccur. It involves accepting personal consequences such as discipline for problems that could have been avoided had the individual acted appropriately. All public office holders are accountable to the courts because of the requirements of the rule of law.

The Premier also announced his commitment internationally in June 2003 at a reception in Columbia, North Carolina, hosted by Governor Mark Sanford referring to their shared vision for a government that is accountable and open to all members of the community.

I said earlier that we are increasingly being overridden by bureaucracies blind to the effects that they are having on our way of life. Unfortunately this means the government is blind to the practicalities also. There is no valid reason for the introduction of this bill on environmental grounds, hence the focus on animal welfare concerns. It has been many years now that the environmental lobby across Australia has attempted to have recreational shooting banned, with limited success. To date, Western Australia and New South Wales have banned hunting, and duck shooting has never been allowed in the Australian Capital Territory. However, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all continue to allow the practice under strict guidelines and limits, and that is extremely important—that is, the strict guidelines and limits.

In fact, the issue of cruelty was thoroughly examined by the Victorian state government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee in 1988 and it found that there were insufficient grounds to support a ban on duck hunting. Departmental officers who observed the opening of the season found there was no evidence of cruelty. The Victorian government also investigated claims of large numbers of birds being wounded, but these claims could not be substantiated. In laying charges of unnecessary cruelty against today's hunters, the RSPCA and the Queensland government have maligned many people involved in the active preservation and protection of the wetlands and other areas where duck and quail live and breed.

Queensland has some 12 million hectares of parks under its control—seven million directly—but there are countless hectares of wetlands in private hands that are maintained by landholders and hunters that would otherwise be lost. Recreational shooters are not the rednecked environmental rapists that the green lobby would have us believe. They and their organisations maintain conservation works in swamps and wetlands. They contribute funds for their upkeep and maintenance and they apply for funding for conservation programs designed to foster and encourage nesting in such areas. Dr Worth himself acknowledges that without adequate management wetlands tend to become weed filled and pest ridden. He says that it is not enough to stop via legislation people hunting because such bans result in a loss of interest in waterfowl, leading to a subsequent loss in interest in wetland preservation.

But do we have an alternative plan? This is my very real concern. Do we have an alternative plan to address this issue introduced with the bill? Of course not, because this bill is not about the birds; it is about politics. It pays lip-service to the EPA's charter to protect and preserve our native flora and fauna but humbly begs and scrapes before the green radicals. This noncommitment to environmental protection by the EPA is further demonstrated in its funding allocations in the last budget. From a total operating budget of \$294 million for 2006-07, only \$6 million spread out over three years is allocated to the destruction of pests and weeds in the seven million hectares of state parks under the direct control of the EPA. With a little bit of maths we can soon work out that this is less than 29c per hectare per year. When we look at it from that perspective, it is clearly hopelessly inadequate to combat the very real problems that our parks face. Yet in spite of this obvious shortcoming, the minister is determined to introduce a bill that will lead to the loss of further wetlands that will have a far greater long-term effect on duck numbers than a hunting season, and this is our very real concern.

There has been no recognition by the department of the conservation efforts of volunteers and the funds that they raise to go towards their efforts. Consequently, at this stage I see no plan put in place by the minister to supplant that loss.

This bill may have been more acceptable if somewhere within its provisions there had been reference to the effects that a ban on hunting would have on bird numbers and habitats. But that seems to be lacking in this bill. It is typical of the government to use its majority in parliament to force through legislation such as this bill without a thought or care for the consequences.

Penny Olsen and Michael Weston, writing for *Birds Australia*, state in an article that appeared in *The State of Australia's Birds* in December 2004 that the greatest threats to our native birds are the deterioration of wetland habitats, the deterioration of water quality, the loss of wetlands, and the increased numbers of pests and other direct disturbances that will occur once these wetlands are no longer being looked after. Penny Olsen and Michael Weston identified a number of contributing problems, including: changed hydrology through reduced and altered natural flows; climate change, through change in rainfall patterns and sea levels; feral animals, such as foxes, feral or uncontrolled cats and dogs and pigs; feral fish that inhabit the waterways, such as carp; aquatic and other weeds; other exotic pests; and insensitive recreational use, including some waterfowl hunting and irresponsible boat and vehicle use.

Further in *The State of Australia's Birds*—a publication that we can only assume has the conservation interests of our native birds at heart—Penny Olsen and Michael Weston state—

Recreational harvesting of certain common waterfowl species is likely to be sustainable.

They state further—

Recreational hunters could become a force for conservation as they have in countries such as the United States.

A primary objective of the Australian Field and Game Federation is wetland conservation. One of its primary objectives is to preserve, restore, develop and maintain waterfowl habitat in Australia. The federation believes that waterfowl hunters are aware of the importance of our wetlands and the wildlife they hold. Traditionally, the federation has been at the forefront of wetland conservation. Often the federation is the first to notice changes in waterfowl population and to seek reasons for that change.

The federation has dedicated itself to the conservation of wetland environments and waterfowl species throughout Australia by raising funds for wetland conservation, by instigating wetland enhancement and research programs, and by raising government and community awareness. A major fundraising initiative involved lobbying state governments for the introduction of a game licence fee levied on all hunters. That levy raises millions of dollars every year across Australia, much of which is channelled into wetland conservation projects and wetland purchase and lease agreements. Wetland management projects have included the erection of duck nesting boxes, tree planting and revegetation works, civil engineering projects for water management and improved grazing management agencies.

The federation has initiated many research projects, including the effects of grazing on wetlands, waterfowl population counts, banding to ascertain distribution and abundance patterns, bag surveys to monitor the number of waterfowl being taken by hunters, and lead shot studies to determine the availability of spent lead pellets to waterfowl. These efforts have resulted in the development of legislation for water allocation to wetlands for environmental reasons, the recognition of the importance of wetlands in the development of salinity management strategies, the extension of the wildlife reserve system as a part of land reclassification, the conservation of wetlands as part of water law and the development of comprehensive government wetland policies.

I would like to give members an example of the kind of volunteer work and funding that will be lost because this bill fails to consider those outcomes. A group of recreational hunters in the Burdekin electorate was in the process of securing funding and donations totalling nearly \$78,000 to maintain the local wetlands. That maintenance included the building and placement of nesting boxes, the development of pest management plans, and works and tree planting to maintain water quality. This project had gained the respect of Landcare and the local council. Representatives of the group told me that they had also received huge support from Parks and Wildlife staff for the project, because sufficient funding to carry out this kind of work is not available from the department. That seems to be the real problem. The department that has the responsibility for the environment in Queensland seems more intent on stopping traditional practice with little or no justification without doing any constructive work. I ask members to contrast the voluntary efforts of landholders and hunters in sustaining our fauna and its environs with the department's woeful record on the protection of native species and the elimination of exotic pests. This is the situation that exists across the state. Volunteer groups carry out the work of the EPA, but we cannot expect these groups to continue their good work once this bill is passed.

The Premier highlighted in his campaign speech this very fact when he said that he would set aside \$30 million to protect our iconic rainforests, threatened wetlands and important areas of wilderness from destruction. He said that the state would buy this privately owned, high-conservation value land and bring it into state protection. As shadow minister for the environment, I applaud this move by the Premier. I also welcome the increased allocation of funds.

Landholders, farmers and graziers are coming under increasing pressure to increase production and output in order to stay competitive in the global marketplace in which we operate. We all know that. That is a fact of life. In some cases—and often in many cases—those people have to choose between maintaining biodiversity or making a living. With all the goodwill in the world, no-one could or should expect them to sacrifice their future for the public good with no recompense. Most landholders are respectful of the land. Most landholders are aware of just how fragile our environment really is. That is a fact that is conveniently ignored by, or escapes, those people who are most vocal in their demonisation of landholders. All landholders have invested time, money, sweat and toil over several generations. Given the option, they would continue to do so. But as the Premier has recognised, landholders alone should not be the ones to carry the burden for the public good. The public good means public input and payment from the public purse. If all are to benefit, all should pay. That is the right and fair thing to do.

The \$30 million allocation will enable areas that do not currently fall under the protection of the EPA to be identified as those most at risk and most worthy to be bought and paid for by the greater public. Where there is determined to be a need, hopefully those wetlands, savannas, woodlands and rainforests that are held in private hands will, with the landholder's consent, be able to be purchased. However, I am anxious to see just how that process will be undertaken.

It is important that such an initiative have the full support of the community and be embraced by landholders as opposed to being feared by them. Landholders in this state are far too used to having their rights eroded and denied by ill-conceived legislation. There has arisen among some sections of the community an erroneous perception that all landholders are not responsible stewards and are instead intent on abusing this resource. As members would know, that is far from the truth but landholders now are—rightly or wrongly—apprehensive about any moves by the government that may affect how they manage their land and how they operate their businesses. Therefore, I hope that the \$30 million is not used to compulsorily acquire land against an owner's wishes. Cooperation from landholders is implicit in our conservation efforts and we need to ensure that ongoing cooperation to identify those areas most in need of conservation.

Unfortunately, many landholders adjacent to state parks have a low opinion of the ability of the EPA to manage the areas that they currently have under their control. This is no reflection on the Parks and Wildlife staff who do an incredible job with the resources that they have. It is a simple acknowledgement that the maintenance of our parks and the funds that are currently allocated for this maintenance, including pest control and fire management, fall far short of what is required.

We have parks already overrun with wild pigs and exotic weeds with no signs of any real impact on their spread. Landowners and recreational hunters have every right to be sceptical about how wetlands and other areas that have been maintained voluntarily, for generations in some cases, would fare under the current funding and allocation models. We cannot expect private landholders to continue to expend large amounts of money for no benefit to maintain those wetlands and grass areas which are at present maintained and preserved by the owners and hunters. It is little use talking of public good if public funds are not used to back up this argument. Too often we see decisions supposedly made for a greater public good but in reality becoming an onerous and costly burden on a small group out of favour with the government.

As members, we represent all of our constituents, not just the ones we like or the ones we agree with. It is our duty to listen to any case on its merits and not make decisions based on one-sided arguments or suspect information. Recreational hunters are not rednecks. They are not dangerous or wanton destroyers of wildlife. They are licensed, responsible members of our communities. Their backgrounds are extensively checked as part of the gun licence requirements, and all of them have undertaken and passed annual accreditation and identification tests to the highest standard set by the authorities.

These people are not ignorant of the importance of biodiversity or of the need to look after our indigenous wildlife. In fact, in many cases they are its greatest exponents. Unlike the EPA and many do-gooders, they actually get out there and do something to maintain Australia's abundant fauna. They are more in touch with birds, their habits and their habitats than many people who call themselves environmentalists and preach their creed, which is: do as I say, not do as I do. Just as the EPA persecutes those transgressing its laws however inadvertently yet cannot put its own house in order, these professional environmentalists decry the loss of wetlands and rainforests but rarely put their hands in their own pockets or break a sweat in a national park destroying weeds. The real environmentalists work quietly and constantly to preserve and enhance what we have. Farmers and landholders lock up productive lands. Recreational hunters build nesting boxes and contribute to the upkeep of dams and swamps. Ordinary mums and dads and children plant trees. They destroy weeds and other pests. These are the real wardens of our flora and fauna.

This bill has not been introduced on environmental grounds. The animal rights lobby tried that route and it did not work because there is not any indisputable evidence that bird numbers are declining because of hunting pressure. Instead, we are now told that the ban is to be introduced because of animal welfare concerns over the numbers of birds wounded. This is despite any reliable evidence of

such a high percentage of birds shot versus those wounded, because that science and that evidence does not exist. The RSPCA has claimed that as much as 90 per cent of ducks shot suffer a slow and cruel death. If this were so, I doubt anyone could support the practice. But, as usual in the animal welfare debate, the rhetoric from the animal welfare lobby is sometimes at odds with the truth. Never let the facts get in the way of an argument appears to be a method used by those most vehemently opposed to many of our traditional husbandry practices, and this applies equally to the groups arguing against customary hunting practices.

The Chairman of the World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission Australia New Zealand group, Dr Graham Webb, in a 1998 paper critiquing the proposed introduction of a ban on duck hunting in South Australia, concluded that such a ban based on unfounded accusations of cruelty was at best counterproductive to long-term conservation issues. He said that in contrast there was, believe it or not, compelling evidence for regulated game bird harvesting with hunters demonstrating unequivocal commitment to conservation and sustainable use, and he further identified a string of wetland habitats that only exist today because of the activities of those hunters.

In his summary, Dr Webb said that the views of hunters on conservation and sustainable use are totally consistent with global trends in conservation and that they have continually indicated their willingness to cooperate with government's adaptive approach to game bird conservation and management. Dr Webb identified several inconsistencies with the intent to ban hunting on welfare grounds and agency responsibility for conservation. He said that it was difficult to support such legislation without first considering the conservation consequences implicit in its enactment.

He contended that game birds are currently valued positively by hunters, landholders and nonhunters alike, creating incentives for all to conserve them. By passing a bill such as the one before us, we stand a significant chance of actually enhancing the pest status of such birds. Because this bill is not trying to restrict or limit birds killed under permitted pest management plans, when populations explode, as happens periodically after good seasons, more birds may actually be killed or wounded but without the controls and codes of conduct that are currently in place.

Mrs Sullivan: Shoot all the old ducks.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you. It is clear that this bill has little to do with unjustifiable claims of cruelty but rather is an attempt to appease a very vocal minority. As Dr Webb points out, the issue of wounding appears to have been chosen for political and public relations purposes and may have little real value in resolving the fundamental philosophical conflict that underlies the proposed ban.

These birds are not shot merely for sport. They are a traditional form of food and every bird taken is eaten, just as fishermen fish for fish that are then eaten. Dr Webb contends that, while wounding can occur during legitimate hunting activities, this can be minimised and such incidences are similar to incidental catches in recreational and commercial fishing operations and should be treated in a similar way. I hasten to add that this does not mean that this issue should be treated in a similar way as the government's handling of the possible closure of fishing areas in Moreton Bay and other issues.

The report is scathing about the models and figures on wounding rates used by the welfare and animal rights lobby to defend its position. It is models such as those criticised by Dr Webb on which the minister has based the decision to bring this legislation forward. Computer simulation models used for predicting wounding rates that, according to the report, cannot and do not predict numbers accurately should be ignored completely in any real discussion of wounding rates in the field. Further, it was found that wounding rate claims investigated by the South Australian department were inflated by some 400 to 500 per cent.

The Victorian government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee also carried out an extensive six-month investigation of duck hunting and animal welfare related issues in 1988. The opening day was observed firsthand by officers of the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment and veterinary officers from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. A report was prepared by the Bureau of Animal Welfare for the Minister of Agriculture and concluded—

The investigating Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs veterinary officers were unanimous in their opinion that the banning of duck hunting on animal welfare grounds is not warranted and that the adverse aspects of duck hunting are minimal.

Hunters were reported to be very careful to euthanase birds as rapidly and humanely as possible and that the vast majority of any wounded birds were recovered and euthanased. The officers present found no incidence of gross cruelty and that most birds were shot cleanly.

I do take note of the minister's statement in her second reading speech that the proposed ban on recreational hunting will not affect the rights of primary producers to seek damage mitigation permits to shoot birds for the purpose of crop protection. I must admit though that while I am pleased that the minister does show real respect for the rights of farmers, I am disappointed that she does not have a reciprocal respect for the rights of hunters.

I do not doubt the minister's sincerity, but I am concerned when reports reach my office that even now there are moves to restrict the use of shotguns for pest destruction. It has even been suggested that instead of using shotguns, rifles be used to scare the birds instead. I cannot but question the

intelligence of such suggestions. Rifles to scare birds for pest mitigation? Do the proponents not think that if this method worked it would not be employed by landholders and farmers? Do they really believe that it is that simple? If only it were.

What this means, of course, is that this government is prepared to put its hand on its heart and swear to value and respect the rights of all Queenslanders until it needs to pander to minority lobby groups in exchange for political favours and it moves to legislate those rights away.

The opposition values the rights of all Queenslanders equally regardless of political affiliation or persuasion. Of course, as with any contentious issue there will be, at the end of the process, winners and losers. Hopefully a compromise solution can be reached that goes some way to satisfying the desires of the relevant parties. Regardless of the eventual outcome it is incumbent on us as members to give a fair hearing to each side. We must consider all the arguments for and against before reaching a decision and not reach that final decision hastily or without a thorough investigation of all the facts—not innuendo, supposition, rhetoric, fallacy or hearsay. We must be careful to ensure that each side of a debate is heard and has equal opportunity to put its side of the case.

The problem that I have with this legislation is that this basic right to be heard was not allowed to recreational hunters and their representative organisations before this legislation was brought before the House. I have had several representations from Field and Game Australia and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia protesting their effective exclusion from the process. They claim that they were not afforded sufficient opportunity to contribute and that claims by the government of having undertaken extensive public consultation are incorrect—at least as far as they are concerned.

They contend that because of this failure to consult, arguments put forward by supporters of the ban, including the RSPCA, were not able to be challenged as to their veracity or accuracy. They also state that the figures and studies that were provided to support the imposition of the ban on cruelty grounds are factually inaccurate and have been discredited by the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand and Canadian governments, by South Australia in 1998 and later by the Victorian and Tasmanian governments as well.

They have raised several serious concerns about the lack of objectivity and the biased nature of advice contained within the briefing notes presented by the Biosecurity, Animal Welfare Unit, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee on 4 February 2005. They also claim that these became the basis of the resolution passed by the welfare committee's chair to the minister for primary industries who then passed them to the minister for the environment and recommended the banning of duck and quail hunting on cruelty grounds. The briefing notes were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

Chief amongst the concerns was that the opinions presented by the recognised animal rights organisations were treated as fact. Their concern was that antihunting groups were well represented but that there was no balancing representation from hunting groups. Another of their concerns was that numerous claims were made during the briefing that were unreferenced and therefore their validity is suspect. Another concern was that there were no figures on wounding rates of quail presented and no studies cited, yet quail have been included in this ban without justification. Another of their concerns was that incorrect figures on declining hunting licences were provided stating that they were declining in every state.

My chief concerns with this bill are the precedent it sets in ignoring due process and the lack of any valid or worthwhile positive conservation outcomes. This legislation ignores and disenfranchises the rights and opinions of a group of Queenslanders and uses a blatantly transparent method to legislate a particular ideology using the ruse of a debate over animal cruelty, the facts of which have neither been substantiated nor conceded. It has politicised the consultative processes that government is duty-bound to undertake and makes a farce of the Premier's claim that his government is open, fair, representative and accountable. It has also somehow managed to not only ignore basic conservation principles, but also to have possibly contributed to the decline in the health and extent of our precious wetlands.

There have been no measures outlined on how the department will deal with the loss of volunteer conservation efforts to preserve those wetlands in private hands. There has been no acknowledgement of the extent of these volunteer works nor of the valuable contribution that they have had on safeguarding and maintaining these areas. The department has not revealed just what management plans it has, if any, to ensure that birds continue to have safe and secure nesting grounds. The department has not revealed what plans it may have to monitor and regulate bird populations in the future. In fact, as a direct result of this bill, the relative worth of duck and quail will effectively decrease leading to a loss of interest in the preservation of the species and possible adverse effects on their viability and diversity.

To counter this appalling lack of a proactive management plan I will move an amendment that attempts to drag the debate back to where it belongs. It will put the ideals of conservation ahead of the expediencies of political manoeuvring and allow the merit or otherwise of the ban to be reviewed and judged by independent arbiters after a trial period. It will allow the real effects of the ban to be tallied and debated on a fair and factual basis.

We all know that the real debate here is about one group using its leverage with the government to try to impose its own philosophies and ideologies on others. The issue here is not wounding rates, the issue is whether everyday Queenslanders retain the right to continue traditional practices. The real issue is about the ramifications of a government willing to legislate away the rights of its citizens for short-term political gain; it is about the politicisation of the consultative processes so important in a democracy; it is about the failure of a government to govern for all its constituents; and it is about its willingness to bow to pressure groups to ensure its political survival. This legislation is not about looking after birds, it is about politics pure and simple.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (4.09 pm): I begin by saying how delighted I am to rise in the House today to support this wonderful piece of legislation. At the very beginning of my speech I say very clearly and firmly that I completely disagree with the member for Burdekin. I think that the EPA does an absolutely wonderful job. I think the EPA does great work for Queensland and for Queenslanders. I think it does wonderful work looking after our national parks, wildlife and flora.

I am disturbed by the tone of the comments made by the member for Burdekin, who seemed to have a really offhand manner when it came to talking about the EPA. These are people who are committed to the work they do. They do great work for Queensland. I do not think for one minute that we should allow anyone to come in here and denigrate the wonderful work that these fine people do for our state. Certainly the first 20 minutes of the speech by the member for Burdekin that I just listened to could well have been delivered in this place by the member for Tablelands. It was that sort of conspiratorial, 'No-one talks to us, we're simply not consulted, no-one listens to the things we have to say. We are the real people who know what is going on in the world but nobody listens to us.'

I am not going to speak here for an hour and base my speech on the science of Dr Webb. It was interesting to listen to the member for Burdekin. She dismissed every piece of research available from Australian government sources, the RSPCA and interstate government bodies that looked at things like wounding rates and damage mitigation permits. Anything that was looked at by the member for Burdekin was dismissed in favour of the charlatan's advice that was being handed to her by Dr Webb, who is clearly something of a hero in the member for Burdekin's electorate when it comes to environmental and scientific matters. I would not put any stock in his views.

It is obvious, member for Burdekin, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there are significant concerns about wounding rates when ducks are shot at. I have spoken in the House before in great detail about the pattern of the pellets that form when someone shoots, and I do not want to do it again today. We know that when someone fires at a duck it is a moving target. There are significant concerns that the duck will be hit in the wing or the foot. You might be lucky, member for Burdekin, and actually hit the duck in the head and have a clean kill. But all the evidence, not the hearsay and the rubbish that the member for Burdekin presented to us today, suggests that there are significant concerns with wounding rates. Up to 90 per cent of the birds that are shot at are wounded, not killed. It is a very, very serious concern.

I do not believe it is in any way appropriate to caricature people in the community or members of this parliament who believe that shooting at ducks for fun is a problem, a concern, and that they should be banned as 'green radicals', as the member for Burdekin suggested. I ask members of this parliament: what is so radical about having a problem with animal cruelty? This is the shadow environment minister suggesting that if someone is concerned about cruelty to birds they are some sort of radical. I think it makes us part of the mainstream. I think the person who is being radical and who is way out on the fringe of this debate is the member for Burdekin.

There are significant concerns in the community about the cruelty of the sporting shooting of ducks and quail. I find it very concerning that the member for Burdekin would believe that someone is a radical if they are concerned about animal welfare. It goes to show, though, how far the National Party really is from the values of mainstream Queenslanders. Having listened to the member's speech, I could only imagine what a hoot National Party meetings are these days; they must be a real riot. But the National Party is way off when it comes to understanding the values and the views of mainstream Queensland. The views expressed by the member for Burdekin are really on the fringe. They are certainly not the values of my constituency. I would bet every last cent I have that they are not the views of Queenslanders as a whole.

I have absolutely great news for the member for Burdekin. I listened to, and heard, her impassioned concern about those shooters who were constructing nesting boxes and doing what I thought seemed to be really wonderful work in maintaining wetlands in her electorate. I have really great news, and I hope I am not stealing the thunder of the minister or the EPA. Those people can still do that work. What a wonderful announcement for the parliament today. The member for Burdekin can take this message back to her constituents: they can still do great work for animal welfare by constructing nesting boxes. They can still do the work that the member for Burdekin said they were doing in the wetlands in the member's electorate, but they cannot shoot at the little critters for fun. That is great news. The member for Burdekin can take that back to her constituents.

I say to the member for Burdekin that I am happy to go and visit her electorate and actually see firsthand the work that she said was being done. I want to actually see the work that the shooters from her electorate were doing. I suggest to the member for Burdekin that we should talk outside the chamber and arrange an appropriate time for me to come to her electorate and see this work firsthand.

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr LEE: I want to be there. I take that interjection from the member for Pumicestone; she is happy to drive me there. The two of us will visit the electorate of the member for Burdekin. I want to see the great work that is being done there, and I want the member for Burdekin to encourage her constituents to continue that work.

I want to refute completely the basis of the argument put forward by the member for Burdekin that if someone shoots ducks they are actually doing the right thing and being a conservationist. That is the crux of the argument that has been put by the member for Burdekin. 'We have to kill them to love them' was the guts of the argument. The more someone shoots them, the more they must really love them. It is like the old Monty Python saying, 'This is hurting me more than it is hurting you.' As the school master bashes the child he says, 'This is hurting me more than it is hurting you.' It is absolutely stupid to suggest that if you are someone who wants to shoot ducks for fun you are a true conservationist. I do not know where the member for Burdekin got this idea from, but it seems absolutely ludicrous to me.

I was stunned by the obvious statement the member for Burdekin made when she said that duck shooters are often the first people to notice changes in local duck populations. What an absolute cracker! Of course they are the first people to notice changes in duck populations: they are the ones shooting them! They are the ones taking aim, albeit sometimes not well, and shooting at these poor little critters. Of course they notice changes in population before other people do.

I am delighted that this bill is before parliament. It is a great piece of legislation. I think it will do some wonderful work and make it clear to Queenslanders how serious we are about things such as this. It is very important, I think as a point of principle, that we do not encourage people to shoot and kill creatures for fun. As a point of principle, I think it is something that is immensely important. This is nothing to do with sustainable agriculture. It is nothing to do with sustainable resource management. This is worth thinking about. It is a piece of legislation which says that shooting birds for kicks is not something that is real crash hot to do in this day and age. I am thrilled to support this piece of legislation.

I have spoken in the House many times previously regarding how strongly I feel about this issue, but today I want to thank the tens of thousands of Queenslanders who actually joined this campaign and gave voice to Queensland's ducks and quail. I want to thank the people who signed electronic petitions. I want to thank the people who signed paper petitions. I want to thank the people who wrote letters to their members of parliament and who signed and returned those wonderful postcards that I think all members of parliament received. I also want to thank those people who organised information stalls and toured the state, going from regional centre to regional centre and city to city, talking about how important this issue was. I think they have done wonderful work, and they will feel great when this piece of legislation is passed by this parliament, hopefully, today.

In particular, I want to place on record my sincere gratitude and thanks to various people, beginning with Des Boyland and his team at the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. They did great work to organise this campaign. Mark Townsend and Kerry Cutting from the RSPCA did tremendous work too. Annette Guice from Animal Liberation Queensland and Mike West from Birds Queensland also did wonderful work.

I want to very sincerely put on record my gratitude to Dr Carol Booth from the Queensland Conservation Council. I often rely upon Dr Booth for advice and encouragement on these sorts of matters. I believe it was around the time she got involved in this campaign that the five wonderful groups that I have mentioned—the Queensland Conservation Council, Birds Queensland, Animal Liberation, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and the RSPCA—really got serious about making this ban on the recreational shooting of duck and quail happen. I am thrilled to support this piece of legislation today. I want to thank the minister and sincerely thank the EPA for the great work they do.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (4.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2006 and continue the stand taken by the shadow spokesman, the member for Burdekin. From the outset, I want to say that there are too many emotions involved in this legislation. When we look at what has happened around the state over time, we see a situation arising here again where we are going to take somebody else's rights away from them.

The few people who go duck shooting—or any other sort of shooting for that matter—are responsible people. I heard the contribution made here this afternoon by the member for Indooroopilly. The important thing to remember is that the great majority of Queenslanders—and Australians for that matter—are conservationists. If we were not conservationists, we would not have survived on one of the driest continents on earth for the last 200 years.

We talk about ducks and the season of 2002. What happened in 2002? The season was cancelled because it was too dry. The other fact that a lot of people do not remember is that ducks are migratory birds. They are birds that will migrate to an area where the wetlands are ripe with water and the wildlife is great. But the point is that, just because we have a drought on at the moment and all of a sudden the ducks have gone, people wonder what has happened to them. People think we shot them out.

Let us look at this. In 1984, there were 1,800 licences granted in Queensland and in 2004 there were 376. Let us have another look at this equation. We had a maniac down in Tasmania who went berserk with a semiautomatic rifle and shot a lot of innocent people, and all of a sudden the Prime Minister and many other people jumped on the bandwagon. Unfortunately, I have to say that I was a member of a government at the time that voted for those gun laws, and I am damned well sorry that I did, because all that has happened is that the rights of people have been eroded. This piece of legislation we have here today is no different. The minister spoke about the number of shooters with licences in 2004. Yes, half of those blokes had guns in 1984. They probably had their rifles bent, shredded or whatever else and they do not have guns anymore to be able to go recreational shooting.

Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, you are a person who represents a large rural and remote electorate, and the wildlife that is abundant in your electorate is the same as in my electorate in a good season—more so in yours, because the wet season is more prominent there than in other parts of the state. That is applicable to all types of wildlife, even with the migration of kangaroos. They move in the good season; they go and find the tucker wherever it is. We talk about the quota for roos and the kangaroo shooting industry. The minister must be well aware that the quota is never shot out; it is never reached on a yearly basis.

People all around the globe say that Australians are destroying their national fauna by shooting kangaroos. What a magnificent industry that is. Since white man came to this country, the kangaroo population is believed to have increased some sevenfold. The important fact here is that man-made waters and man-made feed have increased their habitat.

In relation to ducks, I wish to repeat what my colleague the member for Darling Downs said when we debated this topic fairly heavily in our party room during the week and spoke about crops on the Darling Downs. When we have a heavy season of good crops, we have these problems with wildlife, whether it is ducks, sulphur-crested cockatoos, galahs or whatever else. They do destroy those crops. What do the farmers do? They sit back and watch them. This is a situation where the farmers have to take control.

I respect and admire some of the great work that the RSPCA does, but some of those radical, left-wing lunatics that get involved are the ones that the minority are talking about. The member for Indooroopilly spoke about 5,000 people writing in to knock the duck shooting industry on its head. The lefties are coming to life now. Where are they? Come on. Get on your feet. You can have your say on this, too. The situation is that only 50 people wrote in in support. When we look at the 50 people—and there are only 300-odd shooters with a licence in Queensland—we see that 50 out of 374 is not a bad percentage, and there are 5,000 out of four million as well.

I have to say again that the minister's argument does not stack up. The minister made a statement in relation to what he is going to do to help the Greens and support them at some function he is at one night. It was a bit like the five per cent unemployment when he held his hand up. It was a bit like, 'Thank God we have got John Howard and Peter Costello to get that five per cent,' because they have given us good economic growth in this state and country. The minister is scratching his head and walking away, but I have to say that I know the facts and so does he.

The issue in relation to this conservation legislation is that I really believe it is insane that we are going to victimise those good, innocent people who go about their business in a professional way. I say 'a professional way', and it is professional. I am a shooter myself. I do not own a shotgun and I have never owned a shotgun, but, at the end of the day, many people do. Many people enjoy that type of recreational sport, whether it is duck shooting, pig shooting, fishing or whatever else it is they do in the outdoors. I believe that these people go about their business in a very professional way. They do not go out there indiscriminately shooting ducks or quail. They go out there to get what is applicable for their situation. I know this myself; I have seen these people. I really think it is a slur on the intelligence of those people who have been victimised by this legislation that we see before us in the House today.

The other side of the argument is that many of these people live here in Brisbane or in the larger cities of Queensland. They are the ones who will be deprived of this outdoor activity, because this government sees fit to pander to the Green movement that represents about seven or eight per cent of the population of this state.

Mrs Sullivan: What about playing tennis or football?

Mr JOHNSON: The member for Pumicestone will get her turn in a minute. Again, the situation here is that we want to know what this government is going to ban next? What restriction will it put on the people of Queensland next? I wonder where we start.

Mr Hopper: Fishing.

Mr JOHNSON: I take the interjection from the member for Darling Downs, because he is probably right there. We discussed this during the week too and spoke about some of the activities off the coast of the Burnett electorate. People used to enjoy getting in their tinnie and going out and catching a few fish and coming home. No, that has been banned now. They have to go somewhere else where they never catch a bloody fish.

Mr Lee: That is unparliamentary.

Mr JOHNSON: Unparliamentary? You are unparliamentary. I was going to ask him a question, Mr Deputy Speaker, if I could.

Mr LEE: I rise to a point of order. The member has referred to me as being unparliamentary. I find that incredibly offensive and I ask that it be immediately withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I must admit I did not hear the comment. The member has found offence and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr JOHNSON: Whatever he finds offensive I withdraw and I will apologise to him. I do apologise to him. I would never offend anybody in this place.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would assist if you would—

Mr Mickel: The poor lass from Hansard!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister! I ask that you withdraw unconditionally. Thank you.

Mr JOHNSON: I did withdraw.

An opposition member: Unconditionally.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask that you—

Mr JOHNSON: I withdraw unconditionally. The member for Indooroopilly has got thin skin. There is no doubt about him. He has probably never eaten meat in his life, let alone a quail or a duck. Does he eat lettuce leaves, apples, oranges or what? He needs to go and get a good steak into him by the look of him.

Mr LEE: I rise to a point of order. It is the lead in the ducks that I do not like.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Gregory has the call. I ask that he returns to the provisions of the bill before the House.

Mr JOHNSON: I am endeavouring to, but I have been contradicted a few times here this afternoon. I have had to defend myself. I thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker.

This is a very important portfolio that the minister has. The environment is something that is near and dear to the hearts of all of us. Having been a minister in the state myself, I have seen firsthand the environmental issues when I was Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The importance of the environment and protecting it is paramount. I believe in that. The one thing I do not believe in is going overboard. I think that with this legislation the government is going overboard.

The Nature Conservation Act 1992 probably governed most things. The Premier made mention of this and all things the Premier says have to be obeyed. The real issue here is: where was the consultation? The minister said that she has consulted with the cabinet. Fair enough, but what about other bodies? I do not see that there has been proper and in-depth consultation anywhere. I really believe that is what modern democracy is all about. The democratic system is all about consulting with those groups to discover whether they agree or disagree and the reasons and giving them an opportunity to have input into the legislation. Regardless of whether it is an issue that is applicable to natural resources or conservation, in this modern day with the technology we have available to us we should certainly be taking on board the scientific studies and outcomes. If we do not we are not using modern technology to the best of our ability.

I urge the minister to think very carefully about what we are debating this afternoon. This is not about going out and indiscriminately killing ducks and quail; it is about giving enjoyment to these people who enjoy this recreation. Recreational fishers like to catch a few fish for their own needs and they receive enjoyment from that. There are probably plenty of people in this chamber who enjoy fishing, just as plenty of people out there enjoy going duck or quail shooting. Why all of a sudden do we have to shut down this recreational sport?

It never ceases to amaze me that, because one very small minority group gets a bee in its bonnet about something, we have to jump on the bandwagon and shut it down. Why are we not taking a bipartisan approach to these issues? We have a crisis in Queensland in relation to water. I was talking with the minister for state development a while ago. We have a crisis in relation to a shortage of skilled tradesmen. Why are we not putting our good brains together to come up with genuine outcomes to

resolve some of these issues? We should take a bipartisan approach to this instead of taking away from people the recreational activities that give them a bit of a thrill on the very odd occasion, whether that is duck shooting, quail shooting or whatever.

The other day I heard Mike Horan, the member for Toowoomba South, say, 'The next thing they will be trying to do is bar tackles in Rugby League.' I am a bit like Reggie Reagan; I reckon we should bring back the biff and put a bit of colour back in Rugby League.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! And I reckon the member for Gregory should return to the provisions of the bill before the House.

Mr JOHNSON: I am just giving examples of what this bill is not doing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That is the second time I have had to ask the member to do that.

Mr JOHNSON: I will come back to the bill, but I am just giving examples of what this bill is doing to the recreational group that we are talking about here today—those 374 people who have licences. They will not have a licence anymore because the government is taking their licence away. I ask: is this a communist state we live in or a free democratic society?

I urge the minister to think long and hard about what she is doing to a minority group in this state that is doing nothing wrong but is going out under licence and doing the right thing when the season is open. Back in 2002 we had one of the worst droughts ever—and, unfortunately, we still have that drought on our hands—and the season was shut down. We can probably say that it has been shut down for the last five years, because the season has not been right. Please God, after this summer, we will see a return to normal seasons; we will see an abundance of wildlife in our state and this country, for that matter. We certainly need rain right across the country.

Importantly, I do not believe there is one person who would go out and shoot wildlife for no reason at all. I fear that next we may see a shutdown of the shooting of pigs, kangaroos or something else. Kangaroos are a very important part of the economy of western and north-western Queensland. Slowly but surely we are eroding the asset base of people trying to earn a living. However, we are not talking about earning a living here; we are talking about a recreational sport in quail and duck shooting. I say to the people on the government side that it is a minority group that has been affected. They are law-abiding people doing the right thing. The government is taking away from them a right, a custom and a tradition that has existed for hundreds of years in this country and other countries of the world.

Let us look at our Indigenous population. They eat this wildlife. They certainly do not go out and destroy the habitat as such; they take only enough for their own needs. That is no different to this group of people we are talking about here. I support the contribution and the stand taken by the shadow minister here today. I trust that some common sense will prevail on the government side and its members will see the merit in this argument.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise in support of this bill to ban duck and quail hunting. It will finally put an end to the callous practice of killing native ducks and quail for sport. I commend the honourable minister and I congratulate my colleague the honourable member for Indooroopilly on pursuing this important animal welfare issue. I implore the members of this House to support it.

This cruel sport not only targets our precious native duck and quail species; it also results in slow and painful deaths for many of the ducks and quail. Shooting does not always result in the outright death of a bird. The many dedicated carers of injured animals such as the Brighton Veterinary Surgery in my electorate, which does a wonderful job of treating injured wildlife, can attest to the trauma suffered by birds. For some of these injured birds there is added suffering as they are never found and they are left to die of their horrendous injuries. Activities that put any animal at risk of such pain must never be allowed again. In an era when animal welfare is gaining increased public support and is enshrined in legislation such as the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, it is this parliament's obligation to support this bill not only for the sake of our wildlife but also to reflect the clear wishes of the majority of Queenslanders.

We see frightening examples of animal cruelty in the media from time to time. I always find them personally upsetting. However, I find it even more difficult to answer my children when they ask, 'Mummy, why would anyone want to hurt an animal?' It is a fact of human nature that these incidents affect us emotionally and they raise moral questions about our responsibilities as stewards to protect our Queensland wildlife. We must uphold animal welfare as rigorously as we protect human welfare. My children and I love to visit the many local wetlands in the Sandgate electorate. Watching the birds is a favourite pastime for us and many other families and enthusiasts.

We shoot our birds with a camera I might say, not with a gun. Native ducks such as the chestnut teal duck and the Pacific black duck come right to the centre of Sandgate and can be observed at the Einbunpin Lagoon and Dowse Lagoon. The rare painted button-quail was sighted at the Boondall Wetlands for the very first time just last month. Our native birds are all so individual and unique and we must protect them. It is very rare to have a button-quail sighting, so it is of great concern that this

particular species is often shot by hunters who mistake them for true quail. We now have an opportunity to take the necessary actions to put an end to duck and quail hunting in Queensland forever. I hope that all members will take this opportunity to give these wild birds the permanent protection that they deserve. I urge members to support this bill.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (4.40 pm): I rise to oppose the government's Nature Conservation Amendment Bill and to support the status quo. Many arguments have been advanced by both sides today as to the veracity of banning duck and quail hunting in Queensland and why we should not be doing it. I suppose some people would think that duck and quail shooters are absolutely barbaric and why would anyone want to do anything like this. There are many things in our society that people who not engaged in the particular activity cannot understand because it may be something which is absolutely abhorrent to them and it is anathema to them.

I was sitting here thinking of some of the activities that people have raised with me that they do not like that other people do and yet they are prepared to accept. Some people do not like greyhound racing. Some people do not like horseracing because they think there are animal welfare issues. Some people do not like boxing and believe that it should be banned because it has a potentially lethal health impact upon another human. Some people do not like the keeping of caged birds. I must admit that when I go to someone's place and see a caged cockatoo that has pulled its feathers out because it has nothing else to do I do not particularly like that and I think it should be liberated. I can sometimes be sympathetic to the argument of those people whom we might call extremists who believe that we should not keep birds in confined spaces.

Some people do not like fishing because it has a particular welfare issue. Some people do not think about fish as having feelings, but they have feelings. What about those fish that escape with a lure in their mouth or a stainless steel hook in their gizzards, and there are many of those. Do we then say that we are going to ban fishing because some fish are going to escape and have a stainless steel hook in their gizzards or a lure in their mouth? Do we ban game fishing or other forms of recreational fishing? I do not particularly like abortion, but I understand that there is a reason it has to happen. There are some people who do not like the testing of therapeutic drugs or even cosmetics on animals in laboratory situations, but we understand and accept that it happens for various reasons. They are some of the issues that people do not like. Some people do not like eating meat, but the majority of people in the community do. These are the sorts of issues that we have to deal with as legislators from time to time.

I heard the animal welfare argument advanced by many honourable members opposite today, and there was an element of passion and genuine expression in the argument put forward. I do not think that honourable members opposite have tried to understand the traditional attachment that people have had to the notion of duck and quail shooting in our country and our forebears in other countries. That might be anathema, but nevertheless a small number of people have that attachment. Anything that involves the confinement of animals or domestication of animals has an animal welfare component. It is an issue of how we mitigate the circumstances, mitigate the risk, mitigate any of the suffering and enhance the welfare of those animals.

Earlier the honourable member for Gregory talked about the enhancement of our natural environment for our native animals that has occurred since the arrival of the Europeans. We know that there has been an impact. Government members in particular talk about vegetation clearing in Queensland and the impact that that has had. However, there are many areas in this state that have more vegetation now than when Captain Cook sailed up and down the eastern seaboard and there are many areas that have less. Fire mitigation and the encroachment of certain trees has caused that.

My part of the world on the Brigalow Belt prior to European settlement did not grow any grass other than a few straggly pieces of grass chewed by wallabies. When it was opened up and cleared it became fertile country. Now it is being encroached on by a range of species of wallaroos and wallabies, which has never been seen before. The quail are now out there in the native pastures. They were not there before because they could not breed in the very rich and the very deep brigalow scrubs. When I have been out ploughing—because I have a farming background—there have been a number of times when I have ploughed around quail that have encroached on areas of pasture. This situation never existed prior to European habitation.

A month or two ago when I went home to make a very interesting decision in my political career I planted some sorghum. I was ploughing around the plovers, the plovers' eggs and the plovers' nests. Any person who dares say that members on this side do not have a concern for animal welfare is simply gilding the lily. This morning when I drove to Brisbane—I went to a presentation night at a school in my electorate last night—through Warwick there were two parent ducks walking across the road just on the outskirts of Warwick. I do not know whether they found any water, but they had eight little tiny ducklings. I flashed my lights to stop the oncoming cars as they walked across the road. So we all have an element of care and compassion for animals.

For me, this is simply a matter of understanding and accepting that there are people who have enjoyed the tradition of duck and quail hunting in this state for a long time, and I actually support and stand up for their right to do so. I believe that any move to restrict duck and quail hunting in Queensland

should be based on science. It should be based on the capacity of duck and quail to be able to recover to levels where they are able to be hunted, and that should be the basis of the decision that we make. That is not the basis of the decision that we are making today. Nobody is saying that there will not be some animals which may be injured, but to simply say that 90 per cent of injured animals go away and die a dismal death is not necessarily true, because sometimes those injured ducks or animals are got to very quickly and they are humanely dispatched. That is the other aspect that was not touched on today.

To me, this is about whittling away something that many people in this state have enjoyed doing over a long time. To simply say that there is a majority of people who want this banned is probably going a little bit too far. People might ask on the basis of animal cruelty, 'Why do we need to do this in a modern humane society? We don't need to do this.' However, there are many issues that many honourable members opposite have not mentioned, such as those issues that I mentioned before. Based on the clear superficiality of this argument, some people might like to have other activities banned or restricted as well. That is the simple reality.

The role of this parliament is to try to find some sort of balance and not just ban something because we do not like it or because it is anathema as only a few people do it. As much as this is about animal welfare, it is also about understanding traditions and understanding that there is a way of managing the safe and appropriate taking of ducks and quail whilst minimising the animal welfare issues that may be associated with it. During the dry times when there are difficulties for ducks and quail in breeding then there should be a restriction. There should be a temporary ban placed on the taking of those animals.

Even in the recent dry times we see a lot of quail on our place. I can tell members that the ducks, particularly the whistling ducks, of which there are hundreds that gather on our main farm home dam, are as safe as churches because I have never been interested in hunting them. Duck shooting has never really appealed to me. But I know and I understand that some people do it. It is a recreation activity. Many people cannot understand it being a recreation. One member opposite said before, 'Why can't they take up soccer or football or something like that.' Well, these people do not do soccer or football or something else. It is not just as simple as applying one's own beliefs to somebody else. That is what this is about. Just because something is easy for someone to understand does not necessarily mean that it is readily applicable to those people whose rights or whose traditions we are seeking to curtail or constrain in some way.

I think it would be a far more sensible move for the government to say, 'Let's look at this on a year-by-year basis and the capacity of these birds to be able to breed so that we can maintain the tradition, we can maintain the recreational activity and we can minimise the animal welfare issues'. The people who I have seen shoot ducks aim to kill the birds as quickly and as humanely as they can. Previously, a member referred to lead. I note that in the United States—and it may have happened here—when the issue of contamination by lead shot arose, steel shot was introduced, which dealt with the issue.

Duck shooting might not be acceptable to honourable members opposite, because it is anathema to them; it is something that, basically, they do not like. I am not arguing against the right of honourable members to not like something because it is an issue that burns them to the core. But they also have to understand that it is something that traditionally other people—men, women and children—have enjoyed doing. It is very easy to demonise the sport of shooting or the like that some people have of shooting. I must admit that I am a shooter. I have a number of rifles. I have always said that. For me, it is an animal welfare issue. I have to put down animals that are struggling, injured or aged on my property. I have had to do that in recent times. Many people cannot understand why I have a need to own a firearm or why there is any practical need to do any of those sorts of things that I have just mentioned.

All I am asking is that the members opposite try to look at this issue through a different paradigm rather than just a paradigm that they have constructed for themselves of not liking duck shooting. Although I respect the arguments of the members opposite, I do not necessarily agree with them. The members opposite will never understand why some people like to go duck shooting and not just for recreational purposes; they also like duck or quail meat. It can be quite tasty. This is why people want to be able to go duck shooting.

I do not support this legislation. I support the status quo. I believe that the decision should be based on science, not just sheer emotion. If we considered this issue more deeply, I think we would find that there is probably more a political reason for doing this than a genuine animal welfare and conservation reason. I think that reasoning has been mixed up. It is very easy, when dealing with the perception of duck shooting in the broader electorate, to develop an argument against duck shooting.

I just say to members that we should look at this issue based on our capacity to manage what has been an acceptable, fine tradition over a long period. We should consider this issue on a case-by-case basis. Something should not be banned just because the members opposite want to ban it. If that occurs, there are many more issues that are quite controversial—and which I have referred to during the course of my contribution—that the members opposite will have to deal with in the future. The members

will have to deal with arguments from other people about other issues. To me, if we stop something just because we simply do not like it or we do not understand it, that is the wrong way to legislate in this parliament.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.52 pm): At the outset, I would like to endorse the comments of the previous speakers on this side of the House, particularly those of the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Sandgate. As the member for Burdekin said, I am certainly aware that there were submissions for and against the banning of recreational duck and quail shooting. I know that they were all taken into consideration. But opinion aside, the facts still stand: this activity is clearly cruel and, as such, must not continue.

The statistics are quite clear. Nine out of 10 birds shot suffer a slow and painful death from woundings. Even the opposition could deduct something from that. This is an inordinately high statistic when compared with other forms of recreational hunting. These statistics show that the hunters are either really bad shots or it is really difficult to shoot a moving target, such as a duck. The banning of duck and quail shooting has the support of the RSPCA and the minister's Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, because the recreational shooting of ducks and quails is a cruel practice. Certainly, this banning has my support.

In her contribution, the member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, did a fantastic job of defending recreational shooters for almost an hour. I do not know where she plucked a lot of her reasons for doing this—maybe out of the air. She even suggested—and called—recreational shooters conservationists. I thought, 'Maybe she's going a bit far.' But then I thought, 'She might simply be being mindful of the National Party policy for the environment.' The National Party's environment policy is: if it moves, shoot it; if it stands still, knock it down. The member for Burdekin defended the right of recreational shooters to continue this barbaric practice, because it is 'a long established and traditional practice'. The honourable member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, was visibly shocked by that comment, because even someone as young as she is can remember some longstanding traditions that she is quite glad have now long gone. We can remember when women were not given the right to sign mortgage documents. I can remember when women did not have the right to vote. Thank God we overturned that! What about when women had to resign from Public Service positions when they got married? I can tell members now that if that tradition still existed, we would have got rid of a lot of old ducks in this parliament.

But that is water off a duck's back to the member for Burdekin. She simply does not get it. Duck and quail shooting is a cruel and heartless practice. Fortunately, this side of the House has moved with the times. Those opposite need to move into the 21st century and not stay in the prehistoric era, as did the dinosaurs.

Ms Jones: You ruffle their feathers.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I take that interjection. I am happy this time to ruffle the feathers of the opposition. We would all have to duck for cover if the Nationals got into power and took control of the environment, let alone the economy.

Honestly, the era of duck shooting in Queensland has come to an end. This is no longer a sport that can be tolerated. Unlike those opposite, the only thing that we are giving a quick death to is the banning of recreational duck and quail shooting. As I said, I am happy to ruffle their feathers on this one.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (4.56 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2006. This bill seeks to legislate a ban on recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland. Historically, recreational duck and quail hunting has been permitted in Queensland under a variety of permit programs, most recently since 1995 under a series of nature conservation plans. These permit programs, in conjunction with the seasonal declarations, have provided an effective management program for duck and quail hunting in Queensland. That means that the number of permits was controlled as well as the capacity to cancel a recreational duck and quail hunting season if there was a view that, for one reason or another, duck and/or quail populations were not sufficient or were not likely to be sufficient at the conclusion of a season to proceed. Only 376 duck hunting licences were still in effect when the most recent nature conservation plan expired.

Regrettably, despite these controls and management processes, I understand that the environment minister's duck and quail ministerial advisory committee chose not to advise a renewal of the conservation plan, effectively ending the practice of recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland. However, at the time it remained possible for a conservation plan to be remade without the need for legislation to be introduced into this place. This bill will require that to occur. I wonder why the government has chosen to introduce this bill when it chose to effectively end recreational duck and quail hunting by not renewing the conservation plan. If it was good enough to end duck and quail hunting by not renewing a conservation plan without bringing the matter before the parliament, why is it not good enough to remake a conservation plan without bringing the matter before parliament? It is apparent that this is just a political stunt by the government. If the government were serious and it really believed in the ban on duck and quail hunting and its arguments for doing so, it would have dealt with the matter by introducing a bill at that time.

The explanatory notes provided for this bill refer to the more than 5,000 submissions that were received encouraging the minister to make a legislative change to ban recreational duck and quail hunting while approximately 50 submissions were received objecting to the decision. I would like to add to the record a reminder of the 5,000 signatures tabled in this place by the member for Burdekin opposing the move to ban recreational duck and quail hunting.

I urge members to reflect on the comments made by the member for Burdekin concerning the activities of recreational hunting groups in preserving duck habitats such as wetlands. I understand that a number of groups maintain these wetland areas, volunteering time to control pests and weeds in these sensitive environments. Indeed, I understand that some groups have even gone to the trouble of applying for grants to undertake this work.

What does the government intend to do to fill the gap left by these organisations in the management of those wetland areas? It would be ironic if the efforts of this government to ban a small group of licence-carrying recreational duck hunters, who have been trained in bird species recognition, led to the reduction in the health of duck habitats such as wetlands. I look forward to hearing about the government's plans to increase efforts to maintain these wetlands.

Interestingly, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee reflected on the question of whether or not the legislation gave sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individual Queenslanders with respect to these types of recreational activities when individuals are carrying the appropriate licences and permits. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee ultimately referred to the parliament the question of whether the provisions of the bill have sufficient regard for the rights of recreational duck and quail hunters and relevant property owners. Given that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has indicated that it is a relevant matter to discuss as part of the consideration of this bill, I would like to relate to the House the circumstances of one of my constituents who has taken a particular interest in this matter.

Mr Mario Cuzzubbo of Ingham, in my electorate of Hinchinbrook, wrote to my predecessor, Mr Rowell, in September last year following the government's announcement that the conservation plan would not be renewed when it expired last year. I would like to read Mr Cuzzubbo's letter as it is a pertinent example of the genuine concern in one sector of the community about the end of recreational duck hunting in Queensland. The letter is dated 6 September. It reads—

Dear Marc

Over a period of 45 years I have been a responsible shooter regarding ducks in the Herbert River district. In the early days they provided an important part of our diet and in recent times, while there isn't the dependency of ducks on a table, they are still regarded highly as a delicacy.

I am representing a number of duck hunters in the district by expressing my extreme disappointment that the State Government has made a decision not to renew the legislation regarding duck hunting when it expires this month.

I understand that the number of licence holders has been reduced to 376 licensed hunters. I believe that with this reduction in numbers the duck population will not be significantly reduced and there is good reason why the status quo could be maintained with respect to the current number of licences. There is no doubt that this number will inevitably reduce also.

The taking of ducks in particular is part of a tradition that was widely practiced by the older population and statistical information shows that it is rapidly decreasing. It has been raised that something like 90% of ducks shot suffer a slow, cruel death but I believe that if the licensing could stipulate that they weren't to be shot in flight and only shot on the water, this would reduce the effects of wounded ducks not being taken as it is most unlikely that those affected could be airborne.

I have never considered taking more ducks than for the purpose of my immediate needs and I believe I have never exceeded the designated limit. I have always completed and lodged the necessary returns regarding the taking of ducks and I accept that closures can occur due to unfavourable seasonal conditions.

Although it is late, would consideration be given to extending this legislation for at least another 5 years. By this time the number of licence holders may be reduced to a point where the activity of shooting ducks may no longer be of importance. It is with great disappointment that I write this letter as the taking of ducks has become a significant part of the food that my family eats and has become a part of North Queensland recreational activities.

Could you please provide some assistance in this matter.

Regards

Mario Cuzzubbo

This letter is testimony to the decency and considered position of the vast majority of former duck hunters in Queensland. Mr Cuzzubbo demonstrates an understanding and appreciation for proper controls and the need for licences to be issued to responsible hunters who are not barbaric, which was the unfortunate turn of phrase used by the former minister for the environment to describe recreational duck shooting. Indeed, in the case of Mr Cuzzubbo and other duck hunters in my electorate of Hinchinbrook, they consider duck hunting to be a cultural practice that is not done just for some flippant reason but has been practised for many generations. As Mr Cuzzubbo points out, the dependency on duck no longer exists, but it is still considered a delicacy and is enjoyed on special occasions.

The lack of understanding that the government is displaying with regard to this bill may be explained by the fact that it failed to undertake the scheduled public review of the Queensland duck and quail management plan, which was scheduled to occur in 2005. It simply announced that the conservation plan would not be renewed, and now we have this bill. If it had undertaken the scheduled public review, it may have had an opportunity to consider the points of view of responsible recreational

hunters about their commitment to the appropriate management of duck habitat, about the value they place on the permit and control systems in place, including the option to cancel hunting seasons due to adverse weather conditions, and about their concerns about duck numbers. But this did not occur and the government did not have that opportunity, and that is a shame.

The amendment that will be proposed by the member for Burdekin will give us an opportunity to review this decision in three years time so that we can assess the result of this bill. I am not convinced that the simplistic proposition being put forward by the government today is responsible legislation as far as the management of duck wetland habitat and the conservation of ducks in Queensland is concerned, and for that reason I urge members to consider and support the amendment.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (5.06 pm): I rise to support the nature conservation legislation, which will outlaw recreational shooting of native duck and quail in Queensland. I commend the current minister for bringing this legislation into the House but, in particular, pay tribute to the determination of the former minister, who developed this legislation. After some lobbying from a number of people, including my colleague the member for Indooroopilly, the former minister took a very determined approach to bring about legislation to put an end to this senseless killing. I remember speaking with the former minister about the decision to not declare a duck-shooting season in 2005. That decision was made on the basis of sustainability. Today we bring in legislation that recognises that sustainability but is based on matters of cruelty.

That sustainability found that there was a significant decline in duck numbers through prolonged below average rainfall. There is a major breeding ground in New South Wales for the duck population, and at the time of not declaring a duck-hunting season it was estimated that there were 20 birds in the key breeding grounds, whereas in the 1980s the bird population averaged around 30,000. So there was a significant decline in duck numbers. So that decision was about the sustainability of the species as much as anything else. I will come back to a few of the points raised by the opposition, but first I want to contrast our decision to not declare a duck-shooting season last season and our determination to bring forward this legislation with recent actions of the Victorian government.

There is a lot to be said in favour of the Victorian government. It is a very good government in a whole range of ways, but unfortunately it does not come up to the mark on the issue of protecting ducks and quails. Just last month there were media reports about the Victorian government filling waterholes at shooting sites to attract birds. The Victorian government effectively said, 'The best use of our water supply is not to give it to farmers but to put it in waterholes so that we can attract birds so that people can come along and in the name of sport senselessly slaughter them.' That is not only a shameful act but also a misuse of water resources.

Not only is there that example; but in March, the Victorian government included Lake Murphy, a lake in central Victoria, in its duck-shooting zone. As a result of the prolonged reduction in rainfall, many of the existing lakes and waterholes have become refuges for a whole range of water birds.

There is plenty of evidence to be found about the decline in the number of water birds. Lake Murphy is a refuge for not only threatened ducks but also brolgas, swans and a whole range of other bird species. The Victorian government thought that it was appropriate for that lake to become part of the declared shooters zone. There is something very shameful in those two acts.

Let there be no mistake about the effect on threatened species. A study in Victoria in 1993 which was done on a lake in central Victoria found that there was a population of 300 of a threatened duck species—the freckled duck. The following duck-shooting season reduced that population of 300 by 272. So, 272 out of 300 were wiped out in that duck-shooting season.

We have heard a lot of talk about duck shooting as a sport. Let us be clear that there is no sport in duck shooting. Duck shooting is not about having fair rules; it is not about an equal opportunity for either side to come out at the other end with the same result.

Mrs Sullivan: There is no referee.

Mr FINN: There is no referee, as the member for Pumicestone points out. Whereas on one side we have an unarmed duck, on the other side we have a shooter armed with weapons, dogs, whistles and decoys. The members of the opposition might call this a sport, but I seriously think that there is something sick about someone who calls it sport to crouch behind a bush floating little rubber ducks on a lake while whistling like an ovulating duck so that they can slaughter the unsuspecting duck that comes looking. That is not a sport; that is sick behaviour. Let there be no mistake that this is an act of cruelty. The legislation is about putting an end to this cruelty.

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr FINN: I take the interjection from the member for Pumicestone about the number of drakes present in the chamber. Other members have commented on a range of statistics relative to the cruelty of the native duck slaughter. I thought the member for Gregory said it all. This is about banning people who just get a bit of a thrill out of it. This is about people who get a thrill out of killing ducks. Yes, it is about banning them. This is why it is not a sport and why it is about cruelty.

There have been plenty of studies into cruelty and the impacts of duck shooting. There has been mention of competent hunters. There was a study in 1994 in Victoria that found that for every duck a competent hunter shot—and I do not know how they defined a competent hunter—they wounded another. There has been plenty of research done into what happens with wounded ducks and the pain and suffering that they go through whilst not actually serving the delicacies of the member for Hinchinbrook's constituent.

If members do not think this happens I urge them to get on the web site of the Coalition Against Duck Slaughter and have a look at some of the methods that hunters use to kill wounded birds. I was stunned by the footage that showed a hunter with a wounded bird determining that the best way to kill it was to continually bang its head again against a tree and then that not successfully killing it, still having it in a very distressed state strapped to his belt.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr FINN: I take that interjection from the member for Charters Towers that this must be an Indigenous program. I am not too sure what he meant by that. Maybe he will enlighten us. There are also statistics from rescue units that attend duck-hunting locations in New South Wales. They estimated that between 32 and 40 per cent of dead birds that they retrieved were killed inhumanely and suffered prior to death. These people who kill for a thrill actually kill inhumanely. They do kill for a thrill.

Whilst I acknowledge the member for Hinchinbrook's constituent who said that he has never taken more ducks than he has needed when he has been out hunting, other reports from the animal rights activists who have been very active—particularly in Victoria—state that when they go out and collect a bird that has been shot one of their strategies is to offer it to a hunter. They find that the hunters refuse to take them. The reason that they refuse to take them is that it adds to their bag limit. What that means is that they want an opportunity to shoot another one. What that means is that they kill for a thrill.

There are many, many more horror stories and I am not going to go through them. There is plenty of evidence out there. We can tell by the emotion in this debate that it is a very serious matter for many of us in this chamber. I do want to endorse the words of Carmen Lawrence, the former premier of Western Australia, who, when their state banned duck and quail hunting in 1990, said at the time—

Our community has reached a state of enlightenment where it can no longer accept the institutionalised killing of native birds for recreation.

Sixteen years after the Western Australians reached that enlightenment, I believe Queenslanders also have. That is characterised by actually finding this senseless killing to be barbaric, having tolerated it for too long. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.15 pm): This bill seeks to legislate a ban on recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland. I believe this is a sad day for rural and regional Queensland. Duck hunting has long been a tradition in Queensland. It has been passed down through the generations. For years it has been a way of life for bush families who were brought up in this country. Those opposite may not understand this, but to many rural people this tradition is just as enjoyable as drinking a beer and boiling the billy.

Those opposite made mention of the contribution of the RSPCA. It was this organisation that made the effort to protect toads. I praise the member for Thuringowa when he said that toads need a good wallop. This is an organisation that the government seeks advice and support from and that has the ear of the government.

While this government may at times show sympathy towards the toad, it takes a strong stance on these terrible duck hunters, but we have these flying foxes that have been flapping around for six years, roosting and living amongst residents' households, driving people up the wall, and I would like to see the government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the member please come back to the substance of the bill.

Mr KNUTH: I would like to see someone take a strong stance to protect the people of Charters Towers. If a strong stance had been taken, those bats would have been gone five or six years ago.

Just because those opposite do not shoot ducks, does that give them a reason to stop everyone else from shooting ducks? I do not know what the hobbies of those opposite are—it may be birdwatching or sipping wine. I am not trying to stop those opposite from their hobby, so why should they try to stop everyone else from theirs?

I notice that the east coast fin fishery bill will be tabled in parliament next year. We can guarantee that it will be introduced and that the fishermen will be complaining because their rights will be taken from them, exactly like the rights of rural and regional Queensland. Duck shooting is something that has been practised for generations—

Mrs Sullivan: Does that make it right?

Mr KNUTH: Have those opposite ever shot a duck?

Mrs Sullivan: No.

Mr KNUTH: To many rural people duck hunting is a tradition that is as enjoyable as a beer and boiling the billy. Annual recreational duck and quail hunting seasons have been managed and are sustainable. They do not impact on the long-term survival of the species that are harvested. Also to be taken into consideration is the large number of man-made waterholes and dams that have increased the number of habitats for wild ducks.

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The member does not like it because it is the truth. In fact, recreational hunters maintain conservation work in swamps and wetlands to encourage the nesting of water birds. They contribute their own funds to this work and also apply for grants to ensure that wetlands do not become weed fields and pest ridden. They are conservationists. In fact, no expert is concerned with the decline in duck numbers. This bill is purely motivated so that the Beattie government can pander to the left-wing minority who do not fish, shoot, camp or get their hands dirty with real work.

I have grave concerns that the people who convinced the state government that duck and quail hunting is cruel and barbaric and should not be practised in the 21st century are the same people who are targeting recreational fishing and pig hunters on the same grounds. This is the same group of people who tried to stop Richmond's popular Hog'n'Dog day. Over 800 people turn up for this day. There are no sports stadiums at Richmond. Most of Richmond's race meetings have been closed. They do not have trains running on frequent schedules, but they have Hog'n'Dog day and they have the sympathy of the government. Fortunately, the government did not listen to the RSPCA on that issue.

The government does not understand rural Queensland. It does not understand bush culture. Duck shooting is what rural Queenslanders are brought up doing. It is something our grandfathers and great-grandfathers have handed down from generation to generation. It is a way of life that has continued to provide food on the table. Do members opposite know that we shot ducks and quail and that we ate ducks, rabbit and quail? We cannot do this now. We were once able to do this, but then this government decided to go down the track of 'we care'. It is not about the government caring; it is about the government pandering to a group that has the government's ear and has a lot of strength. The government will listen to that group rather than listen to rural and regional Queenslanders.

There is no reason to ban duck and quail hunting in Queensland. It is managed under the Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail) Conservation Plan 1995. Wayne Goss was in power when that legislation was introduced. I think he could see the reasons to continue with duck and quail hunting. He was a lot smarter than this government is today. Prior to 1995, hunting of duck and quail in Queensland was regulated under the Nature Conservation Act. It was a good move by the Goss government to introduce this conservation plan in 1995. Hunting duck in Queensland was strictly regulated to ensure that hunting was ecologically sustainable. Hunting has been confined to defined seasons, and hunting seasons are closely monitored. Hunters have to obtain a recreational wildlife harvesting licence. Hunting is only allowed on private property during a declared harvest period. Hunters also have to obtain permission from the relevant landholders before getting a licence.

Mrs Sullivan: You're giving the minister a lot of ammunition.

Mr KNUTH: If someone is applying for a licence for the first time, they need to pass a waterfowl or quail identification test. It is strictly monitored. Duck and quail shooters are aware of their responsibility to observe the laws and regulations that relate to hunting. It is a fact that hunting is not the greatest threat for the birds; the greatest threat for the birds is the loss and degradation of their habitats.

What does the government want people in rural and regional Queensland to do? As I said before, we do not have multimillion-dollar sports stadiums, big screens, and trains and buses running on frequent schedules. But we have pig hunting, and we may be able to catch a fish or shoot a duck. That is what we have out there. If the members opposite lived out there they would be doing the same thing because they would not know any different. Many rural and regional Queenslanders rely on recreational activities such as fishing, shooting and camping. But slowly this government is destroying their heritage, lifestyle and way of life.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (5.24 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill and to support our shadow minister. I make the observation that this piece of legislation has nothing to do with the conservation of duck and quail in Queensland. Not one extra duck or quail will be protected by the passage of this bill. This bill has put the 'con' back into conservation.

In August 2005, the Premier announced that the duck and quail conservation plan would not continue after its expiry date in September 2005. This announcement effectively ended recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland. That is it: there is no more duck and quail hunting, so this legislation is completely superfluous. If members opposite were to be honest, they would recognise that fact. We could be using the time of this place in a more valuable manner. Water infrastructure, health and policing are issues we should be discussing.

The unfortunate aspect of this bill is that it is not about conservation; it is more about an ideology. It is not about sustainability or biodiversity of species. It is not based on science. It is all wrapped up in emotion. It is centred on the principle of cruelty. If this legislation is passed, then the next group of people who will be in the sights of the people who instigated this document will be the fishers. In another six to 12 months I can hear a Labor member of this House giving us a blow by blow account of how cruel it is to catch and kill a fish—putting live baits on a steel hook, piercing the fish with a cruelly sharpened barb, dragging it to the surface, and letting it slowly and silently flop around on the deck while it struggles and its little mouth opens and closes.

I am waiting for the minister for the environment to stand up in this place and say, 'Fishing is not an appropriate activity in contemporary life in the Smart State.' That will happen if we continue down this road. It is a very dangerous road to go down. If we listen to the member for Indooroopilly, we will not kill another animal because it is cruel.

Most of the people opposed to this legislation would be opposed to the principle of eating meat—that to kill another animal for our sustenance is a very bad thing. Many would be vegetarians who make an in-principle stand to oppose cruelty and the eating of meat, and I appreciate that. However, the reality is that being a human and surviving in this world means that we have to consume another life force, whether that be animal or plant. We cannot photosynthesise. We cannot stand with our arms out and turn sunlight into energy.

I think modern humans who live in cities in particular are out of touch with the reality of the cycle of life and death. If we are to make a decision to ban duck and quail hunting solely on the basis of cruelty, then members should try calculating the level of cruelty that went into their last meal. They should try calculating the level of cruelty that went into the meal that they gave to their children or that they shared with their family. Members opposite are trying to stop the right of many Queenslanders—my right included—to eat wild harvested duck and quail.

My early experience of eating ducks was when I was growing up on a quarter-acre block at South Kolan when there was no such thing as Kentucky Fried Chicken or McDonalds. We had a chook house down the back. Dad grew some potatoes, corn and pumpkin. We were poor. We had to do it tough. He was a canecutter. As a treat on a Sunday we would eat duck. We would go down the back and see the ducks. Dad would grab a duck or two and maybe a chook. He would put them on the chopping block and get this big cruel axe and chop their heads off. Then the chooks would run around. The kids would stand there, look at them and think, 'Wow.' Then we would go and get the chook or ducks, put them in a bucket of hot water, pluck them and tear the gizzards out. We would probably save the gizzards to use as bait when we went fishing, which was a great pastime. Then my mother would mix in those home-grown potatoes with that duck, put some seasoning on it and we would have the best feed of our lives. That is what we did on a Sunday evening.

We were not sheltered from the reality of the cycle of life and death that many people and many children are sheltered from. It appears to me that the people who proposed this bill think that there is another world out there for ducks. When the duckie gets sick, the little duckie ambulance will come along and give the duckie a pat on the back and say, 'Bye-bye, you're off to duckie heaven.' The reality is that there is cruelty in nature. If a duck does not die from lead shot or being shot by a shotgun, the only other future that that duck has is to die a horrible death by being ripped apart by some predator.

Debate, on motion of Mr Messenger, adjourned.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.30 pm): I 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.

This is a very simple motion and it is in two parts. The first part calls on this parliament—that is, Queensland's 52nd Parliament—to acknowledge the growing threat to Queensland from climate change. The second part of the motion is that the parliament calls on the state government to take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I moved this motion at the first sitting of this parliament three weeks ago so that all members, irrespective of their political persuasions, would have time to think about how they would vote. Would they vote in support of the motion or against the motion, or would they sit on the fence and abstain from voting?

When I was recently invited by the Sunshine Coast ABC staff to join them and other state and local government representatives for the first viewing on the Sunshine Coast of the film made by the former United States Vice President Al Gore titled *An Inconvenient Truth*, I was asked what I would do. I said that I would take the matter to state parliament and we would talk about it on the floor of the parliament. I believe everyone should see the film *An Inconvenient Truth*. It certainly makes you sit up and think; it certainly demonstrates the issue. The film prompts people to think about the issues of climate change, the future of our environment and the future of our communities where we live.

I agree with comments made by the Queensland Conservation Council and other commentators that climate change represents the most significant problem facing our planet today and that its impact will adversely affect all life and activity on our planet. For the purpose of this debate, when I use the term 'climate change' I refer to the changes in rainfall patterns across the state, the dramatic rise in average temperatures and the more severe weather conditions and the fact that these changes will significantly alter our lifestyle and the environment on which we so heavily rely.

Only this morning, another article was published in the *Courier-Mail* commenting on how soon a moderate global warming of, say, two to three degrees would affect the Great Barrier Reef and our nation's \$32 billion tourism industry. For the benefit of members who did not see the article, I table a copy of it.

Tabled paper: Courier-Mail article dated 1 November 2006 and titled 'perilous Future for the Reef'.

In the first sitting of this parliament, we spent a lot of time debating water supply problems in south-east Queensland. Yesterday and today again, water supply problems in south-east Queensland were raised as significant issues in this chamber. Those problems are all a result of climate change.

It has been reported that the paper prepared by the former World Bank chief economist, Sir Nicholas Stern, has caused a major international storm which has rocked our own federal parliament in Canberra, with some federal politicians being ejected from the chamber and others being warned about their behaviour. I certainly hope we will not see that sort of action during this debate. While some people do not agree that we have a climate change problem, I hope this debate will prompt our Queensland government—and in fact all levels of government in Australia and our community—to do more and to work harder at reducing greenhouse gas emission levels. Together we can achieve it. Individually it will be so much harder.

I note that the Queensland government has produced its own greenhouse strategy which is on the public record. I believe tonight is a perfect opportunity to talk about not only the government proposed strategy but other alternative greenhouse reduction action plans. For the purpose of this debate, I table a copy of the Queensland Conservation Council's three-page action plan for Queensland.

Tabled paper: Document by Queensland Conservation titled 'A Greenhouse Reduction Action Plan for Queensland'.

Members will note that this proposal is a multipronged approach. The first component deals with setting a greenhouse reduction target; legislating a greenhouse target of at least 60 per cent reduction by 2050; setting a binding milestone target of a 20 per cent reduction by 2020; convening a climate summit to engage government, industry, business, academia and community stakeholders in an action plan to achieve the target; and providing an annual progress report to this very House.

The second component refers to providing incentives that support emission reductions; implementing with other states in Australia a national carbon trading scheme by 2008—yes, two years away—negotiating individual energy reduction agreements with high energy users; fast-tracking public transport infrastructure and promoting a public transport first program; and funding climate mitigation programs for agriculture.

The third component refers to supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency; setting a renewable energy target of 20 per cent by 2020; providing \$400 million from climate futures funds to support renewables and efficiency initiatives; and establishing a renewable energy centre here in Queensland.

The fourth component refers to supporting individual action on greenhouse gas reductions; introducing part 2 of a sustainable housing code to include existing houses, units and commercial premises; providing a policy focus by setting a 50 per cent energy-saving and water-saving target for residential and commercial premises to be achieved by 2015; establishing a sustainable housing fund to provide interest-free loans—yes, interest-free loans—for the purchase and installation of energy and water-efficient appliances and sustainable design improvements, and I believe the state of our finances in Queensland means we can fund this proposal; providing incentives for the purchase of low-emission and fuel-efficient vehicles; and introducing annual public transport passes as a part of salary packages for government employees.

The fifth and last component touches on capping government energy use and making major developments greenhouse neutral; introducing an energy reduction target that cuts government use by 25 per cent by 2012; converting government fleets to hybrid or efficient vehicles; establishing a climate neutral program that ensures all major infrastructure projects are at least greenhouse neutral; ensuring that all new major developments offset all projected greenhouse emissions; and setting energy-saving and water-saving targets and offset programs for all new residential developments. I acknowledge that some of these proposals are also covered in the government's own greenhouse strategy, but tonight is a time for us to consider these issues and put other issues on the table for debate.

While some people in our community are critical of the Queensland Conservation Council, I say that we should be grown-up and mature enough to be prepared to give credit where credit is due. I certainly believe Queensland needs a strong conservation movement to assist in keeping this very

important issue of climate change on the state government's agenda. I use this opportunity to call on my parliamentary colleagues in the National and Liberal parties to follow the lead of the members on the crossbenches and raise this issue in the parliament and assist us to maintain the government's focus on the need for real outcomes. That is what we are after—real outcomes during the life of the 52nd Parliament.

I now table a further two-page letter from the coordinator of the Queensland Conservation Council dated 13 October 2006, together with a one-page letter dated 1 November from the coordinator of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council supporting the very intent of this motion.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from Queensland Conservation dated 13 October 2006.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from the Sunshine Coast Environment Council Inc dated 1 November 2006.

This morning in the House the Minister for Mines and Energy spoke about how Queensland is leading the world in clean coal technology. I hope that, when the government members speak to the motion, they will clearly set out their anticipated start date for the plant and comment on my understanding that one tonne of carbon combined with 2.66 tonnes of oxygen produces 3.66 tonnes of carbon dioxide. I urge members to support the motion. I also thank members of the crossbenches for allowing me to bring forward this important motion for debate tonight. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (5.40 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the member for Nicklin. It seems to me that in recent times there has been a definite shift in the sentiment of this whole environmental issue. In fact, it is almost down to what I would call a 'der' factor now because people from all political strides are really starting to understand that we have a major problem and it needs to be addressed. Obviously, the state government needs to continue to put its money where its mouth is, as the member for Nicklin has said, and continue to invest in vehicles that do not contribute to the problem, as well as many other issues.

My brother-in-law David Weaver is a senior research scientist in Western Australia. He and I have had long discussions about this over the past five years. I know the member for Hervey Bay shares this same philosophy on the problem of peak oil. Emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide from fossil fuel consumption, land clearing and other economic activities are causing atmospheric concentrations of the gases to rise, which in turn is causing what we call global warming. Over the next century it is going to cause climate change, which is change in average local temperatures and rainfall; greater weather extremes, which we are experiencing at the moment; and—I think this one is a rising understated risk—rising sea levels. We have seen that some of the low-lying islands on the Pacific rim are at major risk from rising sea levels. In Australia we love to live by the seaside and thus there is a lot of dense housing concentration at the seaside and those rising sea levels could cause a real problem.

Because of our laissez-faire attitude towards life and our laid-back manner, we in Australia have a tendency to say, 'It'll be okay. It's somebody else's problem.' It is easy for us to point the finger at countries like China, India and the developing countries and say, 'It's all their fault; they are using all the diesel and adding all this stuff to the atmosphere', but that is not true. In fact, per capita Australia has the largest greenhouse gas emissions in the world. We are the worst polluters. Let me say it again: on a per capita basis we cannot point the finger at China, India and places like that—we are the worst. If members look at the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that Australia produces and look at our small population they will see we are the No. 1 culprit. The sooner we own up to it and take responsibility for the vandalism that we are causing to the environment, the better off we will all be.

Carbon dioxide, of course, is the major greenhouse gas. Stabilising atmospheric CO₂ will hopefully slow global warming. When we look at some of the other countries of the world, we would clearly think, for instance, of the United States as being a far bigger polluter than we are. But again, we need to think on a per capita basis. We need to get our act together, stop blaming everyone else and do something positive, otherwise we will have no future for our children.

At the moment, Queensland is running out of water; we are seeing and feeling for the first time in a bipartisan way the impact of global warming, the impact of climate change. In a lot of ways up until now we have lived in a fool's paradise. We have washed our cars on the weekend and hosed our driveways down with perfectly good potable drinking water. We have flushed perfectly good drinking water down the toilets. This rabid consumption of drinking water has been an environmental disaster of an unbelievable magnitude. It is interesting that now we start to impose really serious water restrictions, all of a sudden people are starting to talk about rainwater tanks. When I was a kid, every house had a rainwater tank bar none. We need to be a lot smarter about how we use these renewable resources. I call on the state and federal governments to put every effort into leading the way, not being reactive, not sending out press releases stating, 'It's all someone else's fault,' but taking responsibility and making sure that Australia, as it does in the sporting realm and the medical field, leads the world.

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.45 pm): I do have a small amendment on which I have consulted the member for Nicklin. I move—

That the following words are inserted after 'levels'—

'and further notes the steps already being undertaken by the State Government.'

This amendment maintains exactly what the member for Nicklin has moved but adds, 'and further notes steps already being undertaken by the state government'. The only reason I have done that is that I do not want there to be any misunderstanding. We have actually taken a number of steps and I want that acknowledged in the resolution. I accept what the member has moved. I have moved an amendment which will be seconded by the minister for the environment.

I think it says a lot about this parliament to see that there is not one member of the opposition here. Here we are talking about climate change raised by an Independent member of parliament who, quite rightly, has put on the agenda a debate about a very serious and important issue about the future of civilisation, yet not one member of the National Party or Liberal Party is in the House. Frankly, that is a disgrace. I want to make that point because I think Queenslanders need to understand that this is not only the biggest issue facing us, but we have to do it in a non-political, bipartisan way. We do not seem to be getting that.

I want to congratulate the member for Nicklin for putting this on the agenda. We are in a new environment that has never been experienced before and climate change is the catalyst. Tackling the problem will be one of the major challenges of the century and it has to be done sooner rather than later.

The Stern report released in the United Kingdom this week is one of the most comprehensive attempts to date to measure the impacts of climate change in dollars and cents. As we all know, the impacts of climate change on our environment and our way of life are wide ranging. The effects on water supply and food production are the most notable. The Stern review estimates that without action the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least five per cent of global gross domestic product each year now and forever. The report warns that doing nothing about climate change could be up to 20 times more expensive than taking remedial action when the economic costs of drought, floods, hurricanes and human migration are assessed. It puts the global cost of global warming and its effects at \$9 trillion. If people are worried about the costs of these issues, that should put it in some degree of context. The review says 'prompt and strong action is clearly warranted'.

I am pleased to report that we are playing our part in the Smart State and taking immediate action to address climate change and reduce emissions. On 25 and 26 July 2006, we held the successful Climate Change Summit in this chamber. It followed on from the international Earth Dialogues Forum in Brisbane, which I co-chaired with former President Mikhail Gorbachev of Green Cross International. Opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, including clean coal technology, emissions trading, energy efficiency and renewable energy were extensively canvassed.

Next year we will also host the third Australia-New Zealand Climate Change and Business Conference, which I announced in New Zealand on the weekend. This important conference, on 30 and 31 August, will bring together some of Australasia's most prominent business and political leaders to discuss the risks and opportunities facing business as a result of climate change. That is obviously important for the insurance industry amongst others.

As well as playing a lead role in debate and analysis we have also taken action. For example, the ban on broadscale tree clearing that we introduced in Queensland was the sole reason Australia was able to meet emission targets under Kyoto, and the opposition fought us every step of the way. I am proud that my government had the guts to actually tackle this issue head on.

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. We did it. My government did. What was our thanks from the Howard government? It short-changed us the \$75 million it promised for our \$150 million tree clearing compensation package, and we are still waiting. If the Prime Minister is serious about climate change, he should pay us the \$75 million.

Our government is also working hard on the development of less energy dependent resources such as clean coal technology, geothermal energy and coal seam methane. Earlier this year we established a \$1 billion Queensland Future Growth Fund to help the state meet the challenges of climate change and the continued economic development of our state. Our Future Growth Fund will provide \$300 million to support the continued sustainable development of clean coal technology. Our government is also addressing the effects on water supply caused by climate change. We are investing more in new water initiatives than any government before us—a water grid, new dams, weirs, pipelines and other water storages, recycling, desalination, conservation and education. Climate change is a major challenge for governments and communities around the world. We must all continue to work together to help protect our environment and provide a clean safe future. I want to make one final point: we need the federal government to invest the \$300 million-plus in developing clean coal technology. That is part of the answer.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (5.50 pm): I rise to second the amendment and to also congratulate the member for Nicklin for moving this motion. As Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism I am very aware and concerned about the serious emerging impacts that climate change will have on our economy, people and particularly our world-class environment. We have seen rapid increases in the scientific evidence and political community awareness in recent years. In addition, the Stern report, the associated expert and political commentary and intense media interest reminds us that 'business as usual' is no longer an option. We need to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the climate changes we have already set in motion.

Governments, industry and each and every one of us need to take urgent action to respond to these challenges. The consequences facing our environment are serious and significant in their own right. A healthy environment is essential for maintaining the productivity of communities and critical industry sectors—for example, tourism and agriculture. Climate change is already impacting on our unique natural assets, including the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics World Heritage areas. Further changes will impact on their health and, of course, their productivity. The Great Barrier Reef has already experienced unprecedented rates of bleaching over the past two decades. Additional warming of only one degree Celsius is expected to cause considerable losses or contractions of species associated with coral communities.

Land based ecosystems and species are vulnerable, particularly in arid and semiarid rangelands, in rainforests and vine thickets and wetlands, rivers and riparian systems. Climate changes such as extreme events and changed rainfall patterns will alter how ecosystems work. There will be less water available, water quality will be reduced and pest invasions will increase. The most vulnerable species that will lose more than 50 per cent of their current habitat with only a one degree increase in temperature include eight frogs, six mammals, three birds and three skinks. This includes animals close to the hearts of Queenslanders. For example, the mahogany glider, the golden bower bird, the spotted-tail quoll and even the Herbert River ringtail possum, which is the icon of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, are included in this list.

Mountainous habitats like those in the Wet Tropics and the Border Ranges are likely to be very seriously affected as they often protect cool-adapted upland rainforest species. Climate change is predicted to increase the intensity of tropical cyclones and related storm surge and wind damage, increasing the vulnerability of our ecosystem and coastal communities. It is therefore important that we ensure that future investments in core infrastructure are designed to withstand the stresses of extreme weather events. Incorporating energy and water efficiency design features will help reduce the greenhouse burden in the longer term.

I would encourage all Queenslanders to look at their own practices in the home. International and national government action is essential, but there is much we can do locally and as individuals to reduce our carbon footprint. There is lots we can do without compromising our enviable lifestyles. At home we can turn off lights and use less hot water—we do not need children if we want to be able to do that; turn off electrical appliances, because even appliances on standby use a substantial amount of power; buy energy and water efficient appliances and shower heads; change incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescents; and use natural ventilation. Where air conditioners must be used, purchase energy efficient ones and set them at 24 degrees and purchase green power to offset these impacts.

When travelling, where possible take public transport, ride a bike or walk; ride-share; minimise long distance air travel or offset emissions through supporting tree planting programs; and choose a fuel efficient vehicle and maintain the tyre pressure at the recommended level. We are continuing to discover many other ways of responding, so talk to family, friends and colleagues and visit key web sites for new ways to do the things that we can do better. Queensland will remain active in the national policy agenda, particularly in developing improved and new technologies and fostering their uptake. Climate change is the environmental issue of our time, and we all need to work together and act decisively on this issue now.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (5.55 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the debate on the motion moved by the member for Nicklin. The term 'climate change' is often interchangeable with the term 'global warming'. But according to the National Academy of Sciences, the phrase 'climate change' is growing in preferred use to 'global warming' because it helps convey that there are other changes in addition to rising temperatures. Climate change, however, refers to any significant change in measures of climate such as temperature, precipitation or wind lasting for an extended period—perhaps decades or longer. Most of us would be able to acknowledge changes in temperature, rainfall and wind without too much trouble.

Climate change may result from natural factors such as the changes in the sun's intensity or slow changes in the earth's orbit around the sun; natural processes within the climate system itself, that is, changes in ocean circulation; and human activities that change the atmosphere's composition, such as through burning fossil fuels, and the land surface, such as deforestation, reforestation, urbanisation and desertification. The trouble is that not everyone is convinced that human beings are the cause of climate

change or global warming, and that is where the focus has always been wrong in this debate—always looking for someone to blame. People must accept, however, that there are changes, be they part of a natural cycle such as the ice ages in the past or relatively recent ones. Scientists have shown us over the years that the poles were once beautifully forested areas. Our deserts were the same. Our mountains were once at the bottom of the sea. Putting it in a very simple way, we know changes occur in climate and land forms for many reasons. Changes will occur, but we must address them, learn to minimise them and adapt to them.

It is not necessary to know who broke the eggs to recognise the mess and clean it up, although it certainly helps if you can minimise the mess. We are a relatively small population on this planet, and especially here in Queensland we are a very minor player in the scheme of things. But we cannot stop playing our part. We are already experiencing change in this the driest continent in the world. Again, whether it be man-made or cyclic, we must do our part. This is an incredibly difficult topic on which to get consensus. Everybody has a theory. Everybody with a scientific degree differs in some way to someone else's scientific data. Everyone has a solution, and they are all different. There have been some pretty dramatic solutions put forward, and I read of one only a few days ago. It was about creating fake volcanic eruptions because it was believed that it could help combat global warming according to a new US study. These volcanic eruptions could significantly offset future warming and provide additional time to reduce dependence on fossil fuels according to Tom Wigley of the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, the author of the study.

He proposed a two-pronged approach to stabilising climate with injections of climate-cooling sulfates into the atmosphere like those produced in volcanic eruptions combined with cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gases, as most members would know, are gaseous components of the atmosphere that contribute to the greenhouse gas effect. Although uncertainty exists about exactly how earth's climate responds to these gases, global temperatures are rising. Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapour—believe it or not, water vapour. They also include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone—all naturally occurring.

However, certain human activities add to the levels of most of these naturally occurring gases. The question must be asked: just how much does human activity add to the naturally existing greenhouse gases? I tried to find the answer to that question and I found this statement—

Note that it is not really possible to assert that a certain gas causes a certain percentage of the greenhouse effect, because the influences of the various gases are not additive.

In other words, it cannot be calculated, but it is known. According to the global warming trend, greenhouse gases from industry and agriculture also play a major role. One thing we know is that we have to do something. We were always told that the depletion of the ozone layer is a big threat to us. The dire consequences that we face because of that has been hanging over our heads. I refer to another piece of information that I have found, which states—

Note that ozone depletion has only a minor role in greenhouse warming, though the two processes often are confused in the popular media.

We need to ensure that the media stops sensationalising and simply gives us the truth.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (6.00 pm): It is my privilege to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Nicklin and in support of the amendments brought to the House by the government. Climate change is not new and it is not in dispute. The phenomenon was first recognised by Professor Roger Ravelle at Harvard through work that commenced in 1957. Professor Ralph Summy was talking about climate change at the University of Queensland as early as 1968.

It is fair to say that for some years there was genuine scientific debate about whether climate change was happening and the extent to which human actions were contributing to it. Years ago, regardless of that continuing scientific debate, the Queensland government began to act. In 1999 we commenced a process of banning tree clearing. Earlier this year, we held a major conference on climate change. It was always the right thing to act as we did, even when there was room for scepticism.

But in 2006, the debate on climate change is over. The year 2005 was the hottest year on record in Australia—1.09 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average. That increase in temperature is even more significant because it happened outside an El Nino event. Today, the official position of the Australian Greenhouse Office—hardly a progressive, groundbreaking organisation—is that scientific debate about the existence of global warming and whether it is caused by human action is over. Today, the scientific discussion is not about whether or not it is happening; it is about just how fast it is kicking in.

Given this consensus among the smart people in the scientific community and clearly among the smart people—that is the Labor side and today the Independents in this parliament—I thought I would ask myself just where the members of the Queensland coalition are on this issue. They are not here to tell me, so I thought I would take a trip down memory lane and look at their public statements on the matter. What a journey that was!

On 2 June 2000, well after the Queensland government had commenced action, the then shadow minister for mines and energy, Mr Seeney, took a firm position on the issue. When the then federal environment minister, Robert Hill, proposed greenhouse gas abatement measures for coal-fired power stations, Mr Seeney put out a press release calling for a 'rational approach to greenhouse'. In the release he stated—

Queensland would be a massive loser if there was a clear commitment by the Commonwealth to cut greenhouse gas abatement only where measures did not harm Australia's trade competitiveness.

Mr Seeney went on to slam Queensland's 13 per cent gas target, stating that all Mr Beattie would achieve with his bid to send a message to the world and the Labor Left would be to enforce higher power prices for Queenslanders. That is where he was in 2000.

I then skipped forward a few years to 2004. In April of that year in a debate about vegetation management Mr Rowell, who is no longer with us, raised a really hoary old chestnut. He suggested that a justification for clear-felling forests was that there was now some evidence that rainforests were acting not as carbon sinks but rather, as the trees died, they were contributing to carbon emissions and, therefore, escalating the greenhouse effect.

I will move on. On 9 August 2006, long after even the federal government recognised that climate change was on, the Queensland Nationals were still out. The then Nationals leader, Mr Springborg, said in the House—

Climate change has been happening for millions of years around the world. It happens naturally and mankind may have an influence over climate change. To the extent that that is the case, the jury is still out.

On the same day Mr Rickuss was right there beside him. He stated—

Climate change is still a debatable point.

On 31 August, the *Courier-Mail* reported—

It is hard to know what opposition leader Lawrence Springborg thinks about climate change. There is no mention of it on his internet home page.

The bottom line is that there is no longer any scientific debate about whether climate change is happening. The only surprise is just how fast it is occurring. This is the biggest issue that is facing our civilisation and the National Party still does not even agree that it is on.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak to this motion and to the amendment that was moved by the Premier. The community has always expressed concerns about quality of life issues. One of those issues has been climate change—the warming of the environment, temperature increases and their impact on quality of life. A Queensland Conservation Council document states—

Climate change means a change in rainfall patterns across the State, a dramatic rise in average temperatures and more severe weather conditions. These changes will fundamentally alter our way of life by changing the environmental conditions upon which we depend.

I am sure those comments encapsulate people's concerns in general about their future and that of their families. Equally, there are those who dismiss the entire notion of global warming as climatic cycles. However, I believe that, as time goes on, more and more people are seeing that there have been significant changes in temperature, in the cycle of wet seasons and dry seasons, and are taking much more notice of information that is available to them.

Major industry is usually the centre of criticism for greenhouse gases, along with motor vehicle use and power stations. I found an article on nuclear power titled 'Nuclear power: no solution to climate change' very interesting. It states—

There are significant constraints on the growth of nuclear power, such as its high capital cost and, in many countries, lack of public acceptability. As a method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, nuclear power is further limited because it is used almost exclusively for electricity generation, which is responsible for less than one third of global greenhouse gas emissions.

I think that is an important point to note in the current climate where we have a Prime Minister who is pushing nuclear power quite significantly. We need to have an Australia-wide debate on the issue to ensure that the true facts of nuclear power—its risks and advantages—are properly advised of and that people are properly informed.

In an article in today's *Gladstone Observer*, Lee McIvor presented an audit of industries in my electorate. I would have to say that most of those industries are working to reduce both their greenhouse and other gaseous emissions. I refer to the editorial by the editor of the *Gladstone Observer*, Mat Ovenden, in relation to that article. It states—

While Australia has been targeted for not signing the agreement—

that is the Kyoto agreement—

it's often ignored that our country is among the leaders in developing greener industries.

It would be very easy to sign a piece of paper so Australia could be seen by the rest of the world as responding to the global warming issue.

It seems everyone has a theory about the future doom of our planet.

And it also seems there are very few people that agree on how severe it is.

One week we've got 10 years to live, another week we've got 100 years to live and another week the whole global warming theory is plastered as an over-exaggeration.

I don't for a second agree with the latter, but until everyone can agree on the effect industry is having on global warming, no outcomes or cooperation will be achieved.

Despite the propaganda, signing the Kyoto Protocol will do nothing for Australia, particularly Central Queensland.

And while Australia has been targeted for not signing the agreement, it's often ignored that our country is among the leaders in developing greener industries.

Our time and money should be spent on continuing to develop these technologies as opposed to sitting in boardrooms, debating whose signature appears on the agreement.

Our responsibility is to make decisions that benefit our community, our children and their children. I reiterate Mat's closing sentiment: we need to actively work for achievable solutions, and not merely discuss theories and blame others.

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (6.10 pm): In my first speech I indicated that as a member of parliament one of my priorities was to contribute to progressive environmental policy. Firstly, I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Nicklin. I also place on the record my absolute disgust that nobody from the Liberal Party or the National Party is here for this debate.

Mrs Sullivan: Even One Nation is here.

Ms JONES: I will make sure that the electors of Ashgrove are aware that the Liberal Party did not even bother to turn up.

Mr Foley: The whole of One Nation is here.

Ms JONES: I take the interjections of honourable members. In my view, climate change is one of the biggest challenges confronting Australia and our state. In recent times, we have seen significant growth in both public awareness and the desire of Queenslanders—except for Liberal Party members—to be more environmentally responsible by saving water and helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Just last Sunday, I joined around 100 local residents at the inaugural Butterfly Festival in Woolcock Park. The Butterfly Festival was a great family day with lots of interactive activities for kids and even parents to learn more about the rehabilitation of our local waterways and environment. We also got our hands dirty planting butterfly friendly plants along the banks of Ithaca Creek, which runs through both the electorate of the minister for local government and member for Mount Coot-tha and my electorate.

Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, we have seen no leadership on climate change at a national level. The Howard government, as it does with so many issues, has put it in the too-difficult basket. Once again, the responsibility has fallen on state governments to implement policy to address national problems—that is, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling climate change.

I am proud to be a part of the Beattie government, which has positioned Queensland as a world leader in climate research and application. Our Queensland Greenhouse Strategy, the investments we have made in clean coal technology and climate research and development put our state at the forefront in our country. Last term, this government delivered on a 2004 election commitment by introducing legislation controlling tree clearing and broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation. We did this despite the National Party voting against it en bloc.

During the recent state election, one of our re-election commitments was to strengthen the state's leadership in climate change by establishing the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. The centre will harness the scientific knowledge and expertise of officers from the Department of Natural Resources and Water, the Department of Mines and Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. The centre's immediate responsibilities will be to finalise the government's Climate Smart Adaptation Action Plan and progress outcomes of the 2006 Climate Change Summit convened by the Premier in July, such as the Biodiesel Industry Action Plan and clean coal technology.

As a multiagency organisation, the centre will bring a whole-of-government focus to the vital issues of climate change and its impacts on all sections of the community and the economy, as well as the environment. The Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence will also engage with national and international researchers, ensuring Queensland benefits from the global research agenda on climate change, including the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology.

Another key area where this government has made a significant contribution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is through our investment in public transport, in particular, the new busways—

Mr Reeves: Hear, hear!

Ms JONES:—I was waiting for that—and the additional rolling stock for Queensland Rail services. Under the direction of the minister for public works, we have also seen the reduction of large cylinder passenger vehicles in Q-Fleet. Four-cylinder vehicles now represent more than 40 per cent of the fleet compared to around only 10 per cent when the government was first elected.

This government has a very strong record on environmental policies and tackling climate change. However, as the Premier said earlier, the only way we are going to make some real changes in Australia is if we have bipartisan support and a national government that is actually willing to get its hands dirty and solve the problem. At the moment, it is wiping its hands as it has done with housing and disability services.

A government member: Where are they?

Ms JONES: Exactly; where are they? The view of the Liberal Party and the National Party is evident by the fact that they did not bother to turn up today. Once again, it is left to the Labor Party to do all the important things—

A government member: And the Independents.

Ms JONES: And the Independents. I must acknowledge those across the benches. It is up to us to look after the important issues such as the environment, disability services, housing, emergency services and everything else that we stand up for.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the One Nation member for Tablelands, and I say that because of a comment that was made earlier.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (6.15 pm): I am pleased to speak to the motion moved by the member for Nicklin tonight. I also note that not one member of the coalition, Liberal or National, is present in the House tonight.

The risks attributed to climate change are more than significant. Some warnings can be described as cataclysmic. We hear about flooded coastlines, inundated cities, devastated industries, spreading deserts, food shortages, even more severe cyclones, massive migration of entire populations and so on, which are all possible results of climate change. Most recently, the costs have been pegged at around \$9 trillion. I doubt that anyone can say with any certainty how much of that is hard science and how much is guesstimating. However, what I believe is certain is the need for this state and this country to move enthusiastically to embrace renewable energy supplies and to sever our reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels such as coal and oil. We should simply not entertain the idea of uranium as a power source.

Going renewable will be a far simpler and easier process than some would have us believe. Renewable energy is extremely well proven and understood. It covers a range of options, including the most popular ones which are hydro, solar and wind generation. All of those methods of power generation are in place and working well in many countries around the world. For example, Europe is planning to have 22 per cent of its energy coming from renewable sources by 2010, which is barely three years away. Sweden already generates 48 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources, mostly hydro, and by 2010 it expects that figure to reach 60 per cent.

I think it is time to put the tired old arguments against renewable power generation out to pasture. In my electorate, the wind generation facility near Ravenshoe has many years of solid performance under its belt. More significantly, sadly the massive Tully Millstream hydrofacility which was proposed for my electorate in the mid-1990s was never developed. The particular combination of catchments, river courses and so on, plus its location in the wettest part of Australia, make the Tully Millstream an exceptional proposition. That has been proven in the multimillion-dollar studies that were completed when this project was being seriously considered a decade ago. This proposal should be revisited, as it is beyond doubt that it can produce 500 megawatts of base load power from the clean green and renewable hydrogeneration process. This is more important than ever before because of the climate change issues that we are now facing.

In my opinion, there is no reason in the world for this nation to go nuclear. The Great Dividing Range runs down the east coast not only of Queensland but also Australia, and it would provide us with many potential dam and hydrogeneration sites. We also have literally unlimited solar generation possibilities, especially on the inland side of the same mountain range. Solar is a proven technology that is undergoing constant progress in terms of improving efficiency and reducing costs. I have not even addressed emerging technologies such as hot rock and hot air towers.

In the face of those options which offer win-win solutions, there is no justification for the Prime Minister to raise the spectre of nuclear power. Nor is there any reason for the Premier to be spruiking for clean coal technology. There is no such thing as clean coal. All we are really talking about is making a dirty product a little bit less dirty. Surely this state can come up with better answers than that.

Instead, under the Beattie government we are opening up more and more coalmines, not only to fuel existing power stations here but also for export by the shipload into the Northern Hemisphere. The government collects its royalties on every tonne while at the same time it destroys the economic future of Queensland families and communities with arbitrary land clearing bans, which it tries to convince us will help control greenhouse gas emissions. One wonders if these bans were in exchange for the continued plundering of coal. Meanwhile, the Beattie government tries to make average Queenslanders feel guilty about their normal day-to-day activities while spending millions trying to make coal clean. A cigarette, whether filtered or unfiltered, is still a cigarette and the same goes for coal.

I think one of the main problems in coming to grips with climate change is the hypocrisy that surrounds it. Just yesterday we heard the Premier compare nuclear and coal-fired power stations. He spoke about how coal-fired power stations use less water; he spoke about how nuclear stations could pump hot water on to the reef. The impression that he created was that coal-fired power stations are sweet little butterfly-friendly places. It is a pity that he did not mention the hundreds of tonnes of pollutants that are being pumped up into the air through the stations' chimneys and into the atmosphere at the same time.

Time expired.

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (6.20 pm): It is my great pleasure to stand in support of the motion as proposed to be amended by the Premier. Queensland has led Australia with early action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Queensland's remnant vegetation protection policy, as well as our existing programs such as the 13 per cent gas scheme and our major investments including coal technology, show that Queensland has done more than any other state to ensure Australia's international credibility in meeting its 2012 target and beyond.

Queensland's 13 per cent gas scheme is driving energy investment in the state and is delivering the environmental advantages we intended when we announced the scheme as part of the Cleaner Energy Strategy in 2000. The scheme, developed to diversify the generation fuel mix and reduce the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in Queensland, obliges retailers and other liable parties to source at least 13 per cent of the electricity they supply from gas-fired generation. I can report that there are nine generators holding accreditation for 11 power stations and between them these generators have gas-fired generation capacity of around 1,600 megawatts which have created around 5.25 million gas electricity certificates, which equates to 5.25 million megawatt hours of gas-fired electricity.

Queensland is on the front foot. We have embraced lower emission generation and actively encouraged investment in it. Six years ago the 13 per cent gas policy was announced to focus on the uptake of gas. Our commitment led to the largest gas exploration and development catalyst ever seen on the east coast of Australia. As I told the House this week—and it is a story worth repeating—we have developed a competitive and thriving market for lower emission generation.

While the federal government's recent announcement of funding for 100 megawatts of low emissions generation in Queensland is welcome, it is a little late in coming. We are grateful in any event.

We have already developed 1,600 megawatts of gas-fired generation—16 times what the federal government is proposing. This includes the 230 megawatt power station at Townsville, the 385 megawatt power station at Swanbank E and the 450 megawatt Braemar Power Station.

The growth in gas-fired generation initiated by our 13 per cent scheme shows no sign of abating, with more than 1,500 megawatts of gas-fired generation projects in the pipeline. The economic benefits of this gas policy are impressive; so too are the environmental benefits. I am told that this has the potential to reduce Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions by 26 million tonnes over the policy's 15 year time frame and that is equivalent to more than 400,000 cars off the road over that period.

As well, a world-first demonstration power plant proposed by the government-owned Stanwell Corporation outside Rockhampton has taken a major step forward. As I informed the House earlier today, Stanwell has launched the environmental impact study phase of this groundbreaking initiative. If it meets EIS requirements, the ZeroGen project will be the first in the world to integrate the technologies of coal gasification and carbon capture and storage to produce baseload electricity with low CO₂ emissions. It could capture and store up to 420,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year and that is akin to taking 93,000 cars off the road. ZeroGen is a significant project for national and international power and coal industries. Up to 700 jobs will be created in the construction phase and up to 150 permanent jobs during its operating life. This project has the potential to achieve deep cuts in CO₂ emissions.

As previous members who have spoken tonight have heartily supported the motion and the amendment as proposed, it is utterly disgraceful that the 25 members of the opposition, the National Party and the Liberal Party, have not had the decency to even be present in the chamber whilst this debate is taking place. They are actively opposed to any greenhouse gas emission initiatives being taken by this government. It is disgraceful.

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to, viz—

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 and further notes the steps already being undertaken by the State Government.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.27 pm to 7.30 pm.

MARINE PARKS (GREAT SANDY) ZONING PLAN

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (7.30 pm): I move—

That the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006 (Subordinate Legislation No. 229 of 2006), tabled in the Parliament on 11 October 2006, be disallowed.

The Great Sandy Marine Park extends from Baffle Creek just north of Bundaberg to Double Island Point in the south near Tin Can Bay and wraps around Fraser Island. The park encompasses almost 6,000 square kilometres and absorbs the existing Woongarra and Hervey Bay marine parks.

The marine environment supports a diverse range of activities including fishing, whale watching and turtle nesting. A zoning plan setting out how this marine environment would be managed was announced in April 2006 and took effect on 31 August 2006. It was sneakily put through during the election campaign. The draft plan was released in 2005 and proved very divisive, fuelling conflict between commercial and recreational fishermen in the Hervey Bay area while recreational fishermen in the Bundaberg area staged a number of protests during the state election campaign.

The zoning plan has been on the drawing board for years. A 25-person working group of local representatives, including commercial and recreational fishing representatives, tourism industry stakeholders and local council representatives, to name but a few, was set up in 2002 to advise the state government. This group was disbanded in June 2004.

The Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan identifies five different zones within the marine park and the level of protection for each zone. Green zones, or marine national park zones, provide the highest level of protection. They are 'look but do not take' areas where activities such as fishing and collecting are banned. There are yellow or conservation park zones. They have a high level of protection. Commercial fishing is banned, recreational fishing is limited to one line and one hook per person except when trolling and crabbing is limited to four devices per person. Blue or general use zones are where most activities are permitted, although permits are required for some activities—for example, aquaculture and harvest fishing for aquarium fish.

Habitat protection zones, which are dark blue, is where most activities are permitted but trawling is banned. There is also a buffer zone, which is olive green, around Wolf Rock, which is similar to the green zone but allows trolling or top line fishing with lures only. There are also designated areas generally to manage marine park issues that are relevant only in a specific area or at a specific time of the year—for example, turtle nesting or shorebirds roosting. Examples of designated areas include the Mon Repos turtle protection and monitoring areas, which set out the entry and use provisions, while in turtle protection areas trawling is banned between 1 November each year to 31 January the following year.

The largest designated area is the Great Sandy designated area, which incorporates the Great Sandy Strait and Tin Can Bay Inlet. Commercial fishing is permitted, recreational is fishing permitted and they can use three lines and up to six hooks. In the draft plan, recreational fishers were to be limited to one hook and one line, so the change to the final plan was in response to the pressure from recreational fishers who claimed that they were discriminated against by that particular ruling. Also, a number of go-slow areas have been established which are aimed at protecting turtles and dugongs from boat strike.

The view of the tourism industry in the Great Sandy Marine Park, which employs about 15,000 Queenslanders and more than a million people from around the world visit the area every year, is important. Ten per cent of Queensland's total number of domestic and international tourists each year visit the Great Sandy Marine Park area for tourism purposes. This information was sourced from the Beattie government media release of 18 April 2006.

Fraser Island Defenders Organisation honorary project officer, John Sinclair, described the marine park as a 'lose, lose situation' in a letter to the editor of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* on 28 April 2006. Fraser Coast charter boat operator Paul Dolan, who takes tourists out for catch-and-release fishing, including to two of the newly designated green zones near Duck Island and Little Woody Island, says that his business may have to close. In the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* on 19 May 2006 he stated—

My life is in the green zones where they want to ban fishing. I run a strict catch and release policy. The evidence is in my log books but it doesn't seem to matter.

In an enlightening article in the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* on 17 February 2005, whale watching operator Jason Brigden, who was a member of the working group that spent three years advising the government on the Great Sandy Marine Park plan, described the consultation process as a joke and described the draft plan as 'so flawed environmentally, morally and economically that you wonder if anything we say and write is going to be acknowledged properly.'

The Fraser Coast South Burnett Regional Tourism Board also prepared a detailed submission in March 2005 in response to the draft Great Sandy Marine Park plan in which it expressed disappointment that the working group was disbanded. In a submission dated 11 March 2005 the board stated—

This has resulted in a plan which does not take into account the need of all stakeholders and specifically tourism operators and visitors to the Fraser Coast.

What are the concerns of the recreational fishing industry? The proposal has angered recreational fishermen throughout the Wide Bay region. The regulatory impact statement for the draft Great Sandy Marine Park plan pointed out that 75 per cent of visitors and people moving to Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait region claim that access to recreational fishing is one of the reasons for moving there, while 15 per cent of these people claimed that it is their sole reason for visiting, or moving to, the area. This regulatory impact statement also quotes a 2001 report that estimated recreational fishers spent more than \$100 million on accommodation each year and a further \$38 million a year on fishing related items such as fuel, tackle, bait and safety gear.

Sunfish Fraser Coast chairman, Rob Watkins, has raised the question about anglers knowing where they are in relation to the new zones. In the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* of 6 September 2006 he stated—

There are many people on the Fraser Coast who just go out and fish in canoes and they will not have any idea whether they are breaking the law or not.

The manager of Hervey Bay bait and tackle shop Fisherman's Corner, Ray Ozich, told the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* on 19 May 2006—

People are talking about selling their boats and moving on ... People love coming to Hervey Bay for fishing ... People thrive on fishing here but they will not return if we put obstacles in their way and stop them enjoying themselves.

In the *NewsMail* of 25 August 2006, Bundaberg amateur fisherman Bob Pope reflected the views of many recreational fishermen when he said—

I've been fishing here for the past 12 years and now I have to stop. These politicians are either idiots, or they are taking note of idiots, there is no commonsense in the plan.

In a letter to the Queensland coalition in August 2006 Don Robinson, the director of Tackle World in Bundaberg, outlined a series of concerns held by recreational anglers and families about changes to fishing zones between Burnett Heads and Elliott Heads. Mr Robinson pointed out that a large portion of the area between Burnett Heads and Elliott Heads is virtually a natural green zone because of the rocky shoreline that makes fishing very difficult. Barolin Rocks is the safest area and where most people fish, and that is now closed. Burkitt's Reef is the only inshore reef in the area and is now totally closed. Mr Robinson stated—

These two closures, plus the closure of Hoffman's Rocks because of the way the yellow zone is calculated, means that there are now no safe accessible inshore reef areas for families in this area to go fishing.

I have spoken to families and seniors who love to go fishing in that area. This plan has left them with just an inaccessible area to go fishing in. In these places, they could hardly crawl through the vegetation to get down to the water's edge and then, when they did get to the water's edge, there were massive black rocks everywhere that an older person or a family would have difficulty clambering over. However, these other areas I have mentioned that were ideal and safe for people to fish in have been closed off. It is a tragedy to be doing this to families. It is taking away the social benefit to families, retirees and seniors who like to throw a line in and have reasonable access to the area in which they have put their life savings and where they wish to retire.

Mr Robinson pointed out that a public meeting of more than 100 recreational anglers and families on 22 August 2006 moved a motion which was unanimously carried. This motion stated—

This meeting demands that the State Government puts a moratorium on the implementation of the Great Sandy Marine Park Northern Section until the Zoning Plan is revised with true consultation with all stakeholders using genuine science.

I now move to the concerns of the commercial fishing industry. During the state election campaign, commercial fisherman Brett Fuchs confronted the Premier about the impacts of the Great Sandy Marine Park on his business. He said that the new fishing green zones were taking 30 to 40 per cent of his business away. That was in the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* on 6 September. In the same paper on 18 April this year, commercial fisherman Wayne Fuchs predicted the zoning would put some skippers out of business, while the Queensland Seafood Industry Association Urangan branch president, Des Finlay, said that they would be asking the state government to enter into a compensation scheme similar to what was done in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park area by the Commonwealth government. But we all know that this government does not pay compensation—we know that from the government's most recent act in the parliament—if a marine park is put into place. So no such scheme has been developed.

Urangan Fisheries spokesman William Fitzsimmons told the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* in April this year that he feared the zones would restrict the amount of fresh seafood being sold. He said—

Fishermen won't be catching as much so we will have to start importing to keep prices level.

There are also concerns from the fishing industry about go-slow zones. Both commercial and recreational fishermen are worried about the impact of new go-slow zones in the Great Sandy Straits. Sunfish executive officer David Bateman told ABC news in February last year—

The problem with it is that those shallow areas can be rough at times and anglers in small boats tend to have to travel at a certain speed to keep their nose up so they don't get swamped, so to go slow, it creates a very dangerous situation and it's not very safe for the people in the boats.

Writing in the August 2006 edition of *The Queensland Fisherman* magazine, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association president, Mr Neil Green, stated that he had explained to fisheries minister, Tim Mulherin, how the go-slow zones would affect the profitability and sustainability of a range of fisheries in the area and had the potential to make some operations unviable. Mr Green said that he—

... explained that fishermen in this area need to travel on the plane to find fish, run their crab pots, etc, as they are dependent on working in shallow waters and can only access these fishing grounds on the top of the tide. This limits them to only a few hours of the tide to cover these areas efficiently.

Mr Green went on to state—

... the Environmental Protection Agency marine park management division could not tell us why the go slow zones were being implemented. The turtle expert informed us there wasn't any evidence that there was a lot of turtle activity in these go slow areas but they were being implemented as a precautionary measure to deter fishers transiting through shallow areas of the Great Sandy Strait.

Mr Green said—

Mr Mulherin was very concerned about the impact this may have on commercial fishing in the area and made immediate arrangements for me to meet with his relevant Departmental officers to go through the extensive impact document that QSLA had put together about the zones.

It would be interesting to hear Mr Mulherin's view, as I have not noticed that he has said anything publicly about the Great Sandy Marine Park area or stood up for the fishing industry that he is supposed to represent.

During the 2006 state election campaign, the coalition committed to overhauling the Great Sandy Marine Park plan if we were elected to ensure that it had broad community support and community ownership. The plan was to be revised and a new plan introduced within six months if we had been elected. We said that we did not need to reinvent the wheel—that there were a lot of good things within that plan—but that all these other issues that everyone from every single industry is so unhappy with are the issues that needed to be fixed. When we see the serious problems faced by the recreational fishers, particularly in the Bundaberg area, we realise the faults that lie within this plan. They could be so easily fixed if we disallowed this tonight and set about reviewing the plan and fixing these problems over the next six months.

The coalition would have ensured that the marine park plan was developed by the community for the community, not imposed upon the community by Brisbane based bureaucrats. The coalition committed to forming a new working group of local representatives to ensure that the plan had broad community support and an appropriate balance between protecting the environment and ensuring the marine park could be used and enjoyed by locals and visitors now and into the future. The coalition also committed to developing an assistance scheme for the commercial fishing industry to offset any adverse impacts and potential loss of fishing rights as a result of the marine park plan.

Here is a chance to get this very important plan right and fix these problems that I identified. Our arguments show that most of the changes that are required have been clearly identified. This disallowance motion gives members of this parliament the opportunity to get it right for the community once and for all.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (7.45 pm): I congratulate the shadow primary industries minister for moving this disallowance motion before the House. It shows that he is a level-headed politician who will listen to the people, and I have great pleasure in seconding the motion.

Why does this Labor government hate the recreational and commercial fishing industry? The government has flogged the recreational and commercial fishing industry for the last eight years, and the pain and hurt does not seem to stop. The current zoning plan for the Great Sandy Strait Marine Park is a comprehensively flawed document and has upset many local residents and businesspeople whose views have not been properly considered by the Beattie Labor government.

As mentioned by the shadow primary industries minister, Labor scrapped a working group in June 2004 which involved recreational and commercial fishing representatives, tourism representatives and council representatives, to name just a few, and then imposed a plan on the local community that does not seem to have the support of anyone. It does not have that vital ingredient—community ownership. As a result, a range of excessive, irrational decisions have been made, such as the closure of two great recreational fishing places—Barolin Rock and Burkitt's Reef—and we may as well add Hoffman's Rocks to that as well. They are 100 per cent closed thanks to Labor.

I have had a number of discussions with keen local fishers who are obviously upset by these closures, including Don Robinson, an important and influential spokesperson for recreational fishers in the Burnett and Bundaberg areas. He is the owner and operator of a local fishing shop. Don was on the advisory body which was supposed to help the Labor government devise its fish or no-fish zones. The government ignored the advice of that body and structured the process so that decisions were made on ideology rather than science. This is a common theme for this government; it is a government driven by ideology rather than level-headed science.

Don was shocked to learn that the question being asked of the scientists consulted by the government was: 'We are going to close down this area to fishing. How do we go about it?' It was a very presumptive question, one would think. Instead, the questions should have been: 'What effect does fishing have on the environment? Is recreational and commercial fishing sustainable in this particular area? Why are we thinking of closing this area to fishing? What effect will fishing have on the biodiversity of fish species?'

One of Don's comments that stood out for me was that once a location was identified as being a good fishing spot it was closed down. That was the one that was closed down. The policy of fishing closures worked out by this government is best described as willy-nilly. This policy of willy-nilly fishing closures by Labor has caused a devastating impact on the local tourism market and also the local businesses from the small bakehouse owner through to the local takeaway tackle shop. Don believes that the boat ramp at Bargara, which is a beautiful area to visit, may as well be closed down because there is nowhere good to fish.

In a recent letter to the editor in the Bundaberg *NewsMail* on 30 August 2006 Don Robinson expressed his disappointment about the proposed closures in the Bundaberg region and made comment to the then Labor candidate for Bundaberg, who stated that more than 1,000 submissions had been made on the proposed fishing bans. Don pointed out that the candidate did not state that they were all totally ignored and there were virtually no changes to the original proposals before those 1,000 submissions were made. Don went on to make further comment that at the public meeting held on 22 August, which I attended, not one of the 109 concerned anglers present at the meeting said that they had been consulted and only three had made submissions. It really makes one wonder where those 1,000 submissions allegedly came from. Don speculated that probably 95 per cent or more came from one or two extreme organisations that helped draft the original proposal. Don also pointed out that, although there has been comment made by Labor that only four per cent had been locked away, which does not sound like much at all, if that four per cent is totally directed to the best and safest fishing areas with none to the non-fishing areas, it is probably locking away 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the fishing.

Don's final message to the Labor Party is that many people live in and retire in this area because of the lifestyle which includes easily accessible fishing in safe areas. If a grandfather wanted to take his grandchild rock fishing along our coastline, there is no safe place for them to go. Our rocky coastlines make it almost impossible to fish safely anywhere except at Barolin Rocks and Hoffman's Rocks. Our only inshore reef is Burkitts Reef. All three of these areas have been closed. So in reality Don is saying that it is not four per cent of the safe fishing spots that have been closed; it is 100 per cent. The coalition has agreed that the bans on these fishing spots will be scrapped if we return to power. I call on the Labor Party tonight to agree to make sensible changes to this legislation and to vote for this disallowance motion.

Peter Nowland, one of the many keen recreational fishers in the Bundaberg-Burnett region, expressed his disappointment in the Bundaberg *NewsMail* recently that he will no longer be able to take his young grandson fishing off Burkitts Reef due to the Great Sandy Marine Park fishing area rezoning. Mr Nowland states—

The government is closing off the reef. We will have to venture further afield. There will not be many fishing areas left for Bargara people because a lot cannot get out to the artificial reef. If the government closed these areas down for a period of, say, a couple of years and then opened them up it would be okay, but they are closing them down permanently.

Another man to comment on the zones in the Bundaberg *NewsMail* is Bargara Beach Dive Centre operator Kelton Green, who commented that no fishing zones were a good idea but thought that the state government had pushed the barrow too far with the Great Sandy Marine Park bans. He said, 'The green zones are a good idea but I think they may have gone just a little too far too quick.'

The Bundaberg *NewsMail*, I might add, has quite extensively reported on these closures. I congratulate it on this coverage and the opportunity it has given many local fishing enthusiasts and professionals to speak out against these closures.

A Queensland coalition government would have scrapped Labor's flawed Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan and developed a new plan that would have broad community support and community ownership. The coalition knows just how vital it is that all different stakeholders get together to develop a plan that provides an appropriate balance between protecting the environment and ensuring this wonderful marine park can still be used and enjoyed by locals in the future. A new working group of local representatives needs to be established. It would be tasked with the development of a new Great Sandy

Marine Park zoning plan that has broad community support. We do not need any of these sham consultations. The current plan needs to be revised in close consultation with the working group and a new zoning plan that has community ownership must be introduced.

Tonight I call upon the government to reverse the beach fishing ban in Bargara because it is not a decision based on science, the government did not meaningfully consult with the community and it does not recognise the devastation and impact that this will have on tourism, families and also children's health.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (7.55 pm): Thomas Paine once observed that the trade of government has always been monopolised by the most ignorant and rascally individuals of mankind. Thank goodness the people of Queensland have got the coalition pegged. Thank goodness they have recognised that this ignorance and rascally behaviour in which they indulge and call opposition is not fit not merely for government but barely for opposition. Today we have seen the most disgraceful abdication of the field in the most important areas of government. A little earlier tonight—and I will not re-cover the ground—we saw the shameful display of the Liberal and National parties not participating and not even being in the room while this parliament considered climate change. Disgraceful!

When I saw the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South tonight I was going to come in here and say that that is the most disgraceful thing I have ever seen, but the coalition members trumped themselves a little earlier at 5.30 by moving something even more disgraceful. The cowardice with which they began the evening's procession has now been crowned with mendacity of such elaborate, skilful and generous size that we could rest in its shade. They come here tonight and say that they seek to support both the commercial fishing industry and the amateur fishing industry and preserve environmental values by scrapping the marine park plan after five years of hard work and consultation. They give this little wink and nod to all parties that says, 'We are going to look after you. Don't worry, we'll look after you pros. Don't worry about that,' and yet in the same breath say, 'You amateurs, don't worry, we are going to look after you and get those pros. Sh!' The ability to talk out of both sides of their mouth and lie out of both sides of their mouth at the same time is an extraordinary capacity.

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive.

Mr O'Brien: Do you take those comments personally?

Mr HORAN: I do.

Mr McNAMARA: I am happy to withdraw if the member for Toowoomba South resents that remark.

Mr HORAN: I find those remarks personally offensive. The member knows that it is unparliamentary language. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has withdrawn.

Mr McNAMARA: Certainly if the member feels he resembles those remarks I withdraw.

Mr HORAN: In this parliament we are supposed to have an unqualified withdrawal. A smart alec comment like that is not an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr McNAMARA: I withdraw.

Mr HORAN: I ask him to withdraw it properly.

Mr McNAMARA: I withdraw. The difficulty is that this is serious business. This is about the governance of Queensland. This is about giving certainty to important industries—and they are very important industries. On 2002 figures, I recall that the commercial fishing industry in Maryborough and Hervey Bay was worth \$30 million a year. This is not a toy for the National Party—and I will not include the Liberal Party in this because I note again they are not speaking on this at all. The Liberal Party again has no position here. I guess one has to take with a grain of salt the suggestion that this is indeed a coalition position because apparently no member of the Liberal Party is prepared to stand up here tonight and publicly commit to scrapping the marine park zoning plans should they ever somehow fall into government.

But this serious business requires something a little more advanced than merely turning up and saying, 'We're going to give you what you want.' Government deserves more than that. It requires more than that. This process in which we constantly see the Liberal and National parties pretending to have a policy by simply saying, 'We'll oppose the government's policy,' is why they are in opposition, and will be for a very long time. Tonight we have not seen opposition members turn up and say, 'Here's our map. This is what we'd do.' They have not done that. They have not walked in and said, 'There aren't enough green zones and this is where we'd put them.' They have not walked in and said, 'No, the pros have got too much. We're going to take them out of this area,' because they know that that is the hard stuff that goes with governance. Mere negativity is the best they have and mere negativity is an aspiration for opposition, not governance.

The Liberals stand outside the room somewhere. The Nationals stand here tonight and say, 'There're too many green zones.' Only four per cent of this park is in a green zone, yet they have nominated all of these green zones that should go. If we go 50 kilometres north, the Great Barrier Reef

Marine Park has 33 per cent in a green zone. But do we hear those opposite squealing about that? Do we hear them say, 'Oh, no, that's got to be overturned. We can't live with that. The first thing we'll do is we'll get Canberra to change that. We'll get that pulled'? No, because totally under the heel of their Canberra masters they will cop anything. It is in fact one of my proudest achievements to stand here tonight and say that the Great Sandy Marine Park zonings allow commercial fishing a future. They allow recreational anglers access to 96 per cent of the park.

Which parts would the National Party change if it is doing the wink and nod to the greens? Will it extend the green zones? Apparently not. It is not going to be much of a marine park if there is less than four per cent of it in a green zone, but that is the wink and nod. Perhaps that might be why the Liberals are not speaking to this disallowance motion. They have a tendency to be a kind of an aqua-blue Liberal Party if they can get away with it. So standing up here and saying that we need to peel away the green zones might be a little harder for some of them.

But protecting a commercial industry that is worth as much as it is to Hervey Bay, with 700 direct jobs in that industry, is vital to my city's economy and vital to the economic health of the people whom I represent. I will not for a second cop the National Party coming in and saying, 'No, we're going to throw it all out the window—all of that consultation,' and there was tonnes of it. For National Party members to come in here and read letters to the editor and clips from the newspapers, as if that is research, shows the absolute policy light of the National Party. My God it is embarrassing!

I know very well that some of those people who were quoted are people who have worked very hard with the government through consultation in the process to get the result that is now the law, and it is a good result. Commercial fishers in Hervey Bay are pleased. They have had losses. Make no mistake: they have had pain. They have lost good solid fishing areas, but that was part of the process of saying, 'We're all going to have to give a little bit if we're going to have some environmental integrity in this final plan.' You cannot have it both ways. You cannot have a marine park that has no green zones in it. Wake up! You cannot do it. After the disgrace of not one member of the opposition having a view on global warming in the previous debate, for them to walk in here now and say, 'Oh, but we're going to have a bit of a go now about the green zones and the environmental protection of the Great Sandy Strait,' just beggars belief.

I strongly support the plan. It is a good plan. It is a plan that members of the commercial fishing industry have told me gives them certainty. They know where they can go; they know what they can work with. The idea that the opposition would like to see this plan torn up and go back to square one simply shows the complete ignorance of the opposition. It does not have any idea of what commercial certainty is worth to people with millions of dollars invested in an industry.

The suggestion that genuine amateurs are not pleased with having access to 96 per cent of the park, including the yellow conservation zones along the front of the park—and effectively, for the first time ever, having recreational fishing zones—is again ignorance. It is based on no understanding of what is actually going on. It is simply playing to the lowest common denominator looking to corral all of the elements of discontent that one can into an area and hopefully on that negative basis squeak into government. But it is a tragic and sad indictment on the overall governance of Queensland that that is the best the opposition can come up with. The opposition talks about principle. I will finish with this: Otto van Bismarck once said that when you agree with a thing in principle what you mean is that you have not got the slightest intention of carrying it out in practice. And, regretfully, that is where the opposition is tonight. I oppose the motion.

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (8.05 pm): I, too, rise to speak in support of the Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan and to oppose the disallowance motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. The Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan is made up of five zones and nine designated areas. Tonight I want to outline what those areas are. Unfortunately, I would have liked to have had with me a map of the zones so that I could point to the coloured areas and take the National Party members through it again, as they seem to need another lesson to remind them what these zones are. I will just describe them instead.

The zones represent various levels of conservation by clearly establishing what uses and what activities are appropriate to be conducted in the zones. The marine national park zone—that is the green zone that those opposite seem to be so concerned about, that is the no-take zone: you can go in but not take anything out—is less than four per cent of the total area as we have already heard. It provides the greatest level of protection where we can enjoy low-impact activities. Snorkelling and swimming are appropriate, but we cannot remove marine plants or animals or other materials. So that is not an area where you can go fishing. Buffer zones are similar to green zones but they allow for trolling. The conservation park zone provides for conservation and reasonable use and enjoyment of the marine park with some restrictions on activities such as recreational fishing and commercial netting. So that is where you go fishing; that is not where you throw your nets in to go fishing.

The habitat protection zone provides for conservation through the protection of sensitive habitats from potentially damaging activities and reasonable use where trawling is prohibited. The general use zone provides for conservation and reasonable use of the marine park with minimal restrictions on activities.

A designated area is an area set aside for special management and is in addition to the zones. The area covered by the two previously existing marine parks of Hervey Bay and Woongarra have been maintained in the Great Sandy Marine Park as designated areas. The whale management area protects whales by managing human-whale interactions and commercial whale-watching activities, and again that is only in a particular area. Many people involved in the tourism industry on the Gold Coast have been telling me that they have had a bumper whale-watching season out of the Gold Coast. There is plenty of ocean out there into which you can safely take whale-watching cruises on catamarans and different types of vessels to see whales that want to come in close enough to shore and are comfortable and happy interacting with people. But whales need to have a safe area set aside for them where they can go when they do not want that interaction or where they will be safe from too much human interaction. These are very special areas designated for specific purposes.

The turtle protection and turtle monitoring areas protect marine turtles and their habitat by limiting trawling and monitoring their interactions with humans. The Mon Repos area protects marine turtle rookeries and allows for public appreciation by managing public access. The Great Sandy area recognises the importance of fishing in the area by allowing recreational and commercial fishing activities to continue with some minimal restrictions. The go-slow area protects dugongs and turtles from boat strike by limiting boat speed. The shorebird roosting and feeding area protects shorebirds from disturbance, habitat degradation, introduced pets and predators and by managing human activities and domestic animal behaviour.

Ms Darling interjected.

Mrs REILLY: Yes, we have to look after the birds. The grey nurse shark area protects a significant habitat for the endangered grey nurse shark by managing diving and human behaviour. The fish trap area protects important Aboriginal sites from damage by managing anchoring, the removal of material and other impacting activities. So when people have all of this information in front of them—the map with the coloured zones in it—when they know where they are going and what they are allowed to do, I think they will find that they will survive and they will be able to continue their lives. The sky will not fall in, the wheels will not fall off the pram and everyone will be happy. We will have recreational pursuits and commercial fishing industries protected. Indeed, we heard the member for Hervey Bay outline what that very important sector of the Queensland economy provides.

I have to make mention that it is absolutely gobsmackingly outstanding in its nonsensical—

Ms Jarratt: Audacity

Mrs REILLY: Their audacity. I cannot think of enough words to describe the National Party trying to take the position that it would achieve better environmental outcomes out of its plans than would the Labor Party. Earlier this evening the National Party members were not even in this place to discuss climate change. This zoning plan has delivered an outcome that is a win for the environment in the Great Sandy Region.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (8.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South that the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006, which was tabled in parliament on 11 October 2006, be disallowed. Fish do not know if they are in a green or a yellow zone. They do not know if they are a recreational fish or a commercial fish. People, through the government, make the decisions and we have a responsibility to strike a balance—a balance that does not include impractical circular zones. These zones cannot be complied with and expose innocent members of the community to fines. Enforcement and fines should be last options when we have a community that respects the rules.

All Queenslanders have the democratic right to fish. Grandparents and parents have the right to pass on their fishing knowledge to their children and grandchildren. The sheer enjoyment of a family spending time together in a recreational activity is an important part of our social fabric. Recreational fishing promotes a healthy, active lifestyle that can only assist in reducing the rate of childhood obesity. Far too many of our young people are involved in antisocial behaviour. Let us replace the spray can with the rod and reel.

Consultation on these zones has been a farce. The people of Bundaberg have again been left out. Their views and their wishes have been ignored. This was no more evident than when Bundaberg's families united to join the fishing army, which is a group of dedicated, community-minded citizens who were forced to organise meetings and rallies to get their message across to the government. These meetings were well attended and provided an opportunity for people to show their frustration with the current rules and the lack of consultation. These families care for their environment and believe, with the coalition, that through true science and proper consultation we will achieve the best results, which is a balance between caring for our environment and maintaining the future recreational and commercial fishing needs of the Bundaberg community.

After Cairns, Bundaberg is the second largest fishing region in the state. It is home to a large boat-building and repair industry. The river, foreshore and ocean areas and the activities they provide are vital to the region. Fishing is vital to the economy and this hardworking industry needs security. It needs a common-sense and hand-in-glove approach by this government.

The government's last attempt at consultation was a mess. It showed the fishing people of Bundaberg that they were again being taken for granted. A hastily organised meeting scheduled to be held on Melbourne Cup day in a room that accommodates only 30 people is a poor reflection of the government's understanding of the hurt and frustration that these people are feeling. Thankfully, this meeting has now been rescheduled.

I refer to a letter from Don Robinson, the leader of the fishing army and a well-respected member of the community of Bundaberg. It states—

Dear Jack Dempsey

...

There was no fishing representative from Bundy at any stage of this review. The minister does not understand and it appears all his staff also do not understand what astronomical high tide means. It is obvious that no one has ever considered what effect there would be if the main fishing spots along our coast are closed.

It all sounds great that if you close a couple of fishing spots, then you can fish all the other areas. Perhaps the minister can come to Bundaberg and show us where we can go because the locals do not know. The rocky foreshore makes our coastline a natural green zone and it is virtually impossible to fish in all but a couple of places.

If those places are closed where do you fish?

There is nowhere. The letter states further—

Two or three selfish people who were on the consultative committee and who like to scuba dive at Barolin Rocks have conspired to close that area to recreational anglers even though anglers fish over a sandy bottom there and not over reef. It appears that Hoffman Rocks has been closed to recreational anglers unintentionally because of poor drafting of legislation and a lack of knowledge and understanding of the area and without any consultation with local anglers. Thanking you, Don Robinson.

We all want to fish and have fish in the future. I ask the government to speak to the people involved and listen to their concerns. I would also like to kindly invite the minister to come to Bundaberg and speak to the fishing community. They are not a bunch of radicals; they are caring Queenslanders who would appreciate the opportunity to welcome the minister and discuss this matter with him in a decent, honest and open way. Fishing is very important for the social and economic needs of Bundaberg. The people involved in all aspects of fishing need to be listened to. We need practical, common-sense rules that all of those involved will understand and respect.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (8.17 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006. The zoning of the Great Sandy Marine Park incorporated information gained from 1,091 public responses and seven public meetings attended by over 1,300 participants to minimise any potential social impacts associated with the introduction of a zoning plan in the region. The final zoning plan was developed to ensure ongoing access for a wide range of activities within the Great Sandy Marine Park. The types of zones and their location were selected based on negotiations with all interested parties to minimise the impacts on their particular sectors while at the same time retaining the principle of overall conservation and reasonable use within the area.

The government has listened carefully and consulted. The resulting plan strikes an excellent balance. After all, everyone is seeking the same outcome. Individuals may differ in their opinion on access to particular areas of the marine park, but they all want the same thing for this special marine area and that is the ability to preserve its natural beauty and ensure a sustainable fish stock while supporting marine based industry.

One of the common reasons that anglers gave for not fishing more often is the amount of confusing legislation stating where they can and cannot fish. The zoning plan helps simplify what anglers need to be aware of before they go fishing. The zoning plan further reduces complexity by incorporating the Woongarra and Hervey Bay marine parks into the Great Sandy Marine Park.

The Great Sandy Marine Park uses zoning definitions and colours that are consistent with the larger Commonwealth managed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and state managed coastal marine park, which stretches from the northern boundary of the Great Sandy Marine Park to the tip of Cape York.

This consistency will make it a lot easier for visiting anglers who in the past needed to be aware of a range of zoning provisions. We want to welcome and encourage recreational anglers who travel the Queensland coastlines visiting towns and sampling the local fishing attractions. Those recreational anglers in turn support the regional economies of coastal communities. Not only is recreational fishing a great Australian pastime; it is also a growing tourism drawcard.

The zones will both maintain and enhance the marine environment, which will secure ongoing social and economic benefits that will flow into the Wide Bay, Burnett and Queensland economies. The marine park has the potential to increase the number of people visiting the region, further stimulating the visitor numbers that already measure approximately one million people each year. The zoning will ensure that any increase in population is sustainable.

Given that only four per cent of the Great Sandy Marine Park constitutes complete no-take zones, anglers are not significantly restricted in accessing areas in the marine park. By implementing the Great Sandy Marine Park, the government has delivered an insurance policy that will ensure sustainable social and economic benefits for current and future generations. It ensures that successive generations of anglers and other users will benefit from this treasured natural asset. I oppose the motion.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (8.20 pm): I rise to speak to the disallowance motion regarding the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006. It should come as no surprise to members that this disallowance motion has been introduced by the member for Toowoomba South, as he is a person who actually listens to the community.

In 2005 the draft plan was first released and it stirred great discontent at that time. It stirred discontent between commercial and recreational fishers in the Hervey Bay area. During the state election campaign, Bundaberg recreational fishers demonstrated against the plan. A group of local representatives, which included commercial and recreational fishing representatives, tourism industry stakeholders and local council representatives was set up in 2002 to advise the state government. However, the group was disbanded in June 2004. Earlier today I spoke about the lack of due process and consultation that is becoming the hallmark of the Beattie government. Tonight, we see the same lack of consultation and transparency.

Members of the public and stakeholders were promised unequivocally by the Premier and others that there would be extensive community involvement when framing the plan and before the legislation was introduced to parliament. Once again, they have been let down. They feel let down by their representatives on the other side of this House who have failed to stand up for their constituents. The Premier disbanded the working group, negating any positive and informed input that it could have had. Instead, he passed on the job to his own bureaucrats.

During the election campaign, the coalition announced that it would scrap the plan and revisit the process. The coalition announced that it would reform the working group and ensure that locals would have a say in the outcomes and that their concerns would be addressed.

No recognition has been given to the financial and social impacts caused by the impost of the new zoning plan. No offers of compensation to affected commercial fishing operators have been made and, as yet, no efforts have been made to compensate recreational fishers for the loss of easily accessible and productive fishing areas.

By moving this disallowance motion, the member for Toowoomba South is meeting the coalition's commitment to have the legislation overturned. He is listening to and addressing the concerns of hundreds of local residents, industry groups and tourism operators to try to bring some balance and common sense back into the issue. Of course it is essential that we have proper management of the natural resources of this area, which stretches from Tin Can Bay to Bundaberg, and that we plan for a viable future. However, we cannot ignore the wider ramifications of this legislation.

This plan was flawed from the start and members of this House are obligated to correct it. The marine park supports a variety of activities, including fishing, whale watching and turtle nesting, which makes it even more imperative that the area is managed properly. I cannot support a flawed process or flawed legislation. I really do urge all members to support the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (8.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan 2006. In doing so, I object to the disallowance motion moved by the honourable member for Toowoomba South.

The Great Sandy Marine Park covers some 6,000 square kilometres of tidal waters and land, stretching from Double Island Point in the south to Baffle Creek in the north. It includes some of the world's most beautiful ocean areas, including the heritage listed Fraser Island, and it incorporates areas of the former Woongarra and Hervey Bay marine parks.

The purpose of the Great Sandy Marine Park is to protect and conserve marine species, ecosystems, habitats, populations and genetic biodiversity, including internationally recognised wetlands and threatened species. It also provides opportunities for access to ecologically sustainable use of the area—I emphasise ecologically sustainable use of the area—including recreational, commercial, research and traditional activities.

The park has five different zones and nine designated areas classified according to the natural values of each area with regulations covering recreational and commercial use. The zoning plan identifies different zones within the marine park, states the objectives very clearly for each zone and identifies the level of protection for the zone. The zoning plan lists the activities that can occur as of right, those for which a permit is required and those that are prohibited.

There are five different zones: the marine national park zones, the buffer zone, the conservation park zone, the habitat protection zone and the general use zone. The marine national park zones afford the greatest level of protection and are used to protect areas of high natural and ecological value. They are easily identifiable and are referred to as the 'green zones'. The conservation park zone protects

significant marine habitats. Commercial netting, trawling and harvest fishing are prohibited. Some activities are allowed. The general use zone is that area of the marine park not identified as marine national park, buffer, conservation or habitat protection zones. The general use zone aims to provide for conservation while providing opportunities for reasonable use. Most activities are permitted in this area.

In my opinion, the marine park provides users with greater protection and better clarity as they will know exactly what they can do in the park. It provides protection for the entire region, while maintaining special management practices for turtles and whales in the area covered by previous marine parks.

I believe in the importance of recreational fishing in the area. Ninety-six per cent of the area is open to recreational fishermen and that is a big win for them. The conservation movement asked for 33 per cent of the marine park to be excluded. At the moment, the government is only proposing that four per cent of the park be excluded. Recreational fishermen should be extremely pleased with that outcome.

The marine park is also important to commercial fishermen, and I understand that. The zoning plan recognises the importance of commercial fishing to the region. Commercial line fishing and netting is permitted to continue in the general use area, as well as the habitat protection zone and the Great Sandy designated areas.

What does the marine park mean for other significant parts of the Queensland economy such as tourism? Evidence from experiences throughout Australia and overseas indicate that well-managed marine parks attract visitors. The Great Sandy Marine Park incorporates and complements the significant tourism drawcards in the region, including Fraser Island and Hervey Bay whale-watching operations and also another conservation park near Bundaberg.

The economic benefits of this zone extend far beyond tourism. The Hervey Bay and Great Sandy region is the site of some exciting new developments in sustainable aquaculture, including new marine enterprises such as scallop ranching and sea cucumber ranching. There are hatchery operations, new soft-shell crab facilities and a new aquaculture precinct being developed by the Hervey Bay City Council, I am informed, which will be home to some high-tech recirculating—which means there is no discharge—land based aquaculture operations. In fact, DPI and Fisheries recognises other plans for this region; however none of these deal specifically with aquaculture. The government has defined allowable aquaculture development types in the Great Sandy Marine Park as rack and line and sea ranching, including sea scalloping.

As I indicated previously, the economic perspective of the Great Sandy Marine Park is extremely important. Firstly, it creates a new marine park to allow the region to showcase its world-class tourism assets. In particular, with direct flights now to the Fraser Coast from Sydney, international backpacker and domestic tourism has been booming for a decade and the whale-watching Fraser and Great Sandy strait drawcard must be protected. Secondly, it has enshrined within the marine park legitimate use of the regional's significant \$70 million commercial fishing industry, including thousands of fish, scallop, crab and prawn harvesting, processing and marketing jobs. It is over 90 per cent of the marine park. The region produces world-class seafood for the export market as well as for the local and domestic markets. This very viable activity will be protected by the plan and in very large measure has been supported by industry.

Thirdly, the zoning of the park will allow the sustainable expansion of the lucrative aquaculture industry. Sea cage aquaculture would not be allowed. I will never support sea cage aquaculture in the marine park environment. Other aquaculture industry with less impact will be supported and this will ensure that the economic benefit to Queensland continues.

The combination of zones and designated areas allow for the clear definition and development of opportunities of the aquaculture industry within the Great Sandy region. Based on preliminary planning, forecasted growth of up to 1,200 jobs may be generated if opportunities for marine aquaculture like sea ranching and rack and line are maximised. Clearly this Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan is of great benefit to Queensland. It gives surety to commercial and recreational fishing. It is also of tremendous economic benefit to Queensland, and I support this plan.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (8.33 pm): I am very pleased tonight to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. I do so on the basis of balance. For reasons yet to be understood by the Queensland community, this Beattie government is dealing with yet another issue by positioning itself on the extremity of the continuum. The Nationals advocate a balanced approach in relation to environmentally and ecologically sensitive policies. It is very clear that this government is incapable of delivering a balanced approach to the environment. One only has to look at the extreme position that it has taken on vegetation management, wild rivers and, of course, the extreme environmental damage that the proposed dam at Traveston Crossing will result in.

Government members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: Why is it that this government gives lip-service to the environment but then is incapable of enacting legislation that will bring about real protection? If this Labor government were truly concerned about the environment, it would be fighting to protect the lungfish, the Mary River cod, the

Mary River turtle and the giant barred tree frog. But what has this government done to protect these listed endangered and vulnerable species? I will inform the House what this government has done. It has announced a dam site on its fragile ecosystems. It is pure hypocrisy for the members on the opposite side of this chamber to say that they are concerned for the Great Sandy Marine Park when the Great Sandy straits will be devastated by the impact of the Traveston Crossing Dam.

A government member interjected.

Mr GIBSON: Public statements that downstream flows will not be significantly affected because the estimated mean annual flow volumes are expected to be maintained at 85 per cent of the natural flow volumes misrepresent the proposed water infrastructure on downstream flows. The state government's own IQQM modelling of stream flows predicts that the annual flow volumes at Fisherman's Pocket will be reduced to 57 per cent of predevelopment flows in 55 out of the 110 study years.

I listened to the member for Ipswich wax lyrical earlier this evening about what the Australian Labor Party was doing for the environment. May I take this moment to draw to her attention and to that of other members on the opposite side of the chamber the World Commission Report on Dams which on page 77 states—

Large shallow dams in tropical and subtropical environments contribute up to 28 per cent of the global warming potential of greenhouse gas emissions.

That is right, 28 per cent. Yet did we hear them speak against the Traveston Crossing Dam when they were so concerned about the environment? No. Once again they were silent. However, I digress. Let me come back to the need for balance with our environment.

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr GIBSON: The Nationals believe strongly in introducing provisions that ensure this outcome is reached. To reach this point it is imperative that the government consult the local community. Decision makers must always avail themselves of the most relevant and accurate information.

Government members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I hear the dulcet tones of those on the opposite side of the chamber trying to speak up and yet they are saying very little. This is how they are with the environment. They make a lot of noise, but they do very little. It is essential that we have local consultation. It must be undertaken. I am sure all members would agree on this fundamental point. To its credit, the government did establish a local orientated committee in 2002 and began the process of consultation.

Mrs Sullivan: We invented public consultation.

Mr GIBSON: For a party that invented public consultation it ran away pretty quickly—as soon as it became known that several significant industries and a strong regional economy would be seriously affected. Subsequently, of course, infuriating businesspeople and inciting heightened emotions in Tin Can Bay within my electorate, the government decided that it was all too hard and pulled out of public negotiation and consultation. That is right; we see the true *modus operandi* of this Labor government: when the going gets tough it runs.

But what did it learn before it ran with its tail between its legs? The go-slow zones that the Great Sandy Marine Park recommends of only six knots will result in greater fuel consumption for commercial operators. It may interest those members on the opposite side of the chamber to know that with greater fuel consumption there will be an increase in greenhouse gases, and yet we find them silent on that again. These go-slow zones cover most of the fishing areas accessed from Tin Can Bay. Recreational fisherman are also adversely affected by this. They will be required to carry a GPS in their tinnies to ensure that they do not end up in a zone where they should not be fishing. Knowledge of the area may serve locals well, but what of the tourists? When they are out fishing, how will they know whether they are in a green zone, whether they are in a go-slow area or whether they are in any of the other designated zones under this plan? They will be required to have the wisdom of Solomon if they are to not engage in illegal activities—something that will be very difficult. Once again we see this Labor government attempting to deal with a serious issue by implementing draconian, top-down policies. The government needs to get back to public consultation, and it needs to listen to the people.

I conclude by quoting from the Monty Python movie *The Meaning of Life*. It was said, 'Fishy, fishy, fishy, fish, where can that fishy be?' If we leave it to the Labor Party, no-one will be able to answer that question. I support the disallowance motion.

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (8.40 pm): I am pleased to join the debate, although it is not really a debate that we are having tonight. The previous speaker, who was not present during any of the consultations that occurred over many years in the development of the Great Sandy Marine Park and who was not present in the last parliament, has discovered opinions about our actions that are entirely erroneous, yet he has no shame in putting them as matters of fact. The fact is that our government, the Beattie government, has proudly put in place the Great Sandy Marine Park.

Tonight we are debating how the opposition, if it had power—and thank heavens it does not—would undo the Great Sandy Marine Park. So we are the ones who are protecting the environment. It is an action of which, I have to say, I am very proud.

It should go on the record tonight that the timing of the concerns that were expressed, particularly in the Bundaberg area, to members of the opposition from several fishing people—I note some letters have been read out tonight—were in the lead-up to the last election. They were generated in that climate and were very much, I am sure, a part of the opposition's attempt to win more power and more seats in that area. Tonight the opposition is professing views that were not expressed in our extensive consultation prior to establishing the Great Sandy Marine Park or when it was brought before the House during the previous parliament.

I must also comment on the fact that the word 'balance' has been very loosely used tonight. In fact, members of the opposition have spoken about the so-called 'balance' between commercial and recreational fishing interests. There has been no mention of the tourism interests. There has been no mention of the environmental interests. The balance that had to be found was between the commercial fishing interests, the recreational fishing interests, the conservation groups in the area, the tourism interests and, underlying that, the broader community, their jobs and their future. That was the balance that we sought to find in establishing the Great Sandy Marine Park.

However, I am mindful of one thing that members of the opposition have said tonight that is true—that is, that people are not happy with the Great Sandy Marine Park. The recreational fishers looked me in the eye and told me how unhappy they were because they thought we should have been much, much tougher on the commercial fishers. Similarly, the commercial fishers were telling me they were very unhappy because most of the damage that is being done is by unbridled recreational fishing. The tourism industry is definitely unhappy because the green zones do not go far enough. When charter boat operators take tourists into the Great Sandy Strait for whale watching and the like, they do not want to be confronted by fishing boats trawling with nets behind them. The conservation movement is unhappy because having four per cent of the park in a green zone is nowhere near enough in an environment that is spectacular.

As the former environment minister, I did not do as much as I would have liked to have done if, indeed, balance was not necessary. It is a wondrous environment. As the member for Cairns, and coming so proudly as I do from a magnificent part of the state, with the Wet Tropics rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Sandy Marine Park is as good as, as valuable and as spectacular a part of the environment as any other in the state of Queensland.

The future for the communities in the Great Sandy Strait area is in tourism. It is an industry that will thrive and create more jobs. It is an industry that will become better, of course, if the environment is protected. I do not subscribe to the opposition's view that we should wait until the environment is so destroyed that there is inarguable damage and then do something about it. It is too late then. I am proud of the EPA. One of its greatest achievements in the last term of the Beattie government was to establish the Great Sandy Marine Park.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (8.45 pm): I would like to thank all of the members who have participated in this debate on the disallowance motion for the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan. I would particularly like to recognise the former minister for environment and her contribution, which was extremely important in tonight's debate.

This government honoured its commitment to create the Great Sandy Marine Park on 31 August 2006. Queenslanders can be absolutely proud of the fact that we have the most comprehensive network of marine parks in Australia. A new marine park furthers Queensland's commitment to the national representative system of marine protected areas. Queensland's commitment to a network of marine parks provides the protection for the marine environment that is needed and provides security for the industries that rely on it, as the former minister has explained.

This new marine park absorbs the previous Woongarra and Hervey Bay marine parks. At 6,000 square kilometres, it is nearly three times their size. We have created a marine park in a beautiful and unique region that attracts more than one million visitors each year. I would like to remind my colleagues of some of the significant marine values in the region.

The species of international and national conservation significance include humpback whales, the grey nurse shark, marine turtles, dugong, dolphins and false water rats. The marine park covers some of the most southerly coastal fringing reefs on the Australian mainland, and it contains extensive seagrass and mangrove communities. This important marine environment also supports a major tourism industry that brings around \$500 million each year to the Queensland economy. Of course, as we have heard tonight, commercial fishing and recreational fishing and boating are also very important industries.

A major objective for the government in declaring the marine park is to ensure the conservation and reasonable use of the area's significant marine environments. A zoning plan is the primary management tool used to achieve this objective because it manages uses and activities in the marine

park. The Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan, which commenced on 31 August 2006, does this through five different zones and nine designated areas. By using these same zones throughout state and Commonwealth managed marine parks, the government has helped reduce the complexity associated with accessing Queensland's marine environment.

The five zones in the Great Sandy Marine Park represent various levels of conservation by clearly establishing what uses and activities are appropriate within each zone. The marine national park zone, also known as a green or no-take zone, provides the greatest level of protection. The single buffer zone is similar to the green zone but allows for trolling of pelagic species. It was introduced to enhance the protection of Wolf Rock grey nurse shark habitat while minimising the impact on the recreational fishing sector.

The conservation park zone provides for conservation and reasonable use of certain areas of the marine park with restrictions on activities such as recreational fishing and commercial fishing. The habitat protection zone where trawling is prohibited provides for conservation through the protection of sensitive habitats from potentially damaging activities.

We have to balance commercial fishing interests with the interests of the large number of local and visiting recreational fishers and tourism activities. At the same time, we need to protect the marine environment that attracts people to this region. There seems to be some confusion about resource allocation within the Great Sandy Marine Park.

The purpose of marine parks is to provide for the conservation of the marine environment. It was never our intention to allocate resources from one sector to another, as these types of allocation policies are not in line with the objectives of a marine park. I can assure members that the zoning plan decisions were not made lightly. The government undertook extensive consultation, despite what the opposition believes, to gauge the views of a diverse range of interest groups. Consultation, including seven public meetings attended by approximately 1,300 people, occurred when the draft zoning plan was released in February 2005. From that consultation, we received 1,091 submissions. Targeted consultation continued with the key groups representing commercial fishing, recreational fishing, conservation and tourism. It occurred across government and was ongoing until the final zoning plan was decided.

Ongoing consultation with industry since the plan was decided has identified some inconsistencies in the baseline data underpinning the zoning map. These inconsistencies generally relate to the coastline data that was used to determine the marine park boundary. The EPA has now started a process that will verify the accuracy of all coordinates used in the development of the zoning plan, and the program will update the coastline data on which the zoning plan is based by using EPA's recently produced interim coastline dataset and the latest aerial photographs.

The intent of the GPS coordinates was to provide fishers with the latest and most accurate technology, and it has to be said that this is the first time this has been attempted. The process also includes the production of a zoning mapping brochure format intended to assist marine park users to more confidently interpret the zoning plan. I have to say to the member for Gympie that these charts will help those in the go-slow areas know where they actually are. The recreational fishing sector is currently providing input into the development of the brochure to ensure that it meets the needs of those users.

In developing the zoning plan, it was recognised that industries supporting a regional economy relied upon the future protection of the Great Sandy Regions marine environment. For future protection, we have introduced a zoning plan that provides conservation benefits but still allows a majority of commercial activities to continue. The area of marine national park zones in the Great Sandy Marine Park is around four per cent, and these no-take areas were selected as ideal candidates for green zones because they comprehensively represent marine species and habitat found in the region. Additionally, nine designated areas were selected to be set aside within the Great Sandy Marine Park because they require special management.

The go-slow areas that I spoke about are to protect dugongs and turtles, as well as the shorebird roosting and feeding areas, the grey nurse shark area and the fish trap area. Feedback from our consultation indicated the community aspirations for the region did not include intensive marine aquaculture such as sea cages or fish farms. Therefore, the zoning plan prohibits intensive sea cage aquaculture within the boundaries of the marine park.

However, the zoning plan does not preclude the examination of opportunities to develop the aquaculture industry within the Great Sandy Region. Based on preliminary planning, forecasted growth of up to 1,252 jobs may be generated if opportunities for marine aquaculture are maximised. By allowing for multiple use activities within the Great Sandy Marine Park and providing an increased level of protection, we have ensured the community will gain maximum long-term benefits by using the marine environments in a sustainable fashion. This of course will allow for a diverse range of industries to be maintained and allow for a future development of eco-friendly industries, like whale watching, to expand and provide further revenue into the local economy.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 27—Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Dickson

NOES, 45—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Darling, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Kiernan, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Robertson, Schwarten, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 423.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (9.01 pm): I continue my short contribution to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill. I would like to remind the House that the people who are imposing this legislation on Queenslanders are imposing not only legislation but also an ideology. They are also imposing their religion by stealth on regional and rural communities. It is an extreme green religion that elevates the status of animals to that of humans, giving them human attributes and human feelings. It is a pantheistic religion which has Gaea as God and Gorbachev as one of the high priests. I remind these people of another religion and a god. It is the God to which the Premier is going to pray for rain tomorrow for the TV cameras. There is a book that belongs to this God. In it he says—

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky ...

Dr Hugh Lavery was the founding director of research and planning in the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. Prior to that he studied waterfowl, mostly in tropical Queensland but also at the renowned Wild Fowl Trust in the UK, for the Illinois Natural History Survey in the US and at the Delta research station in Canada. He has published many scientific papers that subsequently were popularised in *Wild Ducks and Other Waterfowl in Queensland* and formed part of Harry Firth's multi-edition *Waterfowl in Australia*. He is a well-known expert on waterfowl, ducks and quail in Queensland. In fact, I have in my hand a book written by Hugh Lavery. I have spoken with Hugh many times. I have been lucky enough to meet him. He is a gentleman. I first met with him when he conducted the 15th Romeo W. Lahey memorial lecture at the National Parks Association on Wednesday, 19 October.

Hugh writes in a magazine called *Fur and Feather*. He talks about duck shooting. Hugh writes about whether a custom reaching back to Aboriginal times should continue, whether harvesting these birds can still be sustainable and whether accountability to meet modern social concerns is feasible, and it deserves critical attention. Hugh then goes on throughout the article, which is quite an informative one, to say—

It's quite widely accepted that waterfowl, like larger kangaroos, had benefited from the proliferation of man-made shallow wetlands and grazing uplands in Queensland. The spread of hunting across Queensland can be seen through the recovery places of duck bans. The form of harvesting is as varied as the game bird species and their seasonal habitat. On average, the species taken is the Pacific black duck, supplemented by the grey teal, main duck, wandering whistler duck and hard head. Most are taken either by landholders and their friends inland or groups of duck shooters, sometimes in organised clubs, on coastal wetlands that may have been built and managed by them.

The number taken by any one hunter is usually remarkably small, the large bag is skewed heavily towards the limited numbers of skilled shooters. Between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of targeted birds are injured and escape detection, depending on habitat type and whether retriever dogs are used. These are usually quickly taken by predators such as peregrine falcons. No evidence of effect of lead shot in birds that escape alive has yet been found in Queensland. Maximum annual takes during occasionally wet years across Queensland has been calculated to be in the vicinity of 100,000 and 150,000—

Hugh writes—

a small proportion of an overall population estimated in millions at their peaks.

He says—

The majority of birds harvested are juveniles, Pacific black duck and grey teal especially. These are departing their ephemeral inland breeding grounds in what can often be a futile search for permanent coastal wetlands which are already overinhabited by local populations. The huge advantage lies with the localised pairs of ducks that secrete themselves very effectively close to their breeding grounds and respond by nesting quickly and repeatedly to the onset of rain. Huge populations are then derived from relatively small numbers. The breeding stock is rarely seen by hunters.

Under the heading 'Waterfowl management: a more conservative approach', he says—

Some matters central to the argument about duck shooting. Conservation legislation seeks to sustain the species, not preserve every individual. My debate is thus about sustainability. I do not enter into the subject of cruelty. This latter engages a different concept and is addressed in other styles of legislation.

I think he puts it succinctly there. He talks about sustainability of the species and he does not seek to preserve every individual, which is the whole point and thrust of the argument of why we have opposed this legislation. It is legislation that does not seek to sustain species.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MESSENGER: I will take the interjection. It is a complete political stunt.

Another group has written to me about this issue of shooting ducks and quails—the Wide Bay Working Gundog Club—and it has also written to the former minister for the environment and member for Cairns. It writes—

Our club members are dumbfounded and totally stunned by your decision—

This is, of course, writing to the former environment minister—

to support the banning of the harvesting of duck and quail in open seasons in the future and the cancellation of the next duck and quail management plan. Our membership is made up of a varied range of folk from professionals to labourers, reflective of a typical community, who are questioning whether the Labor Party has unwittingly been hoodwinked by organisations with a clear vested interest. The Labor Party as far as anyone is aware does not have a national policy to ban the harvesting of renewable natural resources.

I am wondering if this legislation that is in the state arena is going to be also agreed upon by a federal Labor Party. The letter continues—

The arguments you have raised for the bans are that the pursuit and harvest of a renewable natural resource such as duck and quail is—

and the letter runs through a whole list of arguments—

inappropriate because participants lack the skill and expertise in game identification.

The letter goes on to counter that by saying—

It's a blatant lie aimed at public consumption and aimed at hoodwinking the government and the minister of the day—an argument being used by those who want to see bannings as a result of their own personal beliefs and supported by the government because of their own personal beliefs. You are a minister—

and it is obviously referring to the previous minister—

representing all Queenslanders, not just a chosen few. There is absolutely no data or evidence in Queensland to support this assertion. The licensing process itself was designed specifically to address that issue.

I will say that again. If a person is a licensed duck hunter, they have the skill and expertise in game identification. The group goes on to dispel a few myths at the back of this letter. It continues—

The view and submissions of the RSPCA and other animal welfare groups were overrepresented on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and this group had undue influence during the process undertaken by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's deliberations on preparing advice for the Minister for Primary Industries by using invalid and unsupported evidence. At the same time, Field and Game Australia, the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and the Canine Control Council were not given the same opportunities of sitting on the committee as full members and the representations were brushed aside.

Current duck and quail harvest permit holders were not brought into the process of discussion, making it in any way transparent. The RSPCA tabled unsubstantiated, biased, misleading and incorrect data including the internationally discredited Russell wounding rate report model. Absolutely no evidence exists that only one in 10 birds shot is retrieved to hand. Virtually all hunters use highly-trained efficient retrieving breeds of specialist gundogs. Data relating to the harvest of quail has never been tabled because it does not exist and the only reliable source of information comes from quail hunters. Clearly this is a mischievous and misleading assertion. The highly credentialled Pope and Webb reports that examine closely the Australian scene in game management were not given the same airing.

As well as that, a conflict of interest exists in having Dr Anne Covill both as a representative of the RSPCA on the Duck and Quail Management Committee and as a key adviser on the AWAC. No other representatives on the Duck and Quail Advisory Committee were offered that opportunity to sit as full members. It is also important that the community be given answers to the following: was the timing of the release of the ministerial statement linked to the attempt of garnering support from the greens during the lead-up to the election?

I would have to say yes. The letter continues—

Is it more or less cruel in taking duck and quail for the table than the same process was during pest mitigation? Is it more or less cruel for recreational fishermen to harvest fish for the table using current methods? Is there a degree of hypocrisy at play when one can harvest a rabbit for the table using a shotgun and the practice is not to be considered cruel and barbaric and yet the exact opposite applies to duck and quail? Is the legitimate involvement of the Indigenous population in the harvesting of natural resources such as duck and quail being now viewed in a different light? Are the appropriate and just rights of the Indigenous populations to harvest duck and quail with common tools such as shotguns being extinguished? If not, would the taking of duck and quail by Indigenous communities be viewed as less cruel than if the same ducks and quail were being taken for the table by the average citizen of the states?

Is there not a clear conflict of interest in having Dr Anne Covill of the RSPCA as a key sitting member of both the Duck and Quail Advisory Committee and the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee? Is there not a clear expression of bias and the limiting of due process and natural justice by having the minister stating—

that is, the previous minister—

her clear objections to hunting in public forums, suggesting that the practice is barbaric and clearly discarding scientific analysis and evidence that supports this alternative view?

I want to thank the Wide Bay Working Gundog Club, including Mr John Palus, Ms Merrilyn Walsh and Ms Bev Gilbert, because I have had the pleasure of seeing their dogs in action. These dogs are highly-trained animals. This is a very professional group who are made up of dedicated conservationists. I will repeat that point again: these people are dedicated conservationists who know what they are talking about. This legislation before the House is nothing more than a political stunt and I will be opposing it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Noosa, I want to acknowledge in the public gallery my electorate staff—Glenda Little and Kelly Patterson and her husband, Frank. Welcome.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (9.16 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2006. This is a strange debate in that the government already has the power to cancel duck and quail hunting seasons, which I fully support. The government has cancelled seasons in the past, and I earnestly hope that all seasons are cancelled from this time on. In my electorate of Noosa we have a deep affinity with our environment. The communities of Noosa, Coolum, Eumundi and the hinterland towns are made up of people who have chosen to become part of the local environment rather than ride roughshod over it. We have demonstrated this commitment time and time again. It is reflected in local government planning and will be further demonstrated following the signing off on Noosa council's submission to have the Noosa shire formally declared a biosphere reserve under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program, or the MAB program as it is to be known.

The minister stated when introducing the bill that while hunting would be banned farmers would be able to obtain a damage mitigation permit from the EPA to prevent damage to crops. Interestingly, though, the EPA states that there are very few permits sought. Perhaps this is because waterbird abundance, breeding and wetland area indices have been almost exclusively below average for the years 2000 to 2006. The EPA suggests that this is as a result of duck numbers being in decline rather than increasing. For example, my research finds that for the second year in a row record low numbers of waterbirds were counted on the Macquarie Marshes. The marshes averaged 30,000 in the 1980s, and never below 100, but this year there were fewer than 10 birds. A combination of severe drought in New South Wales and Queensland with river regulation continues to affect many key wetlands. Six species were at their lowest recorded numbers in 23 years, including the plumed whistling duck. Most adult birds were concentrated in the south or the north, with very low numbers in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. Breeding was highly concentrated in the south.

Having spent a great deal of my time and life in western Queensland, I understand the significance of this issue and the dire consequences if crops are threatened. My time in the west provided the magnitude of the problem and I support the resolve of farmers to exercise their right to cull any species of bird or animal that is endangering the viability of their farms. However, we are not just talking about western Queensland and areas of primary production. There are six species of ducks hunted in Queensland: the Pacific black duck, the wood duck, the grey teal, the hardhead, the plumed whistling duck and the wandering whistling duck. With the possible exception of the hardhead, the other species mate for life.

The two quail species are the stubble quail and the brown quail. In Queensland in 2002, there were 402 registered shooters. Those 402 shooters killed or bagged 11,061 ducks and 1,225 quail. As I mentioned earlier, in 2003 the season was cancelled. In 2004, there were 379 registered shooters and those shooters killed or bagged 11,562 ducks and 2,839 quail. Given that ducks cannot be shot while at rest, it would seem that many more would die a cruel and agonising death from gunshot wounds later on.

I am fairly certain that there would be little, if any, duck or quail shooting in my electorate of Noosa. However, I know and understand the way my electorate thinks and feels about the environment and the protection of the environment, whether that be flora or fauna. If I did not speak up in favour of abolishing duck and quail hunting, I would be failing in my responsibility to the very people who put me in this place.

A recreational pursuit that deliberately sets out to hurt, kill and often fatally wound, causing a slow and agonising death, is no longer acceptable to society. I firmly believe in this day and age that the hunting and killing of any bird or animal, particularly native birds or animals, is not acceptable to the majority of Queenslanders. Again, I am not speaking about the culling of introduced species, such as wild pigs, goats, foxes, feral cats and dogs. The humane culling of these species is necessary. Indeed, it is important for the protection and the survival of our own native species and for the protection of crops and animals belonging to our primary producers.

The years I spent in western Queensland quickly educated me as to the devastation caused by introduced species. I fully support farmers who, through necessity, have to cull these animals. I also understand the need at times for primary producers to even humanely cull our native species, which include ducks, cockatoos, kangaroos and wallabies—whatever it is—that may be destroying their crops and their livelihoods.

My personal belief is that the time has come where the minority must accept that the hunting and killing of defenceless birds and animals in the guise of recreational pursuit is no longer acceptable to a civilised and educated society. Duck and quail shooting has never been allowed in the Australian Capital Territory. Western Australia totally banned shooting in 1990. New South Wales banned recreational duck shooting in 1995. Victoria and South Australia have greatly reduced the number of hunters.

In 2005, the Queensland government again cancelled the duck and quail recreational hunting season following advice from the Duck and Quail Management Advisory Committee based on factors such as rainfall records, long-term weather forecasts, surface water in dams and wetlands, and population data. The advisory committee found that the duck and quail numbers had fallen dramatically during the past few years of drought, making a season unsustainable. A recent waterbird population survey revealed numbers at their lowest level since surveying began in 1984—down from one billion to just 200,000.

I do not believe that there is anyone who does not recognise and accept that whatever we do has an impact on our environment. If we are honest in our intent to act on the premise of protecting and saving our fragile environment by all measures of conservation and preservation, then as legislators we would be failing to uphold this principle if we did not support a total and permanent ban on duck and quail hunting.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (9.23 pm): I rise to speak to this bill. I have heard a lot of very interesting stories in this chamber. I notice that, when we go into the dining room and have our dinner, all the members opposite eat meat. Have the members ever been on a tour of an abattoir and watched a bullock get killed? Have they seen the pressure that those cattle are put under before they run up the race and are knocked? Man has to live and survive. We have to face the realities of life. This bill is not about the realities of life; this bill is about a tradition that has been handed down through generation after generation in this nation. This government is taking that tradition away from us. It is just another little grab by this government.

What will be next? We have heard members mention fishing. We have heard members mention things that absolutely intrude on our rights. I used to shoot roos for a living. Let me tell members that I was possibly one of the most humane shooters they will ever meet. I never pulled the trigger of my rifle without making sure that I could kill a kangaroo in a humane manner. I have never shot for fun.

Prior to my election I was also a dogger for the Wambo shire. For those who do not know what a dogger is, a dogger is a person who goes out and traps and shoots wild dogs. That has to occur because of what those animals can do to a cow that is calving.

Government members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: It is the same thing. It is about taking a life. It has absolutely everything to do with this bill. Nature looks after itself. I have seen dogs pull the tongue out of a calf as it was being born. That calf is then born without a tongue. The point I am making is that it was very easy to kill a wild dog. I have seen what has happened to crops after a mob of ducks have come in overnight. The ducks have bitten off the little green shoots of wheat and then dug up the seed so that no wheat can be grown. The ducks destroy the crop. I know that we have plans in place where a property owner can cull these animals or birds in such a situation.

The point I make is that, after the duck shooters have gone, we will still have fewer ducks. Earlier I heard a member say that, since duck shooting has been banned in New South Wales, the duck population in that state has decreased. I admit that that could be because of drought. We have had 10 to 12 years of drought. Earlier we heard the member for Gregory speak about the population of wild birds because of the drought. The rains will come again and these birds will repopulate.

This bill takes away our rights. I have had constituents come to my office and talk about duck shooting. They do not take many ducks at all. They live for their weekends away where, as a family, they go duck shooting. They have retriever dogs for which they have paid a lot of money. Duck shooting is a sport and a tradition. I can see the minister shaking her head. What does she do when she finds a mouse in her house? Does the minister chase the mouse out the door? No, the minister sets a trap.

Ms Nelson-Carr: I make a pet of them.

Mr HOPPER: Does the minister feed him and give him a drink? It is exactly the same thing. This is what life is about. Duck shooting is a tradition that is being taken away from us. Earlier we heard the shadow minister for primary industries speak to a motion that he moved that related to fishing. What is next in line? We should be able to do these things in this nation. Our rights should be protected. The United States protects the rights of its people.

This bill relates to a tradition that has been passed on. It is an erosion of our rights. I simply refuse to accept it. We heard the member for Charters Towers talk about the bats in Charters Towers. I have to say that I am very disappointed that the minister for the environment has allowed those bats to stay in Charters Towers because they are not in their natural environment. We have talked about being cruel to ducks, yet this bat colony is not living in its natural environment. It is living in trees that were imported into the area. They were planted by human beings. Those trees are not the bats' natural environment. Those bats should be shifted to an environment to which they are suited. But, no, the minister will not consider that. She will let the bats stay there. Yet she has forced this legislation onto us—legislation which erodes another rural right. That is exactly what this is.

Earlier tonight the member for Gregory spoke about putting water across Australia. Do members realise what Australia was like before white man came here? The white man put water across Australia. He put the infrastructure in place so that we have more roos, we have more ducks and we have more of everything else. It is simply unacceptable that this legislation is passed, as it erodes the rights of the few duck shooters of Queensland. That is exactly what this bill is about.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (9.30 pm), in reply: Tonight it gives me great pleasure to rise to condemn some of the opposition's points, many of which I cannot believe. First of all, I start with the member for Burdekin, who outlined her arguments for killing, shooting and plundering ducks and quails.

Mr Messenger: What about murdering?

Ms NELSON-CARR: And murdering, yes. Her reasons were based on the fact that she believes there has not been due process and we have not consulted with the community. In 1998 when I first came to this place we discussed this particular issue. In the 8½ years that I have been a member of parliament, only one person has complained to me about the duck and quail legislation. Consultation has occurred with many key stakeholders including sporting shooters.

The member claimed that over three years only \$6 million was spent on the eradication of pests and weeds. That is not true. An extra \$6 million was targeted for pests and fire. The EPA now has more rangers than ever before and a record budget. Under the last coalition, funding for pests and weeds was \$920,000. Under Labor, this year \$4.5 million has been allocated. Therefore, the member has made another irrelevant comment.

A number of opposition speakers have claimed that there is no evidence of bird decline due to shooting. There is clear evidence that bird numbers are declining due to a range of factors. It is not appropriate to add shooting to the list of causes for that decline, which will include the fact that we are suffering from the worst drought in 100 years.

I turn to the claim that people should be able to kill for sport. I thank the member for Yeerongpilly, who outlined rigorously what sport actually is. For members opposite to stand in this House and say that it is their right to shoot for sport or fun when—

A government member interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: Not for sport and fun. Why was killing pigeons outlawed 50 years ago? Because it is not a sport and it is inhumane. Once upon a time we shot quails, ducks and pigeons to provide food for our families. That was probably the right thing to do, but shooting pigeons has now been outlawed. You can buy a duck or a quail for the price of a cartridge. If you want a shooting experience, it seems to me that shooting clay pigeons is the way to go. The opposition supports the status quo. Why did it oppose the conservation plan in 1995?

Mr Johnson interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I am glad to take that interjection, because the member for Gregory referred to many of us on this side as lunatics. I think that word was used very loosely. Members opposite should look to themselves. If they think it is okay to shoot for fun, they have a seriously long spiritual path to embark upon.

Mr Johnson: I didn't say it was shooting for fun.

Ms NELSON-CARR: Yes, he did. He also said that it was acceptable to fish and plunder our reefs and oceans so that our grandchildren cannot have the same possibility.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. That is a load of—I will not say it. I ask the minister to withdraw, because that is totally untrue. This afternoon in this chamber I did not say a word about plundering and what have you. I ask the minister to withdraw.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I withdraw. The member did say that he and his colleagues should bring back the biff. I say to all of them that plundering the seas and the oceans, shooting for fun and bringing back the biff ain't the way to go.

The bill does not impact on the rights of landholders to protect their crops from damage, nor does it impact on the traditional hunting rights of Indigenous Queenslanders. The decision follows a finding by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, a committee that reports to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries. After considering a balance of evidence from a range of sources, the committee found that the wounding rates in hunting these animals was unacceptably high, causing an unacceptably high level of pain.

Mr Johnson: How do you know?

Ms NELSON-CARR: Because we investigate. Ninety per cent of animals shot were not killed, and members opposite think that that is okay.

It is important to note that this bill does not prevent recreational shooters from targeting feral animals such as pigs or rabbits. Why don't shooters shoot pigs and rabbits? They are feral. They cause enormous economic and environmental harm. In hunting them, shooters are actually giving the community a fair go and benefiting the environment.

I believe that the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is not a lone voice on this issue. As members would know, my predecessor the Minister for the Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women received over 5,000 individually signed submissions from Queenslanders across the state calling on the government to end this practice. That is in addition to the thousands of letters that the government has received, asking for the same.

Since the bill was tabled, the member for Burdekin has tabled a petition with 5,097 signatures opposing this move to ban duck and quail hunting in Queensland. Among other things, that petition claims a link between the ending of duck and quail hunting in Queensland and a hidden desire by the government to end recreational fishing. I make it clear that ending recreational duck and quail hunting is about nothing more than ending duck and quail hunting.

I agree with my colleague who highlighted the fact that animal welfare is gaining increased public support. This bill is about making sure that it cannot be resumed without the scrutiny of this House. I would hope that, following the comments of the member for Noosa, both he and the member for Moggill will vote for sanity and will vote with us. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 97A)—

Mrs MENKENS (9.39 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 3—

At page 4, line 7, 's 97A'—

omit, insert—

'ss 97A and 97B'.

2 Clause 3—

At page 5, after line 7—

insert—

'97B Limited operation of section 97A

- '(1) Section 97A and this section expire 3 years after the day section 97A commences.
- '(2) Not more than 9 months, but not less than 6 months, before the end of the 3 years mentioned in subsection (1), the Minister must establish a review of the operation of section 97A.
- '(3) The review must be carried out by a person who—
 - (a) is suitably qualified, having regard to the requirements for the review; and
 - (b) is not otherwise engaged or employed by the State or an entity representing the State.
- '(4) The review must consider the operation of section 97A in relation to how it has affected—
 - (a) duck and quail numbers in Queensland; and
 - (b) the extent and diversity of wetland areas; and
 - (c) the conservation status of areas mentioned in paragraph (b); and
 - (d) funding, and contributions of labour, from voluntary organisations interested in wetland conservation and management.
- '(5) Also, the review must comment, and make recommendations as appropriate, in relation to the following—
 - (a) whether section 97A has achieved its intended purposes;
 - (b) the advisability or inadvisability of continuing section 97A in force;
 - (c) changes that should be made to section 97A.'

The first amendment is just a movement of lines. The second amendment addresses the environmental aspect of this particular bill. It addresses a concern that I had raised earlier about the fact that this legislation does not look at the conservation or the actual preservation of the particular species of waterfowl.

I take this opportunity to thank the minister for the very comprehensive briefing that her staff did afford us. I really did appreciate that. I discussed this area with the staff. As they said, this bill is about animal welfare and it does not address actual conservation.

Conservation is preservation of the species. As I said earlier in my contribution, this is where we believe that this legislation lets itself down because it is not addressing future conservation of the actual waterfowl species. Conservation requires responsible management. This amendment calls for a review at the end of three years to analyse and assess what effect this has had on the waterfowl and also on the waterways. A large number of the waterways in Queensland are preserved and are being looked after by the hunting groups. Figures in the United States show that some of the very best kept

waterways are actually owned and kept by the hunting groups. They are conservationists and they do actually look after the waterways. Figures have shown that in New South Wales since hunting has been banned waterways have conservation issues. These areas have been suffering as a result of this.

We heard the member for Burnett this evening quoting Dr Hugh Lavery, who is an eminent scientist and extremely highly respected in this area. Dr Lavery comments, if I may quote verbatim—

My concern is that without embracing the philosophy of sustainability there will be no field management of waterfowl. Without such management these days habitat will suffer. Water is becoming strictly managed where, even in the northern inland, covering of open drains and capping of the bores is an example of the premium applying to it. The reality is that unmanaged wetlands tend to become weed-filled, pest-ridden places where, more often than not, rubbish is dumped. It is also not enough to stop people hunting by way of the law. Such ban simply results in loss of interest in waterfowl or circumvention of the law, especially in a state the size of Queensland and there is no management.

That is what this particular amendment intends to address. My concern is that this legislation is not about conservation, it is not about preservation of the species; it is about an ideology. This is to create a check and balance to address and assess the preservation of the species of waterfowl.

Ms NELSON-CARR: Those who look after their land provide good landcare. That is good care. If they are doing that so that they can shoot and kill ducks and quail, I think that is a dichotomy. If one considers that conservation is about preserving something, shooting it is a total dichotomy and I do not accept the member's amendment.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! the member for Toowoomba South will cease interjecting. The member for Burdekin has the call.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I just asked you to cease interjecting. You have continued interjecting. I will now warn you under standing order 254.

Ms MENKENS: I was not discussing shooting the birds. My question to the minister is what form of management of the species will be in place to address the number of waterfowl to see exactly what effect the removal of the management plan will have. I am not discussing shooting or hunting birds; I am discussing the preservation of the species of waterfowl. That is extremely important. I am asking what will the EPA be doing to actually address the numbers.

Ms NELSON-CARR: We will continue to do what we have been doing and the fact that they will not be shooting them anymore will make a significant difference.

Division: Question put—That Mrs Menkens amendments be agreed to.

AYES, 23—Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Flegg, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Seeney, Springborg, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Elmes

NOES, 45—Attwood, Barry, Boyle, Choi, Darling, English, Fenlon, Finn, Foley, Fraser, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Palaszcuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Schwarten, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Welford, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Question put—That the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Long Title

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.53 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Child Safety DVD

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (9.53 pm): On Tuesday I joined with over 500 walkers and supporters of Denise and Bruce Morcombe in the Walk for Daniel. During that walk I spoke with a number of parents about the child safety DVD that has been prepared by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation.

I take this opportunity to share with members some of the comments that were made to me by parents who have viewed that very important child safety DVD. One mother said to me that she had spent a lot of time talking with her daughter about stranger danger and the issues involved with child safety. However, when she and her daughter saw the DVD for the first time, her daughter immediately said to her mother, 'Yes, I can understand that. I can relate to the feeling of the hair at the back of your neck standing on end, your stomach turning. I can understand how children might feel when they feel something is not right but they don't know what to do.'

One of the very important things about this child safety DVD that has been prepared by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation is that it has reached children in a way that I believe many other child safety DVDs have not been able to. I have not viewed all the child safety material. However, I have watched the DVD. A number of parents spoke with me on that important walk on Tuesday about how they thought that showing that DVD to their children sent a very clear message to the children about what they could do if they did not feel safe and secure and if there was a problem with a stranger in their immediate midst.

I urge all members to please contact the foundation and make this free DVD available to their communities. Please encourage parents in their communities throughout the length and breadth of Queensland to contact the foundation and have a look at the foundation's DVD. I believe it could save many, many lives. More importantly, it is sending a very important message to all the parents, to visitors to Queensland and, most importantly, to young Queenslanders and young children in Queensland that they can do something if something does not feel right. They should be guided by their inner feelings. If it does not feel right, 99 per cent of the time it is not right, and they can do something about it.

Time expired.

Cairns Northern Beaches

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (9.56 pm): For some, outback images capture the spirit of Australian cultural life, but for many others it is the beach where the true essence of our nature can be found. This is particularly true in my electorate where the majority of people live along the coastline and regularly visit their local beach.

In many parts of Cook, but particularly in the northern beaches of Cairns, erosion is disturbing people's ability to access and enjoy these wonderful open spaces. The Cairns City Council, in partnership with the state government, is trying to address these matters with some heavy engineering solutions, which makes it obvious that there should have been better planning in the past. That is why many of my constituents are up in arms about a number of decisions and actions the council has taken recently regarding these beachfront areas.

I represent three small beachside suburbs that overlap the jurisdiction of the Cairns City Council and will provide three examples of how the council is playing it fast and loose with these iconic areas. At Clifton Beach the council recently closed the road to vehicles as part of a beachfront development application. However, it did not follow the proper procedure and was forced by the department of local government to properly notify the community of its decision. The community is completely up in arms about what has happened at this section of Clifton Beach. The members of the community quickly organised a petition and form letters to express their abject disdain for the actions of the council. Unfortunately, the petition was not in the correct form, but tonight I seek leave to table the non-conforming petition and formal letters that have been signed by 617 of my constituents.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition signed by 617 petitioners

I think that all of this effort could have been avoided if the council had taken the effort to sit down with residents, explain what it was trying to do and incorporate the residents' views into the council planning. I will return to that theme in a moment.

Just to the north of this development in Palm Cove, the council was again caught out when the department of natural resources had to advise it that it had again not followed the correct procedures when dealing with a beach protection zone. It asked the council to make the necessary actions to rectify its oversight.

The third example of the Cairns City Council playing it fast and loose with the northern beach area concerns its plan for the Palm Cove Caravan Park. Thankfully, this time the council has undertaken some public consultation, as required under the Land Act, but it paid for the consultation with a donation from the adjoining property owner. How can the results of the consultation be taken seriously by the community when a party with a vested interest in the result has paid for the consultation?

We can see a pattern emerging where the Cairns City Council is selling out the interests of the community to enjoy this open public space to the interests of developers. The northern beaches of Cairns can no longer afford to have this ad hoc, vested interest driven planning for these important public spaces. The council must develop an overall arching plan for these areas along its northern foreshore and consult with the community in developing it. This is a simple act to prevent the aggravation of the 617 people whom I represent tonight.

Noosa Electorate, Police Resources

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (9.59 pm): I rise tonight to speak on an issue of real concern to the electorate of Noosa—that is, the level of forward planning by the Beattie Labor government on police strength in the Noosa, Coolum and Eumundi police divisions. We are fortunate in my community that very serious crime is reasonably rare. What does occur—and it is increasing—is minor crimes like hooning and vandalism which can only be countered by having police on the streets when they are needed.

These crimes impact on the quality of life and feeling of security that residents have, particularly our senior citizens. This, of course, is exacerbated during holiday times and weekends when the Noosa electorate also becomes the temporary home to thousands upon thousands of tourists.

The gazetted strength of the Noosa police division in 1991 was 31 officers when Noosa had a population of 26,400. Today, at the end of 2006, the gazetted strength of the Noosa police division is 32, with a resident population of almost 50,000—an increase of about 95 per cent. In plain terms, that means that in 1991 there was one police officer for 851 people; in 2006, there is one police officer for 1,562 people. I have only mentioned here statistics relating to our resident population and not the dramatic increases that take place throughout the year at school holiday times, long weekends and weekends generally.

If the Labor government is serious about providing what is its most important function—that is, the security of citizens—then proper planning must be undertaken and additional officers must be allocated to my electorate. Specifically, I call for an additional two officers to be assigned to each of the Hastings Street and Tewantin police beats and the establishment of a new police beat at what is referred to locally as the Noosa Shire Business Centre or, more formally now, Noosa Civic. The establishment of a new police beat at Noosa Civic will cater not specifically to Noosa's new business and shopping precinct but also to the many thousands of new residents moving into Peregrine Springs and the new Coolum Ridges development. When complete, these two developments will house, conservatively, more than 6,500 people.

The Noosa electorate is one of the jewels in the crown of the Queensland tourism industry. In order for our tourism industry's goals to continue to be realised, the government needs to ensure that residents and holiday-makers alike feel secure in their surroundings. It is only in this way that continued investment in tourism and the much needed jobs that come with it will continue.

Sri Lanka Society of Queensland

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.02 pm): On 14 October, I attended the Sri Lanka Society of Queensland Charity Ball. President Nimal de Silva welcomed special guests to the 28th annual ball of the society. The goals of the society are to promote harmonious cooperation and friendship among Sri Lankan expatriates and Australians, irrespective of race, religion, political or other differences, and to preserve, protect and promote the culture of Sri Lanka. The society also assists students and immigrants from Sri Lanka and fosters recreational, sporting and social activities.

For many years, the society has supported many organisations, including the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Blue Nurses Queensland, the Maharagama Cancer Hospital and the Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital in Sri Lanka. Over the past two years, the society has generously donated towards the Sri Lanka Disaster Relief Fund. Just recently, the fund handed over 26 houses to tsunami victims in Maggona and 18 houses to victims in Battaicaloa; 212 houses will be completed and distributed before March 2007. A medical centre is proposed in Kallady, and in Kalutara plans are being drawn up for a preschool building and a community centre.

The society has acknowledged and praised the Queensland government for generously donating \$10 million to the relief effort—\$2 million of which was pledged to help to rebuild communities through the adopt-a-village proposal. These projects give these people a chance to live again with dignity and hope for the future.

The Sri Lanka annual ball provides an excellent opportunity for Sri Lankans to foster a good relationship with all other multicultural communities in Australia and to raise funds for worthy projects such as these. The 2006 management committee, led by Nimal de Silva, should be congratulated for the work involved in organising the event. Over 200 people came along to support the society and a great night of Sri Lankan cuisine, dinner, dance and song.

It is important that Australia provides an environment in which all people have freedom to express and share their cultural values. My experience through associations with many multicultural communities is that new Australians enthusiastically become active and equal participants of our society and contribute greatly to our strong economy. It was great to be part of the Queensland Multicultural Festival, which was held the next day at Roma Street Parklands, and to see people from a wide range of cultures proudly becoming Australian citizens.

Gympie Electorate

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (10.05 pm): Recently, Sue Lappeman from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported on the behaviour of the member for Southport in this chamber and expressed the view that due to the member's attack on people from Gympie he would not be invited to visit Gympie soon. Nothing could be further from the truth. The member for Southport's comments, whilst insensitive to all who live in my electorate, were withdrawn and I am sure were made from a position of ignorance. To that end, I would like to take a moment to expand upon what the electorate of Gympie offers.

On 17 October just past, Gympie celebrated its 139th birthday—a major achievement by anyone's standards. Over the past 139 years, Gympie has brought much to the state of Queensland. Gympie, however, has a claim which sets it apart from every other town and city: it saved the infant colony of Queensland in 1867. Just eight years after Queensland had separated from New South Wales in 1859, it was confronted by a period of financial crisis. The discovery of gold literally saved our state.

However, gold has not been the only valued thing to come from the surrounds of Gympie. Of course, Andrew Fisher came from Gympie and became Australia's first Labor Prime Minister. I am sure that the member for Southport did not mean to accuse the federal ALP of drawing from a defective gene pool at any time in its proud history. During the war years, Gympie's contribution through dairy products literally kept the war effort alive. The city topped the production of butter in 1943, with over 1,166,020 pounds of butter produced in one year.

Today, Gympie is a diverse and vibrant community. Her people are well educated and community minded. Indeed, the largest Apex club in Australia is located in Gympie—of which I am proudly a member—and puts on the Country Music Muster each year, for which over 25,000 visitors come to the Amamoor State Forest each August, and over 15,000 of those people camp out.

Gympie is a community that is exciting and growing. Despite the proposed environmental vandalism that this government wishes to undertake with the construction of a poorly conceived and geologically unsuitable dam, she is a place rich with beauty. From the Mary Valley to the Cooloola coast, Gympie has something to offer everyone—right up to Cooroy in the Noosa hinterland. I encourage the member for Southport or, indeed, any other member to join me for a cup of coffee or any other beverage that takes their fancy and experience what Gympie has to offer before making any unfounded criticisms of our proud city or her residents.

World Teachers' Day

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (10.08 pm): I am sure that every one of us had a teacher who inspired us and encouraged us in a way that we still value and, indeed, rely upon. Teachers have made a very real difference to each and every one of our lives.

Last Friday, 27 October, was World Teachers' Day and a great public opportunity to celebrate the invaluable contribution that teachers make to individuals and our society as a whole. That is why I was so pleased to visit the Stafford State School to celebrate World Teachers' Day. Acting principal, Garry Drummond, and the school's caring and resourceful teaching staff enjoyed a brief morning tea before returning to the classroom to continue educating, nurturing and improving their students.

On Friday, I attended an unrelated community event held at Craigslea State High School, just over my electorate's border in the district of Aspley. A range of impressively presented and capable students supported the event with their organisational skills and superb catering. I was particularly proud to see this at my old high school.

Visiting my old high school on World Teachers' Day also allowed me to renew a connection with Kay Jarratt. In 1984, Mrs Jarratt—as I feel obliged to call her—was my year 9 business principles teacher. Apparently, that was her first year at Craigslea State High School, and I was excited to think that 22 years later Mrs Jarratt and her professional colleagues were enthusiastically engaged in this noble but often undermined profession.

I concluded World Teachers' Day at the Mt Alvernia College awards night where this tremendous school, providing education for girls based on the Franciscan tradition, is celebrating its 50th year. The young women who received a range of academic, cultural, sporting and community awards were clearly the products of good teachers and good leadership in teaching. That is why I was not surprised to read the principal's column in the college newsletter.

Principal Vicki Ward wrote about the so-called 'education debate', responding to ridiculous headlines like 'Ideologues hijack education'. In 1,200 incisive words, Ms Ward compares modern education with the non-existent but idealised past promoted by the likes of John Howard and Julie Bishop. For the benefit of the House, I will conclude with a slice of this powerful and positive statement as a testament to World Teachers' Day. She stated—

We have moved from industrial-age education where everyone was put through the same process with the same, very basic curriculum, to the information age where it is impossible to learn all one needs to know at school and even impossible to describe what one needs to know. We moved from an industrial system that required the majority of workers to be literate and numerate enough to follow routines and practices, with the minority setting up the processes and calling the shots, to a world that requires creativity, initiative, critical insight and adaptability in everyone. We need different outcomes now, so we need to study different things in a different way.

Alligator Creek, Nome and Cungulla, Primary School

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (10.11 pm): Alligator Creek, Nome and Cungulla are rural residential areas south of Townsville with a rapidly growing population of predominantly families with young children. This area is not serviced by a local school. Parents have been lobbying successive governments for a local school since the 1980s. The previous coalition government had committed to these good people a primary school. The furniture for that school was even waiting on rail wagons in Townsville in 1989. However, when the government changed at that election, all plans for a school at Nome were scrapped and have been given no consideration since then. The land was acquired and is still owned by the Department of Education.

Currently there are around 140 children travelling to Townsville every day from the area to attend state schools, and this figure does not include those who attend private schools. I believe these would be sufficient numbers to warrant a primary school being built.

In response to lobbying from concerned parents, I invited the shadow minister for education, Stuart Copeland, to attend a public meeting at the Alligator Creek Bowls Club to hear constituents' concerns about their young people, some of whom are as young as four years old, who are forced to sit on a bus for over an hour on an already congested area of the Bruce Highway. This is a distance of up to 35 kilometres each way.

The coalition believes there is a demonstrated need for a school for this area and it made an election promise to my constituents that a coalition government, if elected, would proceed with plans to build a new school. I ask the minister for education to request his department to revisit the need for a state primary school at Alligator Creek in view of the demographic changes that have taken place in the past 10 years and the huge population growth that is being experienced.

Townsville City Council zones this area as rural but the education department considers the area as fringe urban, which does appear to be quite a discrepancy. I understand this current departmental zoning of this area precludes the area from fulfilling the criteria as having sufficient numbers to warrant the building of a new school. This is a rural area. It is zoned rural by council. There is no sewerage. These people are not supplied access to the town water supply. It is not fringe urban but actually a rural area. I believe these residents are being unduly discriminated against as a result.

A school in a rural area is much more than an educational centre. It is a community centre; it is an area of pride that local P&Cs will develop and support. I have written to the minister on this issue and I do ask him on behalf of the constituents in this area to assess the educational needs of the area with a view to providing them with their own local school.

Shailer Park State High School; Logan North Library

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (10.13 pm): Firstly, I want to acknowledge Shailer Park State High School, which held its awards night tonight—and what a fantastic ceremony it was. I was very fortunate to attend. This country has a great future in the hands of our outstanding, talented, wonderful young people. I want to acknowledge them tonight.

I also rise to speak about a decision made by Logan City Council—a decision made without any public consultation—to close the doors of the Logan North Library at Rochedale South. The Logan North Library services many residents and schools in my electorate. In common with many of my constituents, I can remember when the library was located in Vanessa Boulevard and then moved to where it is today in the old Ikea Centre on Springwood Road, Rochedale South. The library's current location is very convenient for seniors, families, students and teachers. In fact, it is convenient for all the community to access. I have had seniors contact me explaining how they can access shops, medical services and other services in the area as well as the library. Residents and retailers have also raised their concerns about this decision with me.

The Logan City Council is planning a new library at Underwood. It has applied and received a grant from the state government to build this new library. While I do not have any problems with the people of Underwood, Jacaranda Ridge estate and other surrounding areas having a new library, what I do not support is that this new library is at the expense of our library at Rochedale South.

I have written to the minister for local government and I have asked for the money being given to the Logan City Council for that library to be held until Logan City Council does what it should have done in the first place and that is to consult with the Springwood community. When it consults it will hear what I am hearing—that the people of Springwood do not believe it is the best location for their library. I know that there are challenges in finding the right location for this service. However, Logan City Council should not have taken the people of Springwood for granted. It should have consulted with us on this very important decision.

I am told that the Logan City Council has informed the minister that it has made its decision and that is that. That is not good enough. I will continue to lobby the Logan City Council to get a library service back in the Springwood CBD area. For years the Logan City Council has been spruiking about

the Springwood CBD renewal and we are still waiting. Here was the perfect opportunity for the council to start building the foundations of this project. That could have been done through placing the library in the CBD area, but it chose not to do this.

I have a message for the Logan City Council from the Springwood community: they want a library and they want it in the Springwood CBD area. The Logan City Council needs to listen to the community. When it eventually starts moving forward on the renewal of the Springwood CBD it must ensure that we have a library and a community centre. In fact, that should be on the top of its list for this renewal project. I will continue to lobby the council on behalf of my constituents and to remind the council that it should never take the people of Springwood for granted.

Housing and Electricity Supply, Mackay

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (10.16 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to inform the House of the situation in Mackay and surrounding regions. There is no secret that that area is experiencing boom times. Demand for housing and employment are at a record high. Indeed, employees working in the area are finding it very difficult to find housing. Visitors are being informed that if they intend to travel to or through Mackay they should ensure they have secured accommodation before they arrive. Most of the accommodation—hotels, motels et cetera—is at 100 per cent occupancy every day of the week.

Of course, with boom times there is always a downside. Unfortunately, even though businesses are thriving and employment is high, the situation with housing is in dire straits. There is a high cost for housing and the availability of housing is very difficult to keep up with. One of the issues we are finding is that, unfortunately, Ergon is unable to keep up with the supply of power to houses in the area. On the outskirts of most of the urban areas there is a waiting time of more than 12 months for connection.

Quite a number of constituents have talked to me about situations where they have had to pay up-front for the connection of their power—and that is a considerable amount of money—with a guarantee that sometimes it does not happen and that they will be connected in 12 months time. Ergon has that money—and, as I said, it is quite a substantial amount of money—and it is not able to connect power for 12 months. Houses are being built with generators and builders have to supply their own power. Because of the short supply of houses, people are unable to rent somewhere else. As a result, people are basically moving into houses and running generators 24 hours a day.

This situation also affects small businesses, and I will name one small business which contacted me only recently which had paid all of the money up-front in January this year and it looks like they will not have their power connected until April or May next year. They are setting up a farm-stay operation with a number of cabins. Basically all of their operation and small business is on hold until Ergon can supply power. There are numerous other situations. Mr Ian Robert Plath, who has just built a house, is running a generator full-time and does not expect to get power for 12 months. Mr Ken Soto, whose land was resumed by QR to expand Jilalan, has shifted a house onto a block of land and is—

Time expired.

Tobler, Mr E

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth) (10.19 pm): Every now and then we come across people who are the true soul of this country—hardworking, modest and innovative people who go about the business of getting on with life and helping others with no thought of recompense or self-promotion; true Queenslanders who helped build and shape not only this state but also the nation. I am proud to say that a constituent and a good friend of mine was one of these people. Ernest Lesley Tobler, or 'Les' as I knew him, lived in my electorate of Gordonvale for many years. He died recently at the age of 99. Born in 1907, Les grew up in Brisbane and around the Gayndah area. He was a fitter and turner by trade and, like many other men of his era, served his country during the Second World War.

Les was a family man. He was one of seven children and had a family of five himself. There was a sparkle in his eyes when he spoke of family camping and fishing excursions and of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Outdoor living was an important part of Les's lifestyle. He enjoyed physical activity. In his younger years he won the inaugural bicycle race from Brisbane to Mackay. Bear in mind that it takes about 10 to 12 hours to drive this distance in a modern car today and he won on a pushbike that he built himself!

Les was also something of an inventor. His family will tell you that he could have made a fortune if he had patented his ideas. He made a number of different contraptions to make his work sawing timber easier and he also took on the task of building the family home in Rockhampton after his return from war service, incorporating many novel inventions ahead of their time.

Les understood the pain and devastation suffered by people affected by this year's Cyclone Larry. Some 56 years ago the frame of the home he was building in Rockhampton was destroyed by a cyclone. After the cyclone, Les moved the family further north to Eton and then Babinda, where he

resided for many years before moving to Gordonvale. Working as a scoutmaster and heavily involved in the local Australian Rules club, Les contributed a great deal to the Babinda and Gordonvale communities. The organisations Les belonged to were a reflection of his character. A man of great compassion, he was a tireless worker for a number of community organisations and helped out with the Red Cross and the local RSL well into his 80s.

Les was a fair-minded and passionate man, especially when it came to his politics. He was a life member of the ALP and he attended meetings well into his 90s. I used to pick him up for local branch meetings. His views were well founded and forcefully presented. Les is survived by three of his five children, 20 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. He left his mark in the hearts of those people who knew him best and in the values he passed on to his family. Les was the salt of the earth and a good and respected friend. He will be greatly missed by many.

I table two petitions, both non-conforming petitions—one a petition for the supply of renal dialysis at the Ingham Hospital and the second a petition against quarrying in the Behana Gorge near Gordonvale.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 2,654 petitioners.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 1,077 petitioners.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.22 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, 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, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszcuk, 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