



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2007

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor letters in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the record of Parliament. I table the letters for the information of members.

5 December 2006

The Honourable M. Reynolds, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 4 December 2006

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Health Services Act 1991, and for other purposes"

The Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

8 December 2006

The Honourable M. Reynolds, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 7 December 2006

"A Bill for An Act to provide for administrative arrangements for the Medical Board of Queensland, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Wild Rivers Act 2005, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Police Service Administration Act 1990"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend Acts administered by the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to provide for the investigation into and resolution of particular disputes involving energy entities, or particular former energy entities, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Electricity Act 1994 and the Gas Supply Act 2003, and for other purposes"

The Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 5 December 2006, from Her Excellency the Governor to Mr Speaker advising of assent to Bills.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 December 2006, from Her Excellency the Governor to Mr Speaker advising of assent to Bills.

PROCEDURE

Speaker's Ruling—Sub Judice

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, all members are aware of the number of high-profile matters currently pending criminal proceedings. These matters have caused considerable public debate outside the House. It is a matter for the courts to regulate debate in the community that may transgress contempt of those proceedings. However, because the matters are pending in criminal courts, it is vital that no privileged or prejudicial debate occurs in this House. Standing order 233 lays down clear principles and rules in respect of matters pending in courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction. The matter should not be referred to in motions, debate or questions from when the charge is laid to the determination of an appeal, if any.

I make it very clear to all members that I intend to enforce standing order 233 vigorously and have issued an instruction to all deputy speakers to be similarly vigilant in its application. I will not allow any petition, motion, debate or question which, if said outside, may constitute a contempt of court or which could in any way jeopardise a fair trial. The community and the individuals concerned deserve a fair trial, not jeopardised in any way by debate in this House. Accordingly, I have today instructed the Clerk to not present a petition touching upon one of the matters before the courts until that matter is resolved pursuant to standing order 233.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr WB Kaus MP

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

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late William Bernard Kaus, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland; and
2. That the Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

William Bernard Kaus, better known as Bill Kaus, was born in Brisbane on 24 May 1923 and educated at Mount Gravatt and Greenslopes state schools. In 1941, at the age of 18, Mr Kaus volunteered for the Royal Australian Air Force—the RAAF—where he remained until the end of World War II. He underwent aircrew training in Brisbane and Canada before being sent to England in April 1943.

In August 1943, Mr Kaus joined the Royal Air Force's 161 Squadron as a wireless operator/air gunner at the Royal Air Force station in Tempsford. This unit was tasked with 'setting Europe ablaze' by landing agents behind enemy lines. In 1944, he was commissioned as a pilot officer within the 161 Squadron and flew on many secret operations to France, Norway and Germany. In 1945, Mr Kaus was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for exceptional valour for operations against the enemy in which he displayed 'the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty'.

After the war, Mr Kaus returned to Australia where he was discharged from the RAAF and became involved in the family business, Kaus Brothers Bedding Manufacturers, in Woolloongabba. In 1947, Mr Kaus met Neth Hutchinson and they were married the following year, later raising two sons and two daughters. The family lived in Camp Hill and Coorparoo.

Mr Kaus's political career began in earnest in 1966 when he was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the Liberal member for Hawthorne, a seat he held for six years before switching to the newly created seat of Mansfield in 1972. In his maiden speech, Mr Kaus focused on an issue that he was passionate about, and that was improving road and pedestrian safety in Queensland.

During his parliamentary career, Mr Kaus held the position of Liberal Party whip and was secretary of the parliamentary Liberal Party for a period of 14 years. He also served as a Temporary Chairman of Committees and was a member of various overseas parliamentary delegations. In 1983, following the split of the coalition, Mr Kaus joined the National Party and continued to hold the seat of Mansfield until his retirement in 1986.

In 1977, Mr Kaus was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his military service and in 2005 he received the Legion of Honour, the highest award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, as recognition of his contribution to Australia's service in liberating France during World War II.

Throughout his life Mr Kaus was an avid cricket player and sportsman. He was an inaugural member of the Queensland Cricketers' Club and for many years played in the Queensland parliamentary team in the annual interstate parliamentary lawn bowls carnival. Following his retirement,

Mr Kaus was president and member of the Caloundra Bowls Club and secretary to the board of the Caloundra RSL Club where he worked to support the local community with funding for sport and local charities. He also worked on his local church council and youth committees.

A funeral service for Bill Kaus was held at the St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane, on 28 December 2006. On behalf of the government and all members, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to his wife Neth, their children and their families.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): I rise to second the motion of condolence following the passing of William Bernard Kaus. As the Premier said, Bill Kaus was born on 24 May 1923 and he passed away on 20 December 2006. He was married on 12 June 1948 to Neth Hutchinson and they had two sons, Roger and John, and two daughters, Andrea and Vanessa. It is to those people and their families to whom we extend our condolence today.

Bill was educated at Mount Gravatt and Greenslopes state schools where he distinguished himself by playing Rugby League for Easts and for Queensland. He captained the schoolboys team to Townsville but after a football injury, and upon his mother's insistence, he switched to cricket and became a Queensland schoolboys cricket representative.

Bill was first employed with International Harvester, but towards the end of 1941, at the age of 18 years, Bill enlisted in Brisbane and went to Sandgate for military induction. He sailed for Canada where he was assigned to the 21st Wireless School, stationed in Calgary, Canada, as part of the Empire Air Training Service. Bill was posted to the special operations executive as one of a select group of pilots in the 161 Squadron, dubbed the 'moon squadron', which dropped supplies to the resistance movement in occupied France, Belgium and Holland. These missions were flown by night flights at 30 metres altitude to drop off or pick up secret agents working behind enemy lines.

These escapades were the subject of a book called the *Moon Squadron*. In 1945 the RAAF awarded Bill the Distinguished Flying Cross for exceptional valour, and in 2005, as the Premier has already referred to, Bill and four other veterans were presented with France's highest declaration, the Legion of Honour.

As to his political career and his involvement in this parliament, Bill was first elected in 1966 as the Liberal member for Hawthorne. He held the seat for six years until the seat was repositioned in a redistribution. Bill successfully contested the next election in the newly created seat of Mansfield, which he held until his retirement from politics in 1986. He was party whip and secretary of the parliamentary Liberal Party for 14 years and for 10 years he was also Deputy Chairman of Committees. In 1983 Bill joined the National Party and continued to hold the seat of Mansfield for us until he retired.

The issues raised in his maiden speech are as relevant today as they were in 1966. In his maiden speech Bill outlined his concerns about the disastrous road toll, the standard of driving training, the standard of driver testing and a suggested national safe cycling award he encouraged to be introduced to 12- to 15-year-olds to understand road rules and road safety. He was a strong advocate for subway pedestrian crossings to enhance pedestrian safety. During his representation of his electorates, major building works were approved and all nine schools gained libraries.

Bill also maintained an interest in his community. He maintained a great interest in cricket, being an inaugural member of the Queensland Cricketers' Club, President of the Queensland Rifle Association and President of the Cannon Hill RSL Rifle Club. Lawn bowls was another interest and he played with the parliamentary members and the past members lawn bowls teams, winning the team trophies on several occasions. Bill was the President of the Caloundra Bowls Club and secretary to the board of the Caloundra RSL. He is survived by his wife, his family and 11 grandchildren. I join with the Premier in expressing the condolences of this House to his family today.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (9.41 am): I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party and the coalition to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to pass on to the family and friends of the late Bill Kaus our sympathies and condolences and to support the Premier's motion. William Bernard Kaus, as we have heard, was born at Kangaroo Point on 24 May 1923 to his parents, William Kaus and Doreen Baker. Bill attended Mount Gravatt and Greenslopes state schools and was a talented sportsman in his youth, being selected in the Queensland schoolboys team in both Rugby League and cricket.

In 1941 at the age of 18, Bill enlisted in the Air Force and sailed to Canada where he trained in the Empire Air Training Scheme. After completing his training he was posted to Bournemouth, where he struck up a friendship with cricketer great Keith Miller. Bill was posted to Special Operations Executive and undertook many secret missions into occupied France, Belgium and Holland. After his first tour of duty he asked his wing commander to do another tour.

When Bill was not flying he worked at the Australian Comforts Fund and played cricket for several English county sides. In fact, he was enjoying himself so much in England that when the war was over he missed five ships home and the military police had to put him on the boat to get him back to Australia. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1945 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977,

and in 2005 was awarded France's highest military award, the Legion of Honour. Bill Kaus was a war hero in the service of our country. When Bill returned to Australia he worked in his family's bedding manufacturing business and married Neth Florette Hutchinson in 1948 and they had two sons and two daughters.

Bill entered parliament in 1966 as the member for Hawthorne after an earlier unsuccessful tilt at state politics three years prior. His maiden speech is devoted almost entirely to road safety, with many of his insightful comments and suggestions relevant today. His devotion to road safety was a passion that he continued throughout his parliamentary career, with his crowning achievement being the introduction of lollipop road safety personnel in this state. Bill served as member for Hawthorne for two terms and then, following a redistribution, as member for Mansfield until his retirement in 1986. For honourable members who worry about their margins, Bill won his seat in 1969 by four votes.

During his time in parliament, Bill served as Liberal Party whip and party secretary for four years and Deputy Chairman of Committees for 10 years. In 1983 he and Bob Moore, the then member for Windsor, caused major controversy by switching from the Liberal Party to the National Party after losing their preselections. It was a precursor to the monumental events that took place later in that year. Many of us—certainly those in my age group—remember that particularly turbulent time in the politics of our state.

Bill during his time in parliament and in retirement was a tireless community worker. Just some of the interests and commitments he had was as a state selector for Queensland Cricket, inaugural member of the Queensland Cricketers' Club, President of the Queensland Rifle Association, President of the Caloundra Bowls Club and he was an active Mason. Bill Kaus gave outstanding service to his community, his country and this parliament in both the Liberal and National parties. He passed away on 20 December 2006 and is survived by his wife, Neth, his children, Roger, Andrea, John and Vanessa, and 11 grandchildren. My colleagues and the Liberal Party organisation join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in extending our heartfelt sympathies to his family.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (9.46 am): On behalf of the Mansfield electorate, I wish to express our sympathy to the Kaus family. Bill made a significant contribution to our local area and was involved in many community groups, as has been said, particularly due to his great love of sporting clubs. I must say that in the 8½ years that I have been the member for Mansfield I have never heard a local community member speak negatively of Bill.

I did a Google search about Bill and interestingly one of the search results was about the opening of a turning lane at St Catherine's school by Russ Hinze. As a person who has lived on that road for 34 years and went to that school, I know the benefit of that turning lane. I know that Bill Kaus played a significant role in getting that turning lane, and it is still of major benefit today. It was interesting to read his first speech and see the emphasis he placed on road safety. It is my pleasure as the current member for Mansfield to be involved in road safety as the parliamentary secretary to the transport minister. On behalf of the Mansfield community, I would like to thank him for his contribution and thank his family for allowing him to make that contribution to our local area.

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (9.47 am): Mr Speaker, sometimes in life you are just lucky enough to come across a person who is a decent, likeable individual—and that was certainly Bill Kaus. For 16 years he was a Liberal member of parliament before losing endorsement and then switching to another party, but he was still popular enough within his electorate to win that seat. That is how he came into this parliament as a deputy whip.

Probably the most enjoyable time that we ever spent with Bill was the night that we all sat in this parliament until 9.30 the next morning. At 9 o'clock the night before, Bob Katter, as per usual, did not have his Aboriginal legislation ready—it was still coming from the printer—and we all had to filibuster. It got to the stage where there was absolutely no-one left to speak, so Bill had raced out during a debate on education and had photocopied something from the encyclopedia. He came back into the House but, unfortunately for Bill, he had photocopied the wrong page and so it had absolutely no relevance. Halfway through the speech he just had to say to the Speaker, 'Mr Speaker, I don't understand that. In fact I can't even read it.'

It became a fun term with Bill. The ALP, which was sitting over on this side, had 65 divisions during that night. The difficulty of course was that the government had a majority of only one and during the night we did not know when the opposition was going to caucus and all come in together. So for most of those 65 divisions there were only six or seven people on this side. One can just imagine the comments from Russ Hinze!

I can still remember the early hours of that morning when the sun came through these windows behind us and we could not see anything in this parliament. We had to adjourn for a little while while we put the blinds up behind the windows. It was just so bright as the sun came in. We finished at half past nine. Bill was always a likeable person. To me he was a person who was fun, courteous and likeable all the way through. One cannot get much better than that.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with sessional order No. 4 the order of business will now resume and question time will commence one hour from now at 10.50 a.m.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Health and Physical Education

Ms Barry from 437 petitioners requesting the House to order an urgent review of the effectiveness of the delivery of the health and physical education curriculum in Year 9 of all Queensland high schools, specifically those topics which relate to sexual identity, sexual orientation, heterosexism and homophobia.

Burkitt's Reef

Mr Dempsey from 1,417 petitioners requesting the House to extend the 100 metre yellow conservation park zone along Barolin Rocks and to change Burkitt's Reef to a yellow conservation zone so that anglers may continue to fish these areas.

Lake Cooroibah Road, Noosa

Mr Elmes from 184 petitioners requesting the House to investigate the activity of mining, material extraction from the property known as John's Landing, Lake Cooroibah Road, Noosa, due to an expansion of the business and its close proximity to the community.

Palmwoods, Soil Conditioner

Mr Wellington from 39 petitioners requesting the House to reject the application for an amendment to a development approval for a soil conditioner manufacturing business at Palmwoods.

Kulangoor, Landfill

Mr Wellington from 102 petitioners requesting the House to reject the application by Maroochy Shire Council for a proposed landfill site at Ferntree Creek Road Kulangoor.

Bridges, South East Queensland Regional Plan

Mr Wellington from 421 petitioners requesting the House to remove the investigation area at Bridges from the SEQ Regional Plan.

Pinkenba, Waste Transfer Station

Mr Nicholls from 164 petitioners requesting the House to acquire the lease of the land at 127 Eagle Farm Road, Pinkenba and cancel the lease of the Pinkenba Waste Transfer Station.

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

Slingshots

Mr Caltabiano from 153 petitioners requesting the House to implement legislation to bring Queensland in line with other Australian states and ban the sale and possession of slingshots.

Logan City, Hazardous and Noxious Industries

Mr Moorhead from 105 petitioners requesting the House to take measures to ensure that hazardous and noxious industries do not pose a danger to homes, schools or recreation facilities within Logan City.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

1 December 2006—

- Report of the Review of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002
- Evaluation of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement
- Queensland Government Response to the Evaluation of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement

4 December 2006—

- Interim Government Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland (Mr Shine) to Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee Report No. 71 titled Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission

5 December 2006—

- Report of the Queensland Ombudsman titled The Miriam Vale IPA Report—An investigation into the Miriam Vale Shire Council's management of development applications under the Integrated Planning Act 1997
- Report of the Queensland Ombudsman titled The Daintree River Ferry Report—A review of the Douglas Shire Council's tender process and related issues for the 2006 contract to operate the Daintree River Ferry
- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (733-06) presented by Mr Elmes from 185 petitioners requesting the House to support the Coalition to investigate the persecution of Falun Gong to investigate forced organ harvesting allegations and the illegal detention of Falun Gong Practitioners in detention centres, labour camps, prisons and hospitals in China

6 December 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (723-06) presented by Ms Lee Long from 105 petitioners regarding the one-lane, wooden bridge on the Peninsula Development Road at Rifle Creek

7 December 2006—

- Amended response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (733-06) presented by Mr Elmes from 185 petitioners requesting the House to support the Coalition to investigate the persecution of Falun Gong and to investigate forced organ harvesting allegations and the illegal detention of Falun Gong Practitioners in detention centres, labor camps, prisons and hospitals in China

8 December 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to an E-petition (685-06) sponsored by Mr Caltabiano from 15 petitioners regarding the possible sale of land at 77 Kitchener Road, Ascot including the Kitchener Road Children's Centre

11 December 2006—

- Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—Report No. 56 titled Report on the Review of the Strategic Management Review Report—Office of the Information Commissioner, April 2006; Report on the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Office of the Information Commissioner
- Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—Report No. 57 titled Report on the Review of the Strategic Management Review Report—Office of the Ombudsman, April 2006; Report on the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman

12 December 2006—

- Report by the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) titled Major Sports Facility Authority—2006 Corporate Patronage
- Priorities in Progress, Queensland—2005-06: A report to all Queenslanders on outcomes under the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility
- Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms Bligh) to two paper petitions (701-06 and 716-06) presented by Mr Wellington from 113 and 147 petitioners respectively requesting the House to remove the investigation area at Bridges (Yandina) from the South East Queensland Regional Plan

13 December 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Wilson) to an E-petition (638-06) sponsored by Mr Lee from 1088 petitioners regarding uranium mining in Queensland
- Response from the Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to a paper petition (740-06) presented by Mrs Attwood from 44 petitioners regarding teacher aide allocations for prep classrooms
- Letter, dated 7 December 2006, from the Premier (Mr Beattie) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of a letter from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties listing a proposed international treaty action tabled in both houses of the Federal Parliament on 28 November 2006 and the National Interest Analysis for the proposed treaty action listed

14 December 2006—

- Supreme Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2005-06
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Annual Report 2005-06—Replacement page 61

15 December 2006—

- Misconduct Tribunals—Eighth Annual Report 2005-06
- Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland (Mr Shine) to a paper petition presented by Ms Spence from 7319 petitioners regarding "Truth in Sentencing"
- Magistrates Court—Annual Report 2005-06
- Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland (Mr Wallace) to an E-petition sponsored by Mr Fraser regarding an application for a road closure in Paddington

18 December 2006—

- Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms Bligh) to an e-petition (689-06) sponsored by Ms Roberts from 531 petitioners regarding the use of dams to supply water in Queensland
- Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms Bligh) to an e-petition (691-06) sponsored by Mr Lingard from 406 petitioners regarding construction of a dam at Wyaralong
- Overseas Travel Report on the Hon Stephen Robertson MP's trip to the United Kingdom and the United States of America from 3 17 November 2006
- Mental Health Court Report 1 July 2005—30 June 2006

19 December 2006—

- The Coronial Recommendations Project—An investigation into the administrative practice of Queensland public sector agencies in assisting coronial inquiries and responding to coronial recommendations
- Overseas Travel Report for the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland's (Mr Wallace) attendance at the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) meeting held in New Zealand from Thursday 23 November until Saturday 25 November 2006

20 December 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to an e-petition (712-06) sponsored by Mr Caltabiano from 47 petitioners regarding traffic, parking and safety problems at Grovely, Oxford Park and Mitchelton train stations
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (721-06) presented by Ms Bligh from 883 petitioners regarding the Boggo Road Busway
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to an e-petition (632-06) sponsored by Ms Bligh from 72 petitioners regarding the Boggo Road Busway
- Response from the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (Mr Fraser) to paper petitions (737-06 and 738-06) presented by Mr Wellington from 110 and 521 petitioners respectively regarding the landfill site at Ferntree Creek Road, Kulangoor
- Overseas Trip Report for the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (Mr Mulherin) for his visit to New Zealand from 20-25 November 2006

21 December 2006—

- Nineteenth Report on the Register of Members' Interests
- Report to Speaker of Parliament Regarding the Cost of Legal Assistance and the Derrington Report
- Report to the Legislative Assembly on Visit to Christchurch, New Zealand to attend the Environment Protection and Heritage Council by Hon Lindy Nelson-Carr MP, Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism

22 December 2006—

- Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to a paper petition presented by Dr Flegg from 479 petitioners regarding Kenmore State High School
- Report on the Visit to India by the Honourable John Mickel MP

3 January 2007—

- Response from the Acting Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology (Mr Purcell) to an e-petition (622-06) sponsored by Ms Caltabiano from 196 petitioners regarding sale of Yungaba Immigration Hostel
- Annual Report of the Director of Mental Health for the financial year ended 30 June 2006
- Townsville Hospital Foundation Annual Report 2005-2006
- The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation Annual Report 2005-2006
- Annual Financial Statements for The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation for the year ended 30 June 2006

4 January 2007—

- District Court of Queensland Annual Report 2005-2006
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (739-06) presented by Mrs Stuckey from 332 petitioners regarding the M1 Motorway Northbound Exit 92
- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (749-06) presented by Mr Cripps from 136 petitioners regarding the Kirrama Range Road

8 January 2007—

- Notification from the JSCOT regarding one proposed international treaty action tabled in both houses of the Federal Parliament on 6 December 2006
- The National Interest Analysis for the proposed treaty action

9 January 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (735-06) presented by Mr Hobbs from 730 petitioners regarding public sector dentists
- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (743-06) presented by Mrs Menkens from 174 petitioners regarding the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

10 January 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (736-06) presented by Ms Croft from 120 petitioners regarding the shortage of General Practitioners in the Runaway Bay area

19 January 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (754-06) presented by Ms Lee Long from 141 petitioners regarding the intersection of Atherton-Herberton Road and Wongabel Road

23 January 2007—

- Erratum to Explanatory Notes for the Whistleblowers (Disclosure to Member of Parliament) Amendment Bill 2006 tabled on 31 October 2006
- Response from the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (Mr Fraser) to a paper petition (744-06) presented by Mr Wellington from 147 petitioners regarding the Maroochy Shire Council's proposal to develop a bioreactor landfill at Ferntree Creek Road, Kulangoor.
- Correction to the Queensland Government's gift register tabled in the Parliament in late 2006 regarding the 'Maranoa River' painting by Joanne Currie

30 January 2007—

- Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms Bligh) to an e-petition (659-06) sponsored by Mr Lee from 1083 petitioners regarding amending the Integrated Planning Act 1997 and the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026 to allow the provisions of the Vegetation Management Act 1999 to apply to all of Queensland

1 February 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (Mr Mulherin) to an e-petition (726-06) and a paper petition (763-06) presented by Ms Croft from 1,570 and 7,343 petitioners respectively regarding the ending of killing of stray or surrendered cats and dogs

2 February 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence) to a paper petition (752-06) presented by Mrs Menkens from 513 petitioners regarding increasing police numbers at Home Hill Police Station to allow the Station to be staffed on a 24-hour basis
- Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence) to a paper petition (755-06) presented by Ms Lee Long from 84 petitioners regarding the appointment of an investigator from outside Queensland to review all evidence relating to the deaths of Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy at Atherton in 1991

5 February 2007—

- Response from the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism (Ms Nelson-Carr) to a paper petition (756-06) presented by Ms Nelson-Carr from 5000 petitioners requesting the House to intervene to prevent the development of the Reef Cove Resort on False Cape and for the Queensland Government to purchase this site
- Response from the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (Mr Fraser) to a paper petition (734-06) and an e-petition (711-06) presented by Mr Langbroek from 349 petitioners and 112 petitioners respectively regarding rate increases for strata titled property owners

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

- Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2006, No. 288

Integrated Planning Act 1997, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 289

Weapons Act 1990—

- Weapons Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 290

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2006, No. 291

Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 292

Geothermal Exploration Act 2004, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004—

- Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 293

Public Trustee Act 1978—

- Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 294

Health Act 1937—

- Health (Drugs and Poisons) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 295

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection (Mango Leaf Gall Midge) Notice 2006, No. 296

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection (Mango Leaf Gall Midge) Quarantine Notice 2006, No. 297

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

- Government Owned Corporations Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 298

Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing certain provision, No. 299

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

- Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2006, No. 300

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period 2007) Notice 2006, No. 301

Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977—

- Financial Administration and Audit Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 302

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Driver Licensing) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 303

Maritime and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 304

Housing Act 2003—

- Housing Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 305

Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 306

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998—

- Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 307

Health Act 1937, Health Services Act 1991, Pest Management Act 2001, Pharmacists Registration Act 2001, Public Health Act 2005—

- Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2006, No. 308

Health Legislation Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 309

Health Services Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 310

Public Health Act 2005—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 311

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation 2006, No. 312

Child Employment Act 2006—

- Child Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 313 and Explanatory Notes for No. 313

Trade Measurement Act 1990, Trade Measurement Administration Act 1990—

- Trade Measurement Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 314

Building Act 1975, Integrated Planning Act 1997—

- Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 315

Drug Court Act 2000, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- State Penalties Enforcement and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 316

Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002—

- Personal Injuries Proceedings Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 317

Jury Act 1995—

- Jury Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 318

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2006, No. 319

Water Act 2000—

- Water Resource (Calliope River Basin) Plan 2006, No. 320 and Explanatory Notes for No. 320

Water Act 2000—

- Water Resource (Gold Coast) Plan 2006, No. 321 and Explanatory Notes for No. 321

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

- Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2006, No. 322

Criminal Offence Victims Act 1995—

- Criminal Offence Victims Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006, No. 323

Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Act 1990—

- Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2007, No. 1

Police Service Administration Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 2

Health Services Act 1991—

- Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2007, No. 3

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Torres Strait) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2007, No. 4

Mineral Resources Act 1989—

- Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2007, No. 5

Criminal Code (Drink Spiking) and Other Acts Amendment Act 2006—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 6

Justices Act 1886—

- Justices Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2007, No. 7

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2007, No. 8

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

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

Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2006

Amendments made to Bill (after amendments made during consideration in detail)

Clause 1, (Short title)—

At page 4, line 5, after 'Act'—

insert—

'(No. 2)'.

Clause (Insertion of new pt 6, div 5)—

At page 9, line 13, after 'Act'—

insert—

'(No. 2)'.

Clause 6 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 5)—

At page 9, line 18, after 'Act'—

insert—

'(No. 2)'.

Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006

Amendments made to Bill (after amendments made during consideration in detail)

Clause 25 (Insertion of new ch 4, pt 2, div 3)—

At page 45, line 21, '(4)'—

omit, insert—

'(3)'.

Clause 25 (Insertion of new ch 4, pt 2, div 3)—

At page 45, line 24, '(3)'—

omit, insert—

'(4)'.

Clause 25 (Insertion of new ch 4, pt 2, div 3)—

At page 49, line 30, '(3)'—

omit, insert—

'(2)'.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (Mr Fraser)—

- Letter dated 19 December 2006, from the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, to the Electoral Commissioner for Queensland, concerning a special reference of a reviewable local government matter in relation to the area of the City of Brisbane redividing the area into 26 single member divisions.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Water Reform

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): I am pleased to inform the House that the Prime Minister has agreed to my request for an urgent meeting on his proposal for national water reform. The Prime Minister's plans have very serious implications for Queensland. As a result of my request, the Prime Minister has now convened a meeting of states in Canberra on Thursday at 4 o'clock. The reality is that poor practices in the past have denigrated the Murray-Darling, one of the great water systems of Australia. Therefore, we are prepared to be reasonable but we want to ensure that there are effective and workable management practices in place. At the moment it is impossible to know whether that is the case because a number of key questions remain unanswered—details such as the specific powers the Commonwealth seeks to have referred and how it practically expects to manage this vast resource.

In the Prime Minister's letter to me he wrote about the referral of powers and then asked us to make suggestions about what they should be. Other issues, for example, are how much it will cost, what is the time frame and does it intend to use compulsory acquisition on farmers. Those opposite are a little bit more silent now.

As always, the devil is in the detail. For example, it would be a giant backward step for our rural economy and the environment if decision making on water was to occur in isolation from other resources in the catchment and was reliant on decision makers in Canberra alone. Later today I will meet with the Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, to discuss the implications of the Prime Minister's plans on our respective states. Mr Bracks has already indicated that we share common ground on a number of concerns, including the protection of the rights of irrigators—those opposite are silent now; there is no secret privatisation agenda—and that federal funds for major water infrastructure projects should finally start to flow through to the states. Those opposite are silent now, Mr Speaker. For example, in Queensland we are seeking \$408 million for the innovative \$1.7 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Project. We are yet to hear from Canberra in relation to our request and we are yet to hear any support from those opposite, I might say, for this important pipeline.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns with the Prime Minister on Thursday. I hope it will be a key step in working together to address the vital issue of water security and supply in Australia. I do so because the legal advice that we have from Crown law indicates that control of the Murray-Darling will not be easily legally attained by the Commonwealth without state cooperation. We are prepared to give that cooperation provided that there is a reasonable outcome in the interests of Queensland and the nation. I table that legal advice as well as supporting letters to the Prime Minister and appropriate news releases for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter dated 2 February 2007, from the Premier to the Prime Minister relating to responsibility for the management of water within the Great Artesian Basin.

Tabled paper: Media release by the Premier, (undated), titled 'Federal Powers Up the Creek Without State Co-operation'.

Tabled paper: Media release by the Premier, dated 2 February 2007, titled 'Premier Calls for Urgent Meeting on Water'.

Tabled paper: Letter dated 2 February 2007, from Dr Gerard Sammon of Crown Law, to Michael Ries of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, concerning Commonwealth powers in relation to Queensland River systems.

Purified Recycled Water

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.57 am): While we are talking about water, my government has decided that purified recycled water will be a permanent and ongoing feature of our water supplies, both for industry and for household consumption. As a result we have now cancelled the plebiscite planned for next month. It was not an easy decision to make. However, the reality is that we have no choice because of the drought.

Mr Seeney: Because of you!

Mr BEATTIE: The drought is showing no signs of easing. Now the Leader of the Opposition is blaming me for the drought. There are many things I can do, but I cannot make it rain, sadly, and I have not created the drought either. I have no doubt that the Leader of the Opposition is capable of creating a drought: a drought in support of the national Liberal Party. We will deal with that later.

The drought is showing no signs of easing in the south-east corner. In fact, the latest data from the Bureau of Meteorology shows that many parts of the south-east are experiencing the lowest rainfall on record. Purified recycled water will play a crucial role in helping to secure water supplies for the future. It is a key part of our comprehensive water security plan that includes new infrastructure, desalination, the water grid, education and conservation.

I acknowledge that purified recycled water is an emotive issue. It is easy for people to use misinformation to undermine what is a tried and true system.

Mr Springborg: Yeah, which you'd know!

Mr BEATTIE: Now, there is the man who believes that fish change sex based on recycled water. If I were him I would be a little bit quiet. We are not talking about sex changes because we have recycled water, former leader of the opposition. If anyone here has visited London they have drunk recycled water; if they have been to Singapore they have drunk recycled water; if they have been to Orange County in California they have drunk recycled water; if they have been to Washington they have drunk recycled water. The problems of those opposite are not water related; they are inherent. I say to Mr Springborg that I doubt they will be recycling him as leader so I would be a little quiet if I were him, although I have to say the opposition could not do any worse, so maybe it should recycle him as leader. There are a number of other matters on water that I want to share with the House and I seek leave to incorporate those details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I want people to understand the facts about purified recycled water which is why we'll be rolling out an extensive public education campaign over the coming months.

From tonight, we'll be presenting the facts about purified recycled water, as well as the details of my Government's water security plan.

I want the community to understand the science behind the recycling of waste water. Not the fiction, but the science.

I want the community to understand that purified recycled water is clear, it's clean and it's safe.

Our campaign will detail how the water is treated to the highest standard through a multibarrier treatment system and at all times is subject to monitoring and testing.

Purified recycled water has been used for decades in other parts of the world including the United Kingdom and the United States.

These are some of the facts we'll be sharing with the community and I make no apology for it.

Mr Speaker,

We are working flat out to build the infrastructure we need to help tackle climate change and the worst drought on record.

We're working with households, local government, business and industry to reduce water use.

And we're showing leadership by making the tough policy decisions.

Introducing purified recycled water will go a long way to help delivering future water security and supply for south-east Queenslanders.

Ministerial Arrangements

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.59 am): I inform the House that on 30 January 2007 in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001 Her Excellency the Governor appointed Frederick Warren Pitt as Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Seniors and Youth of Queensland. I also inform the House that on 30 January 2007 in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001 Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved the Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order No.1 2007 to reflect this change of Mr Pitt's title. The titles of Mr Pitt's parliamentary secretaries, Ronan Lee and Stirling Hinchliffe, have also been changed to reflect Minister Pitt's new title. I lay upon the table of the House copies of the relevant notifications from the *Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazette*.

Tabled paper: Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 1) 2007.

Tabled paper: Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazette dated 30 January 2007.

Partnerships Queensland: Baseline Report 2006

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.00 am): Today represents a milestone in the Queensland government's approach to Indigenous affairs, particularly in relation to transparency and accountability. Today we release the first baseline report on the lives of Indigenous Queenslanders. This report is the first attempt by any Queensland government to present a full and frank picture of life for Indigenous Queenslanders. It demonstrates, with few pleasant surprises, that in most areas Indigenous Queenslanders are significantly disadvantaged compared with the broader Queensland community.

In 2005 my government launched the Partnerships Queensland Policy Framework and adopted the Partnerships Queensland Performance Framework. Partnerships Queensland provides a whole-of-government policy framework for government agencies to work cooperatively to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Shortly I will table the *Partnerships Queensland: baseline report 2006*. This report provides the first comprehensive profile of Indigenous Queenslanders. It will be the benchmark upon which we judge our performance as we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve their lives. Much of the data is very distressing, and I will deal with some of it.

Infant mortality rates for babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were up to 2.5 times those of non-Indigenous babies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged zero to four years comprised 40.2 per cent of all hospital admissions in their age group. Indigenous youth aged 17 to 24 are up to 13.9 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous young people. I table a copy of this report, and a copy will be circulated to members. I would urge members to read it because there are a lot of serious challenges that we need to face up to. Over the last 8½ years my government has tried to resolve many of these problems. I have to say that I am depressed and disappointed by the result, and I will not pretend otherwise.

We need a partnership with Indigenous communities that can actually improve their lives. Nobody can play Pontius Pilate or waive their responsibilities. Let me highlight why. I draw everyone's attention to the summary. On page 21 it points out that in 2004-05 the rate at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies were subject to substantial reports of abuse and/or neglect was between 1.4 times and 1.8 times the rate of non-Indigenous babies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people comprised 40.2 per cent of all hospital admissions for assault for those aged zero to four years from 2002-03 to 2003-04. Young children residing in Aboriginal DOGIT communities were between 23 and 44 times more likely to be hospitalised because of assault than all Queensland non-Indigenous young children.

On page 22 dot point 3.3 highlights that children aged five to 14 residing in Aboriginal DOGIT communities were significantly more likely to be hospitalised than all Queensland non-Indigenous children for the years outlined. Dot point 4.2 on page 23 points out that notifications of sexually transmitted infections were between 6.1 and 6.5 times more likely to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander young people than non-Indigenous young people. Dot point 4.3 highlights that only 56.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students commencing year 8 in 2000 continued to year 12 in 2004 compared with 82.4 per cent of non-Indigenous students. Dot point 4.8 points out that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were between 4.8 and 4.9 times more likely to be charged by police than non-Indigenous young people for that period.

I refer members to dot points 8.8 and 8.9 on page 27. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged between seven and 14 years were between 2.6 and 3.1 times more likely to be victims of reported injury related offences than non-Indigenous children and were between two and 2.5 times more likely to be victims of reported sexual offences than non-Indigenous children. Dot point 8.9 highlights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 15 to 24 years were between 4.7 and 5.2 times more likely to be victims of reported assault offences than non-Indigenous young people, and an estimated 59.2 per cent of offences against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were alcohol or drug related compared with 47.9 per cent for those non-Indigenous young people.

This is a sad indictment on 200 years of failed policy, but it is also a sad indictment on the lack of partnerships in the past that could have resolved these problems. We have tried as a government every way we possibly can to improve the lives of Indigenous people. I give this commitment today that we will not let up in our determination to achieve this, but we also need leadership from those communities.

This weekend in Atherton there will be a community cabinet meeting—on the Sunday. On the Monday I have asked for the mayors of each one of those Indigenous communities to come and meet with the key ministers to talk about the baseline report and to talk about the future. We need to actually get the leadership in each one of those communities to work with us in partnership. We have tried this. We have had round tables with our senior bureaucrats. We have had ministers working incredibly hard. However, there is a string of issues on which we need the community's leadership. We need to put aside the politics—and there are both political politics and Indigenous politics. There is more politics in this than we could ever find anywhere else. This report should be a sober reminder to all of us, regardless of our political views, that we need to try a new approach, but we cannot do this without leadership. We are prepared to give that leadership, but we need the community's support.

That is why the baseline report is so important. For the first time all agencies will be judged on their performance. Have they met the standards we set for them? Are they doing everything they can to improve people's lives, health, education and standard of housing? It also reinforces the entrenched and intergenerational nature of Indigenous disadvantage. Importantly, it highlights the urgent need to improve the standard of living for Indigenous Queenslanders. It also strengthens the argument for bold, strong and innovative policies and, as I said before, productive partnerships with communities, the corporate and community sectors, and all levels of government. All ministers and directors-general have seen the data in the report and are aware of their responsibilities in improving the results in partnership with Indigenous Queenslanders and their communities.

I would also like to point out that a newspaper report last month was wrong when it claimed that the report, which was circulated throughout government in an early draft form, had been shelved. This was not the case. It was simply a draft report that was being worked on. The government has committed to the most rigorous performance framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander progress of any Australian jurisdiction. It was always our intention to release this report. In fact, we intend to compile it every five years to allow the government and the community to determine what progress has been made. The minister, Warren Pitt, has convinced me of a shorter period, which we will subscribe to.

I am appealing today for bipartisanship from this House. I am also appealing for the leadership of those Indigenous communities to work with us because there are many statistics in the report that show that, while there are areas in which the government can improve, we cannot do it without an improvement in each one of those communities as well.

Tabled paper: Report by the Queensland Government titled 'Partnerships Queensland: Baseline Report 2006'.

Watch-House Monitoring

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.08 am): I want to refer to a meeting that took place last week with a number of my ministers in relation to watch-house monitoring, particularly in deed of grant communities. A reference has been given to the CMC to examine this issue. The CMC was also asked to consider related issues including the optimal use of public resources to deliver justice services and land tenure issues in deed of grant in trust Aboriginal communities.

I will be raising a number of land use issues with the mayors when we meet on Sunday. What my ministers tell me when we have discussions about advancing Indigenous people—and, Mr Speaker, you will recall this when you were a minister—is that there is a need for governments to be able to build government services in a range of areas in those communities. Unfortunately, there are delays in land use issues. I am not trying to point the finger at anybody. I am simply saying that we cannot provide services if we cannot access land. It is very simple.

That is why we have asked the CMC to look at this. The Attorney mentions this in the letter of referral that he sent. Land use issues and the provision of services are intertwined, if you like, and cannot be separated. If we are going to resolve the sorts of statistics that are in the baseline report we have to resolve those issues.

As I said earlier, the CMC was asked to look at these matters. It was asked to take into account the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, previous coronial inquiries and various practices including policing. The Crime and Misconduct Commission will report to the government by 31 August 2007. I table a copy of the letter to the CMC from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

Tabled paper: Letter (undated) from the Attorney-General to the Chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission concerning Aboriginal deaths in custody.

This government takes its responsibility to implement the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations very seriously. In 1991 the then Queensland government accepted 288 of the 290 recommendations that were relevant to Queensland. It did not accept recommendation 58 that persons who are harshly or unreasonably excluded from a hotel be given a right of appeal and recommendation 273 that community workers be appointed to inspect licensed premises.

In addition, my government has not implemented recommendation 79 that public drunkenness be decriminalised because we believe that people should be able to enjoy public spaces without being interrupted by drunks. I have said that repeatedly and so have my ministers. In total we have accepted 287 of the 290 recommendations made by the royal commission, applicable to Queensland, including all those relating to police watch-houses. I table a document that summarises the government's implementation of these recommendations. I also table for members' information a document that sets out the 31 recommendations that require further action as they require ongoing implementation. In other words, we believe we have implemented the recommendations. There are 31 that are ongoing and do not ever end. That is understandable. The text of Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendation 141 about watch-house monitoring and the government's response to the State Coroner's recommendations into the death of Mulrunji, which I tabled in this place on 2 November, are included.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) Implementation Status'.

Tabled paper: Document titled '31 Recommendations requiring further action under Partnership Queensland'.

Tabled paper: Document dated 2 November 2006, titled 'Queensland government response to coroner's comments in the inquest into the death of Mulrunji'.

I urge members to read the letter to the CMC, to read our response to the Aboriginal deaths in custody royal commission—we go through the 31 recommendations in particular—and to read our response to the Coroner's report in relation to Mulrunji because I have found in my conversations with many members that, quite frankly, many have not read them. So I urge them to do so to have an understanding of our response.

I look forward to meeting with the mayors from Queensland's Aboriginal councils next Monday in Atherton. During that meeting we will discuss the CMC review and ways that we can work together to stop the violence in Aboriginal communities.

In relation to the last matter, watch-house monitoring, the police union has raised this issue publicly. I have spoken to the minister about this. I have spoken to representatives of both unions by phone. I have indicated that we will take seriously the issues they have raised in relation to watch-houses, which is why we have the CMC looking at them. The cells are monitored. What the union has asked for is video monitoring of the areas outside the cells in the police stations. We have asked the CMC to have a look at that and come back to us. We will adopt the positive and constructive approach to the monitoring of the watch-house area outside the cells. We will see what recommendations they give us in relation to technology. This is about moving forward. I believe that is the way to do it. I table those documents for the information of the House.

Tropical Cyclone Nelson

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.13 am): A cyclone warning is now current for coastal communities from the Northern Territory-Queensland border to Kowanyama. The latest advice from the Bureau of Meteorology, issued at 6.30 am, reported Tropical Cyclone Nelson as a category 1 cyclone, situated 95 kilometres north of Mornington Island and 270 kilometres north-west of Karumba. Nelson is expected to intensify as it continues to move east-south-east and may cross the coast between Kowanyama and Karumba tomorrow morning. I also understand that the tropical low off Cairns is intensifying but moving away from the coast.

The emergency services minister will provide more detail to the House shortly. However, I encourage far-north Queenslanders to take precautions and make necessary preparations. Queenslanders in this part of the state are highly aware of the extreme weather tropical cyclones bring and are well versed in how to prepare. However, anyone needing assistance in preparing their homes or businesses can contact their local emergency services for information.

Key Projects, South-East Queensland

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.14 am): We have an additional 1,500 Queenslanders every week. That is why we are implementing the largest capital works program in this state's history, with plans to spend a record \$11.6 billion in this financial year. It is the largest building program in the nation on a per capita basis. I table for the information of the House a brochure setting out key projects for the south-east and material relating to north Queensland.

Tabled paper: Copy of an advertisement titled 'Building a Prosperous future for North Queensland...building tomorrow's Queensland today'.

Tabled paper: Brochure titled 'Building tomorrow's Queensland today: Key projects for South East Queensland'.

I seek leave to incorporate the full details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

We have a duty to keep Queenslanders informed of what the Government is doing to tackle the problems of growth and drought—and how we are spending their money.

In December we informed regional Queenslanders through local newspapers, at a cost of \$59,204, of the major projects we are providing for them.

On Sunday an eight-page brochure in *The Sunday Mail* provided about 500,000 households with details of our major infrastructure projects for South-East Queensland. The cost was \$69,577.

Some of the major projects include \$3.6b which has been allocated to 14 major health projects including the Gold Coast University Hospital, the Sunshine Coast Hospital at Kawana, and the new Queensland Children's Hospital.

We're building a multi-billion dollar water grid.

Nearly nine kilometres of steel pipes have already been laid for the Southern Regional Water Pipeline and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project.

We've allocated over \$188m to the State's largest desalination facility at Tugun and completed the early works program, with full scale construction due to start next month, subject to the securing of environmental approvals.

And we're advancing the Traveston Crossing and Wyaralong dams, with full scale Environmental Impact Statement studies ramping up in March.

Last week we opened five new schools, and launched the \$45m Queensland Academy of Creative Industries and the \$20m Queensland Academy of Science, Mathematics and Technology, a joint project with the Australian Government.

We have committed nearly \$42m to new and redeveloped TAFE facilities in South-East Queensland.

We're spending \$9.7b on Queensland roads, including the Tugun Bypass and the Gateway Bridge duplication project, between now and 2011.

The \$217m Boggo Road Busway is under construction.

We are also spending \$450m to provide increased services on the Gold Coast rail line, and injecting \$386m into the South East Cycle Network program.

As Honourable Members can see we are building tomorrow's Queensland today.

Shave for a Cure, Leukaemia Foundation

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.15 am): I promised the Leukaemia Foundation that I would highlight its 'shave for a cure', the World's Greatest Shave. I do so for all members. I draw it to their attention. I seek leave to incorporate the details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This morning I announce details of the Leukaemia Foundation's major fund-raising activity of the year—the 'World's Greatest Shave'.

The Foundation was formed here in Queensland in 1975 and plays a pivotal role in supporting families with leukaemia, lymphoma and other blood disorders, as they undergo medical treatment.

In getting ready for the 'World's Greatest Shave'—which will run from March 15 to 17—the Foundation has set a Statewide fundraising target of \$2.6 million.

Now in its ninth year, the event is expected to sign up some 30,000 people to either shave or colour their hair to raise money for this worthy cause.

Every dollar donated will help care for Queenslanders and their families.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to also report to the House that the Foundation will be opening its fourth accommodation centre for rural and regional families mid year.

With other centres in both Townsville and Brisbane, the new facility is being built at Nathan, next to the QEII Hospital.

In 2005/06, the Leukaemia Foundation provided 31,239 night's accommodation to 516 patients and their families. In the same period, the Foundation also provided education and training to 2031 patients and their carers.

Money raised next month will enable the Foundation to continue this important work and also help fund research into better treatments, and cures.

Purified Recycled Water

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (10.15 am): Statements and reports published in recent weeks have fuelled fears that south-east Queensland may run out of water before the end of next year. I would like to assure the people of south-east Queensland that, despite the very real water shortages gripping this part of the nation, water will continue to flow through their taps. However, make no mistake: our water situation is grim. We are in the grip of the worst drought on record. Our major dam system—the Wivenhoe-Somerset system—is at record low levels. As at today the combined levels for the Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams are 22.24 per cent. South-east Queensland residents and businesses are doing their bit to curb water use. Across the south-east, residents and businesses have cut consumption by more than 30 per cent under level 4 restrictions compared with their predrought consumption.

In January we averaged 721 megalitres a day of use versus the predrought average of 1,136 megalitres for that month. It is a sensational outcome. Nevertheless, as people know, we have not had the rain in our catchments that we need to replenish our dam supplies. Inflows into the combined Wivenhoe system are currently tracking at 20 per cent lower than for the same period—that is, April to December 2004-05, which to date is the worst full year on record.

As the Premier outlined earlier, tough times call for tough decisions which is why purified recycled water will be an ongoing feature of our water supply system. Two surveys undertaken in December and January of 1,000 south-east Queensland residents on each occasion found very strong support in the community for supplementing our water supplies with purified recycled water. When respondents in the January survey were asked whether they would support the use of purified recycled water for drinking that met all health and safety requirements, 78 per cent said they would vote yes. I note that that result is in fact consistent with the results of the online poll conducted by the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Moggill, who also found with a lesser number, but nevertheless 78 per cent in support of the proposition. Purified recycled water gives us a new source of water that is not dependent on rain.

Tonight we begin an information campaign with a series of television ads aimed at informing the public about the need for purified recycled water and desalination as well as water-saving initiatives being taken to guarantee our short- and long-term water security. It will also provide information to residents about how they can access a range of government rebates to assist them in cutting their water use.

Key actions we are taking to secure our region's water supplies are listed in the emergency water regulation introduced into parliament by the Premier in August last year. I seek leave to table the progress reports on these emergency regulation projects for the months of November and December.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Document by the Queensland Water Commission titled 'Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006—Monthly Progress Reports' dated November 2006.

Tabled paper: Document by the Queensland Water Commission titled 'Water Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2006—Monthly Progress Reports' dated December 2006.

Both of these are available on the Queensland Water Commission website and have been since they were published. Based on the current forecast performance of these projects, population growth and conservative dam inflows, analysis and modelling by the Queensland Water Commission show that south-east Queensland will not run out of water at the end of 2008. This is even before purified recycled water would be available to supplement our dam supplies. Based on our current worst case scenario, which is the region receiving the same level of inflows each year into the Wivenhoe system as those received in 2004-05, our worst year to date, the commission advises that dam levels will be at about 6.66 per cent at the start of December 2008. SEQWater advises that water from the Wivenhoe system can be accessed down to one per cent of capacity.

Even without adding purified recycled water, our dam levels increase to 7.15 per cent in January 2009 as the Gold Coast desalination plant increases its output to supply Brisbane. Clearly, if we continue to receive poor rainfall into our dams, the time frames for completing our projects are tight, and we have acknowledged this. But we are taking all possible steps to bring these projects in on deadline and we are reporting publicly each month on project performance. If our water outlook deteriorates further, there are other actions that can be taken to further reduce the pressure on our dam supplies. These include introducing a possible new level of restrictions and further scaling back power station water usage that does not risk the region's electricity supply. The commission will continue to closely monitor our dam inflows, particularly given that inflows for the 2006-07 year to date are currently tracking lower than the worst recorded year to date. We need to see what rainfall we receive in February and March, which are historically higher rainfall months in south-east Queensland, before any definitive conclusion can be drawn about the 2006-07 water year. The commission will also continue to track and report on our emergency water measures and make any changes to its scenario planning to ensure that our region has the water that it needs.

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.20 am): There is a new topic of conversation at barbecues throughout Queensland. Instead of talking about the cricket or the football, the talk is all about water tanks, water efficient washing machines and shower roses. Queenslanders are passionate about saving water—probably more so than in any other state of Australia—and the Beattie government is helping by providing generous rebates under the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme. I am pleased to inform the House that the scheme has reached an important milestone. This week more than \$20 million will have been paid out to Queenslanders in more than 14,000 cheques and 21,700 electronic funds transfer payments.

We have provided rebates for 16,000 water efficient washing machines, 15,000 water tanks and 2,800 dual flush toilet suites. There is further good news: processing of applications will be cranked up another notch this week, with a further 25 people finishing final training last week. Processing staff have now increased to 85 from 42 in November, with another five people to start in the next fortnight. Unfortunately, many payments are being delayed by people not properly filling in application forms. Around 50 per cent of applications are filled out incorrectly and processing staff have to do double the work to complete them. Problems include copies of receipts provided rather than the originals, a number of applicants failing to sign their applications, people not attaching proper proof of residency, and some people applying for washing machine rebates where they have not bought four-star machines. People are not reading the terms and conditions properly before making their applications. I would implore them to do so.

Fact sheets on the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, including all of the terms and conditions, are available on my department's website at www.nrw.qld.gov.au. It is likely that the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme is the largest-scale public rebate scheme in the history of Queensland. Queenslanders see this excellent scheme for what it is—a great opportunity to improve the water efficiency of their homes.

Water Networks

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport) (10.22 am): We have all seen the news footage of the past week which has shown us the two extremes of the water situation in Queensland. On the one hand we have floods in the state's north while on the other the south-east corner remains in the grip of the worst drought on record. The Beattie government is providing funds to local councils for projects around the state to secure our future water supplies. Building upon the announcement made in the parliament last year of \$49 million being given to councils for infrastructure projects under the Smaller Communities Assistance Program, today I advise the House that I have approved more than \$4.5 million to 22 projects by 20 councils across the state which are aimed at reducing wastage of clean drinking water with a focus on preventing loss from their water networks.

The Queensland government has allocated \$50 million around the state for projects like these up until June 2011. This is above and beyond our commitment to the dedicated projects we are undertaking with councils in the south-east corner. Our councils are on the front line in the battle against the current drought, and the state government is committed to supporting them. Last week we saw images of the waste that can occur when a pipe burst in this city, sending our most precious resource down the drain. This is the very type of waste the Beattie government is determined will be plugged in concert with local governments.

A snapshot of some of the projects being funded shows the variety of water-saving initiatives. In Cairns the city council will implement a high-tech monitoring system to identify leaking and/or burst water mains so that they can be isolated and fixed quickly. In Ipswich the city council will build a storage tank for recycled water that will then become available for irrigation and other non-drinking uses. In central Queensland three councils—Aramac, Jericho and Belyando—will undertake a range of projects, including targeting flow measurement and pipeline pressure. In Toowoomba the council will use its funding at the Milne Bay Aquatic Centre to reduce water loss, allowing the pool to remain open to the public. I commend these councils for taking a positive step towards reducing water consumption and loss in their local area.

Power Stations, Water Supply

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.24 am): We are in the grip of the worst drought in south-east Queensland in recorded history. It is a challenge not only for all levels of government but also for industry and the community. Today I want to talk about the supply of water to power stations and their ability to generate power during the drought. Tarong Energy has forecast that there will be sufficient water available to continue to generate power at Tarong Power

Station during this summer and the next, and the state government has committed to fund the \$1.7 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. The Swanbank section of the pipeline will be completed by the end of August this year and the Tarong section by the end of June next year. When it is up and running, it is intended that neither Swanbank nor Tarong power stations will be drawing any water from the Wivenhoe system.

We are working right now to reduce water usage. Tarong Power Station stopped drawing water from Wivenhoe Dam for its cooling towers in March last year. This measure saves around 43 megalitres a day. The water is now drawn from Boondooma Dam, which does not supply drinking water to Brisbane. Tarong Power Station is also implementing a number of recycling and conservation alternatives that are expected to save around 8,000 megalitres a year. On top of this, Tarong Power Station has modified its power generation in off-peak times to save an additional 7,000 megalitres over the next 18 months. Water-saving initiatives at Swanbank power stations will reduce consumption by 727 megalitres this year. In the last five years, Swanbank power stations have cut their total water usage by 22 per cent. Swanbank E is the country's newest, most efficient and most advanced gas-fired power station. As well as these initiatives, the dry-cooled Kogan Creek Power Station is expected to be up and running around September this year. It will boost the state's generating capacity by 750 megawatts. Kogan Creek will use one-tenth of the water used by its wet-cooled counterparts, and that water will be drawn from adjacent deep-well bores. We are facing the worst drought in 100 years and we must all work together to meet the challenges ahead.

Prep Year

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.26 am): On Monday last week history was created in education in Queensland with the first of the universal prep year starting in over 1,500 classrooms across the state. Our government has delivered on its commitment to introduce the prep year in Queensland schools, and I am very proud of the success with which it has been implemented in a very committed way by teachers across the state. Over the past week more than 29,000 children throughout Queensland have enrolled at state and non-state schools for the new full-time non-compulsory prep year. I know many members visited their local schools to greet the prep children and their parents. I was delighted to be on hand at North Lakes State College last Monday with the Premier and fellow ministers to see firsthand the smiles and the tears of the prep children and their parents.

Prep will give young Queenslanders the best possible start to their lifelong education experience and provide a solid foundation to build their lives and future successes on. The introduction of prep is the culmination of hard work of a very large number of people on the infrastructure, curriculum, legislation and policy framework to implement and support this important new education initiative. Getting ready for prep meant taking on one of the largest ever capital works programs in Education's history. I want to congratulate our teams in the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Department of Public Works for their great efforts. In our state schools there are 416 new classrooms and 420 refurbished existing classrooms, as well as 1,000 minor upgrades of preschool classrooms and small schools. As I mentioned, there are 1,500 prep teachers in classrooms across the state, including 840 who came from the preschool system, 560 from the existing school system and an additional 100 new teachers employed. There is also \$2 million committed for specialist staff training and a further \$15.8 million allocated for curriculum resources, including toys.

As members are aware, we are staging the introduction of prep with children born between 1 January and 30 June 2002 eligible to attend prep this year. Next year, 2008, will see children born between July 2002 and June 2003 eligible to attend. This is in line with an increase in the official starting age for school by six months from 2008, bringing Queensland into line with most other states.

The successful introduction of prep is due to a lot of hard work by a very large group of people. As with any new initiative, we will be monitoring the implementation of the new prep year with a view to making it even better for Queensland children into the future.

Law and Order

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.30 am): Being a police officer is not an easy job and, as we have read in recent media reports, policing in Indigenous communities is the most difficult policing work in Australia. However, the good news is that Queenslanders' support for and confidence in our police officers is increasing.

This year's *Report on government services*, released last week, shows that public satisfaction with policing in Queensland is on the rise. Last year, the national report showed that for every 100,000 Queenslanders 47 made complaints against police. This year, that rate has dropped to 39 complaints per 100,000 people.

The report also shows increasing community satisfaction with the way police deal with public order complaints. Satisfaction levels rose by 9.3 per cent—up from 52 per cent of Queenslanders in 2005-06—to 61.3 per cent this year. These increasing levels of satisfaction and support for our Police Service are no doubt fuelled by less crime and increased community safety.

The report shows that Queenslanders generally feel safer than their national counterparts and are less likely to fear crime in their neighbourhood. In most categories of perceived safety—whether it is how safe they feel at home, while walking or jogging, or on public transport at night—Queensland scored higher than the national average. In addition, the report showed that armed and unarmed robbery offences and property crimes have all dropped, while Queensland achieved the second lowest rate of car theft in the nation. This report is in line with the Queensland Police Service Annual Statistical Review, which shows that crime levels have been dropping since 2000-01 and stabilised last year.

While the *Report on government services 2007* is a great score card for Queensland police, officers will continue to work hard to further reduce crime and increase community safety. There is still room to improve and the commissioner and his senior executive are maintaining the pursuit of continuous improvement. For example, while the satisfaction level of people coming into recent contact with police increased in the past year and is now at 81.5 per cent, it is still slightly lower than the national average of 82.6 per cent. Similarly, the public opinion of how police treat people fairly and equally rose in Queensland from 62.9 per cent to 67.4 per cent, which is slightly under the national average of 68 per cent.

I know that police officers will continue to work hard to reduce crime and increase public safety, just as this government will continue to maintain the police to population ratio that we now enjoy, which is higher than the national average. Our record investment in law and order in recent years is delivering good results for Queensland, with more police on the beat than ever before. We have increased police numbers from 6,800 when we were elected in 1998 to what will be 9,728 by October this year. Crime rates have fallen by 16 per cent since 2000-01 and this good work has been maintained in 2005-06 with levels remaining static in comparison to 2004-05.

This government recognises that it is vital for police to have the appropriate resources and equipment to support them in their work. We will continue to ensure that we meet the public's expectations for a safer Queensland.

Partnerships Queensland

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth) (10.33 am): This morning the Premier tabled the Partnerships Queensland baseline report 2006, which gives us a detailed insight into the level of disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland. It is important to note, however, that this report, by its nature, does not do justice to the achievements and successes of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in improving the lifestyles of their people. The data is more focused on problem areas rather than positive aspects of these communities, because we need to be clear about the problems that exist in order to provide Indigenous Queenslanders with the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.

Since the launch of Partnerships Queensland in 2005, the Queensland government has continued to strengthen the focus on improving the quality of life for all Indigenous Queenslanders. I seek leave to table the Partnerships Queensland implementation progress report 2006.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Report by the Queensland Government titled 'Partnerships Queensland—Implementation Progress Report 2006'.

The report provides a summary of some of the key achievements of the Queensland government in recent years to address the levels of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Although the progress report outlines many significant initiatives, I recognise that we need to coordinate our services across the government more effectively if we are to narrow the gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The establishment of the government coordination office to improve the way government agencies work together to address the problems and provide services to the 19 discrete Indigenous communities under Meeting Challenges, Making Choices is playing a vital road in this regard.

But this is just the beginning. This report outlines several key initiatives for change across government to ensure that government policy, planning and service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is well planned and well directed. The Queensland community can see from the publication of these documents that this government is committed to transparency and accountability as we strive to achieve real changes for the betterment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Meat Industry Labour Agreement

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.36 am): Skilled overseas workers in the meat industry will be paid a fair wage comparable with the industry standard following an historic agreement between government, the union and employers. The meat industry labour agreement will also give overseas workers employed in Queensland via section 457 visa arrangements a set number of hours for a standard working week. These are firsts for Queensland and firsts for Australia. The agreement will be signed by the Queensland government, the Commonwealth and any meat-processing companies which want to participate and can demonstrate that they will meet the requirements.

I place on record my thanks for the efforts of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, AMH, Teys Brothers and Nippon, who were involved in the negotiations. The Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations will be responsible for enforcing the agreement.

The Commonwealth government's temporary skilled migration arrangements have been and continue to be a source of concern for the Queensland government. There has been evidence of misuse of the temporary skilled visa arrangements in Queensland and across Australia. The agreement we have now reached, and which comes after the direct involvement of the Queensland government, will help overcome abuses of the system. It was a condition of Queensland's participation that a number of key concerns be met, including greater transparency and fair terms and conditions for skilled overseas workers. The Queensland government also wanted to ensure that Australian workers receive adequate training to meet critical skills shortages and are not displaced by overseas workers.

It appeared there would be an impasse, with negotiations between the parties going on for nine months. It was only after the concerted efforts of state negotiators that agreement between the employers and the unions was reached. That goes to show the business community why state governments need to have a prominent role in industrial relations.

The government supports the appropriate use of subclass 457 visa workers where it is demonstrated as necessary and where overseas workers are not exploited and local workers are not disadvantaged. The labour agreement puts this state's businesses and workers first, creates a level playing field with equal wage rates for all workers and employers, and avoids the risks and controversies that have besieged the 457 visa scheme.

Western and Far-North Queensland Floods

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.38 am): As members are aware, over the past weeks our state has experienced widespread rain, particularly in western and far-north Queensland. That weather contrasts with the drought that we are experiencing in south-east Queensland. While the rain has been very welcome, it has also generated widespread floods, isolated many communities and resulted in a number of rescues. These floods serve as a timely reminder of the challenges faced by Queenslanders and once again highlight the resilience and commitment of our emergency services in fostering safer communities.

On the coast, the Bruce Highway was cut numerous times, isolating small towns including Giru, south of Townsville, which remained cut off for nearly 48 hours. EMQ is working closely with local communities and delivering support as needed. While we are handling the challenges of rescue and resupply, we are also ensuring communities remain prepared. This is particularly important now that Tropical Cyclone Nelson has formed in the Gulf of Carpentaria and another low east of Cairns has the potential to develop into a cyclone.

The low has been in the gulf for several days and planning and preparation is well advanced. The District Disaster Coordination Centre has been activated and the District Disaster Management Group met at 8 am today. Carpentaria and Mornington Island shires and the two local disaster management groups are also fully operational. The second low is currently situated around 175 kilometres east of Cairns. It is moving away from the coast at the moment at about four kilometres per hour and should gradually intensify over the next 24 hours.

I am sure many members are interested in the situation in Innisfail. I am advised that the area received heavy rains yesterday and overnight and, although the situation is currently easing, there is still the potential for further heavy rains. EMQ is keeping a close eye on the area. So far there have been some tarping and sandbagging operations, and we are ready to provide further assistance as required.

Those coastal communities between Cairns and Mackay that have already experienced heavy rain and flooding in recent days should also prepare for strong winds generated by these weather systems. Emergency Management Queensland is working closely with the Bureau of Meteorology and local and district disaster management groups. They already have staff deployed to these regional areas to assist with the flooding operations, and further staff are ready to be deployed as needed.

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Staff Survey

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (10.42 am): As part of our commitment to workforce renewal, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has already this year appointed five new graduates under the DPIF graduate program. The five are extremely talented and bring to the organisation a range of contemporary skills and knowledge which complement the high standards of our existing workforce. The new graduates are Lisa Keller, a plant pathologist based in Toowoomba; Janelle Reichstein, an agricultural extension officer based in St George; Zoie Cook, an internal auditor based in our central office; Sarah Chambers, an economics policy officer in central office; and Gretchen Carrigan, an economist in central office. The graduate program is one of the ways we are responding to pending skills shortages but is also one of the approaches we are taking to ensure that the department's workforce is rejuvenated.

DPIF is working hard to ensure all staff members are focused on industry priorities and that their contribution makes a difference. Over the last two years, it has implemented Aligning for Success—a continuous improvement program targeting staff. This process has involved some changes and change is never easy. The results of the department's 2006 organisational culture inventory reflected this. The staff survey, which formed the basis of the inventory, indicated staff perceived the department's culture as largely passive-defensive, suggesting that staff behave in cautious and conventional ways that discourage flexibility. The survey also indicated the preferred culture was constructive, where people approach tasks in ways that enable growth and development and are focused on exceeding client needs. The findings of the survey were available to all 2,600 staff members last year and were discussed by staff in workshops.

I am pleased to advise the House that the staff survey and the various initiatives we are undertaking—including the graduate program, the workforce renewal strategy, the alumni program and the leadership development strategy—will help ensure that perceptions about DPIF's culture will improve, just as the Aligning for Success program has ensured that its operating systems have improved.

MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Discharge of Ms R Nolan; Appointment of Mrs L Lavarch

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.44 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the member for Ipswich, Ms Nolan, be discharged from the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and the member for Kurwongbah, Mrs Lavarch, be appointed as a member to that committee.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.44 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business order of the day No. 17, South-east Queensland Water Recycling Plebiscite Bill, be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Motion agreed to.

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER RECYCLING PLEBISCITE BILL

Withdrawal

On the order of the day being discharged, the bill was withdrawn.

PRIVILEGE

Withdrawal of Tabled Document

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.45 am): I retabled this morning a document titled *Queensland government response to cononer's comments in the inquest into the death of Mulrunji* that was previously tabled on 2 November last year, the government's reply to the Mulrunji matter. Mr Speaker, in light of your ruling this morning, that is clearly out of order and I seek leave to withdraw it.

Leave granted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Partnerships Queensland

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.46 am): I would like to correct the record regarding an article published in the *Australian* on 18 January this year about Partnerships Queensland. The *Australian* on 18 January this year was wrong in claiming that the Partnerships Queensland report was shelved by the Queensland government during the 2006 election campaign. I was Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy until the date of the election. No directive was issued to cease work on the report. In fact, a number of major departments continued to work on their response plans during this time.

The report was not secret and was referred to on page 2-5 of the department's Ministerial Portfolio Statement for 2006-07. The article wrongly asserts that I commissioned the report. I did not. Work on the report was well underway prior to my being sworn in as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy in March 2005. It is unfortunate that the *Australian* did not check any of the facts with my office in relation to this story. If this were the case, the background and complexity of the report and its groundbreaking nature would have been explained.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.47 am): I table the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 1 of 2007*.

Tabled paper: Scrutiny of Legislation Committee 'Alert Digest No. 1 of 2007'.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Palm Island, Death in Custody

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.48 am): Mr Speaker, I note your comments this morning about the care that needs to be taken in this chamber not to transgress on any of the high-profile court cases that are before the courts. But I think we all know the events that surrounded delaying of the charges against Sergeant Chris Hurley—

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Statement Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are out of order under standing order 233 and I rule that way.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I think we all know that events over the last couple of days have caused a deal of concern in the community. The charges themselves are a matter for the court.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, Leader of the Opposition, I have ruled under standing order 233. If you desist from hearing my advice, I will ask you to take your seat. Is there anything further you would like to say?

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I am agreeing with you. The charges themselves are a matter for the court. The politics are a matter for this parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me. I will say it again. I ask you to take your seat, Leader of the Opposition. I now call question time.

Mr LINGARD: I move dissent from your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: I have been advised by the Clerk that that dissent has to be placed in writing and will be dealt with in three days.

I gave the courtesy of last night informing the Leader of the Opposition of my ruling. My ruling is a firm one and I have indicated already that I will strongly affirm that ruling at any time. I have asked the Deputy Speaker and the temporary chairs to ensure that this parliament does not become a kangaroo court. I will affirm my ruling.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Sit down for the moment. I indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that there is an opportunity within the next few days to put opposition to my ruling in writing. That is your opportunity, not now. I call question time and I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SEENEY: I rose on a point of order which I would like to have heard. I find your reference that I was trying to use this chamber as a kangaroo court very offensive and I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Warrego. I will not take interjections while I am speaking. We have three high-profile cases before the court. I made no statement whatsoever—

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: If the member for Warrego wants to play this game he can play it somewhere else. If the Leader of the Opposition took that as a personal affront to him, he took it incorrectly. I actually said that I will not allow this place to become a kangaroo court by allowing one person or another to mention this. Let us get on with question time. There is no point of order. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Leaking of Sensitive Documents

Mr SEENEY (10.51 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. In the media last night and again today the Premier refused to deny that he had leaked sensitive documents—

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that question is out of order. Can you take your seat.

Mr SEENEY: I give notice that I will move dissent from your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: That is noted.

Leaking of Sensitive Documents

Mr SEENEY: My second question without notice is to the Attorney-General. The leaking of sensitive documents from his department at any time has the high probability of compromising proper judicial processes. What has the Attorney-General done to investigate the leak that resulted in sensitive information being on the front page of yesterday's paper?

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Before the Attorney-General gets on his feet I will once again rule that under section 233 I will not allow the parliament to be involved in matters that are presently before the court. I have taken advice on this matter and I will not allow that question to be asked. I therefore call on the member for Kurwongbah.

Mr SEENEY: Once again, I move dissent from your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: That has been noted.

Climate Change

Mrs LAVARCH: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise of new leadership initiatives at the federal level to help tackle the issue of climate change?

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to do that. Before I do so could I take this opportunity on behalf of the parliament to say to the member for Kurwongbah that it is great to have her back. I am delighted to answer the question because I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the federal opposition leader, Kevin Rudd, on his initiative to host a national summit on climate change.

The climate change summit is welcome recognition at the federal level of the seriousness of this issue and the ramifications for our country. Mr Rudd has been proactive in showing leadership on climate change and the actions that we can take to help tackle the single biggest threat to the future of our economy and, of course, the environment. Today we see that the Labor team at City Hall is also taking the issue seriously and undertaking planning and preparatory work. I congratulate them.

Of course, as members know, our government has long warned of the dangers of climate change and the potential impact on our own state. We are the first state in Australia to fund a Climate Change Centre of Excellence. The centre will provide policy advice and scientific information on climate change and its impact on the community, the economy and the environment.

Annual average temperatures in the state are projected to increase by up to two per cent celsius by 2030, while rainfall may be reduced by 15 per cent over the same period. We need the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence to help us understand and prepare for these changes. However, while there is much that we can all do to help reduce the impact and severity of climate change, we are

also working actively to address the impacts it is already having on our community. For example, in the vital area of water security and supply we are spending more on a per capita basis than any other state or territory in the country. As well as new infrastructure, we are working on initiatives such as purified recycled water and desalination to ensure that we are not totally dependent on the vagaries of future weather patterns.

It took Mr Howard until last month to even acknowledge that climate change was serious. Compare this to the position of Mr Rudd and his team who have already indicated commitment to a national emissions trading scheme, the need for a robust mandatory renewable energy target and the need for an effective national strategy on demand side management.

I am delighted to see that the Prime Minister has come on board as a belated climate change realist. At the very least he might learn a little more about the work my government is trying to do in relation to climate change. That is one of the reasons we banned broadscale clearing of trees and—without any Commonwealth support—we are working hard on clean coal technology.

Queensland, through the banning of broadscale clearing of trees, has helped Australia reach its Kyoto target. We have led on the issue of climate change and we will do the same when it comes to clean coal technology.

Leaking of Sensitive Documents

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General. I preface my question by saying that it does not refer to any matters currently before the court. I refer to a media report on 15 January 2007 when Acting Premier Bligh said legal opinions could not be released publicly before such legal opinions were tabled in the parliament. Does the minister support the government's disgraceful decision to selectively leak the Street report to the media?

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: I once again rule that that question is out of order. Under standing order 233 I indicate once again for those members of the opposition who wish to attack my role as Speaker that standing orders are in place to ensure that we do not prejudice cases that are before the court. That can be done by virtue of the question or by virtue of the answer that a member is asking for. Those members have the opportunity thrice to dissent from my maintenance of standing order 233. I repeat that that question is out of order under standing order 233.

Mr LINGARD: I rise on a matter of privilege. Surely it is up to this parliament to be able to question the role of the Attorney-General. Therefore, I move that the question be allowed.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Beaudesert needs to seek leave of the House. As a former Speaker he would be aware of this. I have given my ruling. If the member wants to move a motion today he needs to first of all seek leave of the House.

Interruption.

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Granting of Leave

Mr LINGARD: I rise on a matter of privilege. I appreciate your statement and I appreciate the ruling from the Clerk of parliament. However, obviously as a matter of privilege I am allowed to ask about the role of this House. Therefore, to allow me to move a motion, I seek leave to move the motion that I spoke about before.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted to move a motion without notice.

AYES, 30—Copeland, 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, 56—Attwood, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Mr SPEAKER: Before resuming question time, I respectfully suggest to Her Majesty's opposition that time and effort be made to draft questions in a way so as they do not offend standing orders.

Dr FLEGG: I rise to a point of order. I give notice that I will write to you and move dissent from your ruling in relation to my question.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I very respectfully note the public comments that you had made about this issue before today and I also very respectfully note the comments that have been made about your position with regard to this issue. I therefore respectfully ask you, Mr Speaker, to consider whether you should remain in the chair given the extent of your rulings this morning. I ask you to consider vacating the chair in favour of the Deputy Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I indicate, first of all, that any statement that I have made about any matter has been as the state member for Townsville. I think many members would be aware of that as would the media in particular. I will take your advice on notice.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

Eat Well, Be Active

Ms DARLING: Can the Premier advise of new initiatives being taken by the government to get Queenslanders up and active?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, I can. This morning I was proud to launch an important state government initiative to help more Queenslanders improve their health and wellbeing. The new Eat Well, Be Active program will run—

An opposition member: This is a joke.

Mr BEATTIE: I know you are, but do not think too much about it. The new Eat Well, Be Active program will run for three years to promote the important healthy lifestyle messages to children, adults and our seniors. It is strongly supported by Pat Rafter, who is a great Queenslander, and Steve Renouf was there as chairman—two great sporting Queenslanders. Eat Well, Be Active is about making small changes to the things we do every day and getting the balance right between food and activity. It is about prevention, not merely treating poor health. The reality is that most of us are eating too much of the wrong foods and we are not physically active enough, and it is killing us. It is also costing taxpayers a fortune.

In Queensland two out of three males and one in two females are overweight. Of these, about 650,000 adults and 25,000 children are clinically obese, which leads to higher death rates at younger ages, plummeting productivity and crippling financial burdens on families and our health system. The good news is that there is a simple solution: eat healthier foods and be more active. Research shows that Queenslanders need straightforward, evidence based information to make the healthy change, and the new Eat Well, Be Active program will do this in a number of ways.

There is a comprehensive web site featuring a wealth of information on healthy eating and physical activity, an information pack will be sent to every Queensland household in coming weeks and an advertising campaign will be conducted to get Queensland's attention. It is a multipronged initiative, and I am delighted that its official ambassador is none other than former tennis champion Pat Rafter. I want to thank Pat for his strong support of this very worthy educational initiative. I say congratulations also to the many people behind the scenes who have worked on this program, including the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation and Queensland Health. The local government minister, Andrew Fraser, was there this morning as was the health minister, Stephen Robertson.

The message driving Eat Well, Be Active is simple: everyone has the power to change their lives and become healthy. The best part about getting fit and active is that it can be great fun and something that we can enjoy with our families and friends every day of our lives.

Members will recall that we had an obesity summit in this chamber. This program and the advertising, which starts tonight, is one of the outcomes of that obesity summit. I indicated before that obesity is costing us a fortune. It is billions of dollars every year across Australia. I think it is costing us something like \$3.7 billion per year. It is an enormous amount of money. This is not only about healthier lifestyles and encouraging people to live longer through healthier lifestyles, but it is also about saving taxpayers money. If we can reduce the number of people who smoke and the number of people who are obese then they will live longer and happier.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Caloundra, I welcome to the gallery today teachers and students from the Anglican Church Grammar School in the electorate of South Brisbane, which is represented in this chamber by the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh.

Clare, Ms L

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Attorney-General. As it is clear that he has now taken over the role of the DPP and no longer has confidence in her, can Ms Clare and the public expect that he will continue to ignore her independent advice when it does not suit the government's sleazy political purposes?

Mr SHINE: I have total confidence in Ms Clare as DPP.

Traveston Dam

Mr WELLS: My question is for the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. Does the minister have statistics as to how much rain fell last year at the site of the proposed Traveston Dam and, if so, how this figure compares with rainfall levels at the existing Somerset-Wivenhoe dams?

Ms BLIGH: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. I do not think people would be surprised to know that, in the face of such a large piece of infrastructure as the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam, there are many people asking questions. They are legitimate questions about what sort of rainfall we could expect into that catchment area given not only the current drought but also ongoing projections about changed rainfall patterns. I am pleased to advise the House that in 2006 the Somerset-Wivenhoe system had an estimated inflow of about 68,000 megalitres.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: As south-east Queensland faces its worst drought that is what we can expect from the people opposite.

Mr Gibson: You're destroying people's lives.

Ms BLIGH: I note that the member for Gympie is not interested in the catchment in the Traveston Crossing area. The estimated inflow into the Wivenhoe system is from a catchment size of 7,000 square kilometres and rainfall estimated at 589 millimetres. By comparison, Traveston Crossing Dam, if it had been built before 2006, would have an estimated 80,000 megalitre inflow from a catchment of 2,000 square kilometres—some three times less in size—from rainfall estimated at 770 millimetres.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I say to the member for Gympie and the Leader of the Opposition that you have had your go. Can we now call on the Deputy Premier to answer the question.

Ms BLIGH: Many people would have noted this week the new one team, one plan, one approach, one destiny from the opposition. I wonder what it brings to the water question? One disappointment. One ring to bind them all. If we walk through the water proposals what we will find on every single one of them—whether it is a dam, a proposal for recycled water, a desalination plant or the water grid—is that not only are there divisions between the National Party and the Liberal Party but there are divisions within the Liberal Party and there are divisions within the National Party.

I note the continued opposition of the Queensland National Party to the Traveston Crossing Dam. I note the continued opposition of the Queensland National Party. What I also note is the ongoing silence of those in the Liberal Party.

Leaking of Sensitive Documents

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. As the first law officer in Queensland, does the minister condone governments leaking sensitive information that could be prejudicial to a prosecution?

Mr SHINE: As I understand it, the matter to which the member refers is a matter that the Speaker has made a determination about. I note that on 15 January this year, I think it was, the Leader of the Opposition asked for the release of the report that is the subject of the question asked by the member.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I say to the Attorney-General that the question that was asked was a general question. Take your seat for a moment. This is a general question that has been asked. It was a general question, not a specific question. That is why I allowed the question to be asked. I say to those who are repetitively interjecting that I will be firmer if you wish me to be firmer. Let us hear the answer from the Attorney-General.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I ask for your ruling on this, Mr Speaker. My understanding is that the honourable member has been asked for his opinion on something. I believe that a hypothetical question and an opinion in response to a hypothetical question is out of order, and I ask for your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am aware that under standing order 115 general rules shall apply to questions without or on notice. It is really up to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice whether he thinks it is hypothetical in nature.

Mr SHINE: I would be guided by your advice in relation to that matter.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I again ask for your ruling on standing order 115—and I know that those opposite have contempt for that standing order, but then they have contempt for this parliament. It says under subsection (c) that questions shall not ask for an expression of opinion. I ask you to rule whether or not the Attorney-General has been asked to express an opinion.

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Members, can I give my ruling on the point of order. I indicated before we resumed question time, after the division, that all of this is in the drafting of the question. That question can be challenged on the basis of it being hypothetical and I would uphold the point of order raised by the Leader of the House. I will now move on to the member for Mount Isa.

Probation and Parole Service

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. In November I went on a tour of the Mornington Island, Normanton and Doomadgee communities. On this trip I met members of the local community and the local community justice groups who expressed support for the new Queensland corrective services probation and parole service in the lower gulf. Could the minister please provide some detail on the parole and probation programs that are currently operating in Queensland, with particular reference to Indigenous communities?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for Mount Isa for the question and acknowledge the terrific work that she is doing in the Aboriginal communities in her electorate. I just hope that anyone who is concerned about rising prisoner numbers listens to this answer, because it is an important one. Some 27 per cent of the people in adult incarceration are Indigenous. If we are going to push those Indigenous numbers down, then we are going to have to change the way we have been doing things, and that is certainly what we have done in the last 12 months. The government has allocated \$57.5 million to establish a new parole and probation service and for the first time ever we are putting parole and probation officers into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in this state. Next week I will be going to Thursday Island to open its new office. We have put them in places like Doomadgee, Mornington Island and the lower gulf.

In those communities in the past six months—and I am just talking about three of them, and that is Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Normanton—since this service has been provided the number of community based orders in these communities has increased by more than 250 per cent. There are now 239 offenders being supervised by probation and parole officers in those communities. When one thinks about the size of those communities, that is a significant number of people on probation and parole. As well, I am informed that the judges are now ordering court based parole as an alternative to prison sentences. I think this is one of the most significant things that we have done to push those Indigenous incarceration numbers down.

As well, some of this money has been spent on programs. For the first time we are able to offer programs in these communities. Programs such as violence prevention, alcohol abuse and drug abuse programs can be delivered in the communities where people are better able to address their problems. We have employed 34 additional staff in the new parole and probation service and this year a number of traineeships will also be offered to Indigenous applicants who will work in their own communities as probation and parole staff. I thank the member for Mount Isa and all of those other members who visited the Indigenous communities and talked to our probation and parole officers. I will certainly be doing that in the next week as I go to the cape and to Thursday Island.

Separation of Powers

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, does this government support the separation of powers or should we expect many other legal cases to feel the disregard of this particular institution?

Mr SHINE: The government of course supports the doctrine of separation of powers. This government has always done so, is doing so and will continue to do so.

Industrial Relations, WorkChoices

Mr LEE: My question is directed to the minister for industrial relations. The Howard government's harsh and unfair industrial relations laws have diminished the working conditions of many Queenslanders. Can the minister advise the House as to the major findings of the QIRC's report into the effects of WorkChoices in Queensland?

Mr MICKEL: I thank the honourable member for his question. I notice that the report brought down by members of the Industrial Relations Commission has already been attacked by the new federal minister on the basis that—I think his words were—'it was full of union hacks'. That must be news to Commissioner Asbury, who was an employer advocate. The federal minister also said that they were

without legal qualifications. That must be news, I am told, to Commissioner Swan is a barrister and Commissioner Asbury has legal qualifications. You see, what we have is a federal government that does not like it. It does not like it when it has been caught out, and on WorkChoices it has been caught out. If members do not believe it, they should have a look at the Newspoll this morning. The federal government has been caught out by average families who are coming under pressure as a direct result of the WorkChoices legislation.

The report found that there is economic uncertainty for families after cuts to unfair dismissal laws and a decrease in wages and conditions of employment—and it is all driven home to the Howard government's harsh and unfair industrial relations laws. Why? Because members all know people who have been told in their workplaces that they can either take it or leave it. That is the choice under John Howard: take it or leave it. What we are saying to the Australian electorate is to say that to the federal government at the end of the year: take it or leave it out—leave it right out of the government process all together. Conditions of employment under AWAs have been diminished and workers are not raising normal industrial relations issues such as health and safety.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr MICKEL: Of course, the pretender there from Gympie does not see anything wrong with wages being slashed.

Mr Gibson: You don't see anything wrong with people's lives being crushed!

Mr MICKEL: He represents an area—

Mr Gibson: You don't see anything wrong with them being destroyed!

Mr MICKEL: He cannot help it. He is getting more and more hysterical, and why wouldn't he? He represents an area with one of the highest unemployment rates in this state where workers—

Mr Gibson: You filthy individual!

Mr SPEAKER: I call on the member for—

Mr MICKEL: What we have is just a disgraceful member who cannot conduct himself properly in this House. He has been here five minutes and will not stand up for one working family in his electorate whose wages or salaries are being cut. I tell you what: he does not represent any of the working families that I know.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, take your seat. Member for Gympie, I would ask you to withdraw the unparliamentary statement you have just made to the minister.

Mr GIBSON: I withdraw.

Mr MICKEL: Forgive him, Mr Speaker. He just does not know what he is doing, the poor thing. The point is—

Time expired.

Deaths in Custody

Mr MESSENGER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer the minister to the 1991 royal commission into deaths in custody report which made 339 different recommendations. Given that senior members of the government have acknowledged that these recommendations have not been carried out because the government has placed a higher priority on footbridges, football stadiums and government advertising than policing and public safety, can the minister please inform the House how many people have died in custody because she has failed to implement, resource and support these recommendations? How many more people will have to die because of the incompetent, corrupt and sleazy culture of this government?

Ms SPENCE: There were a lot of questions and I doubt that I will get them all answered in three minutes, but I will give it a go. Firstly, the Premier tabled our response to the royal commission into deaths in custody this morning. I encourage all members to read that response and inform themselves on what the government has done.

With respect to police watch-houses, we have spent \$144 million in the past 10 years upgrading watch-houses. We have an annual program to upgrade watch-houses. This year we will spend about \$2 million on that upgrade. That is a rolling program.

With respect to prisons, members would be aware that most of the prisons in Queensland have been rebuilt since the royal commission into deaths in custody. In fact, we are rebuilding Sir David Longland prison, which was built only in 1988. We are in the process of rebuilding the Townsville prison. We also have plans for new prisons.

All of this work has produced some very positive results. While any unnatural death in custody is unacceptable, I want all members to get some perspective on how Queensland has performed in terms of deaths in custody. In 1998 in this state, there were nine unnatural deaths in custody. Eight of those

people were non-Indigenous; one person was Indigenous. In 1999, there were seven. In 2000, there were six. In 2001, there were nine. In 2002, there were four. In 2003, there were five. In 2004, there were two. Last year, there was none. In this last financial year, we have had two.

In terms of Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths in custody, non-Indigenous people are far overrepresented. So while we are thinking about these subjects, it is important to inform ourselves of the facts. We in this state are performing very well in this area and we will continue to perform well.

I acknowledge that we can do more in terms of police stations. I would like people to remember that we have cameras in every cell in every watch-house that is being used in the state.

Mr Dempsey interjected.

Ms SPENCE: Do not interrupt, please. We do not have video monitoring in all custody areas in every police station in the state. That is really to where the debate has moved. The Police Union—and police officers generally—have been talking about us moving down that path. It is something that the Premier and I have talked about. We will certainly continue to talk to police about how we can perform better and put more video surveillance into police stations and it is certainly something that the CMC will be doing. The police will make a significant report to the CMC and I think we will see some further changes.

Queensland Skills Plan

Ms STRUTHERS: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. I refer the minister to the Queensland Skills Plan, and I ask: what progress has been made in developing new approaches to working with industry and employers to better inform Queensland's skill needs?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in this important issue. I know that she is very committed to the issue of skills development for many of the young people in her electorate who will seek employment.

I am pleased to advise that we have now formalised five new industry skills alliances to provide advice to government about skills needs. These alliances bring together all the key players within an industry to work together for a common purpose. The automotive, community services and health, hospitality and tourism, sport and recreation, and creative industries have been our first targets. These five skills alliances are autonomous organisations that are made up of major industry stakeholders, training organisations, unions and employers.

Mr Copeland: Is there a bill before the House on it?

Mr WELFORD: No. They will provide strategic advice to government about the skills needs of industry and will play a big part in tackling skills shortages in Queensland. The alliances will deliver a range of information so that we can strike the right balance between the available training and what industry needs to fill jobs. We need to ensure that the supply of training matches the need for skills created by employment demand.

Our government is providing \$3.5 million to support these new alliance over the next three years. The alliances are just one of a number of strategies being put in place as part of our \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan. In December, the Premier and I officially opened stage 1 of the new \$81.6 million Trade and Technician Skills Institute at Acacia Ridge. This facility is the first of its kind in Australia and heralds a new era in traditional trades training in Queensland. The institute will lead development and delivery throughout Queensland for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical and electronic studies.

I was also pleased to launch the new Marine Industry Skills and Training Forum on the Gold Coast recently.

Ms Croft: Hear, hear!

Mr WELFORD: This is a very positive initiative by local industry to ensure that skills shortages are identified and overcome. I acknowledge the enthusiastic support of the member for Broadwater. The marine industry is one of Queensland's fastest growing industries, employing more than 7,000 people and contributing \$1.4 billion to our economy annually. The Gold Coast boat building facilities at Coomera are the biggest of their kind in the Southern Hemisphere and employ thousands of skilled craftspeople. National marine companies and associations will no doubt be looking with interest at what the Gold Coast boat building industry is achieving as a result of our government's initiatives under the Skills Plan.

Deaths in Custody

Mr HORAN: My question is to the Honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The Premier is currently spending \$250,000 on police radio advertisements. Why was this money not spent on fully implementing the recommendations of the 1991 royal commission into deaths in custody?

Ms SPENCE: I do not know where the member gets the figure from, but it is not accurate. In terms of our commitment to meeting the recommendations of the royal commission into deaths in custody, the Premier tabled a significant response from the government this morning. I encourage all members opposite, before they continue to ask questions in this House, to read that response so that we can all debate this matter in an informed way.

Palm Island, Housing

Ms van LITSENBURG: My question is to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology. I note the Liberal leader's comments regarding Palm Island, saying that this government has given up on Aboriginal housing. I ask: could the minister advise what initiatives he has established to address these issues?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for the question. Mr Speaker, as you represent Palm Island as part of your electorate of Townsville, I am sure you would have been as dismayed as I was to hear the Liberal leader on his very first journey to Palm Island in the four years or whatever it is that he has been in this parliament—he has finally found out about the place—make such a ridiculous statement. It certainly goes to the core of why the Liberal leader is dubbed Mr Magoo. Clearly, the Liberal leader either got around Palm Island with his eyes closed or he needs his eyes tested. Had he gone to lot 55, for example, he would have seen a completely refurbished house that cost some \$300,000. If the Liberal leader had asked any questions there, he would have been able to ascertain that that vandalised property has been repaired. If the Liberal leader had asked any questions at the local council, he would have been aware that this report exists, which was compiled last year and which goes to the core of the very problem, and it identifies some \$15 million worth of expenditure.

May I point out to the honourable misguided member that, along with the Commonwealth government, we have spent \$35 million on Palm Island since I have been the minister. Regrettably, we have five fewer houses on the island due to vandalism. But that is something that the council still is responsible for and, indeed, with our guidance, is finally doing something about.

As I say, we have put in place a complete audit which says, for example, on page 8.1 that 289 dwellings were identified requiring immediate attention to meet environmental health standards. That is hardly an indication that we are doing nothing about the problem or that we have given up on the issue. The audit found that 280 dwellings—the majority of houses—required priority work, which we have now earmarked.

The fact of the matter is that at the moment another three new houses are under construction. Another two four-bedroom houses—factory built solutions—are on their way. We are also undertaking five upgrades at the moment. I know that the honourable member would not know one end of a hammer from another and knows nothing about building or construction, but even somebody passing there could hear the ring of Cheney hammers as Q-Build busily gets on with the job.

One of the facts of life is that it behoves every member of this parliament to understand the gravity of the challenge in trying to deliver positive housing outcomes in these communities. Anybody with any intelligence knows the scope of the problem and that we have not given up on it.

Queensland Police, Public March

Mr STEVENS: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer the minister to legislation making it illegal for on-duty police to take part in public marches in protest. Will the minister give a guarantee that if off-duty police choose to march in support of their union they will not, as was the case in Townsville last year, be rostered on to prevent them from attending that protest?

Ms SPENCE: It would be my preference for the police not to conduct their march. The Premier and I will be meeting with the Police Union this afternoon and hopefully we can talk about these issues. I have been having ongoing dialogue with the union. I know that they want to continue to talk with us about these issues and they probably would prefer not to march as well. But if they do march then the request has been made for only officers who are off duty to march. That has been the commissioner's request of the police. If officers on duty did participate in the march, that would be a matter for the police commissioner regarding disciplinary action.

Macintosh Island

Mr LAWLOR: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport. The Macintosh Island bridge, also known as the Indy bridge, in Surfers Paradise is an important thoroughfare for locals but it has been closed for some months now. What is the state government doing to assist the Gold Coast City Council to fix this problem?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Southport for the question about an issue that is of interest not just to the people of Surfers Paradise but to people across the Gold Coast, because Macintosh Island is certainly of interest to many people across the Gold Coast. It is also good to have the opportunity to put on the record what the state government is doing to assist the Gold Coast City Council in dealing with this piece of infrastructure.

The Macintosh Island bridge is owned by the Gold Coast City Council. It is used by the Indy when it is on every year, but for all intents and purposes it remains a piece of infrastructure owned by the Gold Coast City Council and available to residents of the Gold Coast. At present we have a situation which is the worst of both worlds—that is, the bridge, through a lack of maintenance over time, is presently closed to the public. It is not open to anyone. It is not open to any residents to access that part of the world.

We also have a situation where the future operation of the Indy in that part of the Gold Coast is in jeopardy because of the lack of a suitable bridge in place. That draws into question the Indy, which I know has the support of the Gold Coast City Council. I was pleased to be able to reach an agreement with the mayor and local Gold Coast councillor Susie Douglas. I went to meet them to make an arrangement to jointly fund the replacement of the bridge. We agreed to jointly fund, to the cost of \$4.6 million, a new 3.6 metre wide bridge which will replace the presently closed suspension bridge at Macintosh Island. That is a commitment of funds of \$2.3 million from the state government to build a footbridge to replace the one that is presently owned by the Gold Coast City Council.

There was some conjecture and discussion about whether it would be a bridge to carry vehicles. I categorically ruled that out to the council and to the mayor. I would repeat that advice to the House today—that is, it is intended to be a footbridge and that is what it will be used for. The only capacity it has for vehicles would be for a small vehicle to go on it to maintain the bridge so that we do not face the situation we have at the moment where the bridge, as it is presently constructed, is closed to the public. I am grateful for the agreement of the Gold Coast City Council in these circumstances.

We have also agreed that I will use the powers under the Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Act to direct the promoter to demolish the present bridge and construct a new one. That is the quickest and most efficient way to deliver a new bridge. That will mean working in partnership with the council and the state government. We will build it in time for the Indy this year in 2007, which I am sure will be a great event. After those four days of the Indy the bridge will be open every other day of the year for the residents of the Gold Coast to enjoy, and that surely has to be a win for the ratepayers and the residents of that area as well.

Water Supply, South-East Queensland

Mr FOLEY: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. Clearly, the majority of dams have been built in the past where it does not rain. This should lead to a collective sigh of, 'Der, what were they thinking?' from the people of Queensland. In light of the fact that the people of north Queensland are developing webbed feet whilst we in the south are drier than a ute full of dust, will the minister harness the significant rainfall of the north and pipe the water down south and scrap the Mary River-wrecking Traveston Dam?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. He is not alone in his interest regarding the possibility of this project. I can inform him that I think it was in August last year that the Premier announced we would be undertaking an extensive feasibility study into this proposal. To that end we have allocated \$3 million. It is a very large and complex proposal. Terms of reference have been finalised and I understand we are ready to go to market seeking consultants within the next four weeks. Obviously, any results of that research will be made public. But I should say to the honourable member that such a project, if it were found to be feasible, would take many, many years to construct and to bring water into the south-east corner.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Ms BLIGH: We have said from the beginning that, on the face of it, its likelihood in the short term is very, very limited unless we can find new technology, as the minister for transport indicated, to make the transport of water considerably cheaper than it currently is. However, we are not going to leave any rock unturned. We are happy to have a look at it in a very open way, and we will let the member know and make public the results. But we will not be holding up any of the south-east Queensland infrastructure that we have committed to while that work is undertaken.

Child Safety

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. I note that last week the minister spent a day with child safety staff at the Labrador office. Can the minister update the House on child safety issues facing front-line staff on the Gold Coast?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the honourable member for the question and for her continuing interest in the safety of children in her electorate. The Labrador Child Safety Service Centre is a busy office, averaging 34 notifications of suspected harm to children each month. It was very instructive to spend a day with the front-line staff from the centre. I was blown away by their commitment to the job, their innovation, their enthusiasm, their genuine teamwork and their support for each other. I am proud to be their minister.

However, at the same time I also gained a picture of what is happening with child abuse on the Gold Coast. The Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Team estimates that in 90 per cent of cases where harm to children is confirmed at least one parent has a problem with drugs or alcohol or both. In particular, child safety officers are concerned about the use of crystal meth, or ice, on the coast. The Beattie government has set up a high-level ice task force, and I particularly commend the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, on his announcement yesterday of heavy penalties for those who sell ice pipes.

Ice is a highly addictive and extremely dangerous drug not only to users but also to others in their company—even, I am very sad to say, to their own children. Children on the Gold Coast have been injured by parents on crystal meth. Even if there is no actual physical violence, users are in no state to care for a child. I appeal to people to face up to their responsibilities as parents and to seek help if they have a drug or alcohol problem for the sake of their children.

Another concern on the coast is that the law of sun, surf and sand is so strong that some people from southern states simply move there without really thinking it through. They arrive from southern states with barely any money, no job lined up, no other family members for support and no idea of the cost of living. They can soon find themselves flat broke, sleeping in their cars with their kids suffering neglect, and that is when Child Safety is called in.

It is widely known that poverty is a common factor in the families that come to our attention. However, we should not assume that children from apparently wealthy families are automatically well looked after. Members will have heard of the Q1 tower at Surfers Paradise, which has been promoted as the world's tallest residential building—the height of luxury, with its own rainforest and artificial beach. Members may, however, be surprised to learn that child safety staff have even had to remove abused children from Q1. So whether it is children living out of cars or in trouble in million-dollar apartments, our staff on the Gold Coast are very busy.

There is a severe shortage of foster-carers on the coast and our numbers are not keeping up with the need for kids who are at risk and who need our protection. So I take this opportunity to appeal to families on the Gold Coast to consider becoming foster-carers.

Mr SPEAKER: That completes question time.

Mr Johnson: Fair go.

Mr SPEAKER: I say to the member for Gregory that I have been giving him a fair go all morning. I think we have gone a little bit over 11.50, so that completes question time. We will now move to matters of public interest and I call the Leader of the Opposition.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Role of Parliament

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.50 am): It is no longer possible to talk about many of the things that I wanted to talk about in this matter of public interest debate because of the rulings given earlier today. I may not necessarily agree with them but I respect them and I will abide by them. It is unfortunate that many of the issues that the general public would have expected this parliament to consider this morning have not been considered. It raises a whole series of questions about the relevance and purpose of the parliament if we have a situation where clear political issues cannot be raised and considered.

Any charges that might be before the court are a matter for the court and we all acknowledge that. The charges are a matter for the court; the politics are a matter for this parliament. This is the only place where those political issues can be considered. The innocence or guilt of any particular individual is a matter for the courts. The innocence or guilt of the government is a matter for this parliament. That is the purpose of this parliament. The government has to come to this parliament on a regular basis and subject themselves to questioning. It is not just our role as an opposition but also our responsibility to ask those questions on behalf of the community at large and to get those answers from the government to ensure that the government does justify the action that it has taken.

When the sub judge rules are used to subvert that process, it does not just annoy the opposition, it does not just let the government off the hook—

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, take your seat. I find your comments offensive to me as the Speaker and I would ask you to withdraw your comments in regard to sub judge.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw. It was not meant to be offensive. I apologise if it was. The point I am making is that if the purpose of this parliament cannot be served because of sub judge rules then this parliament is weakened and the very purpose that we are here for is lost. We have a situation where the Attorney-General under our system of law can bring charges. I acknowledge that. But it also opens up the potential for—

Procedure—Speaker's Ruling—Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I will ask you to take your seat. I rule once again that under standing order 233 what you are indicating today goes to the very heart of the separation of powers between this parliament and what we should be considering as a parliament and what the judiciary should be considering in any particular court of law. I want you to understand that. It seems to be a very personal reference you have made in relation to me. I have said that I will take that on board and come back to the parliament in that regard. What I am ruling today in regard to standing order 233 is for the protection of the court process. It is not in any way, shape or form taking a particular side, as you alluded to previously in regard to my ruling.

I want to be very fair and independent in saying this. The standing orders are quite clear. Standing order 233 lays down a clear principle in respect of matters pending in courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction. I have already indicated that the matter should not be referred to in a motion, a debate or question in any way, shape or form from when the charge is laid to the determination of an appeal.

The parliament has a role to play in many different forms. As a people's house it has a role to play, but under the separation of powers the other two elements have a role to play as well. This parliament can challenge executive government—the 18 members on my right. The members of the opposition have a perfect right to question the executive government at any time in this particular parliament, but one cannot ride roughshod over the standing orders that this parliament has agreed to. Each time members reflect on me in my ruling or each time a member disagrees with that ruling, they need to go back to the standing orders and try to change those, which I think this parliament would not want to do. If members want to respect the separation of powers, this is a matter before the court of the land and that matter should not be discussed in the parliament. It is as simple as that.

Leader of the Opposition, in the time remaining in your matter of public interest I ask you to address matters that do not allude to, refer to, impact on or influence any matter before the court.

Mr Malone interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Who actually said that? It was the member for Mirani. These are matters outside of this parliament. Any matter outside of this parliament is not in my hands or yours. I am talking about matters before this parliament and in an independent way I take these matters very, very seriously. I dislike the imputations that have been made in relation to my role as Speaker and making an independent ruling. I will deal with that a little bit later in terms of the three motions you have moved. I am making a ruling as an independent Speaker and I intend to continue to do so. Under that framework I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SEENEY: As I said at the beginning of my contribution, I respected the ruling that you made and I was endeavouring to comply with it. I will continue to endeavour to comply with it. The comments that I will make are hypothetical, broad, general comments and they bear no reference or allusion to any particular incident. We have to look at the purpose of this parliament and our role as the opposition and how we conduct it here in the parliament.

Mr Speaker, you spoke about the separation of powers and that was one of the things that I was coming to in my contribution. We all have to be sensitive to and aware of the separation of powers, but when the government itself can be accused of breaching the separation of powers there has to be a forum where the government is called to account. It cannot escape that scrutiny. Otherwise the system does not work. It is not just our role to do that; it is our responsibility.

The other matter that we need to consider and consider gravely in regard to the use of the sub judice rules is the issue that I was referring to before you intervened—and I am referring to it in broad, hypothetical terms—an Attorney-General, whoever it is in our system, has the right to bring charges against an individual or somebody in the community. But there is the potential at least that we need to recognise that if an Attorney-General brings those charges and then uses the sub judice rules associated with those charges to avoid scrutiny in this parliament then we have a real problem. I will not get into a debate about whether that has happened or not in this instance, but I believe those are things that this parliament should have been considering this morning because it is something new, it is something that has not happened before. This government has taken us to a point where these issues have never had to be considered before. I do not think that we have seen anything in Queensland politics like we have seen over the last week or so. I do not think Queensland politics has ever witnessed anything like that. If one understands the issues that are involved, the issues are not just about protecting Peter Beattie's hide or all the senseless backbenchers who were swept in here on his political popularity. The issues are about protecting the institutions that make our community work: protecting the institution of the parliament; protecting the institution of the courts; protecting the integrity of the Attorney-General—not protecting the person, but protecting the office—and protecting the integrity of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Once again, it is not the person—not Leanne Clare—but the office which is much more important than the individuals who are involved and the particular political imperatives of the individuals involved. They are the issues that I would have liked to have addressed in some detail in this parliament this

morning and you have ruled, Mr Speaker, in a particular way about sub judice which does not let those issues be discussed here. I accept those rulings, but the question we all must ponder with respect to that is: how now do we consider those issues? If not in this parliament, where? If not in this parliament, where do we get those questions answered and those matters considered? If we cannot bring the government to account in this parliament, where do we do it? Where does the opposition fulfil the role and the responsibility that we have been given by the people of Queensland? I will pursue those matters with you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Kurwongbah, I reiterate again that it is the institution of parliament that, as Speaker, I have my first duty to protect. That is with regard to the ruling that I have made under this standing order today. I also indicate that if a charge is before the court it is up to that court to determine with a judge and a jury the rights and the wrongs of the matter before it. I have ruled today and I will continue to rule in a way unfettered by the opposition or executive government as an independent Speaker in that regard.

Depression

Hon. LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.01 pm): On 18 October last year I resigned as a minister in this government and took leave from parliament. Today is my first day back in this chamber and I am delighted to be here.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAVARCH: Thank you. I am delighted to be back representing my constituents in the Kurwongbah electorate—a role I find most rewarding.

Members will know that my absence has been due to illness. In mid-October I suffered a major depressive episode. I did not know how long it would take to recover to a point where I could resume duties. I made the decision to resign from the ministry in the interests of good government and good governance and in the best interests of the people of Queensland. At the time of my resignation there was significant media attention about a matter in my portfolio. That decision and subsequent public comment was not connected in any way to my resignation. It was health reasons alone that led to my decision to resign.

Depending on which set of statistics one reads, depression affects somewhere between one in five and one in eight Australians. As a society it is important that we understand depression for what it is: a treatable illness. It is a very complex illness and from what I understand, although I do not profess to be an expert in any way, no-one really knows for certain what causes depression and everyone's experience of depression is different. According to the World Health Organisation, depression is common, affecting 340 million people world wide. Depression can be reliably diagnosed and treated in primary care. Like me, most people recover and continue to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

I received many hundreds of letters, cards, emails, telephone calls, words of inspiration, bouquets of flowers and gifts after I became ill. I have been overwhelmed by how kind and thoughtful everyone has been. I say thank you to each and every person. I am now personally replying to all of you.

The current beyondblue campaign has the very real and powerful message, 'Depression: You are not alone.' I know this to be the case. Many people whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting went out of their way to find me and write to me about their experience and each shared with me their insight and helpful tips. The resounding message from all was that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. By me being here today and resuming parliamentary duties I now, too, can pass on that same message.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the member for Aspley, Bonny Barry, as well as the member for Murrumba, Dean Wells, and the member for Kallangur, Ken Hayward, who looked after my electorate while I was on leave. My thanks go also to the Premier, who could not have been more understanding, more caring and more compassionate during my most difficult time. I cannot thank enough my electorate staff, Gay and Sean, my former ministerial staff and my colleagues in this chamber from all sides of politics for their support. I especially want to make mention of the officers of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and associated bodies and institutions related to that portfolio. Queensland is extremely blessed to have such dedicated and committed people who daily apply their professionalism to enhance and protect the rights of all Queenslanders. My life is forever richer for having met and worked with them. Finally to my sisters, my children and my husband, Michael, words are not adequate. You know the difference you made. Mr Deputy Speaker, can I say it is great to be back.

Child Drowning

Ms STRUTHERS (Algera—ALP) (12.05 pm): In the past month four children have died tragically having been trapped in cars. Today I want to draw public attention to another risk for children, particularly toddlers, and that is death from drowning in buckets and containers. Due to the water restrictions we are all playing our part; we are all putting out buckets and storing water either in tanks or other containers. We are making great efforts and I want to commend the public for those efforts statewide. My own rates notice showed that my own household water usage had dropped by 70 per cent. I and others in my household have not stopped showering, but we have a 5,000 litre tank and we have a pool cover—and it is certainly working.

This practice of using buckets and containers around the house has really drawn public attention to the need for people to be very careful where kids are involved. The Kidsafe organisation, a non-profit organisation with a tremendous record in promoting safety for kids, has released a national red alert this week to all members of parliament and water authorities indicating that this high use of buckets and containers can be a real problem to toddlers and calls for caution. Dr Mark Stokes, the President of Kidsafe Victoria, said—

With governments and water authorities all over Australia urging the community to collect water in buckets from the shower there needs to be a national awareness campaign alerting parents to the drowning dangers of storing water.

There are millions of buckets of water being stored in homes every day in Australia with each bucket representing a potential drowning situation or near drowning which can leave children with severe brain damage—

or can cause death. He goes on—

Many parents are unaware of the risk ...

The risk was drawn to my attention and the reason I have responded so well to this alert is that I have buckets around the house, too. When I was putting the washing out the other day there were two buckets filled with water because we had that great period of rain. I thought to myself, 'I have not been taking enough care in my own household.' My young boy, Alexander, is now 14 months old and I am proud to say that he is walking. So that little fellow is very likely to put his head in a bucket. He is so curious and he toddles around the house very fast now. I urge members in their own local communities to draw attention to this very important public issue. I commend Kidsafe, a very good organisation, for the efforts they are going to not only on this issue but also on many other issues affecting kids' safety.

Let me fill in honourable members on a few of the facts about drownings involving children. Drowning is the most common cause of accidental death in Australia for children aged between zero and four. An international comparison of drowning rates indicates that Australia has the second worst record in the world for toddler drowning. On average, 14 children aged zero to four drown in Queensland each year. Not all of these are pool drownings or in the ocean. Some of these are in buckets or containers.

Infants under one are most frequently drowned in baths or buckets. For every toddler drowning, three or four others are admitted to hospital following an immersion incident. These children are at severe risk of brain damage from lack of oxygen. A baby can drown in less than five centimetres of water. So it may not even be a full bucket; it could be a container that may just have a small amount of water. We need to be more aware of that.

Seventy-seven per cent of drowning reports state that the child was clothed at the time of immersion. Therefore, water activity was not actually intended. I guess that alerts us to the fact that these are genuine accidents—it is kids being curious; it is kids wandering around. Parents really need to keep a close eye on this risk. Any collections of water, be it swimming pools, bathtubs, ponds, buckets, dog bowls and so on, pose a risk. In fact, there have been deaths by kids drowning in eskies with melted ice in them. That is how cautious we all need to be.

In terms of action, I will certainly take up this issue with the Minister for Health to see if there is anything we can do in any of the activities we are promoting through Queensland Health. Certainly, we will continue to provide ongoing support to Kidsafe, which is a non-profit organisation which has sponsorship from Queensland Health. I urge parents to check that buckets and containers are out of reach of toddlers, to familiarise their children with water safety and to learn CPR because vital seconds and minutes can make a real difference. It is a very important issue. Members, have a look for that email from Kidsafe Victoria. I know it has the support of Kidsafe Queensland. We can all do more to prevent these very tragic deaths.

Queensland Policing

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (12.10 pm): In Queensland we have an unprecedented crisis in policing. It is not due to the quality or the integrity of the people who make up the police force; rather, it has more to do with the quality and integrity of the politicians who manage our police force. It should not come as a surprise.

Peter Beattie's Labor Party has created a crisis and ruined every public service in our state. Services like health, electricity, child safety, emergency services, transport, education, water infrastructure, Q-Build and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs are suffering from crises that are symptoms of a sleazy Labor political disease. The sickness is best described by saying that the only thing this Premier is good at is winning elections. Everything else he touches turns to dust.

Now it is time to reap what the Premier has sown. Nightly on our televisions we see hundreds and thousands of men and women who are dedicated to excellence and committed to working in partnership with the people of Queensland speaking with one voice. The men and women of our Police Service are publicly expressing their votes of no confidence in the Premier and his tired, incompetent, corrupt, sleazy Labor government.

These are Queensland professionals who swear on oath to serve with honour and who daily put their duty to the community before their own duty to family relationships. These are Queenslanders who work long hours, are spat on, kicked, punched, shot at, abused and beaten and yet they still will unhesitatingly and in a heartbeat risk their lives for each one of us.

Even while the Premier is out there in the media arrogantly and egotistically speaking and leaking information and taking cheap shots designed to undermine the reputation of our officers, we would still find that if the need arose, every Queensland police officer would put their lives on the line to protect him because the majority of Queenslanders voted him into the high office of Premier. While that high office of Premier does not appear to mean much to the leader of the sleazy Labor Party, the men and women of our police force still serve and respect the democratic institutions and positions of Queensland.

Each officer has taken an oath to protect life and property, preserve the peace, prevent offences, detect and apprehend offenders and help those in need of assistance. I do not need to remind you of that oath, Mr Deputy Speaker English. They make that promise to respect and uphold the rights of all people in the community regardless of race, social status or religion.

Why and how have we found ourselves in a situation where the police minister was forced to admit that her officers were threatening to march on parliament for the first time in Queensland's history? The Queensland police minister has become a lazy passenger who is more of a media commentator than a manager of our valuable police resources.

What did the minister do when the latest crime statistics showed an alarming spike in sexual offences across the state? Did she examine the fundamentals of her budget and ask herself whether she had advocated strongly enough for sufficient resources and funds to fight crime? No, she did not. The minister did the usual and summoned the media and made a statement. Were fewer people raped or sexually assaulted because of the minister's statement? No, but the Beattie government looked good for the six o'clock news.

The Labor spin doctors are happy because nobody knows that on a per capita basis when compared to other Australian states Queensland spends the least on law enforcement. We spend only \$265 per head of population while New South Wales spends \$286 and South Australia spends \$311. Nobody knows that we are one of the only Australian states that does not have a helicopter to help its officers catch criminals and sexual predators. Nobody knows that we have huge problems retaining experienced officers in the Queensland police force. The resignation rate of experienced officers is running at over five per cent. Nobody knows that rural and regional officers are being forced to use their own private vehicles.

Policing in Remote Communities

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (12.15 pm): I, too, would like to discuss policing in Queensland and, in particular, policing in remote communities. Any professional officer—whether they be a nurse, teacher, police officer or administrator—who goes into a remote Indigenous community faces many challenges. They face a different culture, a different language and a different way of doing business. They face problems with isolation. They do not get the services that people take for granted in the capital cities and the provincial towns across the eastern seaboard.

As the Premier alluded to earlier this morning, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit people to work in DOGIT communities. There are a range of reasons for this. There is the issue of standard of accommodation and the pay, but, more generally, lifestyle issues are more of a factor. The reality is that there is plenty of work in the cities for these people so it is difficult to convince them to leave their cosy lifestyle and face the challenges of Indigenous community life.

For police I think the challenge of fitting into communities is far harder than for other professionals. It is easier for a nurse or a teacher to form relationships than for a police officer simply because of the different roles they undertake in the community. There are plenty of things individual officers can do to help them fit into the local community. They can coach the football team, organise youth discos or simply wander around the community talking to people. Most officers do that. Most officers try to engage with their communities outside of their professional life. I think it is important that they do. It sometimes goes unrecognised.

I welcome the tabling today of the partnerships Queensland report into the state of Indigenous affairs in Queensland. While I have yet to have a chance to read the report in its entirety I know the condition of DOGIT communities in my electorate well enough to anticipate much of what it will say. Notwithstanding the report, it has to be said that it is not all doom and gloom in Indigenous communities. There are positive things happening. New leadership is emerging that is far more capable of dealing with other levels of government than before and people are increasingly determined to make a go of their lives.

There are many things that prevent Aboriginal people living in DOGIT communities from getting ahead. I can advise the House that none of these have anything to do with policing or government commitment. It comes down to land tenure. While no government has recognised more native title over land than the Beattie Labor government it does not and will not provide a panacea to the problems facing Aboriginal communities. Recognition of traditional rights provides some comfort to traditional inhabitants but does not provide a basis for economic development.

In fact, besides re-establishing the rights the ancestors of today's traditional owners enjoyed 200 years ago, the only power native title bestows is the ability to inhibit economic development. Absolutely nothing is going to change in Indigenous communities until the nexus surrounding land—its ownership, its use and its development—is resolved. Nothing will engage the Aboriginal community more than a discussion about enhancing Indigenous land rights. It will not matter how many police officers we send to communities or what programs we run; we must find a way to give Indigenous people a greater say over the land that is theirs so that they can truly engage in the real economy.

PNG Gas Pipeline

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.19 pm): Last week finally saw the demise of the long-touted Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline, with PNG's Oil Search revealing it would not spend any more on the proposal and would instead look at using its PNG gas reserves within the country. At the outset of this speech I want to declare as per my pecuniary interest register that I hold Oil Search shares, albeit a small bundle. The *Courier-Mail* reported that the state government was an enthusiastic rhetorical supporter, and that is a very apt description given that the Premier previously boasted that this now defunct project would create thousands of jobs and inject billions into the Queensland economy.

As always, the rhetoric from the Labor spin doctors rarely matches the reality. A visual illustration of the Beattie Labor government's enthusiastic rhetorical support can be seen in this inch-thick stack of media releases which I table in the House today. Between 2 October 1998 and 26 January 2006 the Beattie Labor government issued 32 media releases which mention the PNG gas pipeline—32 media releases about a pipeline project for which not a single pipe was ever laid. I want to outline just a few examples of the spin we have heard from the 'do nothing' Beattie Labor government and its string of state development ministers over the years about a project which was known to many as the mythical pipeline.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media releases regarding PNG gas pipeline.

In April 1999 there were media releases from the Premier headlined 'Gas agreement opens way for supply contracts' and 'PNG pipeline boost'. In August 1999 the Premier jetted off to Port Moresby and issued a statement claiming the 'PNG to Queensland gas pipeline secures foundation volumes'. In December 2002 the Premier was off on another trade mission to Papua New Guinea during which the PNG gas pipeline was said to be 'the focus'. Fast forward to October 2004 and guess what? The Premier was once again boasting of significant news on the PNG gas pipeline, with proponents proceeding to the 'front end engineering and design stage'.

In July 2005 then state development minister Tony McGrady welcomed the sale of PNG gas to AGL, saying 'it was a major step in making the pipeline a reality'. In October 2005 our current state development minister, John Mickel, in his role at that time as energy minister got in on the act, scoring a trip to Papua New Guinea to yet again talk about the pipeline. On 16 January 2006 the Deputy Premier and then state development minister, Anna Bligh, was welcoming yet another agreement on the PNG gas project and boasting of the 1,000 jobs expected to be created during the construction phase, which she said would start in 2007.

Not wanting to miss out, in January 2006 the Premier was also trumpeting according to the headline in his media release 'PNG gas pipeline project a step closer'. After that we had an unusual year of silence from the Beattie Labor government on the PNG gas pipeline until last week, when it was revealed the project was being dumped. But even with confirmation that the project had gone belly up, this shameless state government was doing its best to put on a positive spin by claiming in its 1 February media release that the 'PNG gas suspension opens new opportunities for Queensland'. Remember, this is the project that the Premier said would deliver thousands of jobs and billions of dollars and which former state development minister Tony McGrady breathlessly proclaimed would be a

catalyst for further industrial growth in Queensland's regions. The Beattie Labor government for so many years focused its attention and energy policies around this gas pipeline and there are now a lot of unanswered questions about how power will be provided to drive industrial development in the north.

The pipeline axing is just another in a long list of major projects that have fallen by the wayside under the Beattie Labor government's reign, including Aldoga's decision to put a proposed aluminium smelter at Gladstone on hold indefinitely, the breakdown of the planned AMC magnesium plant in central Queensland, and cane harvester manufacturer Austoft's decision to move from Bundaberg to Brazil to name but a few. It just goes to show that we should judge this sleazy Beattie Labor government on what it does, not what it says. Judge it on its actions or lack of actions, not its meaningless words. The canning of the PNG gas pipeline is yet another example which highlights that the Beattie Labor government is big on talk and short on delivery.

DrinkWise SafeZone Film Festival; Alcohol Abuse

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (12.24 pm): During my maiden speech in October last year I spoke about my ongoing concern relating to the abuse of alcohol and alcohol-blended products in our society, particularly amongst youth. I was therefore delighted when called upon to represent the Premier at the DrinkWise SafeZone Film Festival held at Movie World in the Gaven electorate on Monday, 13 November 2006. DrinkWise is, as the name implies, a self-governing, independent, not-for-profit organisation focused on encouraging a healthier drinking supported culture in Australia. The organisation is supported by the state and federal governments and the alcohol industry.

The film festival offered prize money of some \$57,000 across a range of categories to young filmmakers who created short, no more than six-minute films to sell the responsible drinking message to youths in our society. The 10 finalists included documentaries, comedy, drama and animation as the genre chosen. The judging panel included Professor Nick Croffs, Director of Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre; Ms Virginia Hart, Assistant Secretary of the Drug Strategy Branch in the Australian government's Department of Health and Ageing; and Dr Mike McEvoy, Deputy President of the International Council on Alcohol and Other Addictions based in Lausanne in Switzerland.

I cannot speak highly enough of the quality of films, which certainly hit their target in a most powerful way. My attention, though, is drawn to the need for such directed advertising and campaigns. Recent information from SafeZone paints a grey picture of alcohol abuse in this nation. Alcohol misuse in Australia remains second to tobacco as a major preventable cause of death and disease. In the decade to 2001, some 31,000 people are estimated to have died from risky or high-risk alcohol consumption. Of these, 70 per cent were male. In Australia alcohol contributes to 12 per cent of male suicides; eight per cent of female suicides; 34 per cent of all injuries sustained as a result of a fall; 44 per cent of injuries resulting from a fire; 34 per cent of drowning incidents; 47 per cent of assaults; 16 per cent of child abuse cases; 34 per cent of homicides where the offender is under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident; and 50 per cent of domestic physical and sexual violence cases. These statistics come from the National Health and Medical Research Council's 2001 report *Australian alcohol guidelines: health risks and benefits* published by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in Canberra.

Annually, alcohol accounts for \$1,274 million related to car accidents; \$1,105 million related to crime; \$1,773 million related to lost productivity; and \$3,408 million related to health and other costs. Those figures come from Collins and Lapsley. In 2004 the National Drug Strategy household survey reported that one in six 14- to 19-year-olds drank at least monthly—that is one in six 14- to 19-year-olds—and that one in 10 drank weekly. The survey also found that in people aged 20 to 29 many drank in a risky or high-risk manner. The majority of Australians choose to consume alcohol—that is, 86 per cent of males and 81 per cent of females reported drinking alcohol in amounts ranging from daily to occasionally.

The consumption of alcohol is a major concern for this society and it is pleasing to see the Queensland government respond to this challenge through a range of initiatives from education to enforcement. One program that has particular strength for me is the department of transport's skipper program which is currently being trialled in 28 clubs and pubs on the Gold Coast and seven clubs and pubs in Gympie by agreement where a skipper signs up for the evening in a hotel, club or pub and is provided with an armband and free soft drinks for the night and undertakes not to consume alcohol and will not be served alcohol. That person of course then drives others home. The program goes some way to—

Time expired.

Johns Road Quarry

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (12.29 pm): I would like to draw the attention of the House to an environmental disaster that has occurred under the nose of the environment department over the past 10 months. On 24 October 2006, the Noosa Parks Association—the NPA—wrote to the environment minister and the then Minister for Natural Resources and Water alerting them to environmental damage at the Johns Road Quarry at Lake Cooroibah. That warning went unanswered. The operator, who was removed from the site by police on 17 January this year, is Mr Ted Allan of Noosa Washed Sand. Mr Allan is in partnership with Michael Sherrin, who owns a hire company.

I table that letter dated 24 October, together with attachments, and also a letter dated 1 November from the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association—the NICA—that provided further proof to the minister of increased activity and large-scale environmental damage by Noosa Washed Sand. These groups also advised the minister that they were extremely concerned about the expansion of the quarry so close to the flood plain of the Noosa River.

Tabled paper: Copy letter, dated 24 October 2006, from Shirley Williamson, Project Officer, Noosa Parks Association Inc. to Minister for Natural Resources and Water regarding extractive industry at Johns Road, Cooroibah.

Tabled paper: Copy letter, dated 26 October 2006, from Shirley Williamson, Project Officer, Noosa Parks Association Inc. to Mr Elmes MP regarding extractive industry at Johns Road, Cooroibah.

The NPA wrote to me as the local member to provide me with copies of all correspondence. At the same time, I was receiving calls and letters from concerned residents reporting a dramatic increase in trucking movements from the quarry. A concerned Noosa Council installed a traffic counter to determine the facts. In November it confirmed that at least 6,000 tonnes of material was leaving the site each day. The quarry permit is for between 50,000 and not more than 100,000 tonnes of extracted material per year. Because it is so large, I table just a sample of the traffic movements of trucks entering and leaving the quarry showing the date, time, tonnage and type of truck.

Tabled paper: Copy extract of traffic count headed Lake Cooroibah Heavy Vehicles Class 8.

I met with Peter Gill, a member of the Lake Cooroibah Action Group. Peter provided me with an overview of the quarry and the effects on the Noosa environment. On 6 November I wrote to the minister asking that she investigate concerns that had already been put to her by the NPA and the NICA. I table the minister's response with an attachment to the NPA.

Tabled paper: Copy letter dated 6 November 2006 from Mr Elmes MP to Hon Lindy Nelson-Carr MP, Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism.

Tabled paper: Copy letter dated 22 November 2006 from Hon Nelson-Carr to Mr Elmes.

Tabled paper: Copy letter, dated 22 November 2006, from Nick Heath, Policy Advisor, Office of the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism, to Shirley Williamson, Project Officer, Noosa Parks Association Inc., regarding extractive industry at Johns Road, Cooroibah.

On 3 November the EPA visited the site and followed that visit with a letter to the operator, dated 20 November, warning that the operator was in breach of several conditions of development approval SR05011DA. This letter gave him until 1 December to answer the notice issued by the EPA. I table that letter. From April 2006, EPA officers had dramatically increased their site visits and were on site on four different occasions on one day alone. I wrote to the minister and asked for a report on the investigation that was to be held on site on 5 December 2006 to assess the level of compliance. The minister refused my request and referred me to the EPA's web site to view the guidelines enforcement criteria. I table a copy of that response dated 15 December. I also table photos taken last Friday when I visited the quarry. These pictures do not do the scene of devastation justice, because the scope of damage is just too vast. The scene of the quarry left me speechless. The 50-metre vegetation buffer that is supposed to shield and protect the surrendering property has been mined. Johns Road is in danger of collapse. In fact, the whole area is unstable as a result of illegal activity and has the potential to wash straight into the Noosa River.

Tabled paper: Copy letter dated 20 November 2006, from Dr Glen Brown, Southern Region, EPA, to Mr Ted Allen regarding development approval compliance issues.

Tabled paper: Copy letter dated 15 December 2006 from Hon Lindy Nelson-Carr MP, Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism, to Mr Elmes MP regarding extractive industry at Johns Road, Cooroibah.

Tabled paper: Two photos.

Within two weeks of handing over the keys to Ted Allan, Jack Li Du, the previous operator, visited the site, advised Allan that what he was doing was illegal and reported the facts to the EPA. This again highlights that the EPA knew of the illegal activities in April 2006 but did nothing. Neither I nor the other locals hold Jack Li Du responsible in any way. The department's web site states—

Ms Nelson-Carr takes on the vital role of ensuring Queensland's environment continues to be protected—remaining healthy and sustainably used into the future.

Who, then, should be held accountable for what could become Noosa's own Ok Tedi? The minister knew about the concerns of locals and of the Noosa Council. As the ultimate assessment manager, the minister should have acted to close the quarry months ago. She alone is responsible. If Noosa had received just a fraction of the rainfall that north Queensland received over the past week,

many tonnes of material, including acid sulfate soil, would have been carried into the Noosa River, causing a catastrophe. The minister should buy out Jack Li Du, close the quarry permanently, secure the site and then justify to this House why she should continue to be a minister of the Crown.

Whaling

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (12.34 pm): I rise to address the appalling slaughter of whales by the Fisheries Agency of Japan—the FAJ—carried out each year in the name of scientific research in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary and the north Pacific. At the outset, I wish to place on the record my very high regard for the people of Japan and acknowledge the importance of Japan as both a trading partner and a friend to Australia and Queensland. Indeed, it is a friendship that is more important than ever in these times of international terrorism and resource security concerns. But friends have an obligation to be honest with each other. It is about respect. Abraham Lincoln once observed—

I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

Friendship cannot be a reason to disregard the truth. Indeed, real friendship demands straight talking. That is the position in which Australia now finds itself with its good friend Japan on the issue of so-called scientific whaling. The International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling in 1986 due to the catastrophic collapse of whale numbers brought about by decades of indiscriminate slaughter. Recently, Dr Nick Gales, a veterinary scientist with the Australian Antarctic Division, told the ABC *Catalyst* program—

The populations were so decimated that species like the Antarctic Blue Whale—the greatest largest animal that ever lived—are still just one per cent of what they were prior to whaling days.

The Southern Ocean was declared a whale sanctuary in 1994. Yet in every year since 1987 the FAJ has dispatched a whaling fleet into that whale sanctuary. Japan relies on a loophole in the international law that allows for the scientific testing of whales. Last year, Japan scientifically tested 1,000 whales in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary by harpooning them, measuring and weighing the carcasses, slicing the meat and then delivering it to markets boxed and frozen. In 2005, the FAJ announced its intention to double its scientific killing of minke whales, and worse still, to add 50 fin whales and 50 humpback whales over the next two years. Fin whales and humpback whales are currently listed as endangered species. The humpback whales are well known in my community where they visit each year between July and October on their way back to the Antarctic. The thought of these magnificent creatures being slaughtered in the name of science is offensive and unacceptable.

So what of this science? What are the scientific pearls of wisdom that have been uncovered at such terrible cost? Mr Joji Morishita, a spokesperson for the FAJ, told *Catalyst*—

The whole aim of our research activities is to establish sustainable whaling in the Antarctic Ocean.

So there we have it. Over the past 18 or so years, the FAJ has killed 6,800 whales in the Southern Ocean for the declared scientific purpose of establishing whether they can kill whales for commercial purposes. *Catalyst* assembled a team of scientific experts to review all of the scientific papers published by this research method of killing whales. The panel included Dr Gales, along with Professor Pat Quilty, the former chief scientist of the Australian Antarctic Program and the University of New South Wales Dean of Science, Professor Mike Archer. The panel read every paper published since 1987 and concluded that of the 55 peer reviewed papers available, only four included any information that could not have been obtained other than by lethal means. That means that over the past 18 years, 1,700 whales have been killed for each of those four papers.

This shocking and scientifically unethical slaughter cannot continue. It most certainly cannot continue in the name of science. It cannot be justified for the purposes of making a case for restoring commercial whaling. It is time for Japan to abandon the farce that there is a scientific purpose behind its slaughter of whales in the Southern Ocean. As our friends, Japan should look us in the eye and say, 'We want to kill whales for food' and then let us disagree about that as friends, openly and honestly. To maintain that this extraordinary slaughter has any scientific purpose is not honest. It is not how friends deal with each other. It is time for Japan to ask whether satisfying the culinary desires of that four per cent of the Japanese population who regularly eat whale meat justifies the continuing insult of being untruthful year after year to its good friend, Australia. There is no scientific information gleaned by this terrible slaughter. If our two great nations are to remain friends, Japan must respect the whale sanctuary and immediately cease its dishonest, unethical and unscientific killing of these beautiful creatures.

Separation of Powers

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.39 pm): Yesterday the parliamentary Scrutiny of Legislation Committee met and considered a number of bills which have been introduced into parliament and are now ready to debate. As a member of that committee, I telephoned the committee office prior to the meeting and conveyed my apology for being unable to attend because of another commitment.

During the holding of that committee meeting in Brisbane, I joined with over 500 Queensland police officers who attended a Police Union meeting on the Sunshine Coast. I do not intend to repeat here the issues raised and discussed at that meeting because I note the rulings made this morning by the Speaker. Suffice to say, I use this opportunity to urge all members of this government and all members of this parliament to reflect on the issue of government intervention and interference in decisions made by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I table a 10-page paper prepared by Professor Gerard Carney on the topic of the separation of powers. The paper states—

In Queensland, the doctrine of separation of powers appears not to operate as a legal restriction on power but it provides the basis for important principles which the law protects, such as the independence of the judiciary, and for certain political conventions. Because it is not a legal restriction in Queensland, serious consideration has to be given to other controls on power, such as a committee system for parliamentary review of executive action. Moreover, there are other areas within the constitutional and political system of Queensland where it would seem desirable that the doctrine be put into effect even as a matter of political practice. These areas will be explored towards the end of this paper.

What I hope this paper achieves is to put the doctrine of separation of powers into its proper context as an *ideal* of good government, and to demonstrate that it provides a basis for the adoption of structures, processes and controls which protect liberty now and in the future. As our system of government evolves, new conventions, political practices and even at times new legal rules, will need to be devised to protect the liberty of the people. The doctrine of separation of powers provides the justification for these measures and helps to determine their nature and scope. There is a need to monitor our political system, be vigilant about liberty and advocate new measures when this liberty is threatened. The doctrine of separation of powers is the key to this whole process.

Tabled paper: Copy Queensland Parliament fact sheet titled Separation of Powers.

I also table a two-page fact sheet on the role of the Queensland Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions which states—

The Office carries out the work of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who represents the State in serious criminal cases.

The Director is responsible for providing the State with expert legal representation so that the evidence against someone accused of a serious crime can be properly presented to the court.

...

Lawyers from the ODPDP act for the State at several types of court hearings: committal hearings, trials, sentence hearings, appeals, bail applications and court 'mentions'.

Tabled paper: Copy fact sheet from Department of Justice and Attorney-General titled The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I understand our Attorney-General recently said, 'The best legal minds often differ on matters of law. Even in the High Court of Australia it is common for differing judgements to be recorded.' I use this opportunity to call on the government to bring on a debate about the issue of political interference in the decisions made by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the apparent willingness of the government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! I ask the member for Nicklin to be very careful where he is going with this conversation.

Mr WELLINGTON:—to shop around for another legal opinion—I reflect on the comments already reported by the Attorney-General—when the government receives advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions which it does not like. A senior barrister is reported as recently saying, 'At some stage if the executive government can review the prosecutor's decision'—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nicklin, you are commenting on matters—

Mr WELLINGTON: No, I am not, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Do you wish to disagree? The Speaker was very clear in his ruling this morning. To be general in nature is fine. The comments you are making now are not general in nature. Please continue.

Mr WELLINGTON: This is general in nature, Mr Deputy Speaker. A senior barrister is reported as recently saying, 'At some stage, if the executive government can review the prosecutor's decision not to prosecute someone, does that mean they can review a decision to prosecute?' The question we have to consider is: where does it stop?

The other important aspect of the system of separation of powers is the issue of contempt. I table for the benefit of all members a 13-page extract from *Halsbury's Laws of Australia*, which in other words is a legal encyclopedia.

Tabled paper: Copy extract from Halsbury's Laws of Australia regarding contempt of court.

I will quote two extracts from the encyclopedia for the benefit of all members. It states—

Criminal contempt involves acts or words which interfere with or tend to interfere with the administration of justice—

Time expired.

Liberal and National Parties

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (12.45 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, welcome to 2007—a new parliamentary year and a year, I note, which started with a condolence motion for a sadly departed honourable member who in 1983 controversially switched sides from the Liberal Party to the National Party. That was 24 years ago, but the more things change in Queensland politics the more they stay the same.

This year the Liberals and the Nationals have continued their tumultuous relationship with the laughable commitment given a couple of weeks ago that even if the Liberals should win more seats than the Nationals at a state election the Nationals leader, our friend Mr Seeney, would be our Premier. When asked how confident he could be of this deal, Mr Seeney said that he had 'Bruce's word'. So on Bruce's word, 24 years after three members switched sides at the 1983 election, the Liberals and the Nationals are now telling us that the days of division between them are over—all tucked away under the carpet. I thought it timely to have a look at just how these two sides line up on the issues of the day.

We know that they do not agree about tree clearing. We know that they do not agree about daylight saving. We know that they have never agreed about country racing. The issue today of course is water. So just where do they stand on that? Let us start with the controversial issue of recycled water and the water grid. We would have to start by assuming that the answer to the question of whether the Liberals and Nationals support the water grid is no. After all, the Libs and the Nats voted together against the water grid in parliament last year after then opposition leader, Lawrence Springborg, shared his flat earth concern that recycled water would cause fish to change sex. A united opposition then? No, no—when it comes to the Libs and Nats it is not as simple as that.

Despite voting against the grid, Dr Flegg is in fact a big supporter of recycled water. Indeed, he called last year for the government to push ahead and not to have a referendum on the matter. Be careful what you wish for, Dr Flegg! When such a decision was announced, what did his leader say? It was a bit hard to tell, to be honest. His leader told the TV cameras that it had to be understood that some people would react to this matter emotionally—that is, not rationally—and that their views as well had to be considered. He gave us certainly not support for recycled water; indeed, he gave us concerted equivocation. So recycled water is a matter on which they disagree.

What about dams? Traveston we know is out in a bit of a turn-up for the books for the Nats. Indeed, the Libs and Nats went together to the last election with a nine-year-old water plan for two small dams, one of which was not to be delivered until 2065. We are producing more water through our plan in 12 months than they would have produced in 60 years. Dams do not give us enough water. So what about desalination? I am advised that the member for Currumbin is opposed to the desalination plant in her electorate, so we know that desalination is out. There is some real trouble there between the Libs and Nats on providing water in south-east Queensland.

How about rivers that run free? Just where are these two sides when it comes to wild rivers in far-north Queensland? Of course, the Libs have been consistently supportive of wild rivers legislation and indeed convinced their partner, the Nats, to vote for it in this House, but they have sniped about it at every step of the way. What about the current matter of the Murray-Darling Basin, water meters and compulsory acquisition of water rights? Already there is a split in the federal Liberal and National parties. The *Australian* has described the National's position as specious and a whinge, with people like Peter McGauran, John Anderson and our own Barnaby Joyce opposing both compulsory acquisition of rights and metering. Where do the Libs stand on that? Perhaps this will be the point—with Dr Flegg being a shareholder in Cubbie Station—where we might begin to get a consistent view.

Time expired.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (12.50 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend acts administered by the Minister for Health and the Ambulance Service Act 1991, and for other purposes. I present the explanatory notes and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (12.50 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007 into the House. The bill makes three main sets of amendments. Firstly, the bill amends the Mental Health Act 2000 to give effect to a number of recommendations from the final report of the review of the Mental Health Act 2000, *Promoting balance in the forensic mental health system*, and to allow for the appointment of a second judge to the Mental Health Court to address the rising workload of the court. Secondly, the bill amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to prohibit the sale and commercial display and supply of ice pipes and bongs. Thirdly, the bill amends the Ambulance Service Act 1991 and the Health Services Act 1991 to create a regulatory framework for the conduct of a quality improvement technique called 'root cause analysis' in relation to a reportable event that happened during the provision of a health service by a public sector health service, a private health facility or the Queensland Ambulance Service.

I turn first to the Mental Health Act amendments which give effect to 10 of the recommendations made by Brendan Butler in his final report of the review of the Mental Health Act. The review of the Mental Health Act aimed to balance the rights and needs of people with mental illness with the rights of victims of serious violent offences and their families. The purpose of the Mental Health Act is to provide for the appropriate assessment, treatment and protection of people with mental illness. However, it is essential that we address the freedoms and rights of the broader community, particularly victims of serious violent offences committed by persons who are, or later become, forensic patients.

For example, the amendments simplify the process by which victims and their families can have their say in the Mental Health Court and Mental Health Review Tribunal prior to decisions relating to whether or not a person is of unsound mind or is unfit for trial; whether or not to make or revoke a forensic order; whether to order, approve or revoke limited community treatment for a person under forensic order; and any conditions the court or tribunal may impose on an order for limited community treatment.

This legislation will assist victims in preparing submissions for the court or tribunal by providing guidance about the content of their submission. Further, the Mental Health Court will now be required to provide reasons for taking or not taking into account material submitted by victims and others when making decisions. To ensure the protection of victims these reasons may be the subject of a confidentiality order. The amendments also replace non-specific terms with specific victim focused language, while ensuring at the same time that others with particular interest are not inappropriately excluded. To this end, the amendments replace the term 'non-party' with 'victim or concerned person' to address the needs of victims for recognition within the forensic mental health system. The bill also clarifies that the Attorney-General has responsibility for representing the public interest in tribunal hearings.

The remaining recommendations from Mr Butler's report are being fully considered as part of the 2007-08 budget. The other amendments to the Mental Health Act allow for one or more additional Supreme Court judges to be appointed to the Mental Health Court and for the appointment of the President of the Court. Currently, the act only allows the Mental Health Court to have one judge. The amendments were requested by the Chief Justice of Queensland and will help the Mental Health Court manage its increasing workload.

I now turn to the amendments to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act. The amendments prohibit the sale and commercial display and supply of ice pipes, and are a key part of the government's Icebreaker Strategy announced last December which aims to address the harm caused by the illicit drug crystal methamphetamine or ice.

The definition of 'ice pipe' will specify that it is a device capable of being used for the administration of a dangerous drug by smoking or inhaling the smoke or fumes resulting from the heating or burning of the dangerous drug in its crystal, powder, oil or base form. The form of the drug is specified in order to ensure that pipes which are capable of being used to smoke tobacco are not captured. This is consistent with other provisions of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act which do not prohibit tobacco-smoking implements. The definition is deliberately broad to give effect to the policy intent to remove ice pipes from retail display. The definition of 'ice pipe' will also include devices that are apparently intended to be an ice pipe but cannot be used because they need an adjustment, modification or addition. This is to ensure that partly assembled ice pipes and/or components of an ice pipe are also captured by the prohibition.

Given the time, I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In addition, the bill will amend the Tobacco and other Smoking Products Act to address a loophole which allows retailers to display and sell the individual components of cannabis utensils, colloquially known as bongs. The amendments will close this loophole by prohibiting the sale and commercial display and supply of bongs and their components.

Traditional hookahs for smoking flavoured tobacco are excluded from the ban. A hookah is usually used to smoke flavoured tobacco and has significant cultural meaning for some of Queensland's ethnic communities. However, the bill restricts the number of hookahs that can be displayed to a number prescribed by regulation.

It is not intended that the sale, display or supply of innocuous household or industrial items are to be captured by the broad definitions of 'ice pipe' and 'bong'. Therefore, a defence is inserted to ensure that the prohibition does not capture items that are not primarily designed to be used for the purpose of administering a dangerous drug.

The introduction of these bong and ice pipe provisions clearly demonstrates that this Government is committed to the war against dangerous drugs.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the Health Services Act and the Ambulance Service Act amendments.

These amendments provide a statutory framework to facilitate the conduct of Root Cause Analysis (RCA).

RCA is an internationally recognised incident management technique for identifying and addressing system issues. It is a structured process that involves the establishment of a multidisciplinary team to retrospectively analyse the chain of events responsible for an adverse event. The analysis, which focuses on system issues, is conducted to help find out what happened, why it happened and what must be done to prevent the event from happening again.

The evidence is clear from other high risk industries, such as aviation, that effective incident management techniques which are focused on prevention, rather than punishment, are an essential tool in developing an organisational culture necessary for improving safety and quality.

Mr Speaker, simply looking for someone to blame is unlikely to shed any light on chain of events that lead to an adverse event or how to prevent this chain of events happening again.

For example, if a nurse dispensing medication to patients is continually being interrupted, there is an increased risk that the nurse will become distracted and give a patient the wrong medicine. Blaming the nurse is not going to prevent the next nurse from making the same mistake, because the underlying cause—the interruptions—has not been addressed. If, on the other hand, ward practices are changed to minimise the interruptions, the next nurse is much less likely to make the same mistake.

These amendments are about making the delivery of ambulance and health services safer for all Queenslanders.

Participation in an RCA is voluntary and the bill provides statutory privilege to information and documents created for RCA purposes.

However, the legislation will not prevent pre-existing information being used as evidence in civil, criminal, coronial or disciplinary proceedings.

At the conclusion of their analysis, the RCA Team will be required to prepare an RCA Report that includes:

- a description of the reportable event
- a causal statement of the reasons why the team considers the event occurred
- recommendations for changes or improvements in policies, practices or procedures that may reduce or prevent recurrences of the same type of event

The report will be provided to persons with a personal and professional interest in a reportable event as well as:

- the chief health officer of Queensland Health (who has statutory responsibility for the licensing of private health facilities);
- a coroner investigating the death of a person;
- the newly established Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC) which has responsibility for monitoring, assessing and reporting on the quality of health services provided by or for a provider.

This bill will give effect to a recommendation of the Queensland Health Systems Review Final Report concerning the development of legislation encouraging and protecting good quality and safety assurance analysis within health services. It will also deliver on part of the Government's Action Plan—Building a better health service for Queensland.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude I would like to highlight that the legislation requires that a review of the RCA provisions be conducted within 2 years of the legislation coming into effect and that a report be tabled in this House within 12 months of the review being completed.

The development of a bill such as this involves extensive consultation with stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved with the development of the bill.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

WILD RIVERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (12.55 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Wild Rivers Act 2005, and for other purposes. I present the explanatory notes and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (12.55 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

While it is only three months since wild rivers amendments were brought before the House, this bill is necessary to clarify a few important issues. Firstly, the bill will declare the first six wild rivers areas. This is desirable to provide certainty for the landholders, local governments, miners, traditional owners and conservation interests operating in these areas.

These declaration proposals have been in the public arena for over 13 months, which is more than enough. We have listened and now it is time to act. Having the declarations under a potential legal cloud does not provide certainty to the stakeholders who are living and operating in these catchments. These declarations are not something for lawyers to play games with. This bill will remove any possible uncertainty about the declarations. I table the declarations for the Settlement, Gregory, Morning Inlet, Staaten, Hinchinbrook and Fraser wild river areas for inspection by members.

Tabled paper: Hinchinbrook wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

Tabled paper: Settlement wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

Tabled paper: Fraser wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

Tabled paper: Morning Inlet wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

Tabled paper: Gregory wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

Tabled paper: Staaten wild river declaration, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

After this bill is passed, the declarations will be publicly available on my department's website and at its regional and central offices. Copies will be sent to relevant local government offices for public display.

Secondly, the bill validates the public notices for these six wild rivers areas. It is important to recognise that the stakeholders were not disadvantaged by any suggested technical flaw in these notices. The notices clearly stated where more information about the declaration proposals could be obtained at no cost. In fact, the notices invited members of the public to contact the Department of Natural Resources and Water if they had any questions. These notices were widely published in the *Courier Mail*, *Cairns Post*, *North West Star*, *Fraser Coast Chronicle* and *Ingham Herbert River Express*. Each landholder and local government in these areas was mailed a copy of the declaration proposal document and maps. The documents were also made available for public inspection at the council offices. People holding mining and exploration tenures were sent a letter alerting them to the declaration proposals. Raising questions about the validity of notices 12 months after they were published appears to be some kind of stalling tactic played by lawyers and has little material effect on the declarations themselves. The communities have been extensively consulted and not disadvantaged by any purported error in the notices.

Thirdly, the bill declares the Wild Rivers Code made by me on 30 January 2007 to be a development code for the act. I now table a copy of this document for inspection by members. This code is to be used by my department, other departments and local governments to assess future development applications in all wild rivers areas. Accordingly, the making of the code is necessary in order to fully implement the declarations.

Tabled paper: Wild Rivers Code, Department of Natural Resources and Water, February 2007.

In light of the hour, I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As with the declarations, there has been more than adequate consultation on the Wild Rivers Code. A draft of the code was released for public comment in December 2005 and again in December 2006 after it was revised based on earlier comment and recent Act changes. To date there has not been any negative comments on the revised draft.

Fourthly, the bill sets out a formal process for amending the Wild Rivers Code.

Having a formal process provides certainty to stakeholders in wild river areas. They know there is a transparent process for the Code to be amended.

While the process does not formally require public consultation, I have asked the department to ensure that major amendments are fully consulted on.

It is important to recognise that the Code is not set in concrete. I will amend it if necessary to remove any teething problems or to include better ways of achieving wild river outcomes.

The bill provides a process to make minor or specific types of amendments, which can be done quickly. For example it may be prudent to clarify a definition used by the Code to remove any misunderstanding. This will provide flexibility to keep the Code workable when minor issues are identified. I do not expect the department to fully consult on such minor changes.

The Code will be available on the department's website for public access. Regardless of how it may be amended in future, an updated version will always be on the website.

Fifthly, the bill changes where risk plant species are listed for each wild river area. The Act currently requires them to be listed in a general regulation.

It is better to list them in each declaration, keeping all the wild river 'rules' for a wild river area together in the one document. This will make it easier for stakeholders, local governments and State agencies to use.

Also the bill expands the definition of moderate and high risk species to include woody plants. Presently they are limited to pasture and grain species. It is quite possible that establishing other crop types could pose a risk to the natural values of a wild river. For example *Leucaena* could pose a high risk to wild rivers in tropical areas.

Lastly, the bill has a number of minor inconsequential amendments to other acts, either to remove errors or to clarify provisions or definitions.

Once this bill is passed and then assented to on or about 15 February, these initial six wild rivers will be fully operational, delivering on one of this Government's key election commitments.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Messenger, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (2.30 pm): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 1 to 4 be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 November 2006 (see p. 551).

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (2.30 pm): Although the state election now seems a very long time ago, I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr Speaker and his deputy on their election. I would also like to congratulate Premier Peter Beattie, his deputy, Anna Bligh, and state secretary of the ALP and campaign director, Milton Dick, for steering this government to an historic fourth term. While we all work hard in our electorates, nonetheless the voting public needs to be convinced that its government has a vision and plan for the future. During the campaign the electorate was left in no doubt where the vision and long-range planning lay.

It is good to be back. I congratulate all my colleagues who are here to represent the people of this vast state. Our electorates are diverse, and the issues we face are often complex. However, it is a privilege, and a huge challenge, for each one of us. As I listened to many of the first speeches of our newly elected members, I felt very honoured to be here in such company.

It is such a privilege for me to sit in this House for a third term to represent the people of the Woodridge electorate. As with many members here, I am very reliant on an understanding and supportive family. In my case my husband, Lee, carries much of the responsibility for keeping our home functioning. I thank him for continuing to give me latitude during my all too frequent absences from home, the early mornings, the late nights and busy weekends that so often cut into family time.

Our family has recently grown by one with our youngest son and daughter-in-law having their first child four months ago in Logan Hospital. This gives me an opportunity to again commend the services of our hospital in Logan. It again reinforces, in a very personal way, the exceptional services the hospital offers to the people of Logan and beyond. In the lead-up to the election the opposition attempted to call into question the services of our hospital. The opposition's negative media releases invariably resulted in many letters to the editor as well as calls to my office with people just wanting to express what superb care they had received from our hospital.

Recently I called in to see one of our much-loved Aboriginal elders, Uncle Reg Knox. At one stage we sat by his bedside not knowing if he was going to pull through. Now he is making an amazing recovery. We can thank the staff for such special care and for being very sensitive to his needs as an Aboriginal elder. I guess it is not often a didge and clap sticks are played in hospital and that a patient has their face painted. In an area of diverse cultures, our hospital staff respond magnificently.

As busy members of parliament, we are very reliant on our staff. I would like to pay tribute to three very special people who have been with me since my election in 2001. Sandy, Colleen and Stewart not only perform their roles superbly but are also highly motivated, innovative individuals who are constantly suggesting additional ways to serve the community in the Woodridge electorate. They are all very caring people, and I know their services are highly valued by my constituents. I thank them so much for their loyalty and the high level of care and dedication they bring to their positions.

During the election, the well-oiled unit that is my re-election team quickly sprung into action with a smooth, professional campaign. We have a great band of volunteers who all came together on the campaign and, together, we saw another great result in Woodridge. I thank my campaign manager,

Stewart Dalley, Michael Eborn, who has been organising our booths in Woodridge for in excess of 20 years, and Colleen Callaghan for her nutritious food for our workers as well as keeping an eye on our finances. Many of our booth captains and workers are veterans, and I have to thank them all. Of course, they come not only from our branches but also from many of our community organisations.

My thanks go to Craig Emerson, the federal member for Rankin, and his staff including Jennilyn Mann, Julie Holden, Don Wilkie, Teresa Lane and her daughter Crystal; branch members Jim Sykes, who has been chair of the Woodridge election committee for over 20 years, Les Crofton, Bernard Quinn, Barry Ramsay, John Ruthenberg, Wes Young, Bev Atkins, Leanne Enoch, Ruth Moroney, Chris and Marilyn Murphy, Geoff McGregor and his family, Geoff Greenfield, Hazel Hubbard, Melissa Newton, Craig O'Leary, Leif Bremermann, Lonnie and Ruth Nielsen, Ted and Ditas Warren, Louis Noronha, Adam Lamb, Victor Warren, Ron Robison, Paddy Jerome, Betty McGrady, Peggy Tideman, Paul Wincen, Keith Scott, Ana Martinez and a host of others from our community too numerous to mention such as Gary Cox and Ann McCallum.

Special mention must be made of Jim Michelson, one of our very active Lions. Jim is in his 90s and spent most of the day at one of our booths. Election day is a massive logistical exercise, as is the whole campaign, and our team performed admirably. I want to thank each one of them.

Let me now speak about my electorate. Centred on Woodridge, Kingston, Slacks Creek, Marsden and Crestmead, it is a wonderful tapestry of cultures—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islanders—largely Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands and, of course, many New Zealanders, particularly of the Maori culture—South Americans, Cambodians, Vietnamese, Europeans and now, more recently, our refugee families from the African continent, most particularly from the Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi and the Congo. We have recently welcomed a group of 50 refugees from Burma.

Community events are always colourful affairs with diverse music, dance, food and so many smiling, happy faces. MultiLink and ACCES Services assist our migrants and refugees as well as many other services in the area. Our community health centre has responded with programs to give health checks, provide immunisation and to educate our newly arrived refugees about our health and welfare services.

Our services are second to none. Our Women's Health Centre also plays a vital role in assisting women not only in health services but also in supporting and offering skills to assist women from all walks of life in Logan and beyond.

Our education centres—from primary, secondary, the newly merged Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE and Griffith University—offer a complete educational experience. Principals, teachers and staff all show an amazing commitment to offer the support needed for each and every student to be able to reach their potential. Nonetheless, there are many challenges in schools with such a diverse student body.

There is still an unacceptably high number of students absent from class, and some of these are habitual truants. Mr David Peace has been working with many of these students for several years as a community renewal project. Some innovative work has been done, including utilising the non-government sector. Many people in the sector are eagerly reading his report at the moment.

The YMCA 'shed' offers a unique experience to disengaged students in pretrade skills such as metalwork and woodwork as well as art, music, fashion and IT. The secret ingredient at 'The Shed' is the fantastic mentoring that happens such as at the 'Make and do Shed', where Jock, Gary and their friends share their skills and yarns. Manager Michelle Venables, along with dedicated workers and volunteers, have created a unique facility including the much awarded U-Turn program, which works with young men who have been charged with car theft and are given an intensive automotive course to assist them to gain jobs and, in some cases, apprenticeships. This program is quite inspiring and the level of success is high. I would also like to thank Ross Melville and Clem Jones for their support of 'The Shed' and the addition of a food bank with a growing school breakfast program.

Leaving the truancy issue, our principals and teachers work every day with students with various levels of English language and the full range of students from those of exceptional ability to those who struggle. Some have disabilities and learning and behavioural problems and may come from families who struggle to just survive from week to week.

Kingston College Continuing Education Centre and CentreEd run by the Christian Brothers both offer students a flexible learning model as a second chance to those who have earlier dropped out of school or to those who simply do not fit into the normal school regime. Wherever I go throughout the electorate I see results that are simply inspiring. Teaching is not an easy profession, but the rewards for those who have a real passion to see young people reach their true potential can be great. Whether they work with youngsters in our Logan City Special School or one of our special ed units or with a group of high achievers, it is the distance travelled that should be measured. The results being obtained through innovative programs are very promising, and I want to congratulate all of our schools on their fantastic work.

I must commend our District Director of Education, Ms Kerry Holst, who has shown great leadership, particularly at this time with the introduction of our prep year and also through the education and training reforms. Logan has recently seen the retirement of two of our principals who have not only given long and distinguished service to their own schools but also made a huge contribution to the education alliance in the district. Dennis Howard retired from Marsden State School several months ago. He was responsible for influencing in a very positive way many thousands of students and left an indelible mark on many young teachers throughout his career. Marsden State High School, just inside the boundary of the electorate of my colleague Even Moorhead—Waterford—has also seen the retirement of its principal, Don Whitehouse.

Ms Struthers: He was my principal.

Mrs SCOTT: Isn't he fantastic? In this case he was the founding principal of the school. In its 20 years of operation Marsden State High School has grown to a student body of 1,600 and offers a very broad curriculum with high achievement and a wide contact with industry. Don has steered Marsden State High School through its remarkable development to the point where the school now attracts students from a wide area. These two principals have shown true vision and leadership and will be missed a great deal. Education is in safe hands in my electorate, but there are many challenges to be met.

In recent months the Brisbane media has carried a number of adverse reports about Pacific Islanders in the Woodridge electorate. The concept of gangs roaming the streets is alarmist and untrue. Yes, Pacific Islanders are very visible and do at times move in groups. Yes, some of the young people have committed crimes. But it has been reliably reported that one media outlet which had been looking for gangs in the area for a week without success eventually resorted to setting the scene and instructing a few youngsters in how to act and \$20 was offered to appear on film.

Ms Stone: And a bandana.

Mrs SCOTT: And a bandana. Logan residents and Woodridge residents in particular who are proud of the community have long despaired with media outlets demonising the area. The usual rap is, 'Bad story—it is from Woodridge. Good story—it is from somewhere south of Brisbane.' If honourable members talk to teachers in our schools about our Pacific Islanders they will hear that they are devoted to their family and their church and that most students are friendly, open and honest. However, we need to acknowledge that they walk between two cultures and this can cause issues as to how some of the young people develop and engage in our community.

My community is not one to sit back but quickly sets in motion a response, and that has been fantastic. Ruby Pritchard, a young Samoan police liaison officer, has put together a small team which runs youth programs one night a month at Woodridge State High School, and the last one was at Kingston College. The team is called 'Spark It Up' and young people enjoy the music, dance and inspiring guest speakers who are ideal role models for our students. A new dance craze called krumping is beyond my description but usually brings the house down. A consultative group has also been formed to engage with leaders from the Islander communities to help our young people make good choices in life.

I have to commend our newly appointed inspector John Bourke, who has very quickly become an integral part of the community and is showing true leadership on these issues. Our school based police officers, school guidance officers, chaplains and the whole school communities are all working together because they highly value our young people.

The services in the area both to support those in need and also to enhance the lives of residents are many. They include groups such as BoysTown, Youth and Family Services, Family and Kids Care Foundation, Endeavour Foundation, Interlink Housing, PCYC, Karakan looking after people with mental illness, Keystone, Trinder Park Rest Home, LANDS Transport, Logan Respite Centre and Committee on the Ageing, Meals on Wheels, YMCA and U-Turn, Mission Australia, RSL and Citizens Auxiliary, Red Cross, ambulance committee, service groups such as a Lions, Zonta, Soroptimists, Scouts, Guides, Smith Family, the MAD Shed, WAVSS for domestic violence victims, Volunteer Logan River Valley, Centre Against Sexual Violence, our time-out centre run by Drug ARM, Ben Matthews Centre, Logan House, the emergency accommodation network called LEAN, Crestmead and Booran Park community centres and the Yugambah Dreaming Centre, Indigenous service such as Burragah, Burringilly, Nutch, Murragunyah, Ganyjuu, Wagga Dance Company, Murri Network, Logan elders and the justice group. Such government departments as Police, Transport, Child Safety, Communities and Disabilities, Health, Education, Housing including community renewal and Emergency Services all ensure our services are second to none.

In partnership with our government is Logan City Council, which has gained a tremendous amount by way of services and facilities. I must commend those councillors including the mayor, Graham Able, and council officers for the way in which we have been able to work together.

While all of these services have dedicated men and women employed, I must pay tribute to myriad wonderful volunteers who give of their time so selflessly. They can be found not only within the services I have mentioned but also in our churches, sporting groups, musical and theatre groups, our art

gallery, Neighbourhood Watch groups, P&Cs and in almost every corner of the city and most organisations. They are true heroes. Logan is a great city for families and it is notably a great place to live, work and play.

I would like to invite members to our wonderful retail sector with our newly opened IKEA centre and many other delights awaiting them. Our parks are a wonderful playground for families. It is true that people can find everything they need within the city of Logan. It gets under your skin. Logan has a vast number of rusted-on residents who would never wish to live elsewhere. It is a great community and I am so honoured to represent them in this place.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (2.49 pm): Traditionally, the address-in-reply is an opportunity for members to talk about the recent election. It may not be so recent but this is my first opportunity since the election to jump up in this House and in a general way talk about the election and my electorate of Redlands. Firstly, I thank the voters who had enough faith to re-elect me to this high position.

Ms Nelson-Carr: And a very good person you are, too.

Mr ENGLISH: Thank you, Minister. However, I happily put on the public record that I had a swing against me. I think I worked extremely hard over the last six years but it is a reminder to all of us in this House that the only way to keep the great jobs we enjoy is to keep our heads down, our posteriors up and work like crazy. There are still no guarantees. It is important and it is incumbent upon all of us not to take the voters for granted and to work hard for the people we represent, whether they voted for us or not.

I was recently at a function at the Seventh Day Adventist nursing home. I made the comment there that, whilst I had the luxury of 56 per cent of the people voting to keep me in this job, 44 per cent did not want to keep me in this job. We should not take our positions for granted. As we all know, running a campaign is a difficult proposition, particularly in electorates the size of mine. In electorates like Cook and others that are more diverse it must be increasingly more difficult to run campaigns.

I would like to thank a number of people who volunteered and worked hard on my campaign. I thank Carol Evans for her hard work in the postal vote campaign. I thank Jackie Turnbull, Frank Patterson, Ellie Dean, Des and Sue Parker and, of course, Mr Eric McGregor. I would also like to thank Greg Cook for his hard work in getting the signage up on the day the election was called. We certainly had a good win there.

I would also like to thank Mr Ken Hughes, a lifetime member of the Australian Labor Party, who, despite his advancing years and poor health, on election day got out in the car and picked up people who had difficulty getting to a booth. I put on record my thanks to Ken for his hard work. I would also like to thank Jack and Rosa Duarte, Barbara and John Wyllie, and the lovely June Drive and Allan Smith. I would like to point out that Allan worked very hard on the campaign despite his wife suffering from cancer. She passed away late last year.

I also thank my very good friends Helen and Rodney Chapman for not just their work on the campaign but for their support of a personal nature day in and day out, week in and week out. I thank them for the occasional baby sitting of my beautiful daughter when I cannot find anyone to do it. I thank Keith Hoppe, John and Gael Guerin and the many others. The people I named were not the only ones who volunteered or helped out in the campaign, but I single those out for special mention. I maintain the privacy of some of the others who helped out.

It would be remiss of me if I did not thank my hardworking electorate staff—Kelly Patterson and Glenda Little. They work above and beyond the call of duty. They do more work than they get paid for. I thank them for their commitment to me and the people of the Redlands electorate.

This is my third election. I will highlight for the House some of the differences between the 2001 and 2004 elections and the one that I have just gone through. The 2001 and 2004 elections were four-way contests and fought hard but in good spirit. I would like to think that honourable members will reflect on what I am about to say. It is not a personal attack.

I found the 2006 campaign to be the most difficult that I have fought. I do not say this lightly, but, in my opinion, the conservative parties—the National and Liberal parties—in the Redlands are at present morally bankrupt. Their behaviour was a disgrace. We have had debates in here about the internet and technology on a number of occasions. The internet, just like guns, is not good or bad. It is what people use it for that is good or bad.

There is the ability to anonymously SMS people via public phones. That is a great piece of technology. People can stay in touch with their friends via SMS without the expense of owning a mobile phone. Over the 12 months leading up to the campaign, including a period when my mum was dying of cancer, my partner and I were subject to some of the most obscene, nasty and bitter anonymous text messages.

I did not have to put up with that in the 2001 and 2004 campaigns, but I had to put up with it during this campaign. If that is the low that the conservative parties in the Redlands are reduced to then I have no respect for them. I am sure not all members of their parties would condone such behaviour. I have to

put on the public record the attack that my partner and I underwent. I kept many of the messages sent to my partner for as long as I could. Some of the comments were just grotesque. I put on the public record that I hope the coalition parties in the Redlands lift their game.

During the campaign there were a number of significant promises made by the Beattie Labor Party. First was that we would build police stations with accommodation on both Macleay Island and Russell Island. I am pleased to say that that is occurring as we speak. I turn to the long-awaited fire station at Redland Bay. Money for that was in the budget years ago but it got pulled. There have been arguments ever since.

Just last week we handed over the new Redland Bay Ambulance Station. Whilst the minister, the Hon. Pat Purcell, was there for the handover, I took the opportunity to get in his ear and say, 'Minister, keep the Redland fire station on track.' He said that it is. Again, it is somewhat disappointing that the land that the ambulance station is built on is owned by the council and leased by the state government. However, the council is not prepared to lease us the land for the fire station; it wants to sell us the land. I guess it is hard up for money as well. We are still negotiating that.

In my electorate a lot of roadworks are currently being undertaken. However, there is still a lot more work to do there. I am looking forward to the intersection of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road and Benfer Road finally being upgraded. We have the huge four-laning of Boundary Road underway at the moment.

I would like to raise the much raised issue of the bridge to the southern bay islands. There was recently a media article detailing people presenting me with a petition in relation to this issue. I am not pro or anti the bridge at this point in time. It is just that at the moment there are too many unanswered questions. Will the bridge go from Rocky Point, which is in the Gold Coast City Council area, to Russell Island? Will it go from Redland Bay to Russell Island? Will it go from Redland Bay to Macleay Island? These are some basic questions. There is no great consensus across the population in terms of these questions.

Whatever island we decide to bridge to there will have to be massive amounts of land resumed for a car park because residents from the other three islands will have to catch a ferry to the one island that has the bridge. Is the council prepared to resume land? Where is it going to resume land to build this big car park? If we build the bridge to Rocky Point, is the Gold Coast City Council prepared to resume land and fund a connector road from the mainland end of the bridge out to the M1? If we build the bridge from Redland Bay to Russell Island or Redland Bay to Macleay Island, is the Redland Shire Council prepared to resume land to build the connector road? What would be the toll? Would it be more expensive than the current ferry cost? We have to consider the impact on the employees of the ferry service. BITS provides a fantastic service. The bridge would severely impact on the financial viability of that business and the employees of BITS. There are a range of questions and issues that we need to get public consensus on before we can adequately move forward.

I want to raise some general concerns that I have about our society and about the media. There are a range of problems facing community groups around the world, around Australia and around Queensland. This morning members spoke about housing problems in Indigenous communities and on Palm Island. I am not overly convinced that the natural media reaction of, 'What's the government going to do about it?' is fair and reasonable. For a drug addict to get help and turn around his behaviour, the first thing he has to do is admit there is a problem. For the alcoholic, the first step in recovery is admitting that you are an alcoholic and have a problem. It is with distaste that I read comments when the media criticises the government in relation to speed cameras and says that it is just revenue raising. If you do not want to aid government revenue, do not speed. When traffic accidents occur some people say, 'What's the government going to do to fix the road?' If the person did an illegal U-turn at the crest of a hill unsighted over double white lines, it is a tragedy that people get injured. However, the root cause of that problem is the stupid decision of the driver to do that illegal U-turn at the crest of a hill unsighted over double white lines. You cannot engineer around stupidity.

If we wish to move some of these problems forward, we as a society or we as a distinct community have to admit that we have a problem. Throwing money at Palm Island in relation to housing is not a solution in itself. We build houses; they then get smashed up. We repair the houses; they then get smashed up or burnt down. Money itself is not a solution. I am not having a go at Aboriginal communities; I am having a go at many people in Queensland, particularly the knee-jerk reaction of the media. When a problem is identified, rather than saying, 'What is the government going to do about it?' it is more important to accept some individual or community ownership of the problem and say, 'What are we going to do about it?' When a person dies in a speeding accident or a drink-driving accident, rather than asking, 'What's the government going to do about it?' why do the media not say, 'What a stupid person? Why are they drink driving? Why are they speeding?' I encourage my daughter to take responsibility for her actions. If I can do that as a parent, why can we not do that in the broader

community? I am not saying that governments at all three levels, churches and NGOs and other organisations do not have something to bring to the table; we definitely do. But whilst we only focus on the peripheries and do not bring some of these things back to individual responsibility, we are not going to fix these problems.

In the time left I want to briefly touch on the ongoing issues in my electorate. Road funding is an issue, and I have spoken to the minister, Paul Lucas, about the increasing demands on my electorate because it is growing so quickly. I have spoken to Minister Rod Welford and the department with regard to two high-growth areas in my electorate—Mount Cotton and Redland Bay. Mount Cotton State School and Redland Bay State School are two schools that are under significant growth pressure. I have asked the department to have a plan to cater for that, because both of those schools are significantly landlocked. Is the answer buying adjoining land or the creation of a new school? It is important that Education Queensland has a plan for the growth pressures that will come in those two schools.

During the election campaign there were a lot of—there is some language that I would like to use but, given the rules of this parliament, I will just say this—untruths told in relation to the Moreton Bay Marine Park review. Yes, there is a review and, yes, myself, the member for Cleveland, Phil Weightman, and the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi, have been instrumental in ensuring that industry representatives are consulted during that review. So the commercial fishing sector will have a seat at the table. The recreational sector will have a seat at the table. The local environmentalists who know Moreton Bay very well will also have a seat at the table. It was due to our hard work that that was achieved. When the review and its processes are publicly announced, I encourage anyone with an interest in Moreton Bay to please take the time to have your two cents worth and to have your say.

It has come to our attention that in the southern part of the Redland shire there is significant growth. Council has done a review and has found that it is extremely short of public open space, particularly for recreational and sports facilities, and this is an issue that council is going to have to take on board. It is going to have to acquire the land very quickly because it is being priced out of the market. Of course it will then be incumbent upon the state government via the department of sport and recreation to fund the development of some of the infrastructure that is needed. It is disappointing that late last year the state government gave Redland Shire Council a sum of money for the local Redland Bay Rugby Union Club to install some lights to bring its training ground up to standard. The Rugby Union club was over the moon and very delighted. Of course it wanted to get those lights up over the off-season so they could be used during this season. Unfortunately, there have been delays within council but that still has not occurred. The Rugby Union club is very frustrated, and I would urge Redland Shire Council to try to act on this issue as quickly as possible.

With those few words, I want to finish my speech with the commitments that I gave—the promises that I gave—prior to the 2001 election. I only made two election promises. One was to work hard, and I reaffirm that commitment. The second commitment is to continue to have mobile offices across my electorate at times and locations to try to make myself more available for the constituents of the Redlands. With those few words, I thank the House.

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (3.07 pm): At the outset I want to pay my respects to Her Excellency the Governor, Ms Quentin Bryce. Her Excellency always conducts herself with a professionalism and a dignity that has become the hallmark of her term as Governor and I thank her for delivering the speech outlining the government's program for the next three years. I also take this opportunity to thank the electors of Nudgee for returning me once again as their member. I never take their support for granted. I will, as always, continue to work hard to secure government support for improved services and facilities across my electorate.

Of course, one of the greatest pleasures of being a member of this parliament is the personal service and attention that can be given to the many individuals, organisations and businesses that form the backbone of our electorates. It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I and my staff, to whom I am forever grateful, provide them with support, help and guidance in their dealings with state government departments and agencies. I particularly thank my campaign director, Peter Marks, and our campaign team for their support and efforts not just during the election campaign but throughout the last term. Campaigning is not just a four-week affair that begins with the announcement of the election date by the Premier; it is an ongoing activity which involves many hours of voluntary work by many party members and supporters. During last year's election campaign over 140 individuals contributed in some way towards the campaign effort in the Nudgee electorate. I want to again thank all of those people who helped and in particular give special thanks again to my campaign director, Peter Marks, and his family for their sacrifices and support.

Of course, I should also make mention of my own family for their love and support: my wife, Jenny; our two daughters, Bridget and Fiona; my parents, Roger and Louise; and my wife's parents, Jack and Pat. I also want to recognise the sterling efforts of our leadership team of Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh. This strong leadership team has delivered real benefits to the people of Queensland

founded upon a strong economy, a vision for the future and a comprehensive range of plans to put that vision into practice. Today I want to touch on just a few elements of those plans and also say a few words about some electorate-specific issues that are important to me and my constituents.

There is no doubt that strong leadership and a strong economy played a significant role in the last election. However, two of the more prominent issues were the government's Health Action Plan and our proposal for a water grid for south-east Queensland. The South East Queensland Water Grid is a visionary project that is attracting attention across the nation. It will link the major dams, water treatment plants and the Gold Coast desalination plant in a way that will enable water to be pumped into areas that need it, effectively drought proofing south-east Queensland. It is one of the biggest water networks of its kind in the world and, when completed, will provide a level of water security that will be the envy of the major population centres across Australia.

The Health Action Plan is one of the most comprehensive plans ever developed by our government. It provides for an additional \$9.6 billion over five years to improve services and to restructure and refocus Queensland Health's efforts on the delivery of services. It is a comprehensive response to issues that are confronting health systems across Australia and, indeed, in many parts of the Western World.

There is much in the Health Action Plan to talk about but some of the more visible outcomes to date include the fact that Queensland public hospitals now have more than 3,800 more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals than they had a year ago. This figure represents more than double the target set out under the Health Action Plan. Specifically, as at September last year, we had employed an extra 397 doctors, 1,812 nurses and 601 allied health professionals. These figures show that the government is serious about the implementation of its action plan and is delivering tangible benefits to Queenslanders who access our public hospital services.

I am particularly pleased that the Health Action Plan is delivering a much-needed boost to mental health services across the state. The Nudgee electorate is well serviced by the Prince Charles Hospital mental health unit, and I acknowledge the professionalism and management of the staff at that service. One of its community based services is Nundah House, a stand-alone facility that provides recovery focused support for people with mental illnesses. Nundah House has been the beneficiary of additional funding and resources under the Health Action Plan. That funding will allow the allocation and the employment of additional staff, which will broaden and improve the level of support and services that it can offer. In that regard, I want to welcome the new team leader at Nundah House, Amanda Greaves, and also acknowledge the continued commitment and efforts of Paul Booker, a recreational officer, the artist in residence, Karleen Gwinner, and the new recreational officer, Nicky Baster.

Last year the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, visited Nundah House and was presented with a portrait—in reality, a collection of portraits—of the minister. Each of them was an individual portrait as interpreted by more than a dozen clients and consumers of Nundah House's services. I want to thank all of those clients for their generosity and participation in this project. I particularly thank Karleen Gwinner, the artist in residence, for coordinating the project. As I understand it, the minister proudly displays that portrait in his office in the city or indeed here at Parliament House.

Another significant health issue in my electorate is the construction of a new community health centre at Nundah. The government has allocated a budget of \$15.8 million for this new facility, which is to be built on Melton Road. Land has been purchased and detailed planning and construction have occurred to finetune the design. Queensland Health advised the community at an information forum late last year that it expects the new centre to be completed within 18 months. Services to be delivered at the centre include community child health services, child and youth mental health services, adult mental health services, adult community health services, a women's health service, and an alcohol and drug visiting service. Additionally, BreastScreen Queensland will operate its mammography van from the centre on a regular basis. The community health centre is a major commitment from Queensland Health. I look forward to supporting its endeavours to have the project completed according to schedule.

Another significant issue that is important to my electorate is the increasing congestion on the Gateway Motorway—a federally funded road in name only. The Gateway Motorway north of Nudgee golf course requires an urgent commitment from the federal government to widen it to at least six lanes. The state government has shouldered its responsibilities and has approved the construction of a duplicate Gateway Bridge and upgraded motorway between Nudgee golf course and the river at a cost of around \$1.6 million—and not a cent from the federal government for that project. However, that section of the Gateway Motorway north of these works needs to be recognised as a priority. Currently, the afternoon peak hour traffic north of the Nudgee golf course extending through the Boondall wetlands resembles a car park. When the state sponsored Gateway Bridge duplication is completed around 2011, this section of the road will be in utter chaos unless commitments are made now to upgrade it.

A separate but related issue is the concern for the safety of patrons attending events at the Boondall Entertainment Centre. During major events, congestion results in cars queuing in the Gateway Bridge lanes, resulting in stationary traffic in one lane of a 100-kilometres per hour section of the Gateway Motorway. It is a serious accident waiting to happen. State transport minister, Paul Lucas, has

recognised the need for these upgrades and has instructed his department to pursue federal funding and to start planning works. It is now up to the federal government to support this project with real dollars. I call upon my Liberal colleagues in this House to pursue their colleagues in Canberra to ensure that the Gateway Motorway receives its deserved priority and attention.

There are many other issues of importance that I will be pursuing over the next term and there will be many other opportunities to canvass those issues in this House. I want to conclude by again thanking the Governor for her speech. I look forward to another active term in this parliament as the member for Nudgee.

Debate, on motion of Mr Roberts, adjourned.

PROCEDURE

Speaker's Statement—Alleged Bias

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, today during question time the Leader of the Opposition, following a number of rulings by me and an unsuccessful attempt by the member for Beaudesert to seek leave to move a motion without notice, questioned whether I should remain in the chair given previous comments by me as the member for Townsville and my rulings today. Whilst the Leader of the Opposition has not expressed it as such, by raising the matter in the manner in which he has, he is effectively questioning whether I have actual, perceived or ostensible bias in the matter which has in some way affected my decision making as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition has been more blunt in correspondence that I have received in the last hour.

Any member of this House has the right to speak about matters concerning their electorate, either in the community or, provided it transgresses no rules of this House, in the House itself. Any statement I have made as the member for Townsville about any particular matter I have made as the member for Townsville, as I am entitled to do. The rulings I have made today I have made as Speaker, because I am required to do so by the standing orders of this House. The statements I have made as the member for Townsville and the rulings I have made as Speaker are separate and distinct. Indeed, any close analysis of the Leader of the Opposition's claims would show them to be illogical. I am confident that the rulings I have made are correct and according to standing orders and are untainted by previous statements that I have made.

What the Leader of the Opposition is asking for is for the Speaker to give a ruling that would allow privileged contempt in this parliament—a position clearly against even the most narrow interpretation of the Westminster separation of powers doctrine. As I knew that issues of sub judice may be raised today, I had sought the advice of the principal permanent officer of this House, the Clerk, before deciding on any general course of action. As members may have witnessed, I have been assisted by the Clerk during rulings today.

I further state that I have not acted inconsistently with advice that has been tendered. Unfortunately, claims of bias can be made easily and the stain left by the claim is less easily dissolved. I am, however, settled in my conscience that I have acted impartially and can remain impartial.

I draw to the attention of the House and individual members the importance of not disrespecting the authority of the chair and Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report No. 73. Members should not disrespect the authority of the chair in any circumstances but especially simply because decisions are made with which they do not agree.

The fact remains that there is plenty of scope for the opposition to keep the government accountable on issues. It becomes an exercise of careful wording of questions. All the questions asked today that were ruled out of order could be modified so as to be in order and not offend standing orders. It simply takes the effort of careful consideration. I suggest that this effort take place rather than the easier and more damaging method of casting easy aspersions on the chair.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (3.21 pm): As one of the previous speakers said, it seems a lifetime since we witnessed the last state election in September 2006. So in rising to speak to the address-in-reply debate today, I convey to you, Mr Speaker, my best wishes as you hold that high authority of Speaker in this parliament. I wish you well in your deliberations. I know full well it is not an easy position to uphold, but I respect the position that you have and I trust that you will have a very successful reign as Speaker of this parliament.

I wish to pay tribute here this afternoon to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Quentin Bryce, in her delivery of her message at the opening of parliament. As the member for Nudgee said, this woman always presents herself with absolute dignity. I think she is a lady that Queensland can be fiercely proud of. I also pay tribute to her husband who supports her very ably, Mr Michael Bryce.

I also wish to pay tribute to the electors of the electorate of Gregory for returning me for another term in this parliament. I have just served 17 years here, and I find it an absolute honour to serve the people of this very diversified remote electorate in far-western Queensland. It is an electorate that is made up of very resilient people. It is a very resilient country. Whilst we suffer the hardships of droughts, fire, famine and the tyranny of distance, I think it is something in the make-up of our culture and heritage that we are fiercely proud of. I know, Mr Deputy Speaker Hoolihan, you are a product of that country and you can understand full well what I am saying.

I also want to mention my family who have supported me over the years. These are not easy times but in an electorate like Gregory you are never home—you are away all the time. My family means a lot to me. There are always difficult occasions in representing a seat like this. I will not elaborate on that because I think there are many people in this House who know what it is like. To Robyn, Monique, Tanya and Michael, I thank them for the care they give me. I also have two sons-in-law I should add to that equation but, more importantly, four beautiful little granddaughters. But again that proves what life is all about. It is about our families regardless of where they are or who they are. I think life is about children and it is about us in this society protecting those children and making certain that they are able to go through life and enjoy the great things that we enjoy.

I also want to pay special tribute to my electorate staff. Carole Tanks in Longreach has been with me for 17 years. Carole has not enjoyed good health in recent months but she is back on duty again now and I wish her a speedy recovery to full capacity. Mark Maguire in Emerald has not been with me long but he is a young man who has taken the bit in his mouth and is doing an able job. I am also very ably supported by Sue Mitchell. To Carole, Mark and Sue, I thank them for their contribution to the people of the Gregory electorate and for their commitment and loyalty to me. It makes the job a great deal easier, I can assure you.

I also want to put on record today my sincere thanks to Mike Burns, my electorate council chairman in Emerald, and also to all the members of the party in the electorate of Gregory, especially Lenore Johnson, my campaign manager, and Peter Johnson, her husband, who are always there. These people certainly make a difference and without the support of people such as them we cannot operate as members of parliament. They keep the machinery going.

I know that there are a lot of people in the electorate of Gregory who do not support my side of politics but who do vote for me. I heard the member for Redlands say a while ago that regardless of who votes for you you still represent those people. They are your constituents and it is absolutely paramount that they be respected as constituents and not as members of a political party as such. That is how I operate and that is how I will continue to operate.

I congratulate the new members of parliament on their election. It is a great honour. I see the member for Inala in the House today. She follows her dad, Henry Palaszczuk, who was a very honourable member of this parliament for a long time. I look at the young people in this place on both sides of the parliament and I think they are an inspiration. They add to the calibre and integrity of this place and are an indication of the way Queensland is going. I think it will be an exciting parliament as we see these people develop and hone their skills as members of parliament as we progress through this term. To all those people who are new and also to my colleagues who have been returned, I wish them all well and I congratulate them on their election to this place.

I also want to pay tribute here today to Lawrence Springborg, the former leader of the opposition, for the work that he did in that capacity. It is not an easy task. I also want to pledge my loyalty here today to Jeff Seeney and Bruce Flegg for the work they are doing in leading the coalition parties. I believe we are going to show some great strength, determination and commitment in this coming term. We are going to be not only reactive but proactive in relation to the implementation of policies that are going to be advantageous to the people of Queensland. Where the government does have good policy we will certainly be supporting that, but at the same time we will be exposing where we believe there is a flaw in government policy.

So on with the task. There are many issues in the Gregory electorate that I do want to canvass here today. It is about quality of life regardless of where we live. There are 89 electorates in Queensland and the most important factor in any of those electorates is the value of the education system that we can offer to the young people in those electorates, and the electorate of Gregory is no exception. The fact of the matter is that isolated education is in a very difficult situation and costs a lot of money, especially in remote communities. The Isolated Children's Parents Association has done an exemplary job over a long period of time in bringing about changes, working with the government of the day to make certain we have policies in place that are going to advantage children in isolated areas. I pay

tribute to people like Rosemary Philp, the outgoing chair, and also the incoming president, Peter Powne. These people and their executive do a great job working with the ministers and government of the day. It is through their commitment, involvement and own personal expense that we have seen that change.

In relation to the issue of ag colleges, there are two in the electorate of Gregory, one in Emerald and one in Longreach. We have seen change there in the last couple of years. Some of that change has been negative. I will be monitoring those colleges very closely over the next 12 to 18 months to see exactly and precisely how that change can be turned around into a positive, especially with the numbers down in both of those colleges. I understand that could be applicable to the Tropical College at Burdekin and also the college at Dalby. I will speak more about that later.

In relation to the issue of biosecurity, we have witnessed over a long period of time what has happened with citrus canker in Emerald. We talk about stock inspection services and the government talks about biosecurity. Biosecurity is a very important factor, but if we do not have field personnel to monitor the biosecurity it will not work. I am talking about keeping stock inspectors at key points around the state to monitor the movement of livestock, whether they are tick infested or infected with some other disease or whether they are on legal shipment so that we can assist the Stock Squad and make certain that the pastoral industry is working in an honest, fair fashion and people are not concerned about the welfare of their stock and wondering whether they are in the paddock or someone has knocked them off.

Another issue I wish to refer to is health services. Maternity services have been a contentious issue in the major centres of Gregory for a long while, especially in Emerald. We see that getting back to some sort of a straight line at the moment. I hope it continues that way. It is absolutely paramount that we continue to see visiting specialists in centres such as Longreach, Emerald, Blackall, Barcaldine and Charleville so that we can bring a more professional service to those areas in question.

The Remote Area Planning and Development Board based in Longreach is a fantastic initiative. It is one that is bringing a lot of worth, vision and development to western Queensland under the stewardship of the CEO, David Arnold. He has done an exemplary job. Under the chairmanship of Councillor Gary Peoples from the Aramac Shire, who is the chair of those 11 remote area planning and development boards, it has certainly identified in a visionary and responsible way objectives that can improve the quality of life, development and productivity of the region in question. This has been achieved through liaison with government and their own communities to bring about that change in question. I salute them for their work.

One of the issues that came up recently was a model put forward by the Barcaldine Shire Council in relation to improving health services and bringing doctors into the region—a hub concept. While there was criticism of it, at the end of the day, when it is identified and the final analysis is sorted through, we will see good things come out of that. It is like anything we do: it is about open and constructive debate and putting the issues on the table so that we can get an outcome.

I note that in the police budget this year the minister has earmarked something like \$260 million for 20 new police stations around Queensland. I remind the minister that the Longreach Police Station is still in an absolutely deplorable mess. It is an indictment on the professionalism of police officers working out of that centre. I call on the minister to fast-track the construction of that new facility. We have a modular office in place there at the moment. It has been sitting there now for 12 months. It is still not utilised. It is a monstrosity of a thing. It is an embarrassment to the police to think that they have to use it. I can assure members that it is an embarrassment to the people of the central west to think that that is their police district office.

The other matter that I wish to touch on is the drought in Queensland. The drought has far from broken. We have had significant rain in western Queensland over recent weeks. Whilst I say in the parliament here today that that rain that has fallen in the western part of the state—especially the far west and the Diamantina and Boulia shires—has been absolutely brilliant, the point I make is that it is only relief. Do not forget that for one-half of one minute. When you get four inches in an hour like we had in Longreach that is probably the equivalent of 50 points in real terms because of the run-off factor. Places between Quilpie and Windorah have had no rain at all. Last Sunday coming to Brisbane I drove through Gayndah in the electorate of the member for Callide and there has been no rain in that country at all. Do not kid yourselves, honourable colleagues, there is certainly a drought still raging in many parts of Queensland and it will continue if we do not get follow-up rain—substantial general soaking rain—over the period of the next two or three weeks. Please God, we are going to see it right across the state. I remind the government that the drought is not broken; it is only relief.

There are water issues in western Queensland. I know that there are water problems in the south-east. The Premier has made reference today to taking off the agenda the sale of water out of the Warrego system into the Murray-Darling system. It was stated recently that the Warrego water was going to be sold off in two auctions in March in relation to the irrigation in that network. I remind members that the Warrego is not a river that runs frequently, it is not very long and it certainly will not contribute very much to the Murray-Darling system.

Mr Hobbs: None!

Mr JOHNSON: Virtually none. I take the interjection from the member for Warrego. Part of his electorate is situated on the Warrego in the Paroo shire based in Cunnamulla. The point I make is that there is a lot of homework still to be done on this and the government should certainly not be playing politics with it. This is a very serious issue. The mayor of the Murweh Shire, Mark O'Brien, has shown some great leadership in recent times in relation to this and I support him in that regard. At the end of the day we have to have deep and meaningful meetings with some of these mayors in conjunction with both sides of parliament on a bipartisan approach to get the best possible outcome for this water problem in Queensland.

The other issue I want to touch on here today is the rail freights issue in western Queensland. This is a contentious issue and one that is not going away. Places like Quilpie, Cunnamulla and Winton on the end of some of those lines are paying significant increases in rail freights, as are the people right along those service routes. Bear in mind that this is a CSO operation of Queensland Rail. It is funded by the taxpayers of this state to bring some fairness to the equation of rail freights in these areas in question. There is a CSO operation here in Queensland to subsidise the urban rail passenger network on a day-to-day basis. It is absolutely paramount that the government of the day makes certain that we see fairness and equity kept in this equation of rail freights right across Queensland. I know how handsome the revenue from the coal and mineral lines is. I know the generation of freight on that main line. Bear in mind that it is 20 per cent of the population that provide for the majority in this state and they are the 20 per cent that live outside the coastal strip. They are the ones that generate the dollars here and it is absolutely paramount that they are not crucified and put down in their endeavours to get a fair income and generate a fair income for this state.

In the short time I have left available to me, I want to touch on roads and Indigenous issues. Recently I was given by the Leader of the Opposition the responsibility of Indigenous affairs in this state. I will certainly play a responsible and proactive role in relation to Indigenous services. I will be supporting the government on Indigenous issues that will be of beneficial value to Indigenous communities. However, I put on record here today that the opposition will not be in the business of supporting the government in throwing money at Indigenous issues unless those Indigenous communities can get off their backside and show leadership, commitment and delivery of the services that the Palm Island report has brought down that can flow right across all other communities. The leadership and the responsibility of those communities has to be forthcoming from those councils. They are now under the banner of local government. They have to show that commitment if they want to be a part of the structure of Queensland. It is not about shovelling bucketloads of money into communities and then see it going out because the alcohol management plan is not working, and we are seeing the sexual abuse of women and children in those communities because they have had a gutful of grog and they do not know what their mind is doing.

The opposition will not support that concept. I can assure members that the Leader of the Opposition did not give me this job to pay lip-service to it. I think the government should be put on notice today exactly and precisely where the opposition is coming from.

We know what is going on at the moment in relation to a certain court hearing in Queensland. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you do not get it absolutely right no young people will want to join the Police Service in Queensland, and nobody will want to go to Indigenous communities. That is the talk of the town.

The other issue I want to talk about relates to road construction and road funding. That is a very important and very contentious issue. The federal government has a very big and very important role to play in this issue. We want our fair share of the GST dollars spent on country roads so that we can see the development, productivity and support base we have out there enhanced through the productivity sector with good roads and good infrastructure. I do not say that lightly.

I put on the record today that I will be keeping the government on its toes in relation to road construction and road funding outside the south-east corner. Whilst we know that there is a developing factor in south-east Queensland, with multitudes of people coming in at the rate of 1,000 to 1,500 a week, the government wants to remember that it is out there where the tucker that they eat is coming from, where the gear is coming from that they put on their back and, at the end of the day, where the dollars are coming from that they put in their pocket every Friday to go down to the local pub. People in the south-east corner do not have to worry about whether the bullocks have got fat or whether their cows are not calving or whether their animals are bogged in a waterhole or somebody does not have a job next week.

I thank the people of the electorate of Gregory for the confidence they have shown in me. I can assure them that I will support them to the last during the next term of parliament.

PRIVILEGE

Matter Raised—Speaker's Statement

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.41 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Leader of the Opposition, could you explain the matter of privilege and how it is suddenly arising.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I table a copy of a letter that I sent to the Speaker earlier in the House in response to the statement that the Speaker made a few moments ago. I do not intend to debate the issues that the Speaker raised. I simply table the letter so all members of the House can see that I approached the Speaker with the utmost respect for the position that he holds and in a genuine concern about the workings of this parliament.

Tabled paper: Copy letter dated 6 February 2007 from Mr Seeneey to Mr Speaker.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 56.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (3.42 pm): Today I am pleased to speak to the address-in-reply. I express allegiance to the Governor and, through her, to Her Majesty the Queen. We have a very important role to play as members of parliament. As the member for Gregory pointed out, I think we sometimes lose sight of the role that we play when politics gets so involved and we get so obsessed with what is happening in our own backyard. Of course, our own backyard is very important, but I think there are a number of broader issues that we need to discuss. The address-in-reply is an opportunity to do that.

The address-in-reply debate seems to have started a long, long time ago. In my 20 years in this House, this is probably the longest time we have had between the Governor making the speech and the reply. I think it is rather strange that the address-in-reply began so long ago. It probably does not reflect well on the governance of this state when there are such delays and maybe slackness in relation to the management of this parliament. Speeches can become irrelevant due to the ongoing activities of the state and issues that arise. Some issues that the Governor talked about at that time may have been resolved and some may have been fully discussed, changed or modified.

A government member: Name one.

Mr HOBBS: I will name one that is very important. Thank you for the interjection.

A government member: One that is irrelevant.

Mr HOBBS: It is very relevant. One issue is the water pipeline and recycled water. I thank the member for Hervey Bay for reminding me about this. It was at the bottom of the list, but seeing he insists I will bring it forward. I refer to the issue of the water needs of Queensland. The bottom line is that we are about to drink recycled water in this state because the Labor government did not put in place the infrastructure so that we would not have to drink recycled water. That is the first thing.

I will keep reminding people that we had the Wolffdene Dam site five miles from the beach in a really good rainfall area, and it was sold. The best dam site in south-east Queensland was sold by a Labor government. Had that dam been built we would not be in the crisis situation that we are in now. If the other dams proposed for north Queensland had been built, such as the Burdekin stage 2 and the Urannah and Connors River Dams, we would not have half the problems we have now. All that water in north Queensland is going to waste.

We are constantly being told that recycled water is being drunk everywhere around the world, in places such as England and Singapore. However, it is very interesting to actually go through the details—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr HOBBS: The member should ask 'Mr Roundabout' about Adelaide. We hear a lot about Orange County in the US. The reclaimed water is injected into underground aquifers. The reclaimed water goes into large underground aquifers.

Let us have a quick look at Singapore. We have all heard the Premier talking about Singapore. One per cent of the drinking water supply is actually recycled water—one per cent!

Mr Lawlor: So what?

Mr HOBBS: So there we are. How much will it be over here? Three hundred thousand megalitres a year is going to be pumped into a reservoir, which is almost its inflow for the last couple of years. It is going to be a very, very high percentage—probably 30 per cent, 40 per cent, 50 per cent, and it could even be higher—going into one of our reservoirs.

The Premier has talked about the UK water being the same, but guess what? It is mixed with river water. No-one has mentioned that. The Premier did not mention that the recycled water that people drink in the UK is mixed with river water. Well, fancy that! It is mixed with rivers that run. The recycled water is being put into a dam here. That is the difference. They are different things altogether. Although the honourable member has left the chamber, I thank him for the interjection.

I want to talk about a few other issues that are important in my area of Warrego. Obviously we have to have development. There are some concerns in relation to the Spring Gully-Kogan Creek powerline. People are very concerned about that powerline going across their properties. I think we need to update our land acquisition act to reflect some of the more modern conditions that should apply, particularly in relation to powerlines going across people's places.

Presently if, for instance, a Telecom tower is sited on a property, the owners are paid a yearly amount, whereas if powerlines are located on someone's property, they are virtually paid nothing. They are given a handful of silver, and the owners have to put up with the inconvenience for the rest of their lives. I think there needs to be some modernisation of the land acquisition act in relation to access to people's properties and assets.

The health system is another important issue. We have had some quite substantial changes to the health system in my area. A lot of the health districts have been amalgamated to form much larger districts. For example, the health district in Charleville has been amalgamated with the Roma district. We have also had an amalgamation of the Chinchilla and the Northern and Western Downs districts into one district, which is going to make things much harder.

The system that was working to a certain degree is being changed with the result that it will be much harder for those district managers to cover those bigger districts. It is disappointing that has happened because some good people have been appointed out there. Just recently, Stewart Gordon was appointed to the Roma-Charleville health district. He is a very capable and good manager but even he will be stretched to the limit in terms of meeting the needs of that particular area.

Attracting dentists is another problem that we have encountered. There are never enough people training to become dentists. One of the issues that we consider very important is that, while there are two universities that train dentists in Queensland, the Australian Dental Council introduced a Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme to help alleviate workforce shortages in the public sector, particularly in rural and remote areas. Since 2003, graduates from some overseas dental programs have been classified as eligible to work in Australia under restricted registration and have been doing so in other Australian states. We did not have that program in Queensland, although we will in 2007. That is 10 years down the track from when the program first got going. There was a delay that should not have occurred. That is another example of where we have been dragging the chain and lagging behind when we should have been on the front foot.

The drought is ongoing, although there has been substantial rain in some areas of my electorate such as out in the far west. That is the only rain they have really had. They went from having nothing to having a lot, but it has gone again now. That is the nature of the game. We are not complaining about it, but we are saying that the drought continues. We have heard of a lot of rain falling in the north. Let us hope that we can get some substantial rain throughout the whole area.

I ask the government to be compassionate in relation to drought assistance. There are still a lot of delays in relation to the payments that are coming through. There are delays particularly in relation to vegetation management. Every minister we have had tells us, 'Yes, within 14 days you are going to have fodder permits approved.' Yes, that may happen for a few weeks but then it falls away. The staff leave and they cannot get staff out in those areas. It is no wonder, because at the end of the day most of those departmental people are under so much pressure that they cannot deliver and so they leave. Why would they stay? It is one of those pressure cooker arrangements. It is very hard for them to be able to enjoy the work they do when they have been given an impossible task. It should be easy and it is easy. It is fairly simple to resolve, but for some reason the government cannot understand how to fix it. There are serious delays and serious health risks for many people who are trying to keep their livestock alive in the drought and who are suffering under the pressure of guidelines that make it almost impossible to make some progress.

The shortage of doctors has always been a problem for us. We have had a few of late. Some towns have had some doctors come in. Roma is going quite well in that sense, which is great. However, Cunnamulla still has a serious problem in relation to attracting doctors. One of the problems is that

because we have this amalgamated health district we will have only one person, who now has to cover an area from Thargomindah right through to Injune and Roma and Surat as well. It will be much harder for that district manager to attract doctors and convince them and their wives to come out and stay—or vice versa—in those areas.

Another issue of concern that needs to be looked at—and this is the time to raise this issue—is the delays with regard to Ergon in our areas. We have been talking to Ergon, and the Ergon people we deal with have been very cooperative. They are trying to resolve the issues but somehow they cannot seem to get over those delays. Maybe they are losing some staff to the mines and other areas. That is always a problem they face. By the same token, we have to resolve this issue. We have to improve the situation so that if developments are undertaken the power can be connected within a reasonable time. I have heard of a case where the people involved in a particular development of 40 housing blocks were told that it would be 12 months after those housing blocks were developed before they could get power on. That is totally unsatisfactory—a 12 month wait! People develop the blocks; they get them going; they get all the internal wiring done but then they cannot get the power connected. There needs to be a better system so that private enterprise can go out there, do the job, tick all the boxes that Ergon requires and all they have to do is go out and flick a switch. That would be much simpler. Energex has a system that does work better. I think Ergon is trying to get something going in relation to that. I raise the issue as it is a serious concern.

The member for Gregory talked about road funding. Yes, road funding is obviously an ongoing problem. People down here know all about that with regards to the Ipswich Motorway and others. We face the same situation, only on a smaller scale. The Warrego Highway east of Chinchilla is desperately in need of an upgrade. The deterioration, particularly in the last six months, of that road from Roma to Miles is getting more serious very quickly. It is falling to pieces and we will need to do some serious upgrades soon. Of course, a lot of road trains run that road as well. We need to ensure that we have a good asset that is maintained.

The Patient Transit Subsidy Scheme has not been updated for years. I think about 10c a kilometre is paid. Other states certainly have a much better system. We need to upgrade ours. If we have a health service that is even remotely working, we need to be able to allow people to get to the doctors, specialists and centres where these services are provided. I certainly hope that we can do that.

The south-west Queensland long distance subsidy for bus and air services is still up for consideration. That is a vital part of the communication network in those areas. QantasLink runs most of the airline service, MacAir runs another airline service and there is a coach service as well. The airline services have certainly been improving. We have been getting much more traffic on those routes and that has been great. The aircraft are quite good. There is demand for MacAir on that southern run that goes Brisbane, Oakey, St George and on to Thargomindah. They want additional services on that run. They want to try to upgrade that service a bit more. There are negotiations underway and I hope that can be done.

There are some minor practical issues that I wish to raise with members today. A constituent who lives out near Thargomindah was applying to use a road reserve to run his stock during some of the drought. He does not normally do it. He has not done it for many years. There is a road reserve that had grass on it. It was about 18 kilometres long and about one and a half to two kilometres wide at one end. He was told that he could use it but he had to ensure that he was with those stock at all times and that none of those stock wandered onto the road. We are talking about an area out past Thargomindah. On all those stations out there the roads are unfenced. It was totally impractical and absolutely stupid—crazy. Here we have the department saying, 'You have to keep those cattle off the road,' but you could travel over the next grid and you are into open grazing land and there are cattle all over the road.

This is bureaucracy gone mad again. There is no understanding and no comprehension of what is reasonable and practical. The issue of valuations is about to come up again. That issue still has not been fixed. It should have been and it could have been. The land rental issue still has not been resolved. There are serious anomalies in this regard. People only have to read speeches I have made in relation to this matter in the past to understand some of the serious problems we see with the valuation system. The system is broken. When the valuations come in you can bet your boots that there will be dramatic problems. The system is broken. We need to manage that.

Today we had lunch with representatives from the Campdraft Association. I am sure Mike Horan, the shadow minister for primary industries, will go into more detail on this. I bring to the attention of the House that another problem will arise in relation to campdrafts in Queensland. Keep in mind that the government has ruined some racing communities throughout this state. The same thing is going to happen to the campdraft movement.

We have about 200 campdrafts a year in Queensland. We have what we call a mob based movement system to get the cattle from the properties and stations into the rodeo yards. An exemption under the National Livestock Identification Scheme was given to the Campdraft Association for a mob

based movement. That meant that provided the cattle were from the one property they could go in in a mob, be used and then put on a truck and sent back home, the gates opened up or whatever the case may be. It worked really well.

Without any consultation with the industry, the advisory group to the minister has virtually come out and said that it is going to make sure that the cattle are tagged. The problem we have is that in many instances there are no facilities and no yards in which to tag these cattle. In some instances there may be three stations that join and in the middle there is a campdraft facility so they muster the cattle in that, they use them for the campdraft and then turn them out again.

What they are now saying is that all those cattle have to be tagged and then read with the electronic readers. These people do not have the staff. We all know what it is like, whether it is a P&C or whatever, there are always a fair few workers at the beginning but at the end of the day when it is time to clean up there is no-one around. It is the same with campdrafting. It is an enormous facility. They might require 1,200 cattle. They could have 1,200 nominations so they would require more cattle than that. This is a serious situation. We ask the minister to see whether he can give us a hand with this.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (4.02 pm): As previous speakers have said, it seems a long time since the election and thanks seem to be a bit belated. I would still like to say that it is a great honour to again have the opportunity of representing the people of the Tablelands electorate. I am humbled by the increased support that they have shown me through the ballot box. I will continue to work hard on their behalf.

I also want to thank those people who helped both through the last term, including my staff, and during the election campaign. I would particularly like to thank those people who turned out on election day to man all 28 booths and to scrutineer, including my daughters, Jacqui, Michelle and Vicki. Special thanks to Peter, May, Joyce and Graham, who put in extra hard yards around election time. I am grateful for all of their efforts.

Recovery is continuing from Cyclone Larry, although in some cases it was very slow due to a number of causes. This was highlighted at a public meeting held in Innisfail at the end of last year. Whilst General Cosgrove issued regular newsletters it was good to hear from grassroots people. They advised that red tape, bureaucracy and trawling through insurance claims was a big factor in delaying progress in many cases. Additionally, the tradesmen shortage meant that costs of repairs and replacements of buildings escalated as the supply and demand factor kicked in. Many tradesmen left as they could not sit around doing nothing while waiting for approvals which were too slow in being made by councils and insurance companies.

Industry wise, dairy continues to fight hard to get back on its feet after Larry in March and Monica in April which dropped heavy rains for months. This continuous rain rotted pastures and, with the cold of winter, there was little or no regrowth. That, coupled with high fodder prices, has placed a heavy financial burden on this industry.

In addition, a large percentage of cows developed mastitis because they went un milked for days after Larry due to power cuts to the dairies. The treatment of this disease is very expensive and many cows did not respond. The significant proportion of once productive herds were sent to the meatworks. Over the following months many more cows died calving due to stress related to the cyclone and from footrot and other reasons relating to those conditions. All of this is at a time when dairy farmers are getting pitiful returns of about 32c per litre for their milk which retails at \$1.70 and more a litre. I call on the Beattie government to release its \$1.25 million election promise to this industry now and not tie it to a federal government matching contribution, as this is a Queensland industry which needs Queensland government assistance now.

Bananas are coming back for those who are still persevering with that crop. Some growers have decided not to re-establish due to high workloads in this industry and the difficulty in finding good, reliable workers. Tree crops such as avocados, lychees, longans, macadamias and citrus, for example, still have years to go before returning to full productivity. These horticultural crops are those which many farmers diversified to after both state and federal governments closed down the tobacco industry and forced deregulation on the dairy industry. There is still a great need here for secure ongoing assistance.

Pawpaws, hydroponics and flower farmers are also trying to get their heads back above water. There has been a bumper mango crop this year. That has been good news. Good, reliable pickers were in short supply. The season is now drawing to a close. I want to emphasise that enormous hurdles do still remain and ongoing support will be needed before they all get back to an even keel.

Cyclones have not been the only things impacting on our horticulturists. A mandatory code of conduct for this industry was promised during the last federal election in 2004 by the then leader of the Nationals, John Anderson, to be delivered within 100 days if they won. It still has not been delivered. Following intense industry pressure during the state election campaign only a half-baked code that still fails to meet industry needs was announced but is still yet to be implemented.

The enduring theme for all primary producers has been the financial devastation brought upon them under the label of free trade. Both Labor and Liberal-National federal governments, backed by every state and territory government, have rammed this globalisation theory down our throats, nailing industry after industry to the cross while promising it would be good for us.

We saw the collapse of the Doha round of international trade negotiations mid last year because neither the European Union nor the Americans would agree to put their primary producers and their farmers through anything like the same kind of grief Australian and Queensland producers have been battling for years. The biggest trading blocs in the world will not wear it but our governments force our people to the wall for it. It is time we stopped this idiocy. We need a Premier who will stand up for our Queensland producers at the COAG quarterly meetings and fight for Queenslanders being destroyed by this policy.

Something we all need is a safe, efficient transport network, particularly with the continual cutting back of rail services in rural areas. The long-awaited upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road needs to be put in place as quickly as possible. This is especially so if we believe in the effects of climate change and the possibility of tidal surges and increased threats of cyclones. This would mean that there is a duty of care to improve this inland link sooner rather than later if for no other reason than for the safety of coastal residents.

This is a major connection not only between Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands but also between Cairns and the cape to the north and Cairns and the gulf country to the west. It is regularly cut during heavy rain periods or when there is an accident. Due to increasing traffic loads, travellers are often forced to creep along at 20 or 40 kilometres per hour for kilometre after kilometre when caught behind the ever increasing number of heavy transport vehicles using this road.

This happens to me often. While the heavy transports do eventually pull over, we almost immediately find ourselves behind another one. There is only one lane going down the range and one coming up with limited overtaking opportunities. This is a major highway and is signposted at 80 kilometres per hour. It is high time that we had at least two lanes going each way and it is needed much sooner than the 10-year time frame current proposed. Additionally, the existing Kuranda Range Road is so bendy that it makes ordinary, healthy travellers sick and is not conducive to ambulances taking the sick or injured to the Cairns Base Hospital. That is why we need more health services on Tablelands. But for those who must travel to Cairns for any reason, the sooner the better as far as this project is concerned.

When I delivered my address-in-reply speech after the 2004 election I spoke about the underresourcing of hospitals, about how patients were dying, about lack of staff, ward closures, insufficient doctors, nurses and so on. I hoped then that a massive improvement in the public hospital system was not too much to hope for. But even after Patel, several inquiries, budget increases and so on at the grassroots level of public hospital care, nothing much has changed. At the end of last year I was advised that a lady in her 80s who was a patient at the Atherton Hospital was told that she needed surgery in Cairns. She was told that there was no ambulance available and she would have to find her own way down the windy, bendy mountain range to the coast.

The so-called 'new' Queensland Health system and the Ambulance Service that is supposed to cover all pensioners free of charge, even if it does charge others multiple times, is still not getting it right. Their combined efforts instead produced a result where a Queensland, a lady aged in her 80s, was left to sort herself out. Thankfully, following representation this lady's problem was resolved, but how many others are confronted with a similar dilemma that we do not hear about? And let us remember that this is the Ambulance Service for which we are now being forced to pay a tax on our electricity accounts so, we are told, we can have a world-class service. Instead, ambulance officers are tied up ramping up with patients on board for hours at a time outside the Cairns Base Hospital instead of getting back to their base stations so they are available for any new emergency.

The health minister has said repeatedly that the underlying problem in our health system is a lack of doctors, especially in rural and regional areas, yet this government insists on bonding a mere 50 doctors per year. There are many more than that number leaving Queensland Health for various reasons each year. I was recently approached by a Sydney based Australian trained eye specialist eager to come to the tablelands—a rural and regional area—to establish a practice in cooperation with Queensland Health. His problem is that Queensland Health will not even partially fund equipment to allow common procedures to be performed in one of our hospitals. This specialist is so keen to relocate that he offered to put a substantial sum of his own cash towards the cost of this equipment. It is hard to see how it could get any better than that, but still Queensland Health refused to move. It makes it impossible to believe then that there are no doctors available. With this example in mind, not only doctors but specialists are willing and are available but yet again it is Queensland Health that is getting in the way and leaving its people to suffer. To make matters worse, this specialist has told me that he has colleagues also keen to move from Sydney to country Queensland who are watching his experience to see how it goes. I do not think they would be at all encouraged by what they are seeing.

Queensland Health also needs to be more flexible in its approach to resolving issues. We in the far north are all aware that the Cairns Base repeatedly suffers from overcrowding and understaffing and has ambulances ramping up for hours at a time. The Mareeba Hospital is less than 50 minutes away by road and should be much more highly utilised. With a speedy upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road, this time frame would be even less. It would be efficient to fund extra services into existing health facilities rather than build expensive new ones in Cairns, and patients facing hours of waiting at the Cairns Base could be receiving treatment at Mareeba in less than 60 minutes. Surely it can hardly be any less onerous for the people of Cairns to make the same trip the other way.

There is an equally clear need for a new hospital at Atherton. The existing facility is ageing and a new facility offering improved services is past due for a growing southern tablelands population. It is not as if there are no doctors and specialists available. Instead, as I have said, they exist and new ones are eager to move into our rural areas with a little encouragement from the Beattie government. Foreign doctors are all well and good in the short term, but many of them cannot speak the language well enough, do not understand our health system and are not adequately supervised, not to mention the inability of patients in pain or distress to understand them.

The related need for extra nurses also needs serious attention. The academic training stream has failed to provide nurses who stay in the system, with the average age of nurses at 42 proving the academic system is not working. We should not have to rely on imported nurses. Most people firmly believe that we need to return to the ward based training system that served us well for decades to work in tandem, if necessary, with the university based system. Queenslanders cannot wait for the federal government, so the Beattie government must bite the bullet and spend a substantial amount of the \$9.7 billion on health giving scholarships to hundreds more of our own youth. The health and lives of Queenslanders deserve better than they have been getting.

The Beattie government has been telling us for years about the shortage of tradesmen which we are experiencing in this state. This was again highlighted by the task of rebuilding after Larry. There is a tremendous need for training initiatives which are currently not there to further encourage small business to take on young apprentices. This would be much better than keeping kids at school unnecessarily when many of them would be much better served by getting hands-on experience topped up with the normal block training. The existing lack of tradesmen proves that none of this government's previous efforts have so far worked. There is no excuse for young Queenslanders to face a future of casual and part-time jobs and poor job security while at the same time we are talking about importing workers because of a lack of a skilled workforce.

The ongoing issue of public liability continues to plague businesses, community groups and the public. More needs to be done to help break the suing society mentality as the impact is still far too high and the burden far too great on the majority of ordinary Queenslanders. Another long-term issue is that of water supply and management. The reluctance to build dams for ideological reasons has left not only the south-east but even the wet far north with insufficient storage for existing demand, let alone our continued population growth. As the present floods demonstrate, water is there but the dams are missing. All far northerners will be looking for swift action on the promised \$6 million start for the Nullinga Dam project. This dam will help secure water supplies for the future of a large productive agricultural area while also helping ease the pressure on urban supplies.

We need to remember that using water for irrigation is not some kind of environmental crime. It is vital to all of us that it be as secure as possible. However, security of supply is becoming an increasingly difficult issue for many farmers in my electorate. For example, there are farmers who the department told could drill for water in a particular part of my electorate. They were given an undertaking that should sufficient water be found they would get a reasonable allocation. Some farmers invested amounts of up to \$350,000 each putting down bores. Water was found and notification has recently been received by those farmers of the allocations, which, considering the undertakings they were given and the expense incurred, were far short of expectations.

Additionally, under the latest management plan, the Barron water resource plan, an extra 4,000 megalitres available in the area known as above Tinaroo Dam is still unallocated. Under the same WRP, area based water licences are to be converted to volumetric licences. There is still a conflict with the department after years of consultation on the right rate of conversion regarding these licences. It is imperative that this conversion rate is right and the Beattie government has a duty of care to make sure that that happens as it could mean the difference between a livelihood or no livelihood for many of these farmers who have mostly produced between two to four crops a year on this acreage.

One dairy farmer I was speaking to the other day waters his acreage—he has 17 hectares—all year round. He has to fertilise it heavily and water it all year round just so he can continue with his dairy farm. That would mean that he is using much more than 6.6 megalitres per year. That would amount to something like 25 megalitres per hectare or more. The department has suggested 6.6 megalitres per hectare, but this will produce on average only one crop. Two crops would take 13.2 megalitres and three or more crops around 20 megalitres or more. The farmers feel that they have fairly compromised on a conversion rate of 10 megalitres per hectare, but that certainly would not be enough for the dairy farmer I mentioned. Farmers also feel that departmental officers are not listening to them. It needs to be

remembered that this is not extra water being given to these farmers; it is simply supposed to be a recalculation of the water they are already using. It certainly should not be a way to push them out of business and should not be taken out of the extra 4,000 megalitres that was supposed to be on top of existing licences. I emphasise that it should be completely separate from the extra 4,000 megalitres which should be allocated to those who drill for bore water and those who are underallocated.

There is so much publicity around these days about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power stations and so on. The Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme in my electorate must be put back on the table and reconsidered. It beggars belief that the Beattie government is investing in more and bigger coal-fired power stations and is exporting more and more of this non-renewable fossil fuel while saying no to a clean 500-megawatt hydrostation because it would affect a minuscule bit of the Wet Tropics which could, I am sure, be exchanged for a comparable area elsewhere. It is past time that the narrow, blinkered and extreme green view against this project was overturned. It makes no sense at all to save a few hectares of forest while pumping hundreds and thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas out of coal-fired stations every day to provide an equivalent amount of electricity. It is hypocrisy to support the continued mining and export of shiploads of this polluting mineral and spending millions trying to make it clean while refusing to fund such an environmentally fantastic project as the Tully-Millstream.

It is also hypocrisy to try to make ordinary Queenslanders feel guilty about the greenhouse gas emissions that are caused by their normal daily activity while rejecting this kind of clean hydropower generation in the wettest part of the country. It is like the ludicrous idea of allowing all of our rivers to simply flow out to sea without dam storages, then trying to separate the salt from the sea water through expensive desalination plants and then having to decide what to do with the excess salt. That is not smart at all.

I want to register my opposition to the long running and increasing power grab by Canberra. In the recent few months we have seen it stretching out its hands and trying to grab water, education, health, ports and universities away from the states, further eroding states' powers. I note the Premier's ministerial statements of late last year and recognise the serious changes that have occurred, particularly over the past 40 years, which have gradually and seriously impacted on the three-tiered Westminster system that was introduced at Federation just over 100 years ago. Australia is still made up of a federation of states and while many of us might complain that we do not get a fair deal from Brisbane, under a centralised government in distant Canberra, I believe that it could be much worse.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.20 pm): It is an honour to stand in this place once again as a member of the 52nd Parliament. Indeed, it is an amazing experience. Even more so, to represent the people of Broadwater for the third time is an opportunity bestowed upon me for which I am very grateful. The Broadwater electorate is traditionally not considered Labor. In the last election, the Labor vote increased again due to hard work, grassroots campaigning and strong leadership demonstrated by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The Gold Coast Labor team is also strong in its commitment to working to get the best results for the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast is a very different place from what it was some six years ago. The estimated population of the region is now more than 482,000, with growth expected to continue over the next two decades. The number of residents is forecast to rise to about 719,000 in 2026. The state government's funding injections have kept the momentum of success going for the Gold Coast—funding for infrastructure projects such as the Gold Coast Convention Centre and the new Skilled Park Stadium at Robina, increased funding for tourism and established educational facilities such as Griffith University to create a dental school to support vital research and to provide more medical places, and funding for community renewal projects that help build safer and supported communities.

No doubt, every member in this House has many stories to tell about the campaign that they endured in the lead-up to the election date of 9 September. A campaign experience is one that could provide a plot for a fascinating play. Indeed, there was drama, intrigue and suspense. Therefore, the Broadwater cast is indeed worthy of high recognition. My campaign team was unrelenting in its commitment to me, my re-election and to the party. My team worked long hours and often under extreme pressure to meet deadlines and requests. Each member of my team brought different skills and abilities. Each member harmonised to develop into a great team of which I am extremely grateful and proud.

To Matt Rocks, my organiser who has worked on my campaign twice now and who helped to deliver the outstanding result of an increased margin, I give a huge thank you. He was as tough as an organiser should be, but he knew what needed to be done and he did it. To my fantastic staff, Sam Wilson and Christie Turner and to Robert Hough, Sandra Leggeri, Nina Watson and Bob Brown, thank you for your hard work, undeniable loyalty and individual efforts in this campaign. I need to make special mention of my campaign manager, Mr Rana Watson. Rana displayed unquestioning dedication to my campaign. A campaign for Broadwater requires extensive engagement with the community and Rana was there with me every step of the way—meeting at community stalls, street stalls, mobile offices and meetings. Rana has gained huge experience from his role as campaign manager and there is no doubt

his willingness and energy to work so hard for the community, which was demonstrated during this time and over the many years he has spent as a resident of the electorate, is excellent preparation for his candidacy for Fadden. Rana will make a fantastic representative for the people of Fadden in the federal parliament and I wish him well in his efforts.

The Broadwater branch of the ALP is strong in its commitment to the party and the community. The branch is diverse in its membership and each member has its own way of supporting me. To the Broadwater branch members, thank you for your support and your assistance. To the holders of degrees in folding, enveloping and letterboxing, I give a big thank you. I would also like to mention my union, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union, and its secretary, Ron Monaghan, and thank them very much for their support. There were many people who assisted on election day at polling booths. It was indeed a big day and the result of retaining Broadwater was assisted by those people who offered their help and support at polling booths. These people are not members of the party. Some had never worked on an election campaign before in their lives, but they volunteered to help me and the campaign team. For that I am truly thankful.

Campaigns, election days and the ongoing work for a pollie indeed ensures a busy schedule that can be demanding on all of us, but equally so on our families and friends. To my partner, Garry, whose humour ensures that I always see the lighter side of life and whose generosity always makes me smile, I say a huge thank you for supporting me as I continue to do what I enjoy. I would like to thank my father, Owen, who is in a nursing home in Townsville. He has followed my parliamentary career with great interest. Dad calls me to get an update on how things are going for me and he is always forthcoming with good advice and support. But I will always be thankful to my mother for an upbringing that was influenced by a strong commitment to social justice. Sometimes it is challenging to resolve issues for residents without relinquishing some portion of your own personal beliefs. I found that being a parliamentarian does not always allow for one's true beliefs and thoughts to be exposed. It is my mother who has always encouraged the need to be compassionate. Compassion encourages us to reach out beyond our fears. Compassion can indeed influence one's decisions and actions greatly.

I understand that life can present many challenges. Over the past six years I have met people who have faced great disadvantage and despair. Indeed, I have learned a lot about the diversity of the people whom I represent in my electorate. I have met many people who work so hard in the community. Their efforts are remarkable and inspiring. My personal commitment is to continue to give compassion in my efforts and to continue to work with the government and my colleagues to address the tough issues of mental health, the disadvantages faced by people with disabilities, and the great need for more affordable housing. My commitment remains to be accessible to residents and to be proactive in working with community groups to continue to improve the area in which we live.

During the last term I was delighted to have worked as the secretary on the founding committee of Radio Lollipop—a radio station for sick children at the Gold Coast Hospital. A new committee has since been elected and I will be pleased to continue a close association with this fantastic bunch of volunteers. I will next focus my energy as an invited member of the established Titans Community Fund Board, which is chaired by the federal member, Margaret May. The committee is dedicated to supporting the Gold Coast community through its association with its new NRL team, the Gold Coast Titans.

Engaging with people at my street stalls and mobile office has afforded me an opportunity to learn so much about people—about how people feel about certain issues and the direction of my local area. With many people choosing to move to the fast-growing Broadwater electorate, it is critical that the government moves to improve infrastructure in advance of that population growth. Road and energy infrastructure are key issues that have been raised by residents. The Beattie government has demonstrated its commitment to preparing the Gold Coast for the intensive growth rate that it faces. The Beattie government will spend \$626 million over the next three years on state controlled roads on the Gold Coast. An amount of \$28.25 million has been earmarked for the duplication of that section of Hope Island Road between Santa Barbara Road and Lae Drive at a total cost of \$93 million and the completion of duplication works of Hope Island Road between Oxenford and Santa Barbara Road at a total cost of \$18.99 million. I look forward to assisting the member for Gaven to turn the sod to mark the beginning of some of that construction. This road is indeed in need of upgrading. Many residents have raised their concerns about it with me. I am pleased that construction of the first stage of a larger plan will begin this year.

Energex is investing \$115 million in this current financial year for a range of projects that will benefit the Gold Coast, including significant upgrades of infrastructure at Hope Island and Hollywell to ensure that the system copes with the new residential and commercial developments in the area.

Supporting local schools in the Broadwater electorate is one of my top priorities. The Beattie government will provide \$4.47 million to 70 schools on the Gold Coast as part of its \$50 million School Community Development Fund, which means that the funds will be allocated by the local school communities to projects that are important and to priorities to creating a better learning environment.

To ensure children attending school for the first time get off to a good start—and we all know that the new prep year has begun this year—I was delighted to be at the Labrador Primary School recently to present prep year students with their commemorative cap and water bottle. Coombabah State School's major resource centre upgrade to support the ICT initiatives will also be soon completed at a cost of \$838,000.

The Beattie government has provided \$532,000 to complete the redevelopment of the Hollywell fire station. The Paradise Point Bowls Club, the Runaway Bay Junior Rugby League Football Club and the Dodgers Touch Club have all received funding for improvements to their facilities.

The Broadwater electorate on the Gold Coast is a pleasant place to live, work and play and, together with its people and the Beattie government, I will continue to work towards improving the infrastructure services offered in the area. I look forward to informing and consulting with the community about legislative changes and the many Beattie government initiatives that will be introduced. I look forward in this House to representing their views, the concerns and feedback I receive.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.30 pm): Firstly, I would like to congratulate our Premier and Deputy Premier for their achievements in providing good, strong, stable government for the last three terms. I congratulate all new members and welcome them to this place. I would like to take this opportunity in my speech in the address-in-reply debate to thank the community in the electorate of Mount Ommaney for putting their confidence in me by returning me as their local member for a historic fourth term and for all the good work that they do to make these suburbs a great place to live. I would also like to acknowledge the magnificent and long-term support of my husband, Ron; my campaign manager, Jenny Gribaudo; my electorate officers, Margaret, Francis and Michelle; and a large number of good friends, family, supporters and volunteers who worked hard for me and contributed to my election to this seat over the past eight years.

Through my recent appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Child Safety, I hope to be able to make a real difference to the lives of our most vulnerable and precious—the children of this state. I have every confidence in Minister Desley Boyle that in her compassion, competency and commitment to young people she will continue to bring about change for the better to the lives of our disadvantaged children so that they can have happy, normal, carefree lives as all children should be entitled to. She acknowledges the difficult role of our child protection workers and the magnificent job that they do to keep our children safe.

Madam Deputy Speaker Jones, as you know, the new Department of Child Safety is only 2½ years old and massive changes have already been undertaken towards improving child protection services. However, child service officers need support with the myriad of issues that they face every day. There is a lot to do, including ensuring staff receive the most comprehensive training and support, having clearer performance appraisal systems to allow more specific feedback for staff, more useful information systems and easier access to information and support services.

A whole-of-government approach is needed as all departments have in some way a responsibility to ensuring the safety of our children. As we work together with the Department of Communities to further develop prevention and early intervention responsibilities, we need to be mindful that the formulation of a multicultural policy in conjunction with the minister for multiculturalism is necessary to properly assist parents, carers and children in ethnic communities.

Recruitment of foster-carers and increasing the number of part-time and short-term emergency carers also requires a cross-government and non-government organisation approach to ensure the best care for these children. Support services for children with behavioural difficulties and more secure accommodation arrangements for those with mental health issues is a matter requiring the attention of the Department of Health as well as Disability Services. Tackling the ever-increasing problem of drug abuse which causes families to self-destruct is a matter which requires urgent attention from all major portfolio areas. That is the future in my parliamentary secretary's role, which is a massive job.

Earlier on last year I successfully lobbied hard and long against the proposed Westgate residential development, which would have made traffic in the Centenary suburbs and on the Centenary Highway an ultimate catastrophe. The government and the former member for Inala, Henry Palaszczuk, agreed to shelve the project to preserve our local environment and instead construct a small transit orientated development around Wacol station. The local environmental groups and residents of Riverhills, Jamboree Heights, Middle Park and Westlake welcomed this news that their local environment would remain intact. The government is currently looking at ways to open up the vast amount of green space which has been preserved to the public.

The Centenary Highway bikeway has now been completed to the delight of local cyclists. The four-lane link which is being constructed to overcome the traffic bottlenecks at the Ipswich Road end of the Centenary Highway is progressing according to plan. Intensive studies will be undertaken to look for solutions to the congestion at the Toowong roundabout end of the Centenary Highway. The SEQ Infrastructure Plan allocates \$300 million to construct a transit lane along the Centenary Highway at some time in the future and, after seeing congestion during the closure of the inner-city motorway, I hope it is sooner rather than later.

A police beat was purchased for the Centenary north area in July last year, and disability access and office fittings are currently being finalised. This follows the success of the beat established at Oxley, the upgrade of the Sherwood Police Station and the extension of counter opening hours of the Mount Ommaney Police Station.

Recently, asbestos has been removed from the roofs of three classroom blocks at Jindalee State School, and action has been taken to investigate and remove other signs of asbestos in some flooring areas in the administration blocks.

I relish my role in representing my electorate to the highest levels of government and going in to bat every day for families to achieve a better quality of life, better education opportunities for their children, improved health services and increased job choices. My time in parliament is well utilised lobbying ministers to meet our many and varied local community needs. It is imperative that we build on the facilities in the area to ensure that our young people have the opportunities to get the jobs of their choice and to ensure that they are well placed to be the leaders of tomorrow.

I am passionate about my local schools and have lobbied for significant upgrades to amenities. Some other highlights include: Y-West in Jamboree Heights, which has received a major sporting facilities grant of \$381,000 to construct an extension to the sports centre, incorporating a 25 by 20 metre activity space; \$5 million has been allocated to continue construction of a third train track between Corinda and Darra at a total cost of \$90 million, and extra car parking facilities will be constructed at long last at Oxley railway station; \$60,000 has been provided for bus set-down improvements at Corinda State High School; and \$900,000 has been allocated for concept planning between the Ipswich Motorway and Toowong roundabout on the Centenary Highway, at a total cost of \$3 million.

The Mount Ommaney electorate suffered badly during the electricity breakdowns in early 2004. A new substation has subsequently been constructed near Monier Road to assist with the upgrade of our electricity supplies, and the rebuilding of the switchyard at West Darra station at Riverhills will commence shortly. I would like to thank the minister for public works and housing, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, for supporting low-cost housing for seniors through the last budget by allocating \$600,000 to complete construction of five seniors units, at a total cost of \$1.16 million.

I would sincerely like to thank all of those volunteers who put so much of their time into being involved in a variety of community groups representing seniors, P&C associations, child care, service clubs, action and environmental groups in my local area. These dedicated volunteers assist others in their local area and provide an invaluable contribution to the community in which we work and live.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (4.38 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, at the outset may I ask you to convey to Mr Speaker my congratulations on his appointment to his office of high honour. It is an absolute pleasure to be rising for my third speech in an address-in-reply debate. I am as relieved as ever to be back here. The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Callide, has wished me all the best during the last two terms by pointing out that he thought I would be a oncer. So, being back for my third term, I would like to put in an early bid for him to make that same parting wish to me at the end of this term—that I am, indeed, a oncer—and hopefully he and I can keep the magic going together. It is a great honour to represent Hervey Bay in this place, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart.

Listening to some of the speeches here today from honourable members, I think it is worth paying attention to some of the things which Her Excellency said in her speech in the opening of the first session of the 52nd parliament. I note Her Excellency said—

Enhancing the welfare and prosperity of the people and the state of Queensland is at the core of my government's program.

I ask all honourable members to remember that we come here together as representatives of our various local constituencies to form a parliament of Queensland. It has been a trend over time that, as more Independents are elected, we have seen more institutionalised nimbyism, the not-in-my-backyard phenomenon, such that members of parliament from the same side of the House are theoretically opposing things that their parties have a single position on.

One of the issues which Her Excellency addressed was water. Nothing better illustrates the dangers inherent in thinking that we come to this place as Independents who are only representatives of our electorate or who are somehow bound to do what we have been told by some section of our electorate. As the member for Ipswich pointed out in a very good speech this morning, the member for Currumbin is opposing the desalination plant on the Gold Coast, the member for Gympie, who sits behind me and who is making me miss Elisa Roberts more than I thought possible, is bitterly opposed to the Traveston Dam and the member for Warrego earlier today gave a rant against recycled water. It is not possible to govern Queensland as a group of 89 independents who will not agree on anything and who represent only their electorate.

I was thinking a little bit about it and I remembered a speech—I was not there, it was made in 1774—by Edmund Burke. It is a famous speech to the electors of Bristol. Burke touched on two points: what it is to be a representative and what it is to be a member of a parliament. I will quote briefly a couple of paragraphs from that speech. Burke said—

Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion, high respect; their business, unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

Burke summed up very well the requirement all of us here have at all times as representatives of our electorate: to exercise our judgement as to what is best not just for our electorate but for the governance of Queensland. Edmund Burke went on to say—

Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against all other agents and advocates; but parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*.

Listening to some of the speeches today, I think we lose sight of that when we allow nimbyism to rule our judgements, when we lose track of the need for the greater good. I certainly understand the need to make those decisions. One of the hardest issues for me in the election most recently passed was the Traveston Dam. The Traveston Dam obviously represents a point of significant political departure for many people in my electorate from my own opinion, but my own opinion was very firmly that this dam was an essential piece of infrastructure for the good of Queensland. Members can come to Hervey Bay any day of the week and watch people driving around with 'no dam' stickers on the back of their car. We are very lucky in Hervey Bay that, thanks to the good policies of the Beattie Labor government, we have put some \$6.5 million into raising Lenthalls Dam. We have a dam that is nearly full. It has been raised by two metres and will be providing water for the next 20 years. Some people in my electorate take the view, 'Why would we have this Traveston Dam built if we do not need it?' But we are a state; we are more than just a series of Balkanised regions. By making that decision as a representative in this place, I care not just for Hervey Bay—and I do care deeply for Hervey Bay—but I care for the good governance of Queensland which means that those decisions have to be taken. I am proud to be part of a team led by Peter Beattie, a government that is prepared to take those decisions. Occasionally we will lose seats by doing that. The alternative is to be a rabble—a group of Independents, for want of a better name—who have no obligation to think beyond their own parish pump and no commitment to the general good.

I thank my campaign team. Many, many people worked very hard on my campaign. There was around 150 people and it is impossible to name them all. Obviously my electorate office staff, Wendy Bennett, Adrian Tantari, Mary Murray for a while, George Seymour and Chris Davies, who also helped out extensively, all deserve my deepest thanks for their enormous efforts both in helping during campaign but also in running the office when I am not there. More so than ever with my new responsibilities as parliamentary secretary to the minister for roads I will rely on their assistance in making sure that the needs of my electorate are met and that the things that I need to know I am informed of.

With those few words, I commend the speech by Her Excellency at the opening of the first session of the 52nd parliament.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (4.46 pm): I am honoured to be able to represent my constituents in the electorate of Nicklin and respond to the Governor's address. Before doing so I acknowledge my wife Jenny who gave up her full-time career as a journalist to work tirelessly as my campaign manager, my strategist, my speech writer and my confidante. Without Jenny's involvement I have no doubt that I would not be standing here today as the member for Nicklin.

I also would like to thank my staff: Vicky, Wendy and John and the members of the Wellington Volunteer Army for their loyalty and support over the years. Together we have made a difference for the good of the electorate of Nicklin and I look forward to this strong partnership continuing so that the good outcomes can continue.

To the Premier and his ministers, congratulations on a convincing win. While there will certainly be occasions when I will not support the government, I look forward to continuing to work with the government on issues that impact on my electorate. Health services are paramount. I look forward to the health minister making an announcement in the future on issues which we have been working on for some time, issues which were held up during the recent state election. I certainly appreciate the regular meetings I have with senior Queensland Health staff and I know my constituents appreciate those as well.

On the issue of police services, I am pleased to report that the new air-conditioned extensions to the Nambour Police Station are very well received by our Nambour police officers. Again I thank the minister for enabling her senior police officers to have regular discussions with me about issues of mutual interest.

On the issue of education, the rapid population growth in the south-east Queensland region has certainly impacted on the public education facilities on the Sunshine Coast. I put on the public record also my appreciation for the ability to pick up the phone and ring senior education department staff to talk about issues of concern that have been raised with me by parents, students or staff.

I note in the Governor's address that reference has been made to the government's proposed solutions to the water crisis that we are experiencing at the moment. While I support the rainwater tank rebate system and the desalination system, I do not believe that the Traveston Dam is sensible and I believe that time will tell whether the federal government or the court will finally stop this decision.

On the issue of disability services and services for our community, I note the government's ongoing commitment to continue to improve the lives of people with a disability and those in need. I thank the minister for communities and disability services for ensuring that his door is always open to hear the requests for help that I bring to his office on behalf of my constituents.

I refer to the government's infrastructure plan and the government's attempts to respond to the huge needs of the Sunshine Coast region. While investigations are due to start this year into the upgrade of the railway line between Landsborough and Nambour, I use this opportunity to urge the government to look at bringing forward the construction timetable so that more people would be able to have the opportunity to travel by rail in preference to on our roads, which are so often gridlocked.

The Nambour Connection Road and the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road are two roads of high priority in the electorate of Nicklin. They certainly carry a large volume of traffic. I use this opportunity to call on the government to bring forward the final solution to the traffic and transport needs on the Nambour Connection Road and to bring forward the upgrade of the Belli Creek crossing No. 2 on the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road.

Until the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road upgrade is completed, I use this opportunity to call on the minister for transport to reduce the current maximum speed limit along this road. I do not believe the heavy haulage trucks and trailers that are regularly up and down the road from five in the morning till after 6 o'clock at night can safely travel the road at the maximum speed limit.

I use this opportunity to thank the Minister for Emergency Services for purchasing land previously owned by the Sunshine Coast Show Society for the future Nambour Fire Station. I use this opportunity to remind the government that now that the land has been purchased, we need to look forward to the date that construction and planning for the new station can take place. I also thank the minister for agreeing to lease the surplus land back to the show society so that the land continues to be available to our community.

I share the government's concern about climate change and the possibility that a lot of the low-lying lands on the Sunshine Coast which have recently been approved for development or may now be in the process of being developed may in the future be flooded or damaged as a result of climate change. Accordingly, I use this opportunity to urge the minister for local government and the minister for environment to review council decisions wherever possible or appropriate to ensure that proper decisions are being made.

The government has my support in taking a tough stance on the issue of alcohol abuse in our communities in Queensland. My wife and I certainly appreciated the opportunity to visit and discuss with elders, councillors, police, teachers and nurses the issue of alcoholism and a whole wide range of related issues in some communities.

Ongoing funding for the Great Walks program in the Sunshine Coast region is greatly appreciated. I will continue to support this program as I know how beneficial it is to our region.

While on the issue of the environment, I use this opportunity to call on the government to finalise the commitment given during the election period to the horse riding enthusiasts in Queensland about the future security of their horse riding trails in areas such as the Mapleton forest.

Before resuming my seat, I note that in the Governor's address she specifically said—

My Government will continue to ensure that every worker gets a fair go.

I repeat what the Governor said—

My Government will continue to ensure that every worker gets a fair go.

Yesterday I attended a meeting with over 500 state government employees who told me that they no longer have confidence in the government that they will get a fair go if they are included or involved in matters referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration. I again use this opportunity to call on the government to bring on a debate about the issue of political interference in decisions made by the Queensland Director of Public Prosecutions.

A senior barrister is reported as saying—

At some stage we are going to have to have a debate about the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions. If the executive government can review the prosecutor's decision not to prosecute someone, does that mean that they can review a decision to prosecute? Where does it stop?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order! I ask the member to be seated. Excuse me, member, I think you are referring to matters that have been ruled by the Speaker to be out of order, and I ask that you no longer refer to them.

Mr WELLINGTON: I also use this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and all other members of this the 52nd Parliament on their election to parliament. I look forward to working with all members of the House, be they government, opposition, Independents or One Nation, in the best interests of not just the electorate of Nicklin but all Queenslanders, including all the employees of the government who have a right and an entitlement to get a fair go in this state.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (4.54 pm): As I stand here in this House delivering my address-in-reply speech to the 52nd Parliament of Queensland as the Liberal state member for Currumbin, I wish to place on record the honour and privilege the people of Currumbin have bestowed upon me to represent them in this place. Once again they have invested their trust in me. I pledge my loyalty to this parliament and to the people of Currumbin, to whom I am truly grateful and deeply humbled.

Each of the 89 members in this House, through election to this hallowed institution, have an important duty to discharge with honesty, integrity and respect the conventions that underpin Queensland's state parliament.

The Premier has been given a clear mandate to govern. In accepting this role, he has accepted the responsibility to govern all Queenslanders equally in a bipartisan way, regardless of party persuasions, to deliver for all in this great state and to not show either favour or neglect of basic services for communities in need.

In my first speech in 2004 I spoke of my belief that actions speak louder than words. Spin, grin and talkfests are a complete waste of time and money if there is an absence of action taken to rectify problems and to implement findings. Also a complete waste of time and money are huge spending campaigns that drown voters with mail that clogs their letter boxes, make false claims on issues and pester people in their homes with unappreciated phone calls asking for votes right up to election eve.

Having lived and raised a family in Currumbin Waters for almost 20 years, I have a firm grasp on local issues. Working actively on community projects and initiatives over the years, I know the challenges that lie ahead for our fast-growing population. Through regular information booths, attending meetings, tabling petitions and hosting public forums, I hear first-hand what matters most to residents. High and regular levels of community activity throughout the electorate resonated in my favour with voters in Currumbin re-electing me for a second term. Of the 30,025 enrolled constituents in Currumbin, 26,611 constituents voted, which equates to 88.63 per cent.

This win could not have happened without the support of a small army of individuals. May I apologise now for those I omit to mention. Sincere thanks go first to my campaign team, many of whom came on board because of issues I assisted them with. We might not have had much money, but we had an unswerving desire to keep Currumbin in Liberal hands. I thank Anne Phillips, Anne and Robert Wright, Tony Shield, John Vanzino, Peter Barrett, Luke Barnes and the Tweed Young Liberals, Anthony Robbie, Margaret May, the federal member for McPherson and her husband David for their wisdom, advice and many hours of assistance. I will be eternally grateful.

I also thank Alan Campigli, Don McHenry and Arthur Elliott, who were such willing helpers. Truck drivers Bob Rothwell and Ray Farrow, Linda Stevens, John Nettleton, Pat Hoban and Lois Helmick, and Ruth and Keith Fleming all battled the elements in rain or shine to garner votes for me. To our office volunteers, Lauren Hertel and Paul Smith, you are absolute champions. Thankyous also go to Sue Boyce, president of the Liberal Women's Council, for friendship and much-needed financial support. I would like to mention Bob Quinn and thank him for his guidance and wise counsel during the 51st Parliament.

I would also like to mention my dad.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order!

Mrs STUCKEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like some respect when I speak about my father.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order! I call honourable members to order.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Despite being in their mid-80s, my dad, World War II air force veteran Eric Coleman, and my wonderful stepmother, Mazie, were actively involved in pre-polling and booth work on election day. I spoke of my father in 2004 and the huge role

that he played in my entry into politics in the Liberal Party. My two sisters and dear friends the Hertel family were there on the hustings, too. Olivia and Edward, our two amazing kids, have grown into well-adjusted, hardworking adults and they know that by going the extra mile and persisting the sky is the limit.

Bev Malseed in my electorate office has, over the past two years, built up strong relationships with constituents and handled their issues in a pleasant, professional and efficient manner. Bev was on a month's leave and overseas for virtually all of the election period but, through her dedicated attention to constituent issues, we have a strong foundation of trust amongst constituents. Angela Owen-Taylor deserves a medal for literally running the electorate office single-handedly with help from volunteers against a barrage of Beattie propaganda. She also had to deal with countless complaints from people angry about the amount of junk mail stuffed daily in their letterboxes.

With regard to my husband of 30 years, Richard, I really struggle to find adequate words to communicate my sentiments and what he really means to me. His belief in me and the desire to see me not only achieve my goals and dreams but also the hopes and aspirations of others, especially those with special needs, is a constant source of energy and inspiration.

First speeches by members in a new parliament provide a genuine occasion for them to highlight the attributes, demographics and also the problems experienced in their regions. Speeches provide a postcard glimpse of other areas of the state, enabling us all to better understand the various characteristics that define each other's region, along with the range of issues that residents face. I will do my best to cover a good percentage of these in the time allocated to me.

Let me introduce honourable members to Currumbin, an exquisitely beautiful 146 square kilometres of beaches, valleys and rainforests. Currumbin really is breathtaking with her natural beauty and nostalgic history—a history that locals are prepared to protect fiercely. As the southern gateway to Queensland, bordering New South Wales, Currumbin is a world-renowned tourist destination for our stunning beaches which play host to surfing titles and are the location of the famous Coolangatta Gold ironman races. We are lucky to have lively Neighbourhood Watches, Lions, Lionesses, Rotary and general community groups and volunteers spread throughout the electorate, all contributing greatly to the social fabric, health and wellbeing of our area. Our two chambers of commerce, the Southern Gold Coast and Creek to Creek, chaired by presidents Barry McNamara and Darren Mackintosh respectively, are active on behalf of our business sectors.

One of the Gold Coast's first tourist attractions, the tranquil oasis Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, is also nestled in our midst. We are blessed to have such a magnificent parcel of protected parkland in our electorate. Landslides caused by heavy rains on 30 June 2005 caused several hundred thousand dollars worth of damage to the property and to several homes on Currumbin Hill. To date, neither the sanctuary nor the affected residents have received much help from the state government. An absence of funding to assist with park maintenance reeks of favouritism, as another fauna park nearby receives considerable funding from this government. CEO Michelle Monsour and her dedicated team have performed wonders in re-establishing and repositioning this remarkable attraction, and it is a real pity the government cannot see it as worthy of assistance.

Coolangatta airport is a major employer in our region with tourism providing significant employment. Bumper numbers of passengers are arriving at our terminal and enjoying the many attractions our area has to offer. To maximise the opportunities that these visitors will bring, the M1 requires upgrading sooner rather than later and the rail line to Coolangatta must be fast-tracked sooner than 2025. Like many other areas, we are experiencing growing pains and require better infrastructure and transport services with some newer suburbs like Lakewoods in Elanora devoid of any public transport services at all.

Affordable housing continues to be a problem across the Gold Coast and the number of homeless people is escalating at an alarming rate. Blair Athol Crisis Accommodation at Bilinga turns away over 5,000 individuals a year. For the past 17 years manager extraordinaire Liz Fritz and her staff have struggled with no funding increases. To her delight, Liz was advised a few months ago that the Minister for Communities had supported a submission from a consortium of agencies headed by Blair Athol in favour of more than half a million dollars in funding to assist them in their efforts to provide services under the banner of HOST. Considering the huge demand for low-cost housing, I, together with many residents, am amazed that the government is building new one-bedroom units right on the Gold Coast Highway in prime real estate when there could be so much better value and more accommodation provided even two streets away.

As I have previously mentioned, Currumbin's beaches are world famous and are patrolled by some of the nation's finest and oldest surf-lifesaving clubs. Point Danger branch has 11 clubs, the majority of which are located in my electorate. Surf Life Saving Queensland has battled unsuccessfully for an increase in funding to continue its vital efforts for many years. With the federal government making 2007 the Year of the Lifesaver, I am pleased to see the state government finally lift its game by

boosting funding after a decade of inaction. Recognising the role our volunteer lifesavers play, not to mention their immeasurable contribution to tourism dollars, in 2005 I implemented an annual award with the prize of a surf rescue board for all clubs in the Point Danger branch. Tugun won the first year and last year Pacific was the victor.

Educational needs are a priority, with seven primary schools, a brand spanking new special school and two large high schools in our area. It is recognised that youth hold the key to the future. By maintaining close contact with all of the schools in Currumbin, I am able to follow their progress, initiatives and achievements.

Together we have achieved much in Currumbin during the 2½ years between elections, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the victories that were won by the community with my full support and commitment. The citizens of Currumbin are known as a passionate lot and have been vocal on a number of issues. This government, under considerable duress, did listen and respond to some of these and the people of Currumbin are grateful for this. I have no problem in thanking the government for taking positive actions and I am on record in this House as having done so on a number of occasions. However, the fact remains that most of the issues the government did respond to favourably only came about because of intense public pressure.

By far the biggest issue for Currumbin prior to the last election was the long-awaited, much-promised Tugun bypass western route, a project that has sorely tested the patience of residents for more than a decade. Only days before the election on 7 February 2004 the entire Currumbin electorate received a letter from the Premier that tossed out the preferred route and ripped people's homes out from underneath them. His direct mail letter said—

Only my government has a solution for the Tugun bypass. We will fix this issue once and for all.

...

We have identified a new eastern corridor including land within Gold Coast Airport as the alternative to the western (C4) option scuttled by New South Wales. This corridor will require the resumption of 14 houses on the eastern edge of the airport.

The public outcry was deafening and, together with federal member Margaret May, I lobbied hard on behalf of the people of Bilinga and Tugun. Within two months of being elected, I met with the Queensland Minister for Transport, the NSW member for Tweed and the New South Wales opposition leader with a message from residents that any route other than the C4 was not negotiable. The federal government flexed its muscle over its funding promise and, thankfully, the Queensland government was finally able to negotiate the go-ahead with a very reluctant New South Wales.

My Labor opponent in the recent election has accused me of taking credit for things the government did. My involvement is there in black and white and without it we may well be suffering the proposed B4 route the Premier tried to impose. Incredulous during this campaign was the threat that only my Labor opponent would deliver this piece of infrastructure. He used fear tactics stating that the Tugun bypass was at risk of being stopped if conservatives won government. Additionally, he was boasting to the electorate that he had played a part in the Tugun bypass, yet I fail to find any reference to him on this important subject prior to his preselection a few months before the election. Worse was that his brochures spelt the suburb of Tugun incorrectly.

Queensland's only six-star rated EnviroDevelopment accredited project, the Ecovillage, was officially opened on 6 December 2005. Consisting of 144 lots on a 110-hectare site, this highly sustainable residential development fits ideally in the picturesque Currumbin Valley. With World Heritage rainforests providing a lush backdrop, the company behind this project, Landmatters, is to be congratulated on its vision, which is to inspire awareness of sustainable living and development practices.

A wonderful addition to the Currumbin community is the new state-of-the-art special school located in Currumbin Waters. Parents, teachers and students relocated seamlessly from their previous home atop Kirra Hill at the beginning of term 3 last year and are building strong links with the local businesses, groups and citizens. Jointly funded by both state and federal governments, the school was officially opened by the minister on Tuesday, 21 November.

Jan Derbidge and the Save Kirra Hill Committee are some of the most passionate lobbyists you will ever meet. Believe me, they are champions. Numerous advocates of this group attended the school many moons ago and have cherished memories they want to see preserved and protected. With help from my office, they embarked down the arduous task of applying for heritage listing in 2004.

Knocked back once, they are determined to continue their push for the original school building to be listed. I have already congratulated the government for generously donating the site of the old primary school to the community on 8 February 2005 so that Kirra Hill will be preserved for public use. Now that the special school has moved to its new location it is important that the government honour its promise and gazette the land to council for care.

Fulfilling a pledge I made at the last election to engage in thorough community consultation, the following groups have flourished. Fix Currumbin Creek Committee chairman, Brad Smith, has been an enormous asset to the Gold Coast City Council with regard to dredging appropriate channels in the mouth of Currumbin Creek. The Currumbin Creek stakeholder group was formed in response to residents' concerns about traffic congestion and safety issues along this state government controlled road.

Law and order issues have flared up on a number of occasions. However, a range of police and community initiatives has seen more harmony in our suburbs. The Eleonora Police Beat became officially operational on 3 May 2005. As a result of several public forums, the Palm Beach Community Consultative Committee was re-formed, Southern Alliance was tasked to the area and a youth group has formed due to the persistence of students Elyse McNeill and Ella Horton. Early in 2006 I instigated Youth Community Spirit Awards to recognise young people who have, through their actions, delivered benefits to our community. A petition of almost 5,000 signatures resulted in Palm Beach Police Station opening its doors during the day on weekends. Our region would benefit further from the school based police officer program.

The Tweed sand bypass project has, since its operations began, pumped over 5,000 million cubic metres of sand onto our southern beaches resulting in the loss of nine surf breaks. Competition for remaining breaks is fierce. A group of surfing and beach nourishment stakeholders formed Guardians of the Points. Mena Tsikleas and Phil Arnott are to be congratulated for their commitment to boosting education programs and seeking to improve recreational amenities.

Tugun is to be the location of a large billion-dollar desalination plant that has been rushed forward for completion by November 2008. An increasing number of residents have raised concerns as to the cost, the energy sources, the environmental impact on land and at sea, the effect on their lifestyles and the reduced property values. There is no question that we must secure our water future and desalination is a method worth considering. However, our community deserves answers.

A major attraction to the Currumbin area away from our golden beaches are our lush valleys in Currumbin and Tallebudgera. To their merit they have until recent times resisted the urban creep. The South-East Queensland Regional Plan announced by Terry Mackenroth prior to retiring from parliament in 2005 gave the impression that our valleys were protected from high-density developments. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is fact that Mr Mackenroth sits on the board of the Devine Group that plans to build a 530 house high-density hideaway development in an area defined as outside the urban footprint. My opponent decided to use this sensitive issue for Currumbin Valley residents as a political football in the last few days of the election promising a call-in if Labor won. Talk about blackmail! Well he lost and the new minister, to his credit, has called the project in. Unfortunately, the project was given the go-ahead. The Premier did state that he would not allow the South-East Regional Plan to be compromised. All was to no avail. It has turned out that the whole exercise was nothing more than a cruel hoax exposing the environmental credentials of the Labor Party as a complete and utter sham.

Here in this House today, in these formal circumstances, I once again pledge my unequivocal commitment that I will continue to represent all of the residents of Currumbin boldly, truthfully, proudly and in a proactive manner to make sure we get a reasonable deal. I thank residents for once again placing their faith in me, for withstanding a massive spending campaign from Labor and for sending them a message that Currumbin cannot be bought.

As members have heard, it has been a busy 2½ years in Currumbin and I have loved every minute of it. I will continue to recognise this government when it responds in a positive manner to resolve issues that fall under their jurisdiction. In return, together with the people of Currumbin, we expect this government to serve us as it does the rest of this great state, fairly and honestly.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (5.14 pm): At the outset I congratulate the Governor for the excellent way that she has been carrying out her role in this state. We should be very pleased and very privileged to have somebody of the calibre of Quentin Bryce. She has conducted herself in an exemplary way. She has travelled around Queensland and got to know much of this state. People I have spoken to who have met Her Excellency and members of my family who have met her feel that she is a person of great warmth, someone who is absolutely dedicated to the people of this state and someone who is enormously genuine and interested in the betterment of the people of this state.

I also express my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and recognise the fantastic job that she has done as our monarch for more than half a century. Often we forget that we are a constitutional monarchy. Sometimes we spend a lot of time questioning our past and our traditions. I support the institutions that we have. I certainly think that nobody can question the dignity and the carriage of Queen Elizabeth II.

I also dedicate myself to the best interests of the people of Queensland and very much the people of Southern Downs. This is the seventh time that I have stood in this place and spoken in the address-in-reply since being elected in 1989. In that time I have seen a lot of interesting changes and a lot of people come and go. Certainly there have been many people come through this place who felt they

would come back after an election, but they did not. I know from the experience of many of my colleagues that this place can be somewhat volatile. We are very much at the hands of the electorate and judged on the way we represent them. I express my gratitude to the people of Southern Downs for their support over such a long time and pledge to represent their interests in this parliament as strongly as I can.

I would like to very much thank my immediate family and extended family for their enormous support—my wife, Linda, daughter Megan, son Jens, daughter Laura and son Thomas—over the last few years that I have been in this place. I thank my mother and recognise my now deceased father. As many people would know, the last election period was, for a range of reasons, an extremely difficult one for me. My wife lost her father in tragic circumstances. I very much place on record my thanks and gratitude to Queenslanders and those people on both sides of the House who offered their support and understanding during that very difficult time.

There are many issues for the people of Southern Downs. As I said, I pledge to work tirelessly on their behalf. I will work constructively for them. I have always had a view that, when it comes to my electorate, their needs are above politics. If there are issues where I can work constructively with the government or government advisers or government agencies to achieve a better situation for the people of Southern Downs then I will continue to do so. However, if there are issues in Southern Downs where I believe those people have not been fairly dealt with by the government I will be strident in my advocacy and strident in my criticism of the government.

I also thank my staff for their support. I thank very much the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who supported us at the last state election. I understand that we do live in a representative democracy and the majority prevails. To those people who supported the coalition I say thank you very much.

To my staff at the time in the opposition office I say thank you for your loyalty and support. I very much thank my staff in my electorate office—Ian, Virginia and Jane. I thank my campaign team. There are too many people to go through and name individually. That is the very great difficulty in this place. As we seek to name the people who are important to us and who do great things in helping us we invariably miss somebody and we feel cheapened later on. So I say thank you very much to my fantastic campaign team which has supported me over a long time. When a member has a higher position in this place than a backbencher, and I do not in any way denigrate my current manifestation, they rely more and more upon staff and their party's people—those very strong supporters, whether they be actively involved in the party or personal supporters—to carry the load while they are away.

One of the issues in the Southern Downs that I will continue to pursue in this parliamentary term is water. Water is something which is manifestly important not only to the people of Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast but also to those people who live in many areas around this state. At the moment north Queensland is probably getting a little bit too much. We would like to share some of it around.

In terms of the proposed dam to benefit those on the Granite Belt—the council and the growing community of Stanthorpe and surrounds—I would encourage this government to be expeditious in its planning processes. This project has been ongoing now for a number years. Its gestation was probably in excess of 15 years ago and the whole planning process tends to take so long for what in this case is an extremely small dam yielding around about 5,000 megalitres a year. I propose more haste and less procrastination with regard to that project. There are many roads issues which require a degree of activity, and I commend and thank the government for the investment from Main Roads with regard to some recent upgrades to roads in my electorate, particularly the Cunningham Highway.

There are issues with schools which of course need to be addressed. I particularly want to pay tribute to the minister for public works, the Hon. Robert Swarten, who has been very helpful to me not only in recent times but also in the past in addressing some of those niggling issues, as a good public works minister should. That is important in that it proves that politics can be subjugated when it comes to the importance of people's individual needs.

I acknowledge the start of the prep year and the work which has been undertaken at a local level in particular by Education officials—local staff, local teachers and the local community—in getting things up and running. However, there are issues that we need to keep a watching brief on such as resources and facilities to see how that flows through and also importantly the quantum of teacher aide time which is made available to those teachers. I am also concerned as we move more and more towards the earning or learning mantra of this state government with regard to those students in electorates such as mine who do not have the opportunity because of isolation to undertake a properly rounded curriculum through years 11 and 12. Sometimes that can be curtailed in that the government is saying that those students will have to go to year 11 and 12 if they do not have a job or are not in training, yet the curriculum diversity available to those students can be somewhat limited. That is something that I am going to keep a watching brief on.

While there is no doubt that there are other health concerns, public dental access is one of the biggest issues in my electorate. Dentists come; dentists go. It is about attracting and keeping those dentists, and that is one of the major concerns which I have with regard to public health in my electorate. That is not to say that waiting lists for surgery, whether it be major or minor, are not important, but certainly dental services are a major issue within the electorate of Southern Downs. There is going to be a plebiscite or vote or referendum undertaken in the Warwick shire at some stage on the issue of fluoridation. As Queensland Health undertakes further consultations with the Warwick Shire Council on this issue, I would encourage an absolute commitment to ensure that there is an equally funded yes and no case. We will be watching that as it goes on.

We have heard a lot in recent times about recycled water—or what is now being called highly purified recycled water—for potable purposes. The way this debate has been distorted and contorted in recent times concerns me and some fundamental dishonesty has crept into this debate. Let me make it abundantly clear: the Queensland coalition supports the recycling of 100 per cent of water into industry and agriculture. In actual fact, when I was minister for natural resources in 1998 following on from my predecessor Howard Hobbs, who actually started the process, we were moving towards transporting all of Brisbane and south-east Queensland's recycled water into industry and agriculture in order to wean those consumptive users off what was fresh potable water. That would have provided a real opportunity to ensure that we did not have the crisis that we have today.

We should not forget for one moment that the western recycled water corridor is the modern manifestation of that particular proposition funded in the early feasibility stages by the then Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government. This government's commitment to it is only lately. This government's commitment in the first five to seven years of its office was not to support it but to repudiate it and in many cases pooh-pooh it. We had the Department of State Development actively working against it and basically saying that it did not stack up because it created a net greenhouse disadvantage because of the energy which is required to pump this water to the end consumptive users. For five to seven years at the very least this government worked against that recycled water proposal which could have been up and running today. If it were up and running today the people of south-east Queensland may not be staring down the barrel of drinking treated sewage. This government has to look at its approach to public policy when it comes to water, because the reason we have a problem in south-east Queensland now is somewhat to do with drought, nothing to do with climate change and a whole lot to do with negligence when it comes to investment in water infrastructure.

We only need to look at what this government said two to three years ago when we were saying that dams needed to be built because there was an emerging crisis. The now health minister was issuing press releases—and they are on the public record—saying that as he sits in his office and looks out the window there is no water crisis and there is only an example of this government's very good water management process in this state and you do not build dams out of 1950s dinosaur technology. We had the same ministers running around pooh-poohing what is now the western corridor recycled water pipeline. This water crisis is largely to do with government negligence. It is largely to do with government negligence because this government has relied upon the same water supplies that were built 20 to 30 years ago to now meet the emerging water needs of a population which is a million to 1.5 million people greater than it was 20 years ago. That is not common sense. That is not common sense! That is the reason we have this problem.

One thing I will admit today is that the Premier is extremely clever in playing politics on this issue and blaming other factors for what in large part is negligence of government. Climate change today is something which has been blamed for absolutely everything. I actually heard a radio announcer say recently that the reason there are so many dead kangaroos on the road is climate change. They have been there for years, unfortunately, because when it is dry they go to the side of the road because that is where the green grass is. That has been no different to any drought over the last number of years. If climate change caused this drought, which we now say is the worst since 1901, what caused the 1901 drought? No-one doubts climate change. It is a natural part of our environment. What we have yet to establish is the extent to which humanity is responsible for effecting climate change. There is no doubt that it has to some extent, but the issue is: is it greater than what human kind is actually doing?

The current minister for natural resources has access to a whole range of data and he should use it, like I did. In the late 1770s based on coral core sampling the Burdekin River and the Fitzroy River did not run for 30 years to the extent that was necessary to lay down sedimentation, and that was in conjunction with what was the last mini Ice Age. There will be climate change. Climate change is a consequence of a world in transition. We have to manage it; there is no doubt about it. But it has become the great thing on which everything can be blamed. Everything is blamed on it. We now have a normal wet season in north Queensland yet people are talking about climate change. There were record minimum temperatures in December in places such as Emerald. Was that to do with global warming? We have to be sensible about this whole issue. No-one doubts climate change. We do not have

dinosaurs today because of climate change. We have had land bridges in the past which have come about because of ice ages. That is climate change. We have to be very careful about this issue. We have to take the emotion out of it. We have to better understand it, but let it not be the blame-all for everything.

On the issue of drinking recycled water, treated sewage or whatever you want to call it, I was the greatest advocate of that in this place. I actually stood up at a Science in Parliament Week—and some members might have been there—in 2005 on the issue of water and raised the issue of drinking treated sewage. I said, 'When are you scientists going to go out there and advocate this and take it into the public forum?' They generally looked around and did not want to touch it. Everyone looked at their shoelaces out of embarrassment for me. The only one in the room who was excited at the time was the mayor of Toowoomba. The reason I supported that was simply this: I had fallen for all of the nonsense about it being through the kidneys of Londoners 29 times and that they drank it in copious quantities in Singapore and all of those sorts of things. When the referendum came about in Toowoomba I heard a counterargument which disputed all of that and said that they did not.

I started to do my own research, and I urge honourable members to do so as well. I went to the Thames Water web site and saw that it contains not one reference to recycled water. Thames Water does not recycle one litre of water for potable drinking purposes—not one litre. I rang Thames Water. The person I spoke to did not have a clue what I was on about. I asked, 'Do you recycle water for drinking purposes?' I was told, 'Sir, if your question is where we have our intake and our outflow, our intake is upstream; our outflow is downstream.' We can argue about fortuitous inclusion, but that situation is no different from that which exists in Adelaide. A whole heap of environmental benefits flow from discharging something and letting nature take its course. Putting something into a diminishing water source is a totally different situation.

I checked out the situation in Singapore and I found that one per cent of its water is recycled. I would gag on a bottle of water if it contained one per cent recycled water. Last year in this place we heard the Deputy Premier refer to Namibia. At that time the only person I know who has ever been to Windhoek, which is the capital of Namibia, happened to be in my office. That person said to me that, when they had got off the plane at Windhoek airport a couple of years previously there was a sign saying, 'Please do not drink the water.'

If the members opposite want to run around saying that it is fine to drink treated sewage, that is okay, but they should give people all of the information. The members opposite should not quote things that are not an adequate representation of what they are proposing. What happens in London is not a comparison. Thames Water does not put any recycled water back into its own water supply for potable purposes. Singapore's water is one per cent recycled water. The situation at Upper Occoquan is different when we consider where the water is piped to and the amount of fresh water inclusion. In terms of Orange County, there are defined time limits as to how long the treated used water has to stay in the groundwater and the sedimentation process that it goes through. The jury is very much out on the issue. It may be safe; I do not know.

In recent times we have heard a lot of pooh-poohing from this government about issues relating to endocrine-disrupting chemicals and some comments I made about hormonal change from endocrine disruptors. That was recognised by the Royal Society in London, and I table that document. The World Health Organisation also makes reference to it. The Science Group Environment Agency in Wallingford, Oxfordshire in the United Kingdom has also written about it. Universities are also making the same sort of serious observations.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Endocrine disrupting chemicals' (EDS) by The Royal Society, dated June 2000.

Tabled paper: Article titled 'Assessment of Feminization of Male Fish in English Rivers' by the Environment Agency of England and Wales, by M Gross-Sorokin, S Roast and G Brightly, dated April 2006.

Tabled paper: Research paper titled 'Assessing the Sensitivity of Different Life Stages for Sexual Disruption in Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) Exposed to Effluents from Wastewater Treatment Works', by K Liney, S Jobling, J Shears, P Simpson and C Tyler, dated October 2005.

Maybe members opposite can say that the issue is not worth worrying about. That is fair enough. That is their particular view. But there is an enormous amount of information out there on the effect of endocrine disruptors. The Parliamentary Library can show members copious references relating to concerns of the World Health Organisation on the same issue. I also table a document titled *Risk Assessment and Health Effects Studies of Indirect Potable Reuse Schemes*, which was compiled by the University of New South Wales Centre for Water and Waste Technology. This report is generally supportive of using recycled water. I table it to provide a balanced argument. Although the report is concerned about endocrine disruptors, it states that far more research is needed because we do know about a whole range of issues.

Tabled paper: Report titled 'Risk Assessment and Health Effects Studies of Indirect Potable Reuse Schemes' by the Centre for Water and Waste Technology, University of NSW dated January 2007.

In conclusion, one thing that we must do is give people a choice. In terms of genetically modified organisms, in this country we have labelling laws that say that consumers have a right to know what they are eating. The government and its agencies say that GMOs are safe. Yet there are labelling laws

which specifically say that a product contains certain quantities of genetically modified organisms. That is fair enough. Today, I call on the government to ensure that consumers know into what food products go treated sewage, or what it calls highly refined recycled water. People have a right to know this. Is it going to be used in the manufacture of beer? Is it going to be used in the manufacture of soft drink? Is it going to be used in the reconstituting of fruit juice? Is it going to be used in the manufacture of biscuits? Is it going to be used in the making of bread? I am saying that people should be given the information so that they can make up their own minds as to whether they want to drink the product or not. In many cases there are other options. One thing that will happen is the fortuitous inclusion of the liquid in the food cycle that goes beyond the boundary of the affected area. We want the right to choose. My family wants the right to choose. We want the right to know. Many other consumers in this state will also want the right to know. Today, my call is to ensure that there is a process in place by which consumers will know if their food is made by using what is, in effect, treated sewage.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (5.34 pm): I want to place on record how pleased and humbled I was to be returned as the member for Whitsunday on election day, 9 September. The election campaign in the seat of Whitsunday was a pretty tough fight with local issues often vying with the more global statewide issues for prominence in the campaign. It was a hard-fought campaign and I was not alone in my efforts to be returned to that seat for the Labor Party. I want to thank party members and supporters for their loyalty, support and faith that, like the majority of voters in Whitsunday, they demonstrated in the Beattie government to continue to show the kind of leadership that has taken this state to the top of the economic tree in Australia while maintaining its commitment to those who, for a variety of reasons, have been marginalised in our society.

I wanted to place on record my thanks to my electorate officer, Barbara, for her tireless work and to make special mention of my then assistant electorate officer, Brendan Greenhill, who has since left the office. Brendan gave many years of dedicated service to the constituents of the Whitsundays. We miss Brendan and we wish him well for his future.

Mrs Scott: Not to mention his coffee skills.

Ms JARRATT: I am coming to that bit. I also place on record my thanks to my campaign director, Steve Ayling. It cannot be left unsaid: I want to thank my partner and my photographer, Ziggy, for all his moral support throughout the campaign. I do not know what I would have done without him. In fact, he was so impressive I married him.

I often say in this House that the Whitsunday electorate is probably one of the most diverse electorates in the state. I know we all think that we have an enormous amount of diversity in our electorates one way or another—and we do—but for an electorate that spans 200 kilometres from one end to the other, there are a whole range of subareas. It is very difficult to write one letter to all of my constituents; I usually have to write four or five different drafts to get the message to various people.

In the southern end of my electorate are the beautiful suburbs of the Mackay northern beaches. They have been deeply influenced by the mineral boom in central Queensland. They are facing housing and lifestyle issues like they have never known before. The housing issue started as one of affordability but has now become one of accessibility. There simply is not a rental market in Mackay. It does not matter how much money you have, there are very few houses on the market. In fact, mining companies are buying up motels so that they can place their workers in accommodation. That demonstrates how tight the accommodation situation is. When we think about those people who do not have the wherewithal to afford even modest rents, we understand the depth of the accommodation issues in a place such as Mackay where housing has reached a crisis.

But there is some good news. Some good things have happened in the northern beaches over the past few years. I am very grateful to the minister for main roads for ensuring that there were funds to complete the duplication of Mackay-Bucasia Road on the part of that road that runs through my electorate. Indeed, funds are there to continue that duplication on to through to Phillip Street. This is a really important issue for the northern beaches as there is one road in and one road out. Without that duplication there were long delays at peak times. I know that the people of that area are very grateful for that roadwork. In fact, the road is now quite magnificent.

The recent rain in Mackay has highlighted the need for further road infrastructure improvements. I know that I and all the other Mackay residents will welcome the replacement of Hospital Bridge, which is a very low-lying bridge that has this time—as it has many times in the past—gone under when the Pioneer River is in flood. I also welcome the duplication of the Forgan Bridge, which was closed on Friday when I was marooned in Mackay. With a high tide and floodwaters reaching seven metres, many roads, houses and bridges were inundated. I look forward to that money being spent on road and bridge infrastructure in Mackay.

As you travel through my electorate you cannot help noticing that the major primary industry is sugar cane growing. For areas like Proserpine, which had been enjoying something of a recovery from the low prices they have dealt with over recent years, the outbreak of the smut disease has been something of a blow. It is neither something we can put our heads in the sand and ignore nor something

we can stop. We will deal with the consequences of this cane disease right throughout the sugar-growing areas of Queensland. I know that sugar cane farmers in the Mackay and Proserpine areas will get on with the job. That is what they do and do well.

I was really pleased to welcome the Deputy Premier to my electorate during the election campaign for the announcement of the government's ethanol plan that will see legislation introduced to mandate a five per cent ethanol blend in all petrol produced in Queensland by 2010. I think that will give hope to those cane farmers and, indeed, grain farmers throughout this state—they do have a future and the state government is right there beside them all the way.

The townships of Cannonvale, Airlie Beach and Shute Haven are, like Mackay, experiencing growth pains—that is the only way I can describe it. There is much debate in the community over infrastructure and development, the shortage of affordable housing, the continuous struggle to grow our tourism market share and the tension between continued development and the maintenance of environmental integrity. Despite the best efforts of the National Party during the campaign to convince voters that they could afford to put their heads in the sand and pretend that progress did not have any uncomfortable consequences or that we could avoid or somehow spend our way out of those consequences, most people in the Whitsundays know that it was actually the Beattie government that delivered the iconic lagoon that put the place on the map, that it was the Beattie government that funded the job-creating events that Airlie Beach is so well known for and the tourism that underpins job creation in the local area, and that it is the Beattie government that is best placed to manage the difficult balance between development and lifestyle into the future.

A highlight for the Whitsunday area—the Airlie Beach-Cannonvale area—was the announcement of the go-ahead for the \$11.5 million police station and watch-house to be located in Cannonvale on the site of the existing police station. I understand that plans are being drawn up and that work should begin in the not-too-distant future. This is a great reward for the hardworking police men and women in the Airlie Beach-Cannonvale area. It is something of a party town and they probably have different roles in that community. They work hard well into the night. I want to put on record my appreciation for the job they do and will continue to do I am sure.

For me, the highlight of the campaign was the announcement in relation to the Queensland tourism strategy in recognising the importance of the tourism industry in providing more than 136,000 jobs statewide and having a net economic value of \$8.4 billion per annum. The Beattie government announced a \$48 million package for Smart State tourism that aims to keep us ahead of the pack when it comes to our market share in that really competitive arena of tourism.

What will complement tourism in the Whitsundays was the announcement of another Great Walk for the Whitsunday area. We call it Reef Walk, for want of a better name right now. This will be a magnificent walk that will go over the spine of two islands, Hook Island and Whitsunday Island. It will look down over the world famous Whitehaven Beach. There will be a channel crossing between the two islands—hopefully in a glass bottom boat so that while doing that leg you can enjoy the coral and fish life the area is so famous for. I can hardly wait to see the first sod turned for that walk. There is a lot of planning to be done but, nevertheless, it is a most welcome announcement.

To the north of my electorate is Bowen—a town that has for some years suffered from the loss of jobs and population that was brought about by the closure of the meatworks some years ago and the downturn in the mining industry, but now it is a very different place. It now sits on the cusp of a very exciting era thanks largely to the commitment of the Beattie government to ensure that it will share in the future prosperity of this state. I think it was on the first full day of the election campaign that I was very proud to stand on top of the water reservoir in Bowen with the Premier when he announced his plans for the water grid for this state. It is a visionary plan, and I think it is probably the single most important announcement that was made during the campaign.

Mr Wallace: Great photo.

Ms JARRATT: Yes, I did like the photo on the front page of the *Australian* but it marked a very momentous announcement. Bowen was a great beneficiary of that announcement, with the Premier telling us that \$49 million has been set aside to deliver the Water for Bowen project. This is a pipeline and channel project that will bring water from the Burdekin right through to Bowen. In addition, \$18 million has been set aside for a feasibility study to look at continuing that water supply through to the Whitsundays. That is great news for my electorate in terms of drought proofing the area. For Bowen, it means much more than that, of course, because water was one of the crucial elements needed to secure Bowen's future.

The second biggest announcement for Bowen during the campaign was that of the industrial triangle. That was great news. We have known for a long time that Bowen is ideally situated to become a major industry hub for Queensland. Abbot Point is a natural deepwater harbour which is totally underutilised and has great potential. We did not have the water. The Water for Bowen project will deliver that. As we speak, the Coordinator-General is working with the local community and the Ports Corporation to undertake studies and to draw up plans for potential investors in the area. There is an enormous amount of land suitable for industry purposes.

People are now saying, 'We love Chalco. We are vying for that and we're very hopeful of getting it. But, if the worst comes to worst and Chalco doesn't come to Bowen, we're very confident that we'll have a major industry there in the foreseeable future.' I, along with Mayor Mike Bruncker and the state government, am working very hard towards that end. As I said, Bowen is on the cusp of a very bright future and I am very excited about that. As I warned the council just before Christmas, that great future will come hand in hand with some problems, and we must prepare now for the social and economic consequences of the great growth that is just around the corner.

As I said at the beginning of this speech, I am pleased and humbled to be returned to represent the fine people of Whitsunday. I am passionate about my region and I am excited about its future. I want to thank everybody in the party, from Milton Dick right down to my stand-in mother and branch member Lil Burke, for their outstanding support and unerring faith in me. Most of all, I thank those who cast their vote in support of me and I will do all in my power to repay that honour.

Debate, on motion of Ms Jarratt, adjourned.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 November 2006 (see p. 500).

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (5.48 pm): I rise to speak to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006, and I do so with the background of turmoil within our police force. At no other time in the history of policing and law enforcement in Queensland have we had such unrest and have police been dealt with by this government in such a shoddy second-hand and second-rate way.

This is a relatively small piece of legislation, consisting of only 29 pages, that still manages to address a wide range of issues within the police portfolio. Graffiti, traffic enforcement, domestic and family violence, people and vehicle searches, unlawful supplying of smoking products to children, unlawful sale of spray-paint to minors, evading police, disposal of forfeited motor vehicles, prostitution and places of safety for people who are drunk or affected by other substances all get a mention in this bill. There are plenty of opportunities for members to raise local policing and law enforcement issues within their electorates, law and order and the adequate resourcing of police so that they can efficiently and effectively carry out their duties. It is always a contentious issue, and we cannot ignore it or take it too lightly.

Our police serve the people of Queensland by protecting life and property, preserving peace and safety, preventing crime and upholding the law. Police face dangerous and stressful situations day in and day out. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that they have the staffing levels and resources that enable them to do their jobs. I know that this is a fairly busy time for the police minister. For *Hansard*, I note that she is not here. She is being represented by the Leader of the House.

Mr Schwarten: On a point of clarification, the minister is not here because she is in a meeting with the Police Union.

Mr MESSENGER: I can imagine why she is in a meeting with the Police Union. According to the five o'clock news, not only is the Queensland Police Union talking about marching on Parliament House, which is an unprecedented move—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise on a point of order. I do not see the relevance of this to the debate before the House.

Mr MESSENGER: It is a police bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): The member will resume his seat.

Mr MESSENGER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can understand—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat, please. The member for Burnett will make sure that he remains on the topic, please.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you for your direction, Madam Deputy Speaker.

As I was saying, police resourcing is one of the issues that is covered generally in this bill. I can understand the frustration that police feel. The normal everyday grind is a terrible thing for police officers, especially when they are not getting the support of their political masters. I am fully aware of some of the difficulties that police face in their jobs.

I support any and all initiatives that make their jobs easier while ensuring the rights and safety of all Queenslanders. The Queensland coalition believes that our hardworking police officers and their families deserve the full support of the community and the state government, and we need to resource the police adequately so that they can effectively protect and serve. This bill goes some way to achieving that goal, but I have significant reservations about some of the clauses contained within it.

The legislation can be broken down into what is best described as two major amendments and 13 minor amendments, although for the most part they are important amendments that facilitate and clarify police powers and responsibilities, as well as correcting previous drafting errors. The two significant amendments described by the minister in her second reading speech relate to the Summary Offences Act 2005. In order of importance they prohibit the sale of spray-paint cans to minors, and prohibit persons engaged in trade or commerce from sending SMS internet messages that include information about traffic enforcement sites.

After examining the content and intent of those amendments, and because of the importance that the coalition places on preventing crime and actively deterring graffiti across Queensland, the coalition will support this bill. The bill will give the police powers to proactively address the blight on our landscape that unauthorised graffiti has become, and it will give police officers the ability to question suspected graffiti artists and confiscate spray-cans before they are used.

In a previous lifetime, when I worked for the ABC in Bundaberg, I spoke with a well-known local artist on the subject of graffiti. He had a different opinion about graffiti. He thought that it was a legitimate tool of expression for youth. We had a long conversation about the pros and cons of graffiti, and one point that was raised was the idea that we could be a little more proactive in providing suitable areas for young people to practise their graffiti so that they do not use public trains or public property. We can harness that artistic energy. The person I spoke with was not only a painter but also a sculptor. One of his new sculptures had recently been erected in Bundaberg and I was with him when he discovered that it had been tagged by a graffiti artist. I remember that he was very upset about that.

I have serious reservations about two particular areas of the bill as it has been presented. My concerns are so serious that if the two amendments had been presented on their own and not as part of a multifaceted bill I would have opposed them out of hand. They are such glaring inconsistencies in an otherwise commendable bill that it makes it difficult to believe that the House can be expected to support their inclusion as they stand. Of course, I look forward to speaking with the minister about these two clauses during consideration of the bill in detail.

I first refer to clause 6, page 9. If passed as it stands, it will amend the Summary Offences Act 2005 with the supposed intent of stopping persons engaged in trade or commerce from sending SMS, internet or other messages that include information about traffic enforcement sites. My second major objection is to the rather innocent-looking clause 16, page 14, which will amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. It will effectively wipe out the provision of a sunset clause in the legislation that allows police to lawfully take people who are suspected of volatile substance misuse to a designated place of safety. I will deal with the latter first, because this is not simply a lack of diligence in drafting. Instead, the clause directly ignores a key recommendation of the CMC. Of course, that is become an alarming habit that this government seems to have acquired.

Clause 16 repeals the sunset provisions for police powers in relation to volatile substance misuse and represents a deliberate and premeditated attempt by the government to circumvent and ignore a specific clause of a CMC review. The clause omits section 608 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and relates to a sunset clause recommended by the CMC that would require a review after three years of operation of the trial of police powers in relation to substance abuse.

It may sound a little nitpicky to be overly concerned about the abolition of a sunset clause. However, by amending the legislation in this way, the government is defying what the CMC considers is a fundamental proposal for the continuing operation of these police powers. It is detailed on page 16 of the report into police powers and VSM, which states—

Recommendation 1—Retain and extend powers statewide. That the trial police powers relating to VSM be retained and extended statewide, subject to modifications to the operation of the designated places of safety and some amendments and augmentation of the trial police powers. These powers should be subject to a sunset clause, whereby after a period of three years of operation a decision would need to be made as to their retention or expiration.

In other words, section 608 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act is a sunset provision that provides for the expiry of police powers in relation to dealing with persons suspected of being affected by volatile substance misuse. Section 608 provides for the operation of those powers to cease one year after commencement, with the option of extension for further periods of up to one year by regulation. The current police powers in relation to VSM are due to expire on 31 July 2007 as contained in section 8P of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2000. Section 607 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act requires the CMC to review the operation of these police powers, to consult with the minister and to present a report for tabling in parliament. The CMC review was conducted over an 18-month period and its report was tabled in September 2005.

The report titled *Police powers and VSM: a review responding to volatile substance misuse* contained 26 recommendations on the roles, the powers and the responsibility of police in relation to dealing with those persons under the influence of, or affected by, substances such as aerosols.

What worries me is that nowhere in the explanatory notes to the bill nor in her second reading speech has the minister attempted to explain how the government has responded to the CMC's recommendations on the need to modify or enhance police powers for dealing with volatile substance abuse as specifically set out in sections 604 to 607 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

The report explains the rationale for recommendation 1 in the following terms—

On the whole, the CMC review found that the trialled police powers have been useful as a central component of the broader government response to the difficult issue of VSM, but that there is scope for some enhancements. The Commission considers that the trial powers should be retained and extended statewide, subject to certain amendments and additions. Accordingly, it makes 26 recommendations, the first of which includes a proviso that the new powers be subject to a time limit. This is because it is important that agencies accept that the enhanced powers are not the solution to the problem of volatile substance misuse—they are designed to support a broader multi-agency response to VSM. A sunset clause will allow an opportunity to evaluate whether this has occurred.

By this amendment the government is essentially saying that we are not going to have that opportunity to evaluate this trial. I continue the quote from this document—

The CMC, which will be monitoring and reporting on the exercise of the powers, will be well placed to advise whether the sunset clause should be invoked or, alternatively, the life of the powers extended.

In advocating a sunset clause, the CMC is not calling into question the capacity of the police to use the powers appropriately when responding to VSM. Rather, it seeks to highlight the importance of stakeholders understanding that, although police are a critical contributor to the multi-agency response to VSM, they cannot be expected to assume primary responsibility for what is a welfare rather than law enforcement function. A failure to appreciate the significance of this point opens the way for the one major potential risk to effective implementation of the enhanced response to VSM favoured by the CMC. This risk is that the suggested changes to police powers come to be seen as an 'end' in themselves, rather than a 'means to an end'.

The role of police when exercising new VSM-related powers is essentially to trigger the welfare-oriented therapeutic response. In most instances, primary responsibility for this response will be carried out either directly by the Department of Communities or indirectly by the non-government organisations funded by the department.

It appears that in deleting the sunset clause, as proposed by the bill, the minister is conveniently sweeping aside the CMC's recommendations and simply giving up on any further attempts to improve on the management of this devastating social problem that is decimating many of our most vulnerable communities. It appears that there will be no attempt by the government to modify, improve and extend the operation of these powers statewide, as the CMC has recommended. The operation of these powers at present is limited to certain communities as prescribed in section 8N of the regulation.

I call on the minister to explain what the government has done in relation to implementing the CMC's recommendations and why it has chosen to bury a fundamental proposal of the CMC review in an obscure clause at the back of an amending bill that is primarily focused on other unrelated issues.

It appears that this Labor government has done nothing in relation to the enhanced response to the volatile substance misuse as advocated so strongly by the CMC. It appears that the Labor government is content simply to leave the existing police powers in place without a requirement for further review and without any broader coordinated interagency response to the social problems arising from volatile substance misuse. In short, the government is trying to cut corners and avoid the extra two-year trial period of the place of safety, which amounts to less public accountability and a lack of independent assessment of an initiative that affects Indigenous communities in Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville, inner Brisbane, Logan, two places in Rockhampton and Caboolture. It does, in fact, have ramifications statewide because we are still waiting for this government to follow through with the CMC recommendations and extend the Safe Place Program to each centre in Queensland. I believe that this initiative has the potential to save a significant number of lives, but do not take my word for it. Let us just allow the CMC to do its job. In the current climate, where there has been a breakdown due to political mismanagement in the relationship between Indigenous communities and police, I think it would be reckless and dangerous to continue with this particular amendment. Therefore, the coalition will be opposing the government's one-sided and cynical decision to remove the sunset clause. Once again, I will be speaking to the minister in the consideration stage.

The Premier has made much in the past of the independence of the CMC and the importance of allowing it to do what it was set up to do. It is not up to the Premier or the minister for police to pick and choose what recommendations they will adopt and those that they feel are more convenient or politically expedient to ignore. To continue to arbitrarily ignore key CMC recommendations is a travesty and exposes the hollow promises of this government to be open and accountable for what it is. It is just another example of the sleazy way that this government does business by stealth and uses standover tactics, and its willingness to choose the path of least resistance rather than to lead by example.

I now move on to clause 6, insertion of a new section 24A. According to the explanatory notes accompanying the bill, that section will prohibit persons in trade or commerce from providing a service in Queensland or elsewhere informing another person by sending a message over the internet or by an SMS text message or by any other message that may be heard, read or otherwise viewed by a person using a mobile phone of the location of a police traffic enforcement site for that purpose or that has the effect of enabling the other person to avoid, or be prepared for, a check made at that site.

As a young man I used to ride a number of high-powered road bikes. I have had the opportunity to meet—

A government member: I'll bet you didn't fall off.

Mr MESSENGER: I will take that interjection. Yes, I fell off many a time, and it is only by God's grace that I am here. I have had the opportunity to meet plenty of police officers while they have written out speeding tickets.

There are only two things that really slowed me down—witnessing first-hand the damage that can happen to the human body in a road accident and the threat of losing my licence. I appreciate the vital and very important role that traffic enforcement policy plays in saving lives and keeping our roads safe. Speed creates accidents and causes the loss of lives. Speaking to clause 6 gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to the officers who serve on Queensland's highway patrol.

I would especially like to make mention of a dear friend of mine who passed away recently. Peter John Winyard was in the Queensland Police Service for 17 years. I first met PJ Winyard when I was 15 years old and we joined the RAAF together as electricians. PJ served nine years in the RAAF and then served 17 years in a number of different roles including traffic at Gladstone lastly. My condolences go to Lorraine, his wife; Alison, his daughter; Peter, his son; and Sarah, his other daughter. I would like to acknowledge the service that Peter John Winyard gave to the Queensland police force. At his funeral we heard how PJ loved writing tickets. The reason he loved writing tickets was to slow people down and to save lives. He was a great family man.

The members of the Highway Patrol are extremely dedicated and highly professional enforcement officers, many of whom see their job as a vocation rather than an occupation. They know that every day they make a positive difference to our community; every day they save lives. I understand that the intent of clause 6 is to assist Highway Patrol officers in saving lives and doing their job better. However, after consulting with IT experts, I believe this government has produced flawed legislation which has already been made obsolete by rapid advances in technology. More importantly, it is aimed at the wrong party. There is a very strong argument that if we are to go down the path of banning the electronic distribution of information which alerts road users to the location of traffic enforcement sites, radars et cetera, then the legislation would be better targeted at the end user rather than the suppliers of the electronic information. While the coalition generally supports the policy intent behind outlawing these types of commercial services because of their potential for misuse by hoons and others intent on flouting the road rules, there are concerns with the short-sighted and narrow focus behind drafting the various definitions within the clause.

There are concerns that the definitions contained within the clause of the terms 'internet message', 'message' and 'relevant message' may give rise to loopholes whereby new and emerging forms of messaging technology such as that used by the GPS devices and the PDAs may not be captured by the legislation. It does not appear that sufficient thought has been given to ensuring that the legislation is not just a knee-jerk reaction to current threats such as those posed by the company Road Spy, but it is also capable of dealing with new and emerging forms of technology which are capable of being applied to similar purposes. I have discussed this point with a Queensland IT expert and former senior lecturer at the Queensland Institute of Technology, Wayne Bucklar, who has kindly supplied me with his thoughts on this matter. I would like to share his thoughts with the House. Wayne writes—

The following comments refer to section 24A of the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendments Bill 2006. The bill appears to be directly aimed at www.roadspy.com.au. Similar services do operate in other countries.

Regulating activities that are conducted via the Internet creates difficulties in both the drafting and subsequent enforcement of the legislation. The Internet by its nature is global in reach and this creates jurisdictional difficulties. The World Wide Web is an application which utilises the Internet as a delivery platform.

The components to produce a World Wide Web page consist of a World Wide Web server and a World Wide Web browser. One of the jurisdictional issues relating to the Internet is to determine where, geographically, an offence occurs. Does the offence occur at the location of the World Wide Web server or does the offence occur when the page is viewed using a World Wide Web browser?

A World Wide Web browser is software most commonly installed on a computer but it may also be installed on a mobile phone and potentially on the GPS navigation system.

Information may be put into a World Wide Web server via a number of sources including from an SMS message sent from a mobile phone. That information may also be distributed via a number of channels including SMS messages sent to mobile phones but also as web pages sent to a mobile phone via either General packet radio service or directly as a web page using third-generation telephony.

If the objective of the legislation is to prohibit the use of such messages in avoiding traffic enforcement locations then the legislation may be aimed at either the originating point of the message (that is a World Wide Web server) or at the receiving point (that is the browser or the phone). It would be legislatively possible to create an offence for the person receiving the message to be in possession of the message whether it was transmitted via SMS or as a Web service.

The advantage of this latter approach would be that the person committing the offence would be within the jurisdiction of the legislation. It would seem that avoiding an offence aimed at the World Wide Web server would be as simple as moving the Web server to a centre located outside of Queensland.

Without expert legal opinion, it is unknown if a company located in another state operating a Web server located in a data centre outside of Queensland would be committing an offence under this legislation.

Section 4 relies on an 'Internet message' and defines it as being a message 'viewed by a person on a website' but fails to define a website. It may be argued that a web site is only the HTML (hypertext markup language) which is transmitted by a Web Server and viewed in a web browser (on either a computer or a phone).

Web pages can also be read by software and would therefore not require a person. The definition does not include other Internet applications such as email, news groups, or messages on a screen which are rendered by programming languages other than HTML.

For instance, it is conceivable that this sort of message could be sent to the screen of a satellite navigation system or a digital car radio. My understanding is that information such as track title and artist name can be broadcast to digital car radios and displayed on the car radio display much like many CD players do in cars at present. It would seem to me to be reasonably feasible to send traffic warnings this way as well.

It is increasingly common for vehicle tracking systems to receive location information from GPS satellites and then to report this via a transmission to a central computer. Taxis commonly use this sort of system at present. If a cab driver were to push a button every time he saw a radar site, that information could be collected and rebroadcast to taxis using their digital display radio systems.

This sort of messaging system would appear to be outside of the definition in the legislation. It is not common to have digital displays in private cars to receive such a broadcast at present, although common Navigation systems do advise drivers when they are approaching Red Light Cameras and Fixed Speed Cameras (in other states).

In section 4c, 'Heard, read or otherwise viewed by a person using a mobile phone' would seem to exclude CB and other two way radio broadcasts. Some phones now have 'push to talk' functions making them like a walkie talkie. As mobiles phones continue to change to resemble (converge with) mp3 players, PDAs, pagers and two way radios, the definition of a mobile phone may need to be clarified or expanded.

The rapid rate of change in available technology poses ongoing difficulties for legislators. Already high-end vehicles are being sold with complex digital displays built into the dashboard along with on board communications via both telephone and satellite reception and transmission capability.

Vehicle tracking systems are now common in commercial vehicles and allow vehicles to be remotely tracked and located on a map with an accuracy of a couple of meters. While this technology may serve to hinder this legislation, it may prove invaluable in the future in enforcing compliance with speed zones.

At least in theory, an enforcement agency with access to that location data could determine the speed of the vehicle and the speed zone in which it is travelling. A monitoring computer could determine this and issue a breach automatically. Perhaps the installation of vehicle tracking systems for central monitoring and enforcement may become a requirement for repeat offenders.

These comments are from the point of view of a technologist. I offer no comment on the apparent mixed signals that are sent by having Speed camera vehicles announce their presence with signage and other road side signs declaring areas to be Police radar zones thus increasing compliance though awareness of enforcement and this legislation apparently trying to prevent the public becoming aware of enforcement.

Having reviewed the draft legislation, and in light of my knowledge of the Internet at a technical level, I am of the opinion that the apparent objectives of this legislation may not be met by the legislation as it fails to target the source and the receiver of the warning message and by focusing only on source of the message it creates an opportunity for easy avoidance by locating the business and/or the World Wide Webservers outside of Queensland.

I would like to draw some comparisons with the situation as it stands in New South Wales. If this government wants to get serious about ensuring drivers slow down and drive safely on our roads and get rid of the general perception that speed cameras are just another form of revenue raising, we should perhaps be following our fellow states' lead. Parliamentary Library research has looked at New South Wales's fixed speed camera operations. The research shows that the operations forewarn motorists of the various road traffic enforcement sites by way of generous warning signs in the near vicinity of the speed cameras. Furthermore, the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority publishes this information on its web site. Similarly, Victoria also enlists fixed speed camera locations and mobile speed camera sites.

The New South Wales system must be working. The ARRB Group study conducted on behalf of the Roads and Traffic Authority entitled *Evaluation of the fixed digital speed camera program in New South Wales* is proof that it is indeed working. One of the key findings, as highlighted by the Parliamentary Library, is that there was a massive 89.8 per cent reduction in fatal crashes on roads with speed cameras. It is also highlighted that there was a substantial reduction in mean speeds in these camera sites and very large reductions found in high-crash zones.

I note that this particular review into speed cameras in New South Wales also considered community attitudes towards the fixed digital speed camera program and found that, despite conflicting findings from various other surveys, the majority of respondents associated the speed cameras with road safety and speeding rather than revenue raising. In short, clause 6 is poorly thought out, poorly researched, poorly drafted and poorly presented legislation. The minister should apologise to the House for wasting our time with such a shoddy piece of legislation.

It is somewhat disturbing that the government, with all the resources available to it, is unable to produce a more robust and technically competent piece of legislation to deal with an issue which it has identified as a significant threat to road safety. It is the policy on the run style of management practised by this government, resulting in such a knee-jerk reaction as this, that wastes the time of this House by having to correct mistakes and errors in new and existing legislation that should never have occurred in the first place.

Fortunately, the rest of the bill seems to be free of such shortcomings. I will now proceed to the remaining clauses which deal with amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989. It essentially makes technical amendments to definitions of the terms 'officer-in-charge' and 'holding cell'. It amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to make consequential amendments to the PPRA to facilitate police enforcement activity in relation to the new graffiti offences in the current bill, to provide for cost recovery in relation to an animal seized by a police officer, to correct drafting deficiencies relating to evading police officers and other minor issues such as renumbering. There are amendments to the Police Service Administration Act 1990 to address minor drafting matters, including omission of redundant terms such as assistant watch-house officer and assistant watch-house manager. It amends the Prostitution Act 1999 to clarify the scope of the independent assessor's powers to hear appeals about decisions on development approvals for brothels. It also amends the Weapons Act 1990 to correct minor drafting issues.

Clause 4 amends, in a very minor way, the definitions of a 'seller' and 'sell'. The amended definitions do not change the essential meaning but merely provide for consistency with usage of the terms elsewhere in the legislation and also provide for incorporation of the definition into the dictionary contained in schedule 2 of the act.

Clause 5 contains the major provision in this bill. According to the explanatory notes, these are the prevention measures designed to strengthen existing antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray-paint cans to minors—that is, persons aged 17 years and under. The amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs and for employers to take standard prevention measures towards their employees who sell spray-paint cans. The amendments will also provide offences relating to sellers generally and to employers.

This clause requires a seller of spray-paint to take the following precautions in relation to employees of the seller. The seller must instruct employees not to sell spray-paint to minors. The employee must sight acceptable evidence of age before selling spray-paint. The seller must warn the employee that failure to carry out the above is an offence under the act. The seller must obtain written acknowledgment from the employee that the employee has received the abovementioned warning and instructions.

The clause provides a maximum penalty of 40 penalty units in relation to the employer of a seller who fails to undertake the required preventive measures. Regarding the sale of spray-paint to minors, the clause provides maximum penalties for selling spray-paint to a minor as follows: the first offence is 140 penalty units; the second offence is 280 penalty units; the third and subsequent offence is 420 penalty units.

Those penalties do not apply to an employee of a seller. Penalties for an employee found selling spray-paint to minors are prescribed under new section 23C. For the first offence it is 20 penalty units and the second or later offence is 40 penalty units. Penalties for employers are therefore seven times heavier than penalties prescribed for employees.

The clause also provides that a seller does not breach the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 if the seller refuses to sell spray-paint to a minor. It further provides the seller with the defence to a charge of unlawful sale of spray-paint to a minor where the seller has asked the person to produce acceptable evidence of age and the seller has no reason to suspect that the evidence provided was false.

It is noted that Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in its *Alert Digest No. 10*, tabled on 28 November 2006, raised the issue of whether the bill also breaches the Commonwealth Age Discrimination Act 2004, which contains a similar provision to Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. The committee has sought clarification from the minister in this regard. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also raised concerns about the penalty provisions. The committee has noted that it would appear to be the legislative intent that an employer can be prosecuted under section 23B(1) for sales made by his or her employee if the employer has taken preventive measures.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr MESSENGER: In continuing to speak to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006, I note that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has raised some concerns and has sought clarification from the minister. I continue on with its concerns. It states—

This is suggested by the overall structure of the cl.5 provisions, and by the fact that the definition of 'seller' inserted in the Dictionary (see cl.8) declares that it 'includes an employee of a seller'.

If so, this would for the first time introduce into the Summary Offences Act a provision making a person liable to prosecution for the acts of another.

That is stated at page 29 of *Alert Digest No. 10*. The committee has suggested in its analysis that the drafting of the bill is somewhat ambiguous in this regard and has sought clarification from the minister as to whether it is the intention of the legislation that employers be liable for prosecution of offences committed by an employee. If the minister has not addressed the committee's concerns prior to resumption of debate on the bill, she should be requested to do so in parliament. I do note that at a briefing provided by the minister's staff on 30 January of this year it was confirmed that the minister intended to respond to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in terms which confirmed that the legislative intent is to also make—

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr MESSENGER:—employers liable for offences committed by an employee. I look forward to hearing the minister's reply and take her interjection. I will obviously look for that reply that the minister has given.

Ms Spence: I will table it.

Mr MESSENGER: Yes. Finally the clause requires a seller to display a prohibition sign, details of which are to be prescribed under a regulation, at each point of sale at the seller's retail outlet with the maximum penalty for failure to comply being 20 penalty units. Clause 8 inserts additional definitions of the following terms into the dictionary contained in schedule 2 of the act: 'employee', 'potentially harmful

thing', 'sell', 'seller', 'spray-can' and 'spray-paint'. Clause 10 inserts a new definition of 'officer in charge' into the schedule containing the dictionary in the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989. The new definition will also allow the officer in charge of a police station to delegate their responsibilities under section 70 of the act to another officer during their absence.

Clauses 11 to 14 inclusive contain minor amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. Clause 15 is with regard to the unlawful sale of spray-paint to minors. This clause inserts a new section 43A into the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 as a consequence of the creation of the new spray-paint selling offences created in the Summary Offences Act 2005. The clause enables a police officer, if they reasonably suspect that a spray-paint offence has been committed, to ask a person to show acceptable evidence of their age and to produce the thing sold to the person. Clause 17 deals with the recovery of costs for animals held by the commissioner and amends section 697 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 in order to remove any doubt that the Police Service can recover costs in relation to animals seized and held by police.

Clauses 18 to 20 inclusive deal with the destruction, forfeiture and disposal of drug utensils. The clause amends section 705 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 in order to authorise delegated police officers to destroy and dispose of drug matter, including pipes and utensils at the end of a proceeding without having to first obtain an order for forfeiture and destruction of seized things under section 701. This is designed to reduce the number of court orders issued for minor purposes. Clauses 21 to 25 inclusive make minor amendments to several sections of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to make it workable and to correct drafting errors in provisions relating to offences for evading police and the forfeiture and disposal of vehicles associated with an evasion offence.

Clause 26 is purely about renumbering and transitional provisions. Clauses 27 to 31 are amendments of the Prostitution Act 1999 relating to the powers of the independent assessor. The purpose of these clauses is to amend the Prostitution Act 1999 in order to clarify that appeals to the independent assessor in relation to a development approval for a brothel may be made in respect of both code assessable development applications and impact assessable development applications. The amendments have been proposed as a result of recommendation 13 of the CMC report on the regulation of the prostitution industry in Queensland. The lack of clarity about the appeal provisions of the legislation has resulted in appeals on some brothel applications being made to the District Court in the first instance, and the judiciary has commented on the inefficiency of this situation in several cases. If appeals on both categories of development approvals are heard in the first instance by the independent assessor, there still remains an avenue of appeal to the District Court when that process has been exhausted. Clause 32 includes a schedule of minor amendments to the Police Service Administration Act and the Weapons Act 1990 in order to remove redundant terms and correct minor drafting errors.

The greater part of this bill has the support of the coalition, and it is on that basis and on that basis only that we are prepared to support this bill rather than delay its introduction or oppose it as a whole. But, as I said earlier, I do have serious reservations with two particular areas of the bill. The clause dealing with the messages about road enforcement sites should never have been included in its present form. I would suggest to the minister if she desires our unqualified support for the bill a redrafting of the clause taking into account the information supplied by Mr Bucklar is necessary to make this particular clause workable and enforceable and to ensure that it is not redundant before it is implemented.

I also draw particular attention to the inclusion of clause 16 and reiterate my and the coalition's opposition to it and its intent in any way, shape or form. The bill and the explanatory notes have been drafted so as to conceal and bury this clause and are no credit to the minister or her advisers. It appears that the minister is simply content to leave the current powers in place and not have to revisit the issue contrary to the clear, unambiguous recommendations of the CMC report of September 2005. In closing, I would hope that the minister sees fit to, firstly, amend the bill in order to fix the obvious deficiencies and, more importantly, to restore the faith of all Queenslanders in this government's integrity by removing completely clause 16 as an affront to the clear recommendations of the CMC.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (7.38 pm): In rising to speak to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill, I commend the minister on the bill and her swift answer to some of the problems that have arisen in relation to the enforcement of laws which we have implemented. The police force does a very good job in relation to it, and it really does worry me when we hear the diatribe by members of the opposition which is not even based on factual circumstances. Police numbers in Queensland have increased because of the actions of the Beattie government. This government gives full support to police officers to enforce the laws that are passed by this parliament.

I have listened with great interest to this debate. Originally, I wanted to speak to only one part of the bill, but perhaps I will debate other aspects of it. Much was made by the previous speaker of the recommendations of the CMC. I point out to the honourable member who just spoke that

recommendations are just that. Some of them are not capable of implementation in their direct form and, as such, can be amended by the legislative powers instilled in the government to reflect the requirement that the police act in certain ways and to allow them to better enforce the law.

I am really concerned that the member supported a police officer who, sadly, is no longer with us. Then he set out to knock everything that the person stood for. We heard some detail from Mr Bucklar, but I must tell this House that the section that is introduced by this bill is to stop the commercial activities of people who operate a business by selling information about the police enforcement sites to people. A reading of the new section indicates that that is exactly what it is meant to achieve, and I believe it does achieve that.

From memory, this person, operating on the Gold Coast, was selling a service whereby people could contribute to that business and in return get information about the location of police enforcement sites. We heard much from the previous speaker about how the internet and everything else could be used for this purpose, but that seems rather pointless as those police enforcement sites are not always permanent. To set up a web site overseas or interstate would probably cost more than the service, which was run fairly cheaply, could recoup.

I commend to everyone the wording of the new section. It refers to 'not in trade or commerce'. I have a son who is very well versed in IT. I can assure members that his comments about the detail that was presented to this House are not able to be reproduced because they are not parliamentary language. The idea of making it unlawful to send such SMS messages was to stamp out anyone operating a business by providing that service. In fact, the wording of the new section does that.

In relation to the matters raised about the CMC recommendations and specifically section 608, I draw everyone's attention to the minister's second reading speech which, incidentally, can be used in a court of law. The basis for the omission of that section was that, currently, the operation of the sections have to be extended by regulation at six-monthly intervals. I understand that section 607 still allows for a review of the sections under consideration and, as such, the removal of section 608 does nothing more than remove the stipulation for six-monthly intervals that is currently required to amend the regulation.

All in all, the legislation provides certainty for our police in the enforcement of our laws. It also seeks to remove the capacity of some of our so-called graffiti artists from decorating community property—an act which I find very offensive, as do the majority of people to whom I speak. Some people might consider it art, but it is nothing more than damage to community property and should be treated as such. All in all, I support the bill fully and I commend it to the House.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (7.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Summary Offices and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. This bill includes amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 to prohibit a person, including a corporation, from sending in the course of trade or commerce an internet message, an SMS message or another type of message that may be heard, read or viewed on a mobile phone to alert persons about the location of a police traffic enforcement site, including a speed camera site, a random breath test site and a vehicle safety check site.

The Beattie government commenced steps to implement these amendments after a business named Road Spy commenced operations on the Gold Coast in January 2006. Road Spy commenced sending SMS text messages to the mobile phones of persons upon payment of a subscription fee about the locations of police traffic enforcement sites primarily where radars and mobile speed cameras are operating. The alerts also include details about general traffic delays and road hazards in Road Spy's area of operations.

Road Spy elected to stop providing warning alerts about police breath-testing sites to new subscribers from 12 January 2006. However, Road Spy elected to continue to send RBT warning alerts to those subscribers who had previously paid to receive them until their current subscriptions ended. Road Spy's message centre received its information principally via SMS text messages from contracted reporters and voluntary informants in its area of operation. Anecdotal information indicates that taxi drivers are included among the contracted reporters.

Road Spy uses modern computer and telecommunication technology, in conjunction with its extensive and organised reporting network, to provide precise, comprehensive and almost instantaneous SMS text alerts to their subscribers. It is understood that alerts are relayed to subscribers at any time of the day, seven days a week, immediately they are received at the message centre.

In 2006 Road Spy's web site stated that it was primarily a road safety warning service and that it did not condone or encourage driving above road speed limits or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The web site also stated that Road Spy strongly recommended that drivers pull over before sending or reading an SMS message. However, the web site also stated that Road Spy could help subscribers avoid traffic delays, costly speeding fines, the accumulation of points on their licences, or worse.

Road Spy's SMS text message alerts about police traffic enforcement sites poses a serious threat to the safety of other road users because of the real risk that hoons and other persons who routinely break the traffic laws would subscribe to its services for the sole purpose of avoiding or being prepared for police traffic enforcement sites. The threat to road safety would be further increased by subscribers who read incoming text message alerts while driving their vehicles.

Currently, neither Queensland legislation nor the Australian Road Rules prohibit persons or businesses in trade or commerce from sending such warning messages about the location of police traffic enforcement sites. This legislation will not prohibit commercial radio stations from broadcasting the location of police radar and speed camera sites to the general public free of charge. The government considers that these limited, random and often delayed traffic alerts do not adversely threaten road safety in contrast to the serious threat posed by Road Spy and any other specialist internet or telecommunications services that rapidly alert subscribing motorists at any time precisely about the current location of all, or most, police traffic enforcement sites in a specific area. These amendments are timely in light of the strong possibility that Road Spy may expand its services to other areas in the state and also because similar businesses could commence operations in the state at any time. The amendments will not harm the general public's right to freedom of speech and communication.

Given that Road Spy's web site claims that its purpose is to help subscribers avoid traffic delays, costly speeding fines and the accumulation of points on their licences or worse, I will save all of Road Spy's subscribers the trouble of subscribing. I will tell them here and now, free of charge, how to do the same: do not speed, do not drink and drive, do not break the laws and you will be fine. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (7.48 pm): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. The bill contains a number of minor amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Prostitution Act 1999 and the Weapons Act 1990. A summary of these amendments is as follows.

The Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 is to be amended to modify the definitions of 'officer-in-charge' and 'holding cell' in the schedule dictionary. The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006 amended section 70 'Duty of police officer who has taken a person into custody of s 69' of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act to allow a police officer who detains a person from a domestic violence incident to detain that person in a 'police holding cell' as well as in a watch-house. The officer-in-charge of a police station at which there is a holding cell must ensure the detained person's particulars are entered into a register as required by a regulation. However, the responsibility placed on the officer-in-charge under this provision cannot be delegated to other police officers, including shift supervisors. The inclusion of a definition of 'officer-in-charge' in the schedule dictionary of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act will correct this matter. The definition of 'holding cell' in the schedule dictionary of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act requires amendment to correct a minor irregularity in the current wording.

The Police Service Administration Act 1990 is to be amended by schedule 2 of the bill to update section 5A.3 'Persons to whom a pt 5A applies' of that act by replacing subsection 5A.3(1) (c) to refer now to a 'watch-house officer'. The outdated terms 'assistant watch-house officer' and 'assistant watch-house manager' have been removed. This will ensure that part 5A 'Alcohol and drug tests' of that act applies to watch-house officers who are staff members. The heading of section 10.28 'Regulations' of that act is to be amended for drafting consistency.

The Prostitution Act 1999 is to be amended to widen section 64K 'Appeals by applicants' in part 4 'Development approvals for brothels' of that act in response to recommendation 13 of a Prostitution Act evaluation report by the Crime and Misconduct Commission in 2004. The recommendation provided that section 64K of the Prostitution Act relating to the jurisdiction of independent assessor be amended to cover appeals against the following: firstly, assessment manager's decisions about the applicability of code or impact assessment under the Integrated Planning Act; and, secondly, assessment manager's decisions about requests to make minor changes to approved brothel premises or requests to change or cancel conditions of a development approval. The amendments will extend the role of the independent assessor to ensure consistency and fairness in the development application approval process for legal brothels.

Finally, the Weapons Act 1990 is to be amended by schedule 2 of the bill to correct minor drafting irregularities in a range of sections of that act. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (7.52 pm): The Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill is a very important piece of legislation in many ways. Whilst the opposition supports the legislation, we do have reservations about a couple of aspects of it—and no doubt the shadow minister has alluded to those tonight.

I do not intend to speak for too long. The one aspect I want to canvass this evening is the issue of the penalties for people who sell spray-paint to minors and the damage that minors can do with spray-paint. I say to the minister this evening that there seems to be great emphasis on penalising the suppliers of spray-paint, but I believe that we should be looking very closely at the end use of the spray-paint and what penalties are applicable to those who use it to damage property. The penalties that apply to them do not seem anywhere near as harsh as the penalties that apply to the supplier of the product. It is always very difficult to police this satisfactorily unless it occurs in a prominent area where surveillance cameras are in place. It is always going to be very difficult for the custodians of public property, or private property for that matter, to detect these louts in our communities.

I support the minister in her endeavours to try to stamp this out. When I was the minister for transport one of the main issues every year with Queensland Rail was the disfigurement of railway property and the countless millions of dollars to paint over the damage and remove the blemish from QR rolling stock and railway property et cetera. I note that in the minister's second reading speech she mentions that the bill to QR is \$2 million annually. That is a lot of chaff in anyone's language.

The time has come. Over a period of time we have seen many criminals apprehended—whether it be in a shopping centre or in the Brisbane mall or at a railway station or in some other public area—because they have committed a serious crime against the community. We cannot have too much surveillance equipment to detect these people. The real issue here—and I draw this to the minister's attention—is the penalties for the minors who breach the law and commit these offences. At the end of the day, we live in a beautiful state, we have beautiful infrastructure and it is a fantastic place to be. I just wonder how these people look after their own property at home. Do they disfigure their own property? Do they treat their parents with respect? Or has something broken down in society that makes them want to commit a crime against the taxpayers of the state? This is an unfortunate situation.

This is not only a question for the police minister but also a question for the Attorney-General to make absolutely certain that if the police do bring these people before the courts they will receive the appropriate penalty for their acts. That is the one aspect that I know the police are concerned about and that many other people around Queensland are concerned about.

Another aspect of the legislation I want to reflect on this evening is the issue of mobile phone texting. Mobile phones are a common fact of life now in modern western democratic societies, and in any other society for that matter. Most kids at school seem to have the damn things these days. I wish to God I never had one myself. Every time the phone rings the call goes to the message bank before I get a chance to pick it up, and answering messages left on the message bank costs me more than what the phone calls would have cost.

This legislation addresses the issue of texting friends or somebody else to advise them of where speed cameras are located or where random breath tests or vehicle inspections are being conducted or whatever. As the minister at the time responsible for the introduction of speed cameras, I am sad to say that speed cameras should never have been hidden the way they are, and I say that in all sincerity. The other day when I was driving down the Bruce Highway I saw one of those speed cameras located in a four-wheel drive that was backed in behind a bridge and a tree, and the sign was just in front of the car. You would need to have a telescopic lens that could go around corners to see it! You would not see it until you went past it. People do flick their lights up and down the highway to warn motorists of a speed camera.

I know that the minister for transport is going to introduce fixed speed cameras, which I support. I think they are a fantastic initiative. They operate very well in New South Wales. I reckon they have a more calming effect on traffic than mobile speed cameras, although I do think mobile speed cameras have a place if they are used properly. I do not think there is any great alarm in having legislation like this that penalises people for alerting others about them. At the end of the day, those fixed cameras will have a role and the technology available is going to be very sophisticated—it will be very accurate and precise. I know that a lot of people question the accuracy of speed cameras. At the time speed cameras were introduced in Queensland personnel in the department of transport in conjunction with personnel from Queensland police undertook an in-depth investigation into what was the right technology to adopt in this state, and I believe that the outcomes of that have been very successful.

At the same time, as the member for Redlands mentioned a while ago, these issues are about road safety. This is about trying to decrease the number of fatalities and serious injuries that occur on our roads. The transport legislation currently before the House will be very beneficial in making our roads even safer, especially for young drivers. We have to target young people while, at the same time, making absolutely certain that all people uphold the road laws, are conversant with them and drive according to the conditions. The police can play a very integral role in all of this through the proper use of speed cameras. For example, a camera should be positioned in one location for an hour and then moved somewhere else. Cameras should not be hidden behind bridges and trees. I have seen them hidden in bushes on the Ipswich Motorway, near Dinmore and such places. Let us get fair dinkum about this. The general public does not want idiots on the road and we want the police to be able to do the best surveillance job possible. However, I believe that tonight we are going too far by penalising people for telephone texting about speed camera locations.

An issue that I and many others on this side of the House have raised is telephone tapping powers for police. Apparently we do not want anyone to tip off where the police are located, yet we will not give the police the proper tools—and I am talking about telephone tapping powers—to apprehend the scum of society who need to be apprehended, brought to justice and put into the right place for the crimes that they commit against society. Some of those crimes are very serious crimes.

Today during the address-in-reply debate I was reading the Governor's speech in which she talked about the money that has been set aside this year for sex offenders and those who commit crimes against women and kids. We have to get a bit more fair dinkum about these issues. The justice

system has to be revised to ensure that our police receive the backup that they need to ensure that when they apprehend scum, those criminals receive a fair penalty and are put away for their efforts. This lack in our system is demoralising our police.

I say to the minister that this Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006 is a very important piece of legislation. However, I do hope that the government does not face the embarrassment of soon having to bring it back to the House for amendment. The police need strong tools, but we cannot have two bob each way. I feel that, in some small part, that is what is happening in this legislation.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (8.02 pm): I rise to speak to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill. In so doing I acknowledge that the rationale behind this legislation is quite understandable to the majority of people in the community. However, in saying that, I have to express my disappointment with the need—and I repeat, with the need—for the increase in penalties for and the prohibition on the supply of spray-paints to minors. I know that there are young people who harm themselves by ingesting spray-paint. Tragically, in all of our communities we see them in parks and behind buildings. The loss of life and the loss of potential is heartbreaking.

While I am not criticising the minister because, as I said, I understand the rationale for that part of the bill, the legislation is disappointing for all those minors who want to buy spray-paint for the right reasons. Perhaps they want to do their bikes up or build something. If they want to use spray-enamel, a can of spray-paint may be the most convenient way of doing the job. I guess the alternative is for those kids to get their mums or dads to buy the spray-paint, which will go into the shed at home and presumably they will be able to use it there in a legal manner. It is disappointing that in so many instances we introduce legislation—and I am speaking about a lot of different types of legislation—to protect a small minority of people and the changes that are implemented disadvantage the majority of good law-abiding kids.

As I have said in this place before, over the years there has been a diminution in the freedom that kids have to be kids. A lot of constraints are placed on them by their parents out of necessity and concern for their safety. Often, kids do not understand or agree with those constraints until they are older and can see the dangers that their parents were trying to protect them from. However, kids have a diminishing number of opportunities to enjoy freely their youth or childhood, which is another symptom of our changing society. As I said, the majority of young people want to do the right thing. They simply want to fix up their pushbike, or build a go-kart or a doghouse. They would simply say, 'Mum, I'm going down to get a can of paint.' Now they will not be able to do that, and it will have to become quite a significant event.

I put that on the record because I believe that the vast majority of young kids in our communities are sound, good, self-protecting young people with high ideals and high aspirations. This legislation protects those who either do not have or have lost the ability to protect themselves.

From the last time that spray-can legislation was before the House we know that it relates particularly to chroming. It was also a fact that the victims of chroming—and I choose those words purposefully—would stand outside shops that sold spray-paint, accost older people and threaten them into going in and buying spray-cans. At that time measures that were introduced were aimed at helping those predominantly young people who were self-harming and had moved past the point of making rational decisions.

The second aspect of the legislation that I wanted to comment on relates to the introduction of an offence in relation to SMS text messaging, illustrated by the company called Road Spy. Until I read the information and some of the other notes on the legislation, I had never heard of Road Spy. Obviously, I have found out that it is a south-east Queensland initiative. There are some sneaky people down here, aren't there?

A government member interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Absolutely. It is a problem. When I first read the initial notes, I thought it was a prohibition on and criminalisation of anyone. I would like the minister to clarify this. The wording is very clear: 'prohibit a person, including a corporation, in trade or commerce...' Could the minister clarify whether it is an offence for a person to SMS text a family member or a friend with a message relating to a camera location. The words appear to clearly demonstrate that, but I would be interested in the minister's clarification. I believe 'in trade or commerce' clarifies that, but I would like it confirmed.

I was in the parliament when the speed camera legislation was brought in by the previous Speaker, the member for Gregory, as minister. There was a significant debate in relation to speed camera enforcement. Indeed, I supported an amendment moved by the then opposition to ensure that revenue from speed camera detection was not put into consolidated revenue but used for road safety

initiatives and, effectively, black spot funding. I would like to quote the then minister, the honourable Vaughan Johnson, the member for Gregory. The bill was introduced in 1996 and it was passed in 1997. He stated—

Turning now to focus on the proposed legislation, a key enforcement element is the introduction of speed cameras approved by Cabinet on 29 July this year. The introduction of speed cameras will be accompanied by strict operational policies and controls to ensure they are used to help reduce speed-related crashes.

These operational controls will include—

- cameras limited to use on roads which have undergone speed limit reviews;
- police enforcement operations to be highly visible and managed on a deterrence based approach; and
- camera sites selected according to strict criteria with an emphasis on locations with a traffic crash history.

He went on with his speech.

Whilst the community perhaps was a little nervous about the introduction of speed cameras, I believe the majority of people were comforted by the minister's constraints in the application of speed cameras. That idealism perhaps has been watered down over time. I wrote to a previous police minister because it was still my apprehension that speed cameras were not to be put at the bottom of hills unless, of course, there was a crash history at the bottom of that hill. It certainly was not intended—and that was not intention of the original legislation—that speed cameras be placed on overtaking lanes and that they not be placed on areas that the general community would regard as safe in terms of a crash history but revenue raising in their intent.

Before somebody interjects, I hasten to add that I am not supporting excessive speed. However, I think the community's opposition, antagonism and anger to speed cameras has developed over time because of the change in policy in terms of practical policing as to where these cameras go. The member for Gregory talked about a speed camera—I cannot remember the location—that was backed beside a bridge and hidden behind a tree. I think we all have instances where we could talk about the most obscure places that speed cameras are placed. It was always intended that these were not going to be a secret revenue-raising mechanism but a genuine attempt to reduce crash incidents so that people could travel safely.

Last Christmas I travelled through New South Wales. I do not think there are very many mobile cameras in New South Wales at all; they are all fixed. They are signposted like you would not believe. I am sure most of the members here will have been through New South Wales. The number of signs saying 'speed cameras in use' almost becomes intimidating. The signs give the distance to the next speed camera. I drove most of the time. I kept saying to John, 'If anyone got a speed detection camera fine in New South Wales they'd have absolutely not a leg to stand on.' There are a lot of speed cameras in New South Wales. They are well signposted, and motorists know that they are there. I do believe it is as good a deterrent as a police vehicle.

The speed camera cars that sit on the side of the road with the speed camera sign sitting approximately three or four metres from the front of the car or the rear of the car went from the cameras being mounted on the vehicle to being mounted in the snorkel. That caused no end of mirth amongst some of the blokes. That has undermined the credibility of the use of those speed cameras because the initial overt, very open, very careful placement of the vehicles in areas that have a high crash record or have safety issues has diminished over time. The community generally sees them as revenue raising. That has done nothing to help the officers who have to administer the regulations.

I have no understanding of Road Spy. However, I raise that other information because I think that is why people listen to the radio stations that give out speed camera locations. I commend the minister for her very practical application in this legislation of the targeting of commercial advisers—SMS text message businesses that are alerting people to where radar and speed camera traps are—and her practical approach to the issue of radio stations. Not all radio stations do this—some do and some do not. I am hoping that in her response the minister will clarify that it will not affect those times when a family member rings up and says, 'Just be careful because there's a radar at the crossroads.' Their intent is not mischievous. It is not intended to in any way encourage danger; it is just a phone call of concern and care.

The other amendments to this legislation are of a general nature. I note the amendments that are proposed in the Prostitution Act. I remain opposed to that legislation on principle. However, I look forward to the minister's comments in relation to Scrutiny of Legislation concerns and also the confirmation of my interpretation of the bill as it is proposed.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (8.14 pm): I rise to speak to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. This bill strengthens the existing antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray-paint cans to minors 17 years and under. This bill will provide offences relating to sellers generally and to employers and employees in specific circumstances. The bill provides that appropriate signage also be displayed.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee asked for clarification as to the definition of 'seller' which in the bill might be interpreted as making one person responsible for the actions of another. I would like that clarified because that remains a concern for me. I would find it difficult to support the bill under that particular circumstance.

I believe most people in this place would be very aware of my dislike for graffiti because I have often spoken of it during many debates. I know there are some who believe that graffiti is an individual expressing himself or herself. I have absolutely no problem with people expressing themselves, but there are appropriate places and avenues to do so. However, for some stupid reason these vandals risk their lives to get at some totally inappropriate places—walls, fences, bridges, railway wagons and so on—just to make some stupid squiggle that is illegible to most people on the streets. Maybe it shows how brave they are to their little gang members—I do not know. To most of us I think it is purely an act of a stupid person.

These bridges—whatever they might be called—are bought and paid for by the people if they are public property. These structures might have been built by governments but they belong to the people. Anyone who conducts themselves in this way—what I believe is antisocial activity—shows a lack of respect for the community or another person's private property. I wonder if these individuals would like me to tag their vehicle with some offensive word or mark, or maybe I could spray ugly designs in their bedroom or over the walls of their parents' home. I am pretty sure their parents would not be too happy with that.

These people have far too much idle time on their hands. I have often stated that if they are caught and convicted of a graffiti offence they should be made to clean it—plus the work of any uncaught vandals—with a toothbrush. These people are, fortunately, the minority in our community. The majority of young people are very community conscious and most do not like this graffiti either.

I recognise that this bill makes it an offence to sell spray-paint to people 17 and under but, unfortunately, it is not just those 17 years old and under who ruin our communities with this unsightly graffiti. It is offensive to the majority of people in our communities. The majority has always ruled in this country, although governments without backbones have often, over the last 10 years, caved in to so many minority groups.

The second major amendment is the alerting of road users of the position of radar traps, random breath-testing units or vehicle safety check sites. I personally have major trouble with the placement of radar traps. I have been told repeatedly—over and over and over—that radar traps are not set at the bottom of hills. They are not hidden. They are very clearly marked. But too often in my own electorate I have seen radar traps hidden behind trees, bushes and shrubs at the bottom of a hill in a gully. Quite frankly, if that is not setting a trap for people I do not know what it would be called.

I know people think it is appropriate to have them anywhere, and perhaps it is. People should not speed and should be caught. I have no objection to that. I got caught myself only because—

Ms Spence: How many times?

Mrs PRATT: Enough, but—

Ms Spence: I think everyone should declare their driving history in here tonight.

Mrs PRATT: I am quite open about it. I have been driving late at night. I have been pulled up. I have been random breath tested. I have never been caught because I do not drink, but I have been pulled up for driving because I have been on automatic. I travel with cruise control. I sold my previous vehicle because the cruise control actually moved 10 kilometres each side of the cruise control speed. It was very poor, so I got a new car.

I forgot to set the cruise control and I was just cruising. My new car cruised very well on our beautiful roads and my speed crept up. To be quite honest, I think we could go a little faster on a lot of our roads, but we cannot go over the limit. I have had some very pleasant conversations with police on the side of the road. We have some wonderful police officers, but we also have some who are a little officious at times.

The point is that people who speed do need to be caught, and I have no objection to that. I know the purpose for which radar traps were introduced in the first place. However, the sites are often hard to see. I must agree with the member for Gladstone. The signs in the Coffs Harbour area where I grew up have been there for a long time and they are huge. When I say huge, I am talking huge; they are humungous. They tell you exactly where that radar trap is. It is the biggest camera I have ever seen on a sign, but people still get caught because we cannot stop an idiot from speeding over and over again.

There is one other issue with regards to this type of thing. I know a lot of people in this House find people who flash lights as they are driving offensive. I have done it and I have done it for the purpose of warning people of an accident that I have just passed that they are coming to. Often I do not know until I get to a particular point why I have been flashed because I do not actually come across a car at times. The point is that when someone flashed their lights it made me aware. I would look down and check my speed. I might have been perfectly right. Everything might have been going fine and I was not speeding. However, it made me aware of my speed. We see people slow down on those occasions and they will slow down for 15 or 20 kilometres, whether they come across a police car, an accident or anything else.

Ms Spence: It is an offence.

Mrs PRATT: It is an offence. I personally think it does more good than harm in a lot of instances.

Everybody knows that we have a problem on our roads with speed. Everybody knows that we cannot stop an idiot from travelling too quickly. I am an idiot at times too, and I will admit it quite openly. We all get a little vague at times. We do a lot of travelling at night. I would like to hear anybody in this chamber stand up and honestly say that they have never sped in their life. Whether they have been caught or not is irrelevant; everybody has sped at some time.

I must admit that I would prefer to see the government lose a few dollars than to see some people lose their lives. There are hoons on our roads and they need to be caught and removed if they are repetitive. However, as I said before, nothing stops an idiot.

Mr BOMBOLAS (Chatsworth—ALP) (8.22 pm): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. Might I say first of all that I empathise with the member for Nanango. I feel for her being flashed. It is not a nice thing to be flashed in the middle of the night when you are not ready for it.

In particular I would like to pay attention to elements of the provisions relating to the ban on the sale of spray-paint cans to minors. To more effectively combat spray-paint graffiti crime five new sections will be inserted into the Summary Offences Act 2005, namely, section 23A 'Seller must take prevention measures in relation to spray-paint.' Subsection 23A(2) provides that a seller who is an employer must take prevention measures in relation to each employee of the seller—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BOMBOLAS: I will be quick—who sells spray-paint cans to the public. And, of course, previous members have discussed these areas. A maximum of 40 penalty points will apply to a contravention of this requirement. The prevention measures are set out in subsection 23A(3), namely, instruct each employee not to sell spray-paint cans to minors in any circumstance. I think this is an important issue here.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr BOMBOLAS: Never bought one. The prevention measures are set out in subsection 23A(3), namely, instruct each employee not to sell spray-paint cans to minors in any circumstance even if the sale is for or claimed to be for an adult. If I did buy one it would have been when I was old enough to buy one. The seller must instruct each employee to sight acceptable evidence of age for a person before selling spray-paint cans to the person unless satisfied the person is an adult and must warn each employee that if they disregard these instructions and sell spray-paint cans to minors they commit an offence against section 23C—When employee of seller liable—of the Summary Offences Act 2005. The seller must also obtain written acknowledgement by each employee that they received the instructions and warnings.

In section 23B, 'Sale of spray-paint to minors', subsection (1) provides that a seller of spray-paint cans must not sell such items to a minor. We can go through all the penalties that are there. The first offence is 140 penalty units, the second offence is 280 penalty units and a third or later offence is 420 penalty units for a contravention of this prohibition.

Subsection 23B provides that an employee of the seller who sells spray-paint cans cannot be prosecuted under this section. Subsection 23B(3) provides defence grounds to a charge of an offence against subsection 23B(1) for a seller to prove; namely, that the seller or an employee of the seller require the person to produce acceptable evidence of age, the person produced acceptable evidence of age showing the person was not a minor and the seller or employer had a reason to believe that the evidence was false.

Subsection 23B(4) provides to the effect that section 46, discrimination in goods and services area of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, does not apply to a seller who refuses to sell spray-paint cans to a minor because of the ban of the sale of spray-paint cans. This will also cover an agent or an employee of the seller. Subsection 23B(5) sets out a definition for acceptable evidence of age of a person to mean a document that is a driver's licence, proof of age card or an Australian or foreign passport and bears a photograph of the person and indicates by reference to the person's date of birth or otherwise that the person has obtained a particular age.

Subsection 23C(2), 'When employee of seller liable', provides that the employee of a seller must not in the course of their employment sell a spray-paint can to a minor. There are maximum penalties that apply to a contravention of this provision, namely, for a first offence, 20 penalty units and for a second or later offence, 40 penalty units.

We could go on about these things, but let me say that these amendments put further pressure on employers and their employees not to sell spray-paint cans to minors. They also clearly define the penalties, if these are incurred, if an offence is actually committed.

I would also like to agree with the honourable member for Keppel that I, too, find graffiti offensive, especially when it is used as a defacing mechanism. I also take on board the suggestion of the member for Gregory about coming down hard on the offenders. At least under this system we will make it more difficult for prospective offenders to access spray-paint cans. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (8.28 pm): I, too, rise this evening to talk specifically in relation to amendments within this bill that will prohibit the sale of aerosol cans to minors. It is clear from the contributions that I have been listening to this evening that these amendments are well supported by both sides of the House. Indeed, graffiti is a highly offensive form of vandalism that costs local governments and agencies, in particular Queensland Rail, and private industry millions of dollars each year. The Gold Coast City Council, in common with many councils, has established a successful anti-graffiti program that employs up to six people full time who work throughout the Gold Coast. I can only echo my colleague's comments in saying that I, too, find graffiti, in particular graffiti that has been done by spray-paint, really quite offensive.

A couple of weeks ago Minister Paul Lucas was down in my electorate to open a fantastic upgraded road that borders a brand new residential development. The developer put up a big fence alongside the road. Within two days of that fence being painted there was graffiti all over it. The development has done a lot to enhance our local area. It was quite disappointing to see that someone had gone to great lengths to access that property and deface the paint-work.

My contribution tonight will be short. I rise to speak in support of amendments in this legislation that give police the powers to ensure that aerosol paint cans are not sold to minors. Obviously the amendments give police the powers to search and apprehend people who have spray-paint cans that the police determine to be an implement used for vandalism and graffiti. My community believes that the police should have these extra powers. Most people in our communities would expect that the police would have these powers to do their jobs. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (8.31 pm): The Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill will be welcomed by many in the electorate of Woodridge on a number of accounts. I have sat on many committees with representatives of local police and the Logan City Council, Neighbourhood Watch coordinators and other interested community members to discuss the issues of graffiti management, the sale of spray-paint to minors and, along with it, the dangerous habit of paint sniffing.

Being a community with many volunteers and one which finds solutions and sets out to implement them, much has been accomplished. The rapid removal of unsightly graffiti is accomplished by both volunteers and those under community correction orders. Neighbourhood Watch coordinator Eric Nielsen has been a champion for his community. We will often see Eric out with his volunteers and his graffiti trailer. They are on the job early in the morning. I understand that at least one of our graffiti trailers was constructed by prisoners at the Woodford Correctional Centre. On a daily basis we see our volunteers out and about taking digital photographs and then removing tags and other graffiti.

A drive through the electorate will reveal very little graffiti and many attractive murals depicting life in our community and its natural features. I must commend a number of our local traders who some time ago met regularly with me and the local council and voluntarily agreed to remove spray-cans from their shelves. Unfortunately, it was not all retailers. However, I am sure their stance did make a difference.

This bill with its prohibition on the sale of spray-cans to minors aged 17 and under will assist a great deal. Retailers were always reticent to challenge the sale to minors, but with the backing of this legislation, along with the penalties for both employer and employee, it will encourage them to enforce this new law. Signage and employee training will be important in the implementation.

I also note that there is an amendment within this bill relating to the detention of a person who is affected by inhaling spray-paint or a volatile substance in a declared area. It enables the continuation of the police powers to take the person to a place of safety which may be their own home but could be a place such as our Time Out Centre in Logan city.

Our Time Out Centre has now been operating for a number of years. It is seeing some incredible success stories. Operated by Drug Arm and with a number of professionals as well as dedicated volunteers, this centre regularly engages with young people and works intensively with them with the intent to have them cease their destructive behaviour and get back on a pathway that will lead them into employment and a better future.

Paint sniffing can be a lethal habit and can render a young person with severe brain damage. It is a sad sight to see young people engage in this habit. I commend our workers from Drug Arm and our volunteers who work with them. Many of these young people are from our Indigenous community. Thus many of our elders and community members have undertaken training so they are able to work with these youngsters and their families.

The other measure I wish to endorse is the prohibition of SMS and internet messages which enable motorists and bike riders to avoid police radar cameras and random breath testing. The message is simple: if people do not speed and do not drive over the limit then they are within the law and have nothing to fear. I believe services such as Road Spy do no-one a service. Motorists prepared to speed when they think they will not be detected are a danger on our roads—they are a danger not only to other motorists but to themselves and their passengers.

I have found the road toll, particularly those multiple deaths of young people, very distressing and almost inevitably avoidable. Just this year, two or three minutes from my office on Compton Road, six young people were involved in an horrific road crash. I no longer use the word accident for such incidents. The driver and front passenger were killed and four young people in the back, not all constrained by seatbelts, were injured. I later saw one of the young passengers interviewed saying the car was travelling at almost 200 kilometres per hour. The number of families and friends touched by such an incident is vast and their future haunted by the loss of their loved one.

In conclusion, I would like to add my voice to the many in our community to plead for constraint on our roads. When people go out on our roads they should do so with courtesy and patience. Parents should remember that their children ride as passengers in their vehicles for 16 years before they get behind the wheel of a car. Their bad habits may lay the foundation for poor driving habits in their children. I commend this bill to the House and thank the minister for progressive laws to try to save people from themselves.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (8.38 pm): The Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill that we are discussing tonight is a very important bill that covers a number of issues. As our shadow minister has indicated, we support the bill but there are some matters that I want to discuss.

At the start I pay tribute to the police. They do a marvellous job. We all rely on them. When there are problems and trouble they are our first port of call for support and assistance. In many instances I think police are working in extremely difficult circumstances. They deal with trauma. They often deal with anger and violence. Very often they have to put themselves in difficult situations to protect the more vulnerable people in society.

This bill addresses a number of issues. One issue that I think is important, and I have spoken about it before, is that of police powers. This bill provides some further clarification with regard to police powers. The Police Powers and Responsibilities Act was originally introduced by then Minister Russell Cooper during the time of the Borbidge government. Since then it has been added to as time has gone on and the need has been identified to make improvements or modifications.

The police powers legislation was originally for prescribed areas. After amendments it has moved on to cover a lot more general powers. This is one area that is very important in terms of some of the calls police get to rowdy parties or problems in streets. I have spoken previously about a problem in the Toowoomba suburb of Kearney Springs. A party developed into a mass party and there were a number of attacks on people's property and people personally in the street.

People expect that when they ring the police they will come and move on the people milling around in the street causing trouble or those who have the potential to cause trouble. The police on that occasion that I mentioned in Toowoomba were unsure as to what their powers were and more or less indicated that they could not do anything until an offence had been committed. I am not sure that their interpretation was right, but certainly the last amendment passed in the parliament did make it quite clear that they have the powers to move people on in order to prevent public disorder. That is a very important power for the police to have and one which I am sure will be conveyed to young police in their training. Situations like the one I mentioned in Toowoomba will not arise if the police are called to the scene and are able to tell people to move on before that congregation of people drinking and so forth develops into serious problems.

On the issue of domestic violence, much of the work of police officers today relates to domestic violence. Whereas years ago much police work was with drunk and disorderly people and break-ins and so forth, a great deal of the shiftwork of police today, particularly night shifts, often relates to domestic violence. There is a lot of process to be undertaken in investigating or attending to issues of domestic violence. It is a very difficult thing for police to deal with in terms of family members and so forth and it can take up much of the time of a shift. I am pleased to see that there are some changes and adjustments in this bill that make attending domestic violence situations that much easier and more specific to follow.

A number of members have spoken tonight about the problems of graffiti. It is the scourge of modern society, and I commend the move in this bill to bring about ways to make it more difficult to get hold of spray-cans. You can get on the trains in some parts of Australia and see that the nation has been totally defaced. I was recently on the train from Parramatta to Sydney and I could not get over the defacing of virtually everything. It degrades the whole of humanity and society to see the place in such a mess. It is interesting to note the way that people involved in graffiti seem to be attracted to trains. There are not too many grain wagons that get hauled through Toowoomba that are not defaced with graffiti, whether it happens in Brisbane or elsewhere. It is a terrible thing. It has become a cult, and various youth workers have looked at different ways to try to overcome it. For example, they have looked at providing a wall where young people can do it and develop their artistic talents where it will not offend other people. It is very offensive to people. It defaces people's towns and suburbs and their fences. It is a very offensive thing. Again, we support what is being done in this bill.

On the issue of speeding, we all want to see the road toll reduced. Late last year it seemed to be that almost every second day you would pick up the paper and young people had been tragically killed, and it just about breaks your heart to see it. There is a young girl in Toowoomba whom I admire greatly for what she wants to do to help in the area of road safety. She comes from a speedway family—the Whitleys. Her father Neil Whitley was a very good driver of Toranas in speedway at the showground at Charlton and other places. Neil's daughter Victoria Whitley has become the Australian Go Kart champion. She is now about 18 years of age, just a little over one year out of school. She went to Centenary Heights State High School and she is training at the TAFE motorsports course in Warwick and her ambition is to drive V8s. I have no doubt that she will achieve that.

Victoria has given a lot of time doing work on defensive driving. She has given a lot of time going to schools and organisations to promote road safety. She is prepared to do it in her own time because she has a great passion to stop not only the killing but also the maiming and injuring of so many young people. She has developed her own wonderful message. She can talk to young people because she is an attractive young woman their age and they listen to her. She talks about the fact that when she races they all race in one direction, they have stewards, she wears a helmet, she wears a fireproof suit, gloves and boots, she has a harness, roll bars, is strapped in, they have rules that they race to and they have an ambulance parked at the racetrack, yet it is still dangerous. She wants to get out the message of how silly and how dangerous it is for young people to not have any of that safety equipment, no ambulance nearby, people going in opposite directions, no stewards or yellow flags or red flags or anything else. She asks: how stupid is it for people to speed and put themselves in that danger? I am very grateful for some of the assistance that we have received from the department of transport, which has been looking into ways she could use her talents to help with the road safety message. I have written to the Premier and thanked him. She was delighted to have a meeting with the Premier during the cabinet meeting in Toowoomba. I just hope that the Premier is able to find a way in which her generosity of spirit in offering to help and be involved in a road safety message or course can be used.

I thought our shadow minister went through the bill very carefully and in detail with regard to technology and people being told about where radar traps are. You can listen to any Brisbane radio station in the morning and they will tell you where the barbecues are. They will say that there is one on Gympie Road at Chermiside outside the such and such shop and so on. They say that the police are having a barbecue and everybody knows what it is all about. I note that the explanatory notes say that that is all right because it is intermittent and is not deliberate. All of those things and signage makes you slow down. If you come into an area where the government has put up a big sign saying 'Police radar used in this area', you are doubly careful. You might be sitting on the right speed, but it is easy when on a long trip to slip over the speed limit before you know it, particularly if you do not use cruise control. Many people do not like cruise control because they believe it is dangerous and can cause accidents. If you are on the highway and you have cruise control, you turn it on and off and on and off and on and off. You are better off just using the accelerator and being in control of the car, because sometimes people have it on but do not realise and accidents have happened as a result, and their reaction when something goes wrong is not the right reaction.

There is signage on the side of the road and there is advertising. I do not think it is illegal for people to ring up and tell someone else that there is a speed trap. For example, your wife is ahead of you a couple of miles driving into town and she rings you on the mobile and says that there is a speed trap. People do it all of the time. It just makes everybody drive more cautiously. That is a fact of life. It is not stopping those people who are out there doing 200 kilometres an hour or drink driving and speeding or driving dangerously; it is just the normal average person who is always careful and they continue a little more carefully because they know that there is a speed trap in the vicinity.

How many of us have thought that someone has flicked their lights at us? The new blue-coloured lights in cars turn on when the car hits a little bump in the road and so for the next 50 kilometres you drive along steadily and there is nothing. It is a bit like trying to stop Betfair with the internet and people operating from overseas with all of the new technology. Maybe the time might be better spent not worrying about those systems in which they can change it to an overseas or interstate location. The time, money and effort might be far better spent on something like putting some decent cameras around the watch-houses or things like that that are missing at the moment. I am sure there are many other things the police would like the money spent on—for example, some decent accommodation for police in rural areas.

The shadow minister will ask some questions about this issue. If the government is trying to do something that is probably not going to work or is going to be very difficult, if not impossible, to police and manage, then I think it would be better off spending time, effort and money on doing something worth while that will work. Other things could be done. The bigger scourge that we have is drugs. The best way in which to give police the tools by which they can intercept drugs or catch drug dealers is to allow phone tapping. But in Queensland, we do not have that. That is a simple tool that costs nothing. We could have phone tapping with proper oversight such as a Public Interest Monitor, as we have with other covert surveillance systems. Phone tapping does not cost any money but it is a tool that could provide a higher rate of detection. Other states allow it.

Previously our shadow minister has spoken about the value that a helicopter would be to police in many circumstances, such as when there has been a major crash on the Ipswich Motorway during peak hour. How does anyone get there? The easiest way by which people can get there is by helicopter. That helicopter would allow people to come in, get the cars off the road and get traffic moving. Sometimes when a car accident occurs it is very hard to get to the scene of the accident because all the lanes are jammed full of cars and no-one can get there. The shadow minister raised some issues relating to information technology that are worth listening to. He will refer to those matters during the consideration in detail.

I want to pay a compliment to the police in Toowoomba. The courtesy and support that they provide to my electorate office is just amazing—and very often it is to my electorate staff because I might be down here or elsewhere in the state. The service that they provide is amazing. It is always spot on; it is always prompt. The police always get a sensible and a satisfactory result for the people who have made a complaint about a particular issue. The police do not provide that service just to my electorate; that is the way they operate. I commend the senior officers and all of their staff, because they have done very well in terms of crime statistics. The police in Toowoomba are highly regarded by all sections of the community—the Neighbourhood Watch areas, the schools, and the community based police. I know Cam Crisp at the Police Citizens Youth Club. The police officers support him on the committee and they come down to the club to help. There is a wonderful appreciation in our city for our police officers. I know how busy they are. At times we have made inquiries and we are just amazed at how many things they will have to attend to on a night shift.

As I alluded to earlier, attending to a domestic violence issue might take an enormous amount of time. Oftentimes people ring up because they have had a break-in, but the police are dealing with a situation where someone has threatened someone else with an axe or something. So they have to spend their time first where there is a life-threatening issue before they can go back and attend to the other matter. So on behalf of the citizens of Toowoomba, I would like to thank our police for the wonderful job they do in making our city a relatively safe place in which to live, for the comfort and security that they give to so many people, and particularly for the way in which they look after people who have suffered trauma and so forth.

I join with our shadow minister in supporting this bill, but I have to raise that note of caution in terms of trying to stop commercial or trade systems being used to provide information about speed traps and other information. When you look at the plethora of ways in which people advise each other—radio stations provide that information, the department of transport and the police have signs up to say that the speed trap is there—you start to wonder whether, at the end of the day, there are better and more effective ways in which to spend money on road safety, the prevention of speeding and trying to catch those people who really do cause the problems.

One of the increasing problems that I see—and it is not a situation where people can get caught by radar or RBTs—is the anger and impatience of many drivers. I do not want to knock young people, but it is generally younger drivers who exhibit this behaviour. The other day I followed someone along Ruthven Street—one of the main streets of Toowoomba. I counted that they went in and out of the lane in which they were travelling 13 times. That driver was just angry and impatient. He was probably doing only 60, 65 or 70 kilometres per hour, but he could not wait—he went into the next lane, then back again and then got caught because someone in front of him was turning right. The driver did not like that so he jammed into the left-hand lane and then went back into the other lane. Then someone else was turning right so he went back out again—in and out. That anger, which is exhibited by people driving up to another driver's tail, is virtually bullying. Even though that driver might be doing the speed limit, they are coming right up the back of the car in front of them and trying to force that driver to move over into the other lane and all the rest of it. I think that is a real issue. I think that is causing a lot of accidents on the road.

Earlier I heard a speaker say that people just need to take a deep breath before they get into their cars. They probably need to plan their trip three or four minutes earlier just to give themselves a bit of time so that they do not have to drive like a bat out of hell and make the road dangerous for everybody else. But I join with our shadow minister in noting that the coalition will be supporting this bill.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (8.55 pm): I rise to contribute briefly to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. As members have already heard from my colleague the honourable member for Burnett and shadow minister for police and corrective services, the coalition supports the majority of these amendments but has some reservations with sections of this bill. In essence, the bill aims to implement a coordination system in respect of improving the visual blight suffered by the public in the wake of errant graffiti vandals and provide police with added clarification under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

As it is clearly stated in the explanatory notes, this bill contains provisions amending a number of different statutes, including the Summary Offences Act 2005, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. In particular, the objectives of the amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 are to strengthen existing antigraffiti laws by

banning the sale of spray-paint cans to minors and to prohibit persons in trade or commerce from providing a service that informs others of police traffic enforcement sites. I note that minor changes are made by this bill to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 to amend the schedule dictionary.

I will direct my comments to changes that aim to reduce the incidence of graffiti damage. Queensland Police Service records show that graffiti offences are predominantly committed by minors and young adults. By restricting the supply of aerosol paint cans to minors, a reduction in the incidence of graffiti offences is expected. The amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs and employers to take standard prevention measures towards their employees who sell spray-cans.

Certainly, graffiti can cause a great deal of angst for local residents when youths and other lawless individuals who have no respect for other people's property deliberately cause damage in an attempt to gain attention for themselves. Vandalism caused by graffiti is thought to cost the community in Brisbane alone some \$10 million every year in cleaning up the damage. Queensland Rail is another target for offenders. This financial year Queensland Rail will spend an estimated \$2 million on repairing carriages and other railway property. I fully support this legislative action, which will send a stronger message to graffiti vandals that their wanton defacing of buildings in our local communities is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In doing so, I remind this House that it was the coalition which had a policy to wipe out graffiti way back before the 2004 election. We planned to restrict the sale of spray-cans to minors who used the spray-paint not only for graffiti but also to undertake the life-threatening practice of chroming.

In the Currumbin electorate there is a particular shopping centre that has been the target of graffiti vandals on a regular basis, resulting in enormous personal cost to the centre owner and, in turn, the tenants. They have had to install extensive security measures to protect their property. It is absolutely disgraceful that residents and businesses feel under siege from these vandals whom they can identify but are unable to restrain. One of our news items this week highlighted a group of youths who have been caught and charged with approximately 1,000 graffiti offences. This type of destruction on a mass scale must cease and it is about time young people learned some respect.

Calvin Pybus and June Hintz at Phantast have, for over a decade, partnered with neighbourhoods, governments, local councils and schools in an effort to provide opportunities and support for youth through artistic programs. These enlightening and proactive programs coordinated by Phantast build self-esteem in our youth and young adults and provide attractive eye-catching murals. Many honourable members of this House who travel on main roads throughout south-east Queensland are already seeing the work of this dedicated and creative pair without even being aware of it. Picture the many murals you see beside the M1 and the Logan motorways of cane fields and other landscapes. As you drive into Palm Beach you are greeted with hundreds of smiling children's faces. In many instances you are witnessing fine examples of former graffiti vandals who are now using their artistic skills in a legal manner and contributing in a mutually beneficial way to our society.

Phantast is a non-profit organisation supported by both state and federal governments to provide training for young artists through community works. Its web site states—

Phantast through its Smart Arts club strategy ... offer a wide variety of challenging and fun activities giving youth countless opportunities to pursue existing interests and develop new ones.

Phantast believes that young people from all backgrounds are capable of making the most of their lives and talents when they are given two essential things—opportunities and support. All Phantast programs are designed to maximise opportunities to acquire four basic senses—competence, usefulness, belonging, power and influence—which help them build self-esteem and be responsible rather than irresponsible. With the banning of the sale of spray-paint cans to minors and initiatives of organisations such as Phantast, it is to be hoped that a reduction in vandalism through graffiti will ensue. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (9.01 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill. For the benefit of other speakers I will be brief. I congratulate the government and the minister on the introduction of this legislation, which will ban the sale of spray-paint cans to minors—that is, to persons under 17 years of age—both for the good of the people who may want to participate in the illegal activity of chroming and for the good of our community. I reflect on my time on the Maroochy Shire Council when the amount of money that the council had to allocate to cleaning up graffiti works was unbelievable. There is also a significant cost to the community in time and dollars that members of the community have to spend in responding and trying to clean up graffiti. So I congratulate the minister and the government. It is great to see the unanimous support of this House for this important issue.

A lot of members have taken the time to share with the House their views on the issue of speed cameras and traffic enforcement. I would like to put on the record that I certainly support the use of fixed speed cameras. I would like to nominate a site where the government could locate a fixed speed camera once the new legislation comes into the House. I would like to nominate a fixed camera to be located on the Nambour Connection Road at the intersection at the entrance to the town of Woombye.

This is an identified black spot where there have been a number of fatalities and many serious accidents. I would love to see a fixed camera situated at that location. I will certainly be canvassing my community to gather more community support for this proposal. I reflect on the fact that when the Police Service operates a police radar in that location there is a reduction in speed and a reduction in the likelihood of serious accidents and the loss of life. So I hope that the minister for police will take this proposal to cabinet and urge the minister for transport to support me in having the first fixed camera in Queensland on the Nambour Connection Road at the entrance to the town of Woombye. We would love to have the minister's support.

I congratulate the minister and thank her for introducing this bill. I am certainly prepared to work in partnership with the government and the community to ensure that we have safer roads. I listened to the contribution by the member for Nanango as she revealed all about her driving record. I congratulate the member for Nanango on her openness in sharing with us.

Ms Spence: Do you want to share yours?

Mr WELLINGTON: No. I would also like to congratulate the member for Kurwongbah on her return to the House. I reflect on the fact that a few years ago she chaired an all-party committee on the issue of graffiti, and I look forward to listening to her powerful contribution shortly on this bill.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (9.04 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. I would like to speak particularly about the strengthening of the existing antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray-paint cans to minors—that is, to persons aged 17 years and under. I also note that the amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs and for employers to take standard prevention measures towards their employees who sell spray-paint cans.

I would like to talk about graffiti in my electorate. It costs many hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions of dollars, to repaint graffiti damage in the electorate of Bundamba. In fact, graffiti is all over the electorate and it is in all suburbs, from Bundamba right through to Springfield Lakes. There is a graffiti culture. But I am pleased to report to the House that there has been a crackdown by Queensland police officers, and recently several offenders have been brought before the courts.

In the electorate of Bundamba even street signs are graffitied—for example, stop signs are graffitied in my home suburb of Collingwood Park. I am very concerned about that because, if you cannot read a stop sign, accidents can happen. I note in the minister's second reading speech that Queensland Rail estimates that it costs \$2 million a year to remove graffiti from carriages and other railway property, such as railway station buildings. In the Bundamba electorate we believe that we are leading the way in relation to reducing railway graffiti.

The Bundamba Railway Station was very heavily graffitied a few years ago. Now the subway has been painted by students from Bundamba State Secondary College. There are very good murals on the Bundamba Railway Station and I am pleased to report that since these murals have been painted they have not been defaced by graffiti artists. At Redbank Railway Station, which is one of our busiest railway stations, Redbank State School students painted tiles which have been placed at the railway station. They are wonderful artistic works of art by the primary school students and, again, they have never been defaced by graffiti artists. I think this is because local students are creating local art.

I would like to pay tribute to the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division, particularly the miners trust section of the union because it has recently awarded a \$2,000 grant to Phantast to paint a coalmining heritage mural along the Ipswich Motorway. This mural will replace ugly graffiti along the sound barriers, and we expect this to start in the next couple of months.

Mr Pearce: Do you reckon an old miner like me might get on it?

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I think, Jimmy, you may have your face painted on a mural providing you provide me with an appropriate photograph.

A government member interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, he will be in his miner's hat because if he is not he will not get on the mural. There is also the Goodna RSL subbranch mural on the on-ramp to the Ipswich Motorway at Goodna. The first section depicts fighter planes from World War II. The subbranch informs me that it intends to fund further murals which will depict our proud services history in our electorate.

Phantast, which is a great community organisation, spends many months every year in the electorate of Bundamba. I would particularly like to thank June, Calvin and Jason, who are brilliant artists. They work with our community groups such as the RSL, our trade unions, our schools and our local community organisations to paint our sound barriers—and I can tell members that we have a lot of sound barriers in the electorate of Bundamba. The latest one that has been painted is the sound barrier at Riverview. They did not use any spray-paint. They used over 2,000 litres of paint in this mural, and it depicts the greening of Australia. So it has a green background with lots of tree branches and native flora and fauna painted on it.

I particularly thank Minister Paul Lucas and the main roads department for their great assistance to Phantast in our community and, particularly, our young painters. For example, for a period of two weeks the main roads department shut down one lane of the Ipswich Motorway from 8 pm to 4 am so that painting could proceed on the sound barriers at the motorway. I can report to the House that the people of Riverview are absolutely delighted with the result because it has replaced graffiti with a wonderful work of art. In our electorate, we plan to paint the new water-pumping stations at Bundamba, and students from the Bundamba State Secondary College and Redbank Plains State High School will be involved in those projects, which will be very large works of art.

In the electorate of Bundamba we love art. The Redbank sound barrier near Mine Street on the on-ramp to the Ipswich Motorway coming into Brisbane was often tagged by graffiti artists. Now it is a tribute to the artist D'Arcy Doyle. It is rarely touched and very rarely tagged by graffiti artists.

As I said, I pay tribute to the art organisation Phantast, the Base Youth Agency in Goodna, the Goodna Youth Accommodation Service, the Samoan Advisory Council and all of the wonderful churches and schools within the Bundamba electorate for working together to try to stop graffiti. We also work together to encourage youth to paint real and meaningful murals. In the electorate my motto is that if it is static do not graffiti, paint it; make it a work of art by the local youth and our community organisations. In our electorate we even paint the electricity poles.

I also place on record my thanks to the Goodna police for their work in charging graffiti offenders. They really work very hard in our electorate. A special type of copper works in Goodna and I would like to pay tribute to all of them. They have a great leadership team in Inspector Cliff Dieckman, Andy Ballantine, Chris Booth, the other sergeants and all who work in CIB and Juvenile Aid. They are very good people who provide wonderful leadership in our community. I thank the minister for bringing this legislation before the House. I commend the bill to the parliament.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (9.11 pm): I also rise to speak in support of the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Before I do that, I acknowledge in the public gallery a very good friend of my family, Peter Smith, and his mother, Mrs Smith, who is 77 years young. It was her birthday this week. On behalf of the members of this House, I welcome her to the Queensland parliament and wish her the very best in the next 77 years.

It is a pleasure for me to rise to speak in support of the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. The bill seeks to improve antigraffiti regulations and prohibit the practice of publishing tip-offs regarding traffic enforcement sites. In addition, the bill seeks to amend several other related pieces of legislation.

Unfortunately, in our community access by young people to spray-paint is an issue that at times results in graffiti. Only yesterday or the day before I saw on television some young people being arrested for painting graffiti in public places. I was astonished that some of them were as young as 12- or 14-years-old and were charged with 400 to 500 separate offences. Clearly, graffiti is a problem in our community. However, at the outset I also indicate that the community at large may have a misconception about aerosol painting, believing that any painting involving aerosol spray-cans is graffiti. I do not believe that that is entirely correct. Obviously, urban art forms can use aerosol paint. While most of the time I do not appreciate that art form, it is an urban art form that we need to acknowledge. The difference between an urban art form that is accepted as art compared to graffiti is simply that permission is given by the owner of the media to allow that art to be performed on their property.

As the members for Redlands and Cleveland would know, I have a community engagement vehicle and I invited local urban artists to—

Ms Spence: I have seen it.

Mr CHOI: That is right. Three years ago the honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services launched my vehicle. I invited local urban artists to perform their work on that vehicle. At times that vehicle is used to clean up graffiti in my electorate. I want members to understand the difference between urban art that uses aerosol spray-cans and unauthorised works, which we regard as graffiti. I take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the sponsors of that vehicle, including the Capalaba Park Shopping Centre, and Alan Lucas and partners who are very keen supporters of my vehicle. Without their support, that vehicle would not be on the road. It is very important that the supporters of my vehicle are acknowledged.

Sadly, it is also true that at times young people inhale the fumes from aerosol paint cans and suffer the effects of substance abuse as a result. At times, that abuse can be fatal. In my electorate, we have a school for young people who, for various reasons, have become disengaged from the traditional school structure. That was a pilot program that has now been extended. The teachers who work in that program assist with skill building and other activities. They provide alternative means of developing a skill base for young people who have become disengaged from traditional school structures.

I take my hat off to those teachers, who obviously have hearts of gold and so much patience with the young people with whom they work. It is particularly difficult to stay detached from young people when they reveal special talents that, for whatever reason, were not encouraged or fostered in the

traditional education system, or any other system for that matter. This was the case with one boy. Although he was known to be a spray-paint sniffer, he had been starting to respond to the alternative teaching methods. He was showing considerable artistic promise. When his body was found on a vacant block of land, naturally his teachers were devastated at the loss of a promising young student to chroming.

The amendments within the bill cut across several pieces of legislation. However, all the changes have the same effects. They improve the current status of police powers with respect to detaining, searching and seizing items such as spray-cans or smoking products from persons who are using the products illegally. Under this bill, acting on a suspicion, the police will be able to ask for proof of a young person's age, particularly with respect to cigarettes.

Recent survey data has shown that students aged 15 to 17 years form the largest percentage of juveniles in detention, with only about one-quarter of those detained being over the age of 18. I believe that the legislation has the potential to bring necessary changes to those affected by graffiti, as well as those illegally using spray-cans and cigarettes.

Furthermore, the amendments proposed by the minister will assist the police to do their job more effectively with respect to the evasion of police by offenders through speeding with no regard for the safety of others. The bill corrects some drafting inconsistencies and improves the scope of the legislation, including clear identification of the police officer involved with the offence and the opportunity for the owner of the car to advise if he or she was not the driver at the time of the offence. Also, some inconsistencies regarding the disposal of the subject motor vehicle whilst the owner is waiting on the results of the application by the police are avoided by this bill, with power given to the commissioner regarding the disposal of the vehicle.

I support totally stronger regulations against graffiti and cigarette sales to minors. Obviously, nothing is 100 per cent fail safe, but I believe that this is certainly a step in the right direction.

In closing, I mention my support for the hardworking men and women of the Queensland Police Service. I know that at times the government has some argy-bargy with the Police Union where the union is looking after the interests of its members by seeking better working conditions and perhaps better equipment. I fully understand that. We, as members of the parliament, have a responsibility to ensure that we discharge our duty in an accountable manner in terms of the finances of this great state.

Having said that, I think no-one in this House would disagree with me that not many professional people go out to work every day not knowing what dangers they will face. At times I feel sorry for the spouses of members of the Queensland Police Service when they think about the safety of their loved ones when they go to work.

I would like to pay tribute to the hardworking Queensland policemen and women for a job well done. Clearly we have the best Police Service in this country. Their work should be recognised. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.20 pm): I rise to support this legislation and to address the issue of graffiti laws within it. I would also like to commend the work of the former all-party chair of the antigraffiti task force, the member for Kurwongbah, for her hard work in producing the law and water report a number of years ago. This provided a very comprehensive analysis of graffiti issues in Queensland for the former minister for police, Tony McGrady. Being part of this committee made me realise how devastatingly destructive graffiti can be and how it requires a tough, long-term solution. Graffiti has long been a blight on our community. Everywhere in our city that it appears it marks our beautiful landscapes, lessening the value of properties in our suburbs and in our industrial areas. Where there is an abundance of graffiti crime follows.

A local resident of mine, Anthony Lanza, called to see me soon after I was elected as the member for Mount Ommaney about eight years ago. He wanted to discuss the graffiti problem in our suburbs and to find some solutions to the ever-increasing problem. He was prepared to put in a lot of hours of his own time to rid the area of this unsightly vandalism. We then established a group named simply the antigraffiti group, and lobbied government and council for grants to get started. Anthony's wife, Ann, made numerous connections with officers in the various government departments and authorities in an attempt to keep their attention on the problem and to ensure that processes were in place for the graffiti's rapid removal. However, in the end it was up to Anthony to gather together some helpers, including the local Jindalee Rotary Club, and go out at all hours of the night to take the tags down as soon as they appeared. He received some donations of paint from local businesses, assistance under the gambling machine benefit fund to purchase a trailer and help from Rotary to purchase a vehicle but only after a number of years using his own resources and vehicle to wander the streets in the early hours of the morning to remove the tags.

The group finally started in January 2000 and has gone from strength to strength. Members of the group cover about one-fifth of Brisbane, including most western and south-western suburbs and some south and eastern suburbs on behalf of the council.

Anthony and Ann are committed members of the antigraffiti group and have constantly lobbied the government to ban spray-paint cans. Spray-cans are not only very easy and cheap to purchase but also easy to steal from unsuspecting shop owners. The group also notifies police of any leads that it has on graffiti vandals. Arrests have subsequently been made based on this information passed to the police. The group works with council, Main Roads and other authorities. The group sent a copy of their clean-up reports to Sherwood police and the Brisbane City Council.

Ann has worked with JAB at Inala and managed to help stop a number of offenders from Centenary high school continuing their graffiti vandalism. Some 90,000 items of graffiti have been removed by this group to date.

The group has noted an alarming number of drug implements around graffiti sites and has also endeavoured to clean up these hazards so that the public, if they are around the area, are prevented from injury. Last year I had a meeting with Anthony, Mary James from the Sherwood Neighbourhood Watch and officers from Transport and Main Roads to look at ways that we can work towards keeping this unsightly graffiti off public property, particularly noise abatement barriers along railway lines. Eighty per cent of the graffiti we clean up is within 100 metres either side of the Ipswich rail corridor. It was suggested that murals, although quite an expensive solution, could be painted in stages along the corridor and that railway police could regularly patrol railway property inside the barriers.

The cost of removing graffiti is enormous as vandals usually come back and hit the areas that have been cleaned. In fact, it is estimated that \$10 million is spent every year in Brisbane, and QR will spend \$2 million this financial year removing graffiti from railway property. Night patrols over the Christmas-New Year period showed that graffiti vandals are still very active. Most of the damage removed was implemented by spray-cans. The group advises that the most prolific vandals are aged in the 20- to 30-year age bracket. Seven graffiti vandals were arrested in January by members of the Oxley police district. The group is still removing approximately 10,000 square metres per annum. The BCC graffiti reduction team removed 110,000 square metres last year. Anthony Lanza is still finding spray-cans and graffiti pens imported from Germany and sold by hip-hop shops in Brisbane. He believes that these implements should carry the code pertaining to the store where they were purchased so that offenders could be easily traced by police.

This legislation is a courageous step in curbing graffiti in the future. However, there is still more to be done. The Summary Offences Act is strengthened by banning the sale of spray-cans to minors—persons aged 17 years and under—and the Oxley police have been very proactive over the last 12 months in working with local businesses in an attempt to curb the sale of spray-cans in the community.

The amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs for their employers to take standard prevention methods towards their employees who sell spray-cans. The amendments will also provide offences relating to sellers generally and to employers and employees in specific circumstances. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (9.26 pm): The Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006 amends six acts and, as such, covers quite a bit of ground. The headline issue is the banning of the sale of spray-cans of paint to minors. Amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 will require shops to put up prohibition signs. Offences will be created for sellers, employers and employees who sell spray-cans to underage buyers in certain circumstances. Clearly this is aimed at addressing the growing problem of graffiti.

However, I believe that it would be better to focus on punishing the offenders—that is, the people creating the graffiti—rather than lumbering honest, law-abiding shopkeepers and staff with more rules and the threat of penalties. When the offenders are caught they should, as a matter of course, be forced to clean up their mess. I am not too worried about them being children—I am not talking about jailing them—but if they think they are old enough and clever enough to destroy public buildings, private fences or railway wagons then they can spend some of that energy cleaning it up.

I believe that our justice system is not served well enough if it takes responsibility for their actions away from young offenders. I believe that this kind of offence in particular is ideal for putting that responsibility back on the offender. Cleaning up the mess one creates is a very basic lesson in responsibility.

I move now to the amendments relating to the use of SMS and similar communication services also contained in the Summary Offences Act. These amendments are aimed at stopping anyone making a business out of passing on information about the location of police speed cameras, mobile radars, RBTs and other traffic enforcement sites when it may help someone avoid or prepare for the site. I have a number of concerns with these amendments. The first is that they discriminate in favour of one kind of business over another. Radio stations will still be allowed to broadcast such warnings, but the businesses that do so by text message, mobile phone or internet networks will be banned. If the main argument is that people should not be allowed to avoid a radar site or RBT location, then surely simple logic tells us that radio broadcasts, which can be heard in practically every vehicle on the road, should have a much greater potential effect than the text services that are only sent to those relatively few people who subscribe to such a service.

Then there is the argument that the text services require people to look at their phone to read the message. We already have to look at the speedometer to ensure that we do not break the law. Telling a policeman that we were speeding because we did not look at the speedometer as we were busy keeping our eyes on the road will not work as an excuse. We need to check the petrol gauge to see if we need to fuel up. We should monitor the engine temperature gauge to avoid mechanical problems. If our vehicles are fitted with satellite navigation systems, as is increasingly common, we will need to look at the map on the screen from time to time to ensure we find our destination. We may glance at the air-conditioning controls to adjust the temperature. We might look down to adjust the demister and so on. We are now beginning to see some cars appear with night vision devices, some of which operate through a screen in the dashboard. Should we look at these screens or simply keep our eyes on the road regardless of how bad the viewing conditions are? How do we balance all of these demands with the basic need to keep our eyes on the road?

These amendments as they relate to speed cameras and mobile radar operations also raise the issue of whether exceeding the speed limit is actually that much of a contribution to the road toll. I am well aware of what the common wisdom is, but it has been challenged by recent figures from England which indicate that only five per cent of drivers who crash were breaking the speed limit. These are new figures based on a new method that police in that country have adopted to record the cause of crashes. I raise them in the context of whether speed camera locations, mobile radar locations and the like are fulfilling a revenue raising role rather than meeting a pressing road safety need. Certainly the figures from England raise doubts about the road safety function of strictly enforcing speed limits while disregarding other factors such as road conditions, weather conditions, vehicle standards and so on. If that is the case—if the speed cameras are more about revenue raising than about road safety—then regulating the way people pass on information about them is more to do with cash flow than saving lives.

Interestingly, the same figures identified distractions caused by mobile phones, satellite navigation systems, driver impatience and drink and drug driving as being neglected as factors in the road toll. I believe that serves to highlight how complex the road safety environment is. One may wonder how far this will go because there appears to be a grave conflict between the equipment and devices being fitted into motor cars all demanding greater or lesser attention from the driver while at the same time, of course, the driver needs to keep their eyes on the road. Should we be banning all but the most basic of devices from our vehicles? Should we have only a speedometer and nothing else on the instrument panel? Is that more likely to improve road safety than draconian enforcement of arbitrary speed limits? Perhaps it is time to have a wider debate about the entire road safety environment rather than the current concentration of blind enforcement of arbitrary limits.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.32 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, with your indulgence, I welcome some friends to the public gallery: Bill and Boo Brett, Andrew and Julie Donne and Jasmine Griffiths, who I am sure are in a state of torpor up there in the public gallery. I welcome them to the Queensland parliament.

The current bill before the parliament will effect a ban on the sale of spray-paint cans to persons under 17 years old, which is something that I have been advocating since I was elected to the seat of Surfers Paradise in 2004. I am pleased that the government is finally taking action to strengthen the laws with regard to the sale of paint products to children in a bid to stamp out graffiti, albeit three years after the coalition raised its concerns about graffiti.

I often mention the Surfers Paradise Community Consultative Committee, which meets at the police station every two months. Apart from hooning in vehicles, the biggest concerns of residents on the Gold Coast at these sorts of community consultative meetings are graffiti and its prolificacy throughout the neighbourhoods on the Gold Coast. I commend the government for bringing in this legislation. In my electorate and certainly across the state graffiti leaves a pernicious stain on our community, particularly in public areas where the community seeks reassurance that its safety and wellbeing is being protected.

Throughout Queensland there are a number of measures being taken to stamp out graffiti. In Brisbane, Lord Mayor Campbell Newman recently indicated that the significant social and economic cost of the graffiti problem to the community is about \$10 million every year, not to mention the human effect on perceptions of public safety. Queensland Rail, the primary target of graffiti in this state, invests significant funding in attempting to address this problem through a comprehensive graffiti management strategy focusing on enforcement and preventative measures. Other local governments, such as the Gold Coast City Council, have also taken positive steps towards the elimination of this scourge in society through public awareness campaigns and clean-up task forces. However, there appears to be no real whole-of-government strategy to deal with the problem.

Contrary to popular belief, the community generally does not report graffiti. Police statistics do not accurately reflect the amount of graffiti crime in this state, which would perhaps allow police and governments to develop more effective enforcement and/or crime prevention strategies. Research in the United States, England and to a limited degree in Australia has shown that graffiti is often linked to

antisocial behaviour, criminal and gang activity and drug use. This is of serious concern to the community, particularly as Queensland Police Service statistics indicate that minors and young adults are the main perpetrators of this petty crime, which studies have identified as a launching pad into other areas of crime.

Recently, in south-east Queensland we have witnessed the uprise of youth gangs who model themselves on notorious US gangs terrorising our streets and leaving their virulent 'tags' in public spaces. These pervading symbols are designed to incite fear amongst members of these communities and we must do whatever we can to prevent this from happening. Mindless graffiti destroys public amenity and disenfranchises the community, who no longer feel safe to use these areas. The problem we have in Queensland is that there appears to be no absolute effective strategy to deal with this issue. I find it amazing that in 2007 we are only just now looking at measures to limit minors' access to graffiti materials to prevent a crime that is as old as civilisation itself. It is unreasonable to expect retailers in this state to adopt and enforce voluntary codes of practice restricting the sale of spray-paint cans to minors, which has been the case up until now.

Retailers and employees have been reluctant to adopt the voluntary practice for fear of being accused of discrimination, which we must make sure will not happen under the new legislation. We have a responsibility to engage the whole of the community to deal with this scourge to ensure that its effects are minimised. Specifically, the state government needs to enact feasible legislation that will limit youth access to graffiti materials, as I hope this bill will do, as well as working more closely with local governments to address this issue. To this end, there is a real need to stop the sale of spray-paints to minors, which the amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 bring about. Once again, I applaud the government for moving this action and I say that it is about time. Other measures that the police minister should be looking at to eliminate this problem are improving intelligence and reporting systems for police, dedicating more police resources to target this problem, adopting a policy on the timely cleaning of the tags and graffiti in public spaces, encouraging legal art in appropriate places and targeting gang and antisocial behavioural problems. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this legislation.

I am also interested in the legislation dealing with the unauthorised SMS messaging of alerts of traffic enforcement sites. I note the concerns of the shadow minister, the member for Burnett. I believe it is necessary that the government take every measure to shut down irresponsible entrepreneurs profiteering from being a threat to public safety. However, I mirror the concerns of my coalition colleagues with respect to a number of shortcomings in the creation of this offence. While the coalition generally supports the principle behind the legislation because of the potential for misuse of this technology, such as by Road Spy, a commercial operation informing drivers of the location of traffic enforcement sites, there are a number of problems with this legislation.

The first problem that arises is with the definitions contained within the proposed legislation. I reiterate the shadow minister's concerns that the focus of this clause is far too narrow to prevent this offence from occurring. The legislation in its current form outlaws 'relevant messages' containing information on police traffic enforcement activities from being transmitted via an internet message, text message or any other message that may be heard, read or otherwise viewed by a person using a mobile phone. This clause neither makes reference to other forms of technology nor includes new and emerging technologies that are changing the way we go about our lives on a daily basis. By ignoring technologies such as GPS devices and personal digital assistants—PDAs—the legislation currently before the parliament is at best irrelevant and at worst redundant.

The second problem with the proposed amendment on which I seek clarification from the minister as to its application is that it will not stop commercial operations like Road Spy from carrying out their business interstate. It would not be difficult for the Gold Coast based Road Spy to move its operations to Tweed Heads and be perfectly legal. As we are dealing with technology where messages can be broadcast and received over great distances, I would be interested to know where the minister perceives the offence to occur and whether there is any criminality on the part of the receiver for procuring this information by subscribing to services that would be illegal under this new legislation.

Technology is not defined by borders and it appears that the police minister has considered this, given the explicit reference to the service operating in 'Queensland or elsewhere'. As I have mentioned, the clause is both impractical and impossible to enforce.

Until a similar offence is enacted in other states or is contained within the National Road Rules or other legislation, crafty businesspeople trading in sensitive information pertaining to police traffic enforcement activities will continue to get a green light. On the one hand, I applaud the government for taking steps towards legislating this potentially dangerous business but, on the other hand, I am reticent to support this amendment in its current ill-considered state.

This amendment before parliament, I submit, is nothing more than redundant lip-service aimed at creating a perception that the government is cracking down on these activities whilst being fully aware that from a practical perspective the law just does not stack up. Unenforceable laws are worse than no law at all. Until the government can produce something that has even a minute chance of being enforced the coalition cannot support the amendment.

Hon. LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (9.40 pm): The Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill, which is before the House, is an omnibus bill amending a range of legislation dealing with the criminal laws of the state. The components of the bill which I wish to address are the amendments to the Summary Offences Act which deal with graffiti.

During 2002 and 2003 I had the privilege of chairing a bipartisan parliamentary graffiti task force established by the then minister for police and corrective services, Tony McGrady. The task force attracted strong interest from members and it reported in August 2003. One of the task force areas of interest was the prohibition of the sale of spray-cans of paint to minors—a measure which is contained in this bill. The task force saw the benefit of the prohibition of the sale of spray-cans of paint to minors not only in tackling graffiti but also in reducing the very harmful practice of chroming.

Graffiti is, of course, as old as civilisation itself. However, it is the emergence of it as a worldwide adjunct to an expression of certain subcultures that has seen graffiti grow to be a phenomenon requiring specific legislative responses. This has occurred in Australia over the past two decades or so after it first emerged in the USA in the 1960s.

During the task force's inquiry we learnt quite a deal. I think any members who are here tonight who were on the task force would agree with me that we learnt new languages, we learnt so much more about generation X and generation text. We can now relate to our children in ways that they would hope we could not.

One of the things we did learn was that there are four typical forms of graffiti. The first, and the type which the public would be more familiar with, is hip-hop graffiti. This tends to involve striking and highly stylised calligraphy and colours. Fences, walls, bus shelters and trains are favourite targets and perpetrators identify themselves through the use of tags. It is this graffiti which our measures in the criminal law most directly target. Graffiti can take numerous other forms such as political slogans, such as the 'bugger up' campaigns, which target billboards or hate graffiti amongst particular groups in the community. This graffiti is damaging to security but, thankfully, it is not all that common in Australia.

Responses to graffiti need to be multipronged if they are to have any real hope of succeeding. Criminalising the actual behaviour, while a necessary part of a holistic strategy, is no solution of itself. Indeed it is the very illegality of the graffiti which makes it part of the subculture which spawns graffiti. There appears to be little evidence that even having harsher penalties on the statute books is any meaningful deterrent to graffiti vandals.

Queensland has harsh laws. I think Queensland still has the harshest laws in Australia, if not the Western World, in this regard. We impose severe penalties when compared to the laws of other Australian jurisdictions. As it stands, the laws in Queensland provide that graffiti is an indictable offence, whereas in most other Australian jurisdictions it is a less serious summary offence. We have a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment for graffiti at a school and a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment for graffiti more generally. There is also a provision for a two-year maximum term of imprisonment for the possession of a graffiti instrument.

The graffiti task force recognised that criminal sanctions alone were not enough to reduce the incidence of graffiti. It proposed that an attempt be made to restrict the availability of the tools used by graffiti perpetrators. The measures in this bill banning the sale of spray-paint cans to persons aged 17 years and under is a worthwhile measure to restrict the availability of such a graffiti tool.

Prohibition signs will be required to be in place in outlets which sell spray-cans. This legislative backing will reinforce the voluntary system which a number of retailers in the state have already put in place. At this point can I commend the commission for children and young people for the work that it did through its inquiry into volatile substance abuse. I commend it for the strategies that it put in place in relation to community engagement and for encouraging retailers to put in place the voluntary code of practice for the storage and sale of spray-cans of paint. I think it is a lot of work that the commission for children and young people did back in late 2003 which has seen many of our retailers adopt the responsible sale of spray-cans of paint.

With the amendments before the House there will be a power to seek the forfeiture of spray-cans from retailers found guilty of selling spray-cans of paint contrary to the proposed provisions. This is a worthwhile measure. But like criminal penalties it must be recognised that this measure alone will not of itself stop graffiti completely. Spray-cans of paint are not the only instrument used by those doing graffiti.

Further, while there is evidence that the majority of graffiti perpetrators are under the age of 17 the practice does extend well beyond these age groups. It is simply a myth to imagine all graffiti is performed by bored or alienated 15-year-olds. It is not, and in fact the practice is known to be carried out by people in their 30s and 40s.

It must also be borne in mind that like the prohibition on underage smoking or the consumption of alcohol it is very difficult to restrict the practical availability of a product which is legal for use by the majority of the population. We are not banning spray-cans of paint per se, only the sale to a particular age group. There is no one solution to reducing or preventing graffiti. But what we do know is that the best strategy combines a strong legal framework with an active program of community partnerships.

For instance, the quick removal of graffiti is part of the required comprehensive response. Also situational measures have proved effective—measures such as protective barriers on likely targets as seen with the growing of plants and trees in front of noise barriers. We also need to understand the subculture and why graffiti is an enduring part of this subculture. Some legal street art programs have been effective in reducing the incidence of graffiti. Engagement with the graffiti perpetrators rather than seeking harsher penalties will sometimes be far more effective in changing their behaviour.

The final strand of the task force's examination involved scientific responses in terms of the use of products to limit the effectiveness of graffiti. Certain paints and treatments for walls and fences will make it difficult to apply paints and markers in the first place. Other products applied to the surface make cleaning much easier. We do need to invest in these initiatives.

In summary, the bill implements a single but worthwhile measure to respond to graffiti. The best response is having in place a measure of legal provisions, effective policing and community engagement. Graffiti is a blight on our urban landscape. I wholeheartedly endorse a comprehensive suite of measures to reduce and prevent graffiti. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (9.48 pm): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. This bill includes amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 to strengthen existing antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray-paint to minors, who are people aged 17 years and under. These amendments were included in the government's 100-day action plan and are listed as election commitment No. 77. It has been interesting to listen to the other members of the graffiti task force that was formed in the last parliament. It is great to see the sorts of results that are coming out of the recommendations that we put forward. In this bill spray-paint is defined to include any liquid or other substance in a spray-can that, if applied to a surface, is designed to colour, stain, mark or corrode the surface.

The amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs and for employers to take standard prevention measures toward their employees who sell spray-paint cans. The amendments will also provide offences relating to sellers generally and to employers and employees in specific circumstances. These amendments are justified given that the state government, local authorities, private industry and members of the general public have to spend millions of dollars annually to repair graffiti damage in Queensland. The Brisbane City Council has recently reported that graffiti vandalism costs the Brisbane community an estimated \$10 million every year and that it significantly reduces the amenity, perceived safety and liveability of the city. It is estimated that Queensland Rail will spend about \$2 million this financial year alone removing graffiti from carriages and from other railway property.

In Caboolture I recently met with the CBD traders regarding the problems in our area. We all realise that a significant proportion of this graffiti damage is caused by minors misusing aerosol spray-paint cans to produce personalised tag symbols. What we have to remember is that we all have a role to play. Property owners need to realise that effective immediate clean-up is very important so that the graffiti vandals do not have a chance to idolise the work that they put out there. Parents need to know where their kids are and also need to know what they are doing when they are not around. It is very important that they take that responsible role, because many young people that I see causing these sorts of offences are the ones who are not adequately supervised. So we as a community need to work together to help them improve their parenting skills, but at the end of the day they still need to take responsibility to know where their under 17-year-olds are, what they are doing, who they are with and make sure that they are abiding by the law.

It is also about teaching them respect for themselves and respect for other people's properties, and I think that that is something that has been missing a lot. I see that in my community as well. It has also been interesting to note that some of the police officers who work within the schools—for example, Senior Sergeant Andy and Constable Andrea—with the local schoolchildren are really focusing on that issue. They are not just talking about spray-paint cans or graffiti or chroming or whatever the other issues are; they are actually talking to the children about respect and respecting themselves, how they build up confidence in themselves and how they deal with other issues of substance abuse—that is, trying to give them the life skills that they need so that they will become good members of our communities as they grow older. I would certainly like to commend them for that and also the non-profit community organisations that are working with them such as Bar Gomara and other ones like that.

A number of retailers in the state currently have voluntary codes of practice restricting the sale of spray-paint cans to minors. However, sales staff may be reluctant if challenged by a customer to adhere to a voluntary code of practice for fear of being accused of discrimination. To more effectively combat spray-paint graffiti crime, the Summary Offences Act will be amended accordingly. The new provisions will operate in conjunction with the existing section 17 graffiti instrument of the Summary Offences Act that contains offences in connection with the possession of a graffiti instrument including a spray-paint

can that a police officer reasonably suspects has been used for graffiti or was being used for graffiti. The prohibition on the sale of spray-paint cans to minors will complement section 23 relating to the sale of potentially harmful things of the Summary Offences Act by further limiting the opportunity for minors to engage in chroming through inhaling the propellant gases used in spray-paint cans.

Section 27 relating to forfeiture of the Summary Offences Act will be widened to authorise courts that find persons guilty of the new offences under section 23B and section 23C of that act to order spray-paint cans which either offence relates to be forfeited to the state. Importantly, this bill also amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to widen section 30 relating to prescribed circumstances of searching persons without warrant and prescribed circumstances for searching a vehicle without warrant of that act. The amendments will empower police officers to stop, detain and search persons and vehicles without warrant and to seize spray-paint cans as evidence of the proposed new offences.

The bill also inserts a new section 43A relating to unlawful sale of spray-paint to minors in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to empower police officers to ask suspected minors who are observed being sold or who are reasonably suspected of just having been sold spray-paint cans to show acceptable evidence of age and to produce that which was sold to them. A police officer may seize the spray-paint can if the suspected minor either refuses or is unable to comply with the request or shows acceptable evidence of age that they are a minor and the police officer reasonably suspects that the spray-paint can is evidence of an offence against sections 23B and 23C of the Summary Offences Act. These powers will be the same as those currently available to police officers under section 43 relating to unlawful supply of smoking products to children of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. These amendments are essential to ensure that police officers may more effectively combat graffiti crime in this state, and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Spence, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.54 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Woorim Beach Sand Dunes

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.54 pm): The Caboolture Shire Council is intent on bulldozing two metres from the top of an 85-metre stretch of sand dune opposite the shops at Woorim Beach despite an outcry from the general public. This outcry stems from the fact that they were not consulted. It is interesting to note that right next door to this proposed sand dune bulldozing stands a six-storey block of flats which received favourable approval from the council and the local councillor declared an interest in it. In front of this unit block, council has already bulldozed the dune. The excuse used was to place sandbags to alleviate erosion but at the same time it gave the developer direct access to the beach, which I might add was advertised until the Department of Fair Trading pulled them up for false and misleading advertising. It also gave those residing there a view of the beach which has not been afforded to any of the other local residents with private dwellings.

The council asked the EPA for approval to bulldoze the dune in a letter dated 24 May 2006. Although the local councillor says that this approval was part of the Woorim master plan which the state government contributed around \$900,000 to, it had nothing to do with it. The dune is a separate issue and, in fact, the Woorim master plan states quite clearly that the dune profile will remain. People were consulted on the Woorim master plan but not on the bulldozing of the dune. The EPA granted approval in good faith with several conditions, but the primary and only reason the council gave for requesting the approval was that the work was to satisfy public demand. This of course was not correct.

In the same letter from the council to the EPA it is acknowledged that the dunal work will not create a precedent for private developers to gain approval for lowering dunes in front of privately owned land. This has become very divisive as the council is proposing to give some a view of the water and not others who live on the waterfront. The EPA, even though the council misled it, does not have the legislative power to overturn the approval given to council. However, the council can and already two Caboolture councillors, Lynette Devereaux and John McNaught, have said they will support a motion to delay the proposed bulldozing until proper public consultation is carried out. Only two other votes are required and people should strongly lobby the mayor and the Bribie Island councillor to get the outcome they desire.

Most Woorim residents agree that the work done by the council with state government funds is being well spent. The roadworks, including a separate access to the Bribie Island Surf Club, is to be commended. The surf club has huge community support and provides a valuable service to the

community in protecting our beachgoers. This club must be a priority in any negotiations to ensure that it is able to continue to provide that essential safety service. Residents and businesses believe that Woorim Beach is worth preserving. The state government has approved 25 per cent subsidies to the council in the past for beach nourishment, and from all counts that will continue. But any work has to be done in a transparent manner. People believe this council has not been transparent in its dealings with the EPA and the general public. Erosion is a natural process and one that occurs up and down the east coast of Queensland. The state government provides some financial assistance, but with the vast coastline it can only do so much. We do rely heavily on the honesty of councils to ensure that the work they do is beneficial to the entire community.

National Livestock Identification System

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (9.57 pm): There are a number of iconic sports that are integral to the bush character. High among them are the traditional campdrafts, rodeos and cutting events where a wide range of age groups can take part in horse sports centred around the traditional cattle handling and riding skills of the drovers, jackeroos, jilleroos and horsemen of legend. But they and the clubs that organise and support them have been dealt a cruel blow by this Beattie government. In its blind pursuit of red tape it has decided to impose NLIS tagging and reporting restrictions on the cattle used in these sporting events. This Beattie government insists that the purity of the NLIS system must be preserved regardless of whom it hurts.

In the eyes of the bush, that brutal extremist position ignores the reality of the matter. Cattle at these campdrafts, rodeos and cutting events are almost always donated. They are taken to the event, used for the event and then returned to their home properties. They are usually cattle that are not ready for immediate sale. Until 1 January this year organisers have been allowed to use what was called a mob permit to cover this process, but now the full force of the National Livestock Identification System law is to be enforced. It will mean, for example, that a grazier who has previously donated cattle, loaded them on to a truck and then had them returned after the event with a minimal amount of effort will now have to tag and record each and every beast that leaves his property even though it is just on a temporary basis, probably just for two days for those sporting events. His 'donation' will suddenly cost him heavily, both in time and money. The clubs and country arenas where these events are held will be forced to install expensive tag scanning equipment to comply with this government's red tape.

These sports cater for entire families. At times, up to three generations of one family compete at these events, which often raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the local ambulance and other community organisations. I understand that there are—or were—some 200 campdrafting events across Queensland alone each year. To sound the death knell on this kind of sport will indeed be a great loss to this state as a whole. The ripple effect will be felt across many communities.

Unless the mob permit system or something similar can be implemented, all sports involving cattle are likely to collapse under these huge new costs and in the face of the massive amount of extra work volunteers and cattle owners will be forced to carry out. The current arrangement shows either the arrogance of this Beattie government or its total lack of understanding and compassion when it comes to the bush. Clancy and his mates would not cop it for quids.

Palm Beach Needle and Syringe Program

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (10.00 pm): Palm Beach residents have opposed a needle exchange facility for more than a decade. Since 1995, the Labor government gave the people of Queensland repeated assurances that the proposed community health centre would not include a needle and syringe supply program. Here we are in 2007 with residents once again fighting the battle against a needle and syringe program setting up in the middle of a thriving business precinct and improved residential dwellings.

On 16 June 1995 the then member for Currumbin, Merri Rose, asked the then Minister for Health, Jim Elder—

... can he inform the House whether the community health centre soon to be opened at Palm Beach will have a needle exchange program?

Mr Elder replied—

The short answer to that question is that the Palm Beach community health centre will not have a needle exchange unit.

Mr Elder went on to state—

... it is an outrageous lie to say that the Government will be putting a needling exchange unit in that centre.

I would like to state clearly that neither me nor the Palm Beach Action Group, which formed to protest the location of the facility in Fifth Avenue, Palm Beach, have taken a moral stand on this issue. The key objection is that the community health centre is an inappropriate location for this service due to its proximity to residences, businesses, parks and beach.

In December 2006 this action group and I met with Queensland Health officials who answered our questions in a polite and straightforward manner. Probably the biggest shock was to be told that of course IV users were not encouraged to bring back used equipment as they would be 'dirty'. This makes a mockery of the term 'needle exchange', which was used when these programs were first started. I imagine that the majority of the population would be of the belief that there was some onus on users to bring back their used needles to be exchanged for clean ones. Somewhere along the way the lines have blurred and we have needle supplies in place of needle exchanges. Has the general public been duped into believing that this program is a true needle exchange when, obviously, it is not?

Needle and syringe programs were conceived as a harm minimisation strategy designed to provide sterile injecting equipment for people who inject drugs. What we see happening today has become marginalised and diluted, bearing very little resemblance to the original program. Governments have a duty of care to the entire community and have an obligation to place everyone's safety on the same level. Of particular concern is the disposal of dirty, used needles by IV users into regular waste bins. It is grossly irresponsible of Queensland Health to not only permit this practice but also encourage it by not making an effort to get back used needles.

GPs cannot throw their sharps containers into the ordinary rubbish. They would be sued for doing so. They have to pay an approved waste disposer to collect them and dispose of them properly by incineration. Monitoring of needle and syringe programs is critical. It is timely at the 20-year mark of the implementation of needle and syringe programs to review the effectiveness of the project and to ensure that every effort is being made to not only minimise infection but also rehabilitate IV users. By doing so, public confidence would rise and communities would be more accepting of these programs if they were told the truth and felt secure that every effort was being made to follow the original intent of the program.

Redlands Relay for Life

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (10.03 pm): It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that on Thursday, 18 January I launched the 2007 Redlands Relay for Life. Each year, 6,000 Queenslanders die from cancer and another 14,000 are diagnosed with the disease. One in every three Queensland males and one in every four Queensland females will develop cancer. Tragically, for every one of those thousands of individuals who are directly affected by the disease, countless more family, friends and colleagues will be indirectly affected. With cancer, the degrees of separation are minute.

It is in defiance of such grim statistics and armed with a sense of hope and a cooperative spirit that we gathered to launch the Redlands edition of one of the world's largest community fundraisers, the Relay for Life—an event that has significantly contributed to the fight against cancer since 1985. In 2006, through Relays for Life, all across Queensland over \$2.3 million was raised for the Queensland Cancer Fund to use in its continual struggle to eliminate cancer and to diminish the suffering of cancer patients through research, treatment, support, prevention and early detection.

The 2006 Redlands relay was a resounding success, raising more than \$83,000 through the efforts of 571 participants in 41 teams. Relay for Life is a team event. It comprises teams of 10 to 15 people who aim to raise a minimum of a \$1,000 per team in the months before the relay. The occasion itself is an 18-hour relay where team members take it in turn to keep their team's baton moving by walking and running around the relay track all night. This is the modern manifestation of an event which began with a man named Dr Gordy Klatt, who, in 1985, was so moved by the death of a close friend as a result of cancer that he ran for 24 hours and covered 81 miles in order to raise money to fight the disease.

One of the most poignant aspects of the current event is the ceremonies that take place throughout the event—the triumph of survival, which is celebrated through the Survivor's Walk during the opening ceremony; the candle light ceremony, which remembers those lost to cancer and offers hope to those who live with it today; and the closing ceremony, which reflects the enormous sense of achievement felt by all those who participate in the Relay for Life. They are the emotional highlights of a truly inspiring event.

Now in its sixth year, the Redlands Relay for Life is a remarkable community event and one with which I am proud to be associated. The 2007 Redlands Relay for Life will take place at the Cleveland Showground from 31 March to 1 April. It will be complemented by a carnival style atmosphere that will include entertainment, music, food and some fantastic activities demonstrating the wonderful community spirit for which the Cleveland electorate is known.

I commend all of those involved in the organisation of the Relay for Life. They are a group of people who should be very proud of the work they have undertaken so far. I am confident that, with the community support so clearly demonstrated at the relay launch, the 2007 fundraising campaign for Relay for Life will be successful and significantly contribute to the fight against cancer.

Bundaberg Naval Cadets

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (10.06 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House the great work of the Bundaberg naval cadets, their families, volunteers and supporters. Today's youths are the key to our future. I have had the pleasure of attending many schools, organisations and presentation ceremonies. Numerous champions have been honoured in a broad spectrum of fields, all of whom have been inspirational and leave me in awe of the quality of citizens we have in the Bundaberg community.

Recently, I had the pleasure of being on hand as TS Bundaberg received the Navy League of Australia Annual Efficiency Trophy for 2006. This award means that those naval cadets have been judged as being the best cadet unit in Australia. They have become the first naval cadets to win the coveted award three times. TS Bundaberg has also taken out the Queensland Annual Efficiency Trophy for the past two years.

The national award was bestowed on TS Bundaberg at its annual presentation day by the Navy League of Australia and presented by the Chief of the Navy, Vice-Admiral Russ Shalders. Bundaberg boasts approximately 60 Australia Navy cadets aged from 12 to 20 years who learn the ropes under an enthusiastic team headed by executive officer Lieutenant Reg Rayner and commanding officer Lieutenant Kerry Read. Lieutenant Rayner said that their aim was to—

... teach the youth of Bundaberg area life skills with a view to possibly joining the defence forces. TS Bundaberg belongs to the cadets and they run the unit with our guidance. Consequently, they believe the place belongs to them and they seem to be a lot happier and we continue to get new recruits.

The Bundaberg group will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. It will be a time to celebrate the thousands of young people who have passed through their ranks, including three generations of some families. This anniversary will be a time to celebrate their achievements not just as a group but in all walks of life. These dedicated youths have made their mark in all fields—captains of naval ships, along with some of the highest ranking members of the Navy. It has been proven that former cadets stay in the Navy longer and reach higher positions than other recruits.

Many organisations could take a leaf out of the book of TS Bundaberg in developing our citizens of the future. I look forward to their continued success.

C-17 Globemaster

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.09 pm): On Wednesday, 6 December 2006 I had the privilege of being part of the welcoming party for the first C-17 Globemaster airlifter on its arrival at RAAF Base Amberley. Under the command of Wing Commander Linda Corbauld, the C-17 Globemaster is the first of four aircraft assigned to No. 36 Squadron, which is to be permanently located at RAAF Base Amberley.

No. 36 Squadron is a RAAF transport squadron and was first formed in March 1942 at RAAF Base Laverton, and currently operates C-130 Hercules aircraft from RAAF Base Richmond. The squadron has an active service history, flying transport aircraft during World War II, the Berlin Airlift, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The squadron has also supported peacekeeping operations around the world, including Somalia, Cambodia and East Timor.

The C-17 aircraft is manufactured by Boeing and has a cruise speed of 500 miles per hour. It is 53 metres long and has a 52-metre wingspan and can fly to a ceiling of 45,000 feet at cruising speed. Its range is global, with in-flight fuelling capabilities. It has a minimum crew of three, which includes two pilots and one loadmaster. It has up to four times the carrying capacity of the current C-130 Hercules and can fly twice the distance.

Reading these statistics does not prepare the observer for the visual impact of its huge presence, particularly in comparison to the slight stature of its commanding officer, Wing Commander Linda Corbauld. It is a truly awe-inspiring sight to see how effortlessly this aircraft can negotiate the airways while carrying massive loads. It has already commenced its working program by flying in support of six F111 strike jets which have left for the United States to participate in Exercise Red Flag in Nevada.

The establishment of No. 36 Squadron at Amberley is yet another example of the strong relationship Queensland has with the RAAF and demonstrates the confidence we share in each other by locating this vital service here. Needless to say, I jumped at the opportunity to promote the advantages of living in this great state of Queensland, recommending that crew members and their families should make every effort to visit some of our world famous attractions, whether it be the Great Barrier Reef, our colourful outback or our tropical rainforests.

Over the years, Queensland has become synonymous with such great icons as the Broncos, Cowboys, Titans, Reds, Bulls, Bullets, Roar and Lions just as Amberley and Ipswich are identified with the F111 strike jets. I believe that with the coming of No. 36 Squadron and the C-17 Globemasters, it will only be a matter of time before they too are acknowledged along with these other great Queensland icons. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new C-17s, their crews and families, to Queensland, the Sunshine State, and I wish them every success for the future.

Medical Education

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.12 pm): I rise in the House tonight to speak about medical education in this country and some of the concerns I and the Queensland coalition have about Queensland's commitment to the quality of healthcare and medical education in our state. The Australian Medical Students Association, AMSA, contacted my office at the end of last year because they felt their calls for state and federal governments to provide increased support to medical students in Australia were falling on deaf ears. Among their most serious concerns was a lack of clinical training places in our hospitals to support our future doctors, as well as a lack of medical academics committed to educating the next generation of doctors.

In Queensland, and indeed throughout the country, we are currently experiencing a gross shortage of doctors. This shortage is placing even more pressure on our underfunded hospitals and overworked doctors and nurses, who somehow manage to keep our ailing public health system afloat. In the Queensland health system, medicos are working unreasonably long hours in conditions the Davies report damned as bleak. Even our medical students are feeling the strain. I was horrified to read in the *Sunday Mail* last week a trainee surgeon admit she feared she would kill a patient because she was routinely forced to operate on patients when she was 'so tired she felt drunk'.

Why do we ask our doctors and medical workforce to do things that we have made illegal for truck drivers? When I hear of such stories I can see why staff retention in Queensland Health is abysmally low. The Queensland coalition will continue a campaign for safe working hours for all of our medical workforce. But, according to AMSA, junior doctors working excessively long hours on relatively low pay are among the lucky ones. Some students struggle to even get a placement because resources are so tight and medical teachers are so thin on the ground. Today's medical students are not being afforded the vital learning opportunities they need to become high-quality medical practitioners, which is going to have serious repercussions on our health system for generations to come.

The Forster review into the state of the fledgling health system concluded that the acute shortage of doctors being experienced across Australia is a direct result of the federal Labor government's ill-fated decision to slash medical student intakes in 1995. Thanks to the Commonwealth coalition, there has been a band of initiatives implemented in the past few years designed to increase the number of students entering medicine, of which we are now beginning to reap the rewards. In 2005 three new medical schools were opened in Australia, and I am happy to say that two of those were on the Gold Coast. By 2012 the annual output of medical schools will increase to around 2,285 graduates, compared to 1,300 in 2000. This is a positive step towards addressing the undersupply of doctors in Australia, and we should be supporting the federal government and the universities in creating more places for medical students.

The challenge for the state government will be generating sufficient intern positions to cater for this most welcome influx of medical students in Queensland. We must not mirror the mistakes made in the UK where thousands of junior doctors cannot find training positions. The state government needs to assure Queensland patients that our doctors will not be lost to other states because there are not enough training and education places in our hospitals. The health minister needs to take action immediately to ensure these intern places are available from next year.

Time expired.

Mackay Region Area Consultative Committee

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (10.15 pm): The sacking of one of Mackay's most respected businessmen and former chair of the Mackay Region Area Consultative Committee, Col Meng, is one of the most disgraceful and dishonourable decisions the Howard government has ever made.

His removal has rightly attracted widespread condemnation in Mackay, the Whitsunday electorate and surrounding communities. It is a deeply suspicious action, taken without justification, and clearly instigated by the federal National Party member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services and Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile. Members do not have to take my word for her role or Col Meng's word. The federal Liberal member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, has publicly accused Mrs Kelly of interfering in regional consultative committee appointments in the far north, including his own electorate.

Col Meng is a man of principle. His unpaid work as chairman of the Mackay Region Area Consultative Committee has been widely praised—praised by just about everyone except De-Anne Kelly. Late last year Mark Vaile wrote to him asking him whether he would seek reappointment. Mrs Kelly was asked whether she would write a letter supporting his reappointment. She did not respond. The next step was that Mr Vaile suddenly replaced Mr Meng as chairman with Barry Sheedy, a former Mackay city councillor and well-known Kelly supporter. The issue has rightly been pursued by the *Daily Mercury* in Mackay for some weeks, and I commend the newspaper for its forthright stance.

The member for Dawson denies any role in Col Meng's sacking. Nonsense! Nobody believes that is the case. She has been caught out once again politicising a program that is supposed to be above politics. De-Anne Kelly has displayed appalling form when it comes to the Regional Partnerships Program over the last three or four years. Both as a parliamentary secretary and as a minister, Mrs Kelly has abused the program for party political advantage—so much so that she became an embarrassment even to the National Party and was demoted from minister to parliamentary secretary.

Before the last federal election Mrs Kelly oversaw the Regional Partnerships Program. One of the projects she pushed through was an \$8 million science and technology precinct for Mackay. The Mackay Region Area Consultative Committee, chaired by Col Meng, told the federal government that the project was not viable and did not have local business community support. John Anderson, the then Deputy Prime Minister, came to Mackay and stood side by side with Mrs Kelly to announce the precinct, which she described as 'one of the most significant advancements for the prosperity of the region'. Almost three years on, not a sod has been turned and the project remains a mirage. Members should not be at all surprised if it is repackaged and promised again before the coming federal election.

But De-Anne Kelly has 'got square' with Col Meng for not only his courage in opposing this white elephant project but also his insistence that the consultative committee be independent of politics. As Col Meng said, the problem was he 'played with a straight bat'. He has been unfairly bowled out by one of the most blatant 'chuckers' in politics—the federal National Party member for Dawson! And fairness and decency in the administration of a \$250 million federal government program have been bowled out as well.

Giru Floods

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (10.19 pm): It seems incongruous to speak about heavy rain and flooding in one part of the State when another is in severe drought, but that is the normal dynamics of this great state of ours. North Queensland has been subject to some excellent drought-breaking rain from the monsoonal influence that has moved through from the north. That has been extremely welcome as, to this stage, it has not been accompanied by high winds and devastation.

Over the weekend, the small town of Giru in the Burdekin region received much publicity as it was inundated by flood waters from the Haughton River. The townspeople of Giru are used to being flooded, sometimes several times a year, and they are remarkably resilient to the effects of this. However, the absence of any disasters is in no small way due to the efforts of the SES, ambulance, police personnel and volunteers in Giru.

I particularly applaud the efforts of the two SES volunteers in Giru, Brian Parison and Frank Scarabel. Last Thursday morning when word of the heavy rain in the upper reaches came through, those two men visited every household in the flood area, alerting people to the flood threat and assisting them to remove household effects. They remained on duty from Thursday morning until Sunday afternoon when the waters had receded. Their only way to get around the town was by wading through knee- to waist-high water, which must have been very tiring. During that time, there were several medical emergencies and a medical evacuation, a family was evacuated and relocated and a small girl was successfully rescued from swirling flood waters. I would like to expand on that particular incident.

On Friday, 2 February at 12.15 pm, Brian Parison, group leader for Giru, and his brother Michael, who is a resident of Giru, rescued a young girl who was seen clinging to an electric light pole support stay wire. The girl had been playing in the water in Mill Street when she was caught in strong-flowing river water from the Haughton River. The girl was washed past the power pole where she grabbed on to the supporting stay wire. It is unknown how long she had been there when Brian and his brother Michael went to her aid. The two men started toward the girl in waist-high, fast-flowing water. When they both stepped into neck-high, fast-flowing water, they had to quickly retreat and try another approach. The little girl was in immediate danger of being swept away. Both men positioned themselves further down stream in the strong current where they were able to brace themselves in waist-deep water. They told the girl to let go and try to swim in their direction. The girl was washed towards them and they were able to grab her and take her to safe ground. The girl was badly shaken but safe. I particularly acknowledge and congratulate those wonderful volunteers for this courageous act and for their other efforts. I have alerted the minister to their actions, and I have no doubt that he shares my feelings.

The only downside to the current rain in north Queensland has been the flooding of the Bruce Highway. This rain has again highlighted the urgent need for some decent upgrading of the Bruce Highway. Intermittently all weekend road and rail communication has been cut in several places between Townsville, Bowen and Mackay. Food supplies such as milk were running low in the Burdekin towns and similar incidents are occurring in Ingham, Innisfail and Cairns. For how many more years is this government going to ignore the basic infrastructure needs of north Queensland communities?

Multiculturalism

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (10.22 pm): Refugees who come to Australia face huge challenges in adapting to their new country, particularly those who may have spent many years in refugee camps and suffered huge deprivation. I congratulate the many workers and volunteers who not only work with these families and individuals but also genuinely love and care for them.

The Logan community has responded magnificently to the arrival of migrants and refugees into our community. The skilled and caring workers, along with many volunteers at ACCES Services, assist with their initial settlement, finding housing with all the requirements for daily living, enrolling them in English language classes and assisting with their everyday journey in this new land. Multi-link, which is our Migrant Resource Centre, provides professional interpreter services and operates many programs to enhance the lives of our diverse community members. Departments such as Police, Housing, Health, Education and Training, Employment and many others all assist to ensure our newly arrived residents are well informed and have services wrapped around them so that they are given every chance to adapt and thrive in their new home. I would also pay tribute to the Logan City Council Mayor, Graham Able, a number of councillors and many of the council officers for their assistance in the resettlement and the welcoming role they play.

Many of those former refugees are now proud Australian citizens. Once again on Australia Day we saw many of them take the oath of allegiance to their new homeland. It was a high day to witness over 100 new citizens become fully-fledged Australians with all of the rights and responsibilities that entails, and following the ceremony it was my privilege to join with many of our migrants, refugees and representatives of many organisations to launch another program to assist them. On behalf of the Hon. Robert Swarten and the Hon. John Mickel, I launched the Life Skills and Training for Multicultural Communities program.

Community Renewal funding of \$480,000 over three years and employment funding of \$146,000 for the first year under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work will assist refugees and migrants with training such as driving lessons, literacy and numeracy, computer skills, budgeting, accessing transport, banking, and many courses and programs leading to employment. The program will outreach to Inala, Acacia Ridge, Woodridge, Kingston, Crestmead, Marsden, Loganlea, Beenleigh, Eagleby, Labrador and parts of Southport.

Members will be aware of the transforming influence of Community Renewal on communities. We in the Woodridge and nearby Waterford electorates have benefited to a huge degree from many millions of dollars in Community Renewal funding. As I have said many times, the commitment of Minister Swarten to electorates such as Woodridge has been magnificent. I thank the minister.

To have spent 15 or perhaps 20 years in a refugee camp suffering terrible deprivation and possibly the death of some family members with no promise of a safe and secure future for their family is the plight of many millions of people in our world. I must say, when we look at the level of spending on weapons and war, it is a shameful state of affairs that so many in our world do not have access to clean water—

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.25 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Swarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson