



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2007

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

### PROCEDURE

#### Speaker's Ruling—Tabling of Documents

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, with regard to the tabling of documents the Queensland Legislative Assembly is very liberal compared to other houses of parliament. The particular distinction in this House is that members have an almost unfettered right to table documents, at least in the first instance. In most other houses of parliament the tabling of documents is limited to particular classes of documents or tablings by ministers of the crown or otherwise only unless the leave of the House or the chair is first sought and given. For example, in the United Kingdom House of Commons, the Canadian House of Commons and the Australian House of Representatives, private members have no right to table papers without the specific consent of the House.

It must be remembered that the same privilege that members enjoy in their speeches in the House is effectively also transferred to documents tabled by them in the House. This very great privilege to table documents in a relatively unfettered manner must be balanced by the right of the chair, assisted by officers at the table, principally the Clerk, to ensure that the standing orders of the House and rulings of the chair are not transgressed or subverted by the tabling of documents or the contents of documents.

The general principles underlying the tabling of documents must, therefore, in this House be as follows. Members have an unfettered right, in the first instance, to table documents. A document is tabled when received by the Clerk or the Clerk's delegate and noted as being received. Once a document is tabled, it is in the possession of the House, and generally is at the pleasure of the House. The tabling of a document must not infringe the standing orders or rulings of the chair in any way and nor should the content of any document tabled be offensive to the rules of the House. The Clerk and other officers at the table have a responsibility to take possession of documents and, on behalf of the chair, peruse those documents to ensure they are not offensive to the rules of the House and bring any offensive matter to the chair for their consideration. Objection can be taken to the tabling of documents at any time. If taken at an early stage it may result in the document not being tabled, but in other instances it may require the action of the House or the chair to deal with the objection.

Can I indicate that in the parliamentary sitting two weeks ago I objected to a particular tabling by the member for Moggill. Later in that week I objected to a tabling by the Premier. Both of those were discussed and not tabled in accordance with that particular ruling.

The Speaker has the right, indeed the duty, to ensure that no tabling or tabled document offends the rules of the House and to take such action as is expedient in all the circumstances. For example, as Speaker, I may embargo release of the document for a period to satisfy myself that no breach of the rules of the House has actually occurred.

Although the tabling of documents in the New Zealand's House of Representatives is more restrictive than in this House, McGee in *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand* is one of the few parliamentary texts that discusses the issue of tabling documents offensive to law, the principles of which must also apply to tablings contrary to standing orders and rules of the House. At page 539 McGee states—

Presentation of a paper to the House is communication of it to all members of Parliament. The Clerk will thus make it available to members as of right and normally to other interested persons too, such as members of the Press Gallery. But if the document contains material that it would be unlawful to publish, the Clerk may restrict access to members only. In these circumstances requests for access to the material are referred to the member who presented it.

Members, in presenting a document, are not required to give any personal warranty about its contents, but the Speaker and the Clerk are entitled to take such steps as they consider proper to ensure that in handling the document they do not break the law. Thus, access to documents subject to a court order protecting their confidentiality was denied (other than to members) until the House ordered their publication.

I have determined that in this House, if the chair determines that a breach of standing orders or rules of the House has occurred and that a tabled document offends the rules of the House or the ruling of the chair, the chair has the following broad options available. Firstly, the chair may attempt to have the member who tabled the document or documents seek leave of the House to withdraw the documents. Members may remember that that is what the Premier did on that occasion a couple of weeks ago. I think it was through mutual agreement with the member for Moggill that I indicated the document was not able to be tabled or it was my ruling that it would not be tabled. Secondly, the chair may report to the House that the document breaches the rules of the House and seek consent of the House to discharge the paper. Thirdly, the chair may rule the tabling or the documents as out of order.

Yesterday evening the Premier made a ministerial statement concerning certain Executive Council decisions made in 2002. The Premier during the course of that ministerial statement tabled two sets of Executive Council minutes. Shortly after the statement, concerns were raised that the contents of the Premier's statement, the tabling of the documents and the tabled documents may have contravened the sub judice principle contained in standing orders and rulings in recent weeks. A decision was made in accordance with precedence to hold the documents until a determination could be made by me on the matter. The Clerk and I were immediately contacted. I directed certain urgent inquiries to be made before I made any rulings.

Members of the House were, in effect, denied access to the documents for a short period—and I have already gone over the law as it stands in this parliament and other parliaments—whilst the documents were examined to ensure compliance with standing orders and rulings of the chair and by me. A short period later, members were permitted access, but access was wholly restricted to members. Later, as Speaker of this parliament I determined to allow the normal course of action run in respect of the documents and any embargo was lifted. I have a right, as the Clerk has, to deliberate on these matters carefully and sensitively, and that was what was done last night.

I now turn to the heart of the matter of sub judice. Was the statement by the Premier or any part of the statement sub judice or was the tabling of tabled documents sub judice? I think listening to the statement a bystander—I am not saying members—in a vacuum without context such as media reports would not necessarily relate the statement to any matter before the courts. Apart from a judge's name, no person's name was mentioned nor was any case or charge. Can I say to all members today that the mentioning of a judge's name should not be tolerated in this House. But, overall, I am satisfied that only one small portion of the statement was sub judice. Unfortunately, that part of the statement connected the entire statement to a matter before the courts. The documents tabled in isolation were inoffensive.

Standing order 233 provides for the sub judice rule. However, there must be a discretion in the chair to determine where, in any particular matter, debate, questions, answers and tabled documents may offend the rule. Sometimes determining where the line as to offensive and inoffensive matters lay is extremely difficult. In relation to current matters before the courts, I will continue to inform myself of details of specific matters before the courts to ensure that I and temporary chairs are able to reach informed decisions. I note public reports of judicial comments made in court in relation to directing the release of material not prejudicial pending a case before the court—a matter which may be determined by a properly instructed jury in some months. In these circumstances, I would emphasise to members not to refer to a specific case, a specific charge or debate evidence in relation to the matter.

I will as Speaker be taking a considered and reasonable approach to rulings of sub judice. I would again emphasise to members to be careful and if in doubt seek advice prior to raising matters in the House from the Clerk or the chair. I would inform the parliament today that I have had discussions with the Leader of the House on this matter. I have had discussions with the opposition leader and the Leader of the Liberal Party to indicate what my rulings would be today. I think we need to take a balanced approach, and I note that the Leader of Opposition Business has had his hand on that button to rise to a point of order. I want to deal with this in a considered way. That is my ruling. I am indicating that I have listened to the judicial comments that have been made and publicly made, and I think we will go down that track.

**Mr LINGARD:** I did not have my finger on the button.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think you did, but anyway that is by the by.

**Mr LINGARD:** It might have been close. I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I appreciate your ruling and agree with it as far as documents in the future are concerned. But I ask for a specific ruling about what your attitude is going to be to the document that was tabled last night and is clearly out in the media. Is that document to be treated as being properly tabled last night?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I did rule that last night as indicated in my statement. Leader of Opposition Business, I indicated that last night and I made a ruling. It was a considered ruling after reading all of the material. I had the Clerk inform the opposition leader and indeed I think the Leader of the House after that of that particular ruling. I made that ruling last night that it was tabled, and that is the distinction that I am making today. If a matter is tabled in the House that may be offensive to standing orders, in

particular standing order 233, the Clerk will have time to discharge his duty in that regard and I will have time to discharge my duty. That was accorded to both the Clerk and myself last night. I know there were high tensions, but we did that and considered that the matters could be tabled, made available to the public and made available to the media.

## TABLED PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence)—

- Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence) to a paper petition (757-06) presented by Mr Springborg from 226 petitioners regarding a potential prison development in the Warwick area

Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism (Ms Nelson-Carr)—

- National Environment Protection Council Annual Report 2005-2006 pursuant to section 24(3) of the National Environment Protection Council (Queensland) Act 1994

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Lewis, Mr W; Death of Mr B Gommersall

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 am): I think the thoughts of all Queenslanders today are with Rugby League legend Wally Lewis and his wife, Jacqui, and their family as the man we affectionately call 'The King' undergoes delicate brain surgery in Melbourne today. Wally has approached the operation with the same poise, confidence and courage that he showed every time he played for Queensland and Australia. We are all aware of his recent battle with epilepsy and the difficult decision he made to undergo surgery, and our thoughts are with him today. We hope the surgery is a complete success, and I know all members would share that sentiment.

Later this morning Rugby League lovers will gather at Suncorp Stadium for a memorial service for Barry Gommersall, another great character of State of Origin football. The government will be represented by the minister for sport, Andrew Fraser. Barry refereed nine origin games and six test matches. He died recently from a blood clot after a long battle with cancer. As I said, the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, Andrew Fraser, will represent the Queensland government at the service and he will need to leave question time early to do so.

### North Bank

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): During the past week Queenslanders have engaged in a vigorous debate over the pros and cons of the North Bank project in Brisbane's CBD. Multiplex Developments Australia has been granted preferred bidder status on stage 1 of the North Bank project, which focuses on the redevelopment of the stretch of river from the Victoria Bridge to Alice Street. I would urge members who have not yet seen the proposal to do so. There is a range of options for the North Bank proposal, and the public feedback will assist to inform the government's decision. I urge members to participate. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard* for the information of members.

Leave granted.

The project includes a covered pedestrian bridge, public open spaces, a public swimming pool, shops, restaurants, a riverfront promenade, a new hotel, commercial and residential buildings as well as a dramatic entry building from Queen Street to the new development.

The project would involve an investment of more than \$1.5 billion over 10 years, including \$270 million in public space that would be provided at no cost to the Queensland taxpayer.

It is a much larger development, and substantially different to the preferred strategic plan that was made public in 2004/05.

Because the proposal is substantially different from the original strategic plan for the area we have sought further feedback from the community.

We have initiated a month long public consultation period to give the community a chance to see the proposal and provide us with feedback by March 14.

This period of consultation does not replace a full public consultation process that would be conducted when the final design is being developed.

A model of the concept and drawings are on display on the ground floor of the Executive Building, we have established a website for public feedback and The Courier-Mail and ABC Local Radio and ABC On-Line have been happy to host debate and welcome reader and listener input.

If members and members of the public have not yet seen the proposal, I encourage you to do so. There are a range of opinions about the North bank proposal and the public feedback will inform the government's final decision.

## Murray-Darling Basin

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): While there have been some commentators ready to attack me for suggesting that we need to look at big solutions to the problems of the Murray-Darling, I am also pleased to report today that many thoughtful people and organisations have taken the time to consider my suggestion. They include organisations like the Queensland Farmers Federation, the Brisbane Institute's executive director, Engineers Australia, a former Governor-General and others. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Just as we are working to provide security for the people of South East Queensland for at least the next 50 years, the Commonwealth Government has a unique opportunity to do the same for the communities that depend upon the Murray Darling.

That's why I am encouraged that the Prime Minister has said publicly he's willing to consider proposals that we investigate channelling water from the North of Queensland and the North of NSW to recharge the Murray Darling.

Neither proposal is without its difficulties. Any investigation will have to weigh up the amount of water to be gained, the cost, and the impact on the local and wider environment.

But the opportunities presented by these options are too great to be dismissed out of hand. They offer us the chance to secure the future of farmers in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The Northern Queensland rivers proposal also offers us the chance to build new industry in our State.

That's why I am pleased to note the support of the Queensland Farmers Federation, Engineers Australia and the Brisbane Institute.

Engineers Australia said "The revival of the Bradfield Scheme concept as an option in solving Australia's water problems was a visionary, nation-building idea worthy of consideration.

Engineers Australia Queensland Division President Geoff Haigh said engineering technology, resources and techniques had improved substantially from when the scheme was first proposed 70 years ago.

He said: "We support an investigation into the viability of delivering such a scheme and support the Premier's suggestion that the application of the Bradfield Scheme could provide a potential solution to some of our water woes."

"The engineering industry is certainly capable of taking up the challenge should the project proceed to the next level of investigation."

The Queensland Farmers Federation agreed that we should consider the feasibility of the proposals.

The Queensland Farmers Federation Chief Executive John Cherry has urged me not to stop pushing the Federal Government to ensure the water rights of Queensland farmers are protected—and I won't.

However he also goes on to say: "As a valid response to climate change where rainfall is shifting from south to north, it may be a more valid response to shift the water south to where the people and established irrigation are rather than shift the agriculture north to where the water is.

"More information rather than less should be on the table as we grapple with the best solutions for dealing with climate change and the problems with the Murray Darling Basin in the long term."

And finally, Emeritus Professor Kay Saunders AM, the Brisbane Institute Executive Director also issued a statement in support.

Professor Saunders said: "We are in the midst of a serious, long-term water crisis and the viability of all options, including the Premier's proposal, should be reviewed in detail.

"The challenge we face with water security is unprecedented and potential solutions should not be dismissed without careful consideration.

"Many of the solutions currently being proposed were previously considered too unpopular or difficult to implement. Many of these are now being examined as viable options," she said.

I look forward to discussing these proposals—and their future investigation—with the Prime Minister.

## Campaign Expenses

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): In terms of campaign expenses, there are some new rules that will apply to the opposition. I hold a long-term view that a strong voice in opposition government is a fundamental component to a democratic system. In line with this view, I work to ensure the opposition has adequate resources to be that strong voice. I am also committed to an open and accountable government and, as such, wish to inform the House of changes to the funding processes for opposition election travel.

Before the last election, the former Leader of the Opposition requested additional funding to facilitate travel during the election campaign. To determine a reasonable amount of funding, the amount provided to the opposition for travel in the 2004 campaign was escalated to the current charter rates and, accordingly, I approved funding of \$204,000.

Since the election, the current Leader of the Opposition has requested further funds to cover a shortfall that occurred in those election travel costs and I have approved funding of \$37,700 to cover this shortfall. In addition, I note that the cost of opposition election travel has risen and there are details of those costs in my ministerial statement.

I indicate my support to fund that shortfall. I have no criticism of it. I seek to incorporate more details in *Hansard*. I want it on the record that I have no criticism of the travel at all.

Leave granted.

I note the cost of the Opposition's election travel has risen from \$130,500 in 2004 to \$241,700 at the last election. I am also advised that the Leader of the Opposition intends to conduct future campaigns in a similar fashion and to seek funding on that basis.

Mr Speaker, in light of the travel costs becoming more substantial, it is my responsibility to ensure these funds are used appropriately and for their approved purposes.

As such, the funding process associated to Opposition election travel has been modified to mirror the existing arrangements for overseas travel that apply to the Leader of the Opposition and all Ministers.

This means that future election travel funding will be provided specifically for that purpose and any unused funds at the end of the campaign will be required to be returned to Ministerial Services, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

### 2007 Reconciliation Awards for Business

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): This year marks the 40th anniversary of the referendum that saw more than 90 per cent of Australians vote to acknowledge Indigenous Australians as citizens and give the Commonwealth the power to make laws regarding Indigenous people. The anniversary of this significant milestone is an opportunity for reflection on how far we have travelled as a nation towards reconciliation and is also a timely reminder that reinforces the need for us to continue working towards this goal.

With this in mind, I announce the 2007 Reconciliation Awards For Business. I established the awards in 2003 as a way of recognising and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous individuals, employers and organisation that actively promote cross-cultural awareness and advance reconciliation in Queensland.

Last year, the reconciliation awards for business recognised a variety of businesses and community organisations. I encourage members to support these awards and I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

From an earthmoving company in Weipa, to a Sunshine Coast TAFE offering training and education opportunities to Indigenous youth—all of the groups recognised by the awards had an important thing in common—a commitment to reconciliation in Queensland.

The 2007 Reconciliation Awards offer \$30,000 in prize money and are a key component of the Government's Reconciliation Business and Leadership Action Plan 2005-2007.

Nominations close on Friday 30 March and I encourage Queensland employers to enter.

### Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2008-09

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.51 am): I wish to report on three other subjects before I make a couple of statements about matters of state significance. I am pleased to announce the opening of the 2008-09 Queensland Premier's drama award.

I established the award in 2001 to encourage fresh, creative and insightful play writing as part of the Smart State approach. The award supports our own home-grown talent by offering the winning playwright the chance to have his or her play produced and staged by the Queensland Theatre Company. This makes the award both exciting and unique. It is the only play-writing competition in the country that guarantees the winner a professionally, fully staged production by a professional theatre company.

This is another example of how the Smart State is leading the way in supporting Queensland writers and cultivating theatre. My government is proud to contribute \$230,000 for the 2008-09 award and production costs. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Playwrights will need to submit a dramatic work that examines the social, economic and political relationships that epitomise Queensland.

The award's theme is "Theatre and Public Life".

The 2006-2007 Award was won by David Brown, for his play *The Estimator*.

It will form part of the Queensland Theatre Company's main stage season this year, and it will premiere during Queensland Week celebrations in June.

David follows in the successful footsteps of Sven Svenson's *Road to the She Devil's Salon*, and Adam Grosetti's *Mano Nera*.

I look forward to discovering what entertaining, challenging and thought-provoking plays the Smart State's writers present for us to enjoy through this next Award round.

### Cyclone Larry Task Force

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 am): I table the latest report from General Peter Cosgrove AC, the head of Operation Recovery Task Force, on the ongoing recovery effort into the communities affected by Cyclone Larry. It has been a massive job that is now drawing to a close, although more work needs to be done. In his report, General Cosgrove recommends that the task force be dissolved on the anniversary of Cyclone Larry on 20 March 2007. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

*Tabled paper:* Report by General Peter Cosgrove, Head of the Operation Recovery Task Force, titled 'Overview Report 19', dated 19 February 2007.

Leave granted.

General Cosgrove says he will then provide a final Task Force report on the processes and outcomes of the Task Force which will provide a useful reference document for the future.

However operational and other support will continue to be provided well into 2007 through the Operation Recovery Management Group, Community Recovery One-Stop-Shops and the Building Coordination Centre.

In this—his 19th report—General Cosgrove notes that the arrangements put in place by the Government for the continuing administration and leadership of the Johnstone Shire are appropriate and are not likely to diminish the recovery effort.

General Cosgrove advises that the Preventative Waterway Debris Removal programme did its job well and debris was removed from critical locations prior to the recent heavy rainfall in the area.

The rebuilding process is continuing, although General Cosgrove notes a drop in the number of tradespeople within the cyclone affected area.

The Building Coordination Centre in Innisfail is continuing to register and coordinate the supply of tradespeople to customers.

The report indicates that insurance issues continue to arise. General Cosgrove encourages insurance companies to continue to work cooperatively with their clients to resolve any outstanding claims and highlights the service provided by the independent insurance advisors located within the Building Coordination Centre.

The outstanding success of the Community Jobs Programme is also highlighted in the report with almost 1,000 people having participated in the programme.

I look forward to receiving General Cosgrove's final report on the past year's activities and his recommendations for future recovery in the region.

### Webb, Ms K

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): Today I pay particular tribute to a great Queenslander, Karrie Webb, who is back in form and doing wonderful things for ladies golf. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Karrie sits with a select group at the very top of Queensland's pantheon of sporting greats. But the 32 year old champion from Ayr refuses to rest on her laurels.

Karrie had stunning home victories in the Australian Women's Open and the ANZ Women's Masters which was staged at the at Royal Pines on the Gold Coast from February 8-11.

And she carried her good form from the Australian summer into the first tournament of the US LPGA tour in Hawaii last weekend where she finished third.

Karrie is a proud Queenslander. She grew up in Ayr and still has a home there.

She was the youngest woman ever to win golfing's grand slam of five major titles and in June 2005 became the youngest person ever to be inducted into golfing's Hall of Fame.

Karrie Webb is a great sportswoman and a great Queenslander. She has nothing more to prove to anyone, except perhaps herself.

I know we all wish her well on the 2007 US LPGA tour which has started with so much promise.

### Coppabella Mine

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.55 am): I wish to draw the attention of the House to a number of matters. Mr Speaker, I thank you for your ruling today because it enables the government to explain a number of matters to the people of Queensland and allows the appropriate questions to be asked by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the matters. I thank you for your ruling, because it will assist both the government to explain various matters and the opposition to ask appropriate questions. I believe it is an appropriate ruling and I thank you for that.

There have been reports in the media in relation to the approval of an assistance package for Coppabella Mine. It has been noted that in relation to a financial assistance package for Coppabella Mine, the corridor relocation facilitation deed, the railway infrastructure facilitation deed and the infrastructure user charge deed were all signed on 23 October 2002. However, it is important to note that this was, in fact, the final stage in a lengthy approval process. For the benefit of the House I will spell out this process once again.

Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd, the operator of the Coppabella Mine, sought assistance from the state to relocate road and rail infrastructure under which it had discovered significant coal reserves. On 22 November 2001, the then minister for state development approved the proposed funding arrangement as a basis for commercial negotiations between the department of state development and Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd.

At the conclusion of those negotiations on 16 May 2002, Executive Council gave approval for an assistance package as an investment or financial arrangement pursuant to the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. The total amount of the assistance package was \$28.787 million, which includes \$2.617 million in GST, which was repayable to the government over 10 years by way of an infrastructure user charge. It is repayable to the government.

On 5 September 2002, Executive Council recommended expenditure of \$28.787 million pursuant to the decision of 16 May 2002, which was well before October. I understand that on 23 October 2002, the then Treasurer signed what was really the formal documents—the three relevant deeds—to formally execute the documents relating to the decision of Executive Council. As any fair-minded person can see, the signing of the deed was merely the formality at the end of a lengthy and comprehensive process that had started back in 2001.

Last night in the House—and I thank you, Mr Speaker, for accepting these tabled documents—I tabled two documents from Executive Council, the first dated May 2002 and the second dated September 2002 which, in fact, highlight and confirm exactly what I have told the House. Indeed, if we look at the explanatory memorandum that accompanies the Executive Council minute dated 9 May 2002, under the heading 'Background' it states—

The Government is providing financial assistance to APC to allow the company to relocate a transport infrastructure corridor. Relocation of the corridor will allow the company to mine shallow coal deposits, which are currently located under the existing State Highway and railway.

The total amount of the assistance package is \$28.787 million (including \$2.617 million GST), repayable to the Government over 10 years by way of an infrastructure user charge.

It later states—

The purpose of the Minute is to approve an assistance package... Approval will allow the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport to enter into the agreement.

Again I highlight that that was May 2002.

I turn to the second document, which is attached to the explanatory memorandum attached to the September minute dated August 2002. Again it highlights an approval and it states—

Australian Premium Coal Pty Ltd (APC) operates the Coppabella coal mine in Central Queensland for the Coppabella Joint Venture. APC has discovered that significant coal reserves lie underneath a six kilometre length of road/rail transport corridor adjacent to the existing Coppabella Coal mine and would like to expand the Coppabella Mine ... by developing these reserves.

The transport corridor contains a 6km section of the Peak Downs Highway, Queensland Rail's Goonyella-Hay Point dual track mainline coal railway, Ergon's 66kV overhead power line, BHP Coal's Braeside water pipeline and a Telstra underground fibre optic telecommunications cable. Moving this corridor will allow APC to mine the coal under the corridor, providing an extra estimated 25m tonnes of saleable coal.

Therefore, this was done to access a coal vein of 25 million tonnes. The minute further states—

APC sought since assistance from the State to relocate the rail and road infrastructure. On 22 November 2001—

And members must remember that this is an explanatory memorandum dated August 2002 referring to a previous approval on 22 November 2001. They do not need to take their shoes off to calculate that that was well before October 2002. The minute refers to the assistance that APC sought and it talks about that assistance. It states—

The Treasurer's approval for DSD—

That is, the department of state development—

—to establish a loan facility with Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) has been obtained. Also, on 16 May 2002 the Department of Treasury sought Governor in Council approval for the provision of the assistance package...

On 18 July 2002 the Minister for State Development approved arrangements negotiated between the State and APC and Queensland Rail (QR) for the provision of a financial facility to fund the relocation of certain road and rail infrastructure south of the Coppabella coal mine.

On page 2 of the explanatory memorandum, it points out that DSD will borrow funds from the Queensland Treasury Corporation for 10 years to fund the state's commitment, that the funds will be immediately drawn down and it refers to how it will go through the bank accounts. It is very open and transparent.

I just want to highlight again, because I think it is absolutely important in terms of my accountability and transparency, that, as members can see, the signing of the deeds in October 2002 was merely a formality at the end of a lengthy and comprehensive process.

**Nuttall, Mr GR; Memorandum**

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.59 am): I notice media reports this morning referring to a memo dated 25 July 2005. It was addressed to the former director-general of health, Steve Buckland, I understand, and it was from the former health minister. It was allegedly cc'd to me and the former director-general of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Dr Leo Keliher. I make reference to whom the memo was addressed to because in local media reports on this matter there has been no reference to the fact that it was actually directed to Steve Buckland. I only became aware of that memo, to the best of my memory, last week when journalists informed me of its existence. I immediately asked for a complete check of my office records and there is no indication that I received a copy of the memo.

I table a note from my correspondence coordinator on the checking process in my office. She indicates that she has done a comprehensive search of the office's electronic correspondence tracking system to see if the memo is held in the office. I think members would understand that I get an enormous number of communications on a day-to-day basis, but she has done a thorough search. She has also completed an extensive physical search of the office files and archives.

*Tabled paper:* Memo (undated) by Cathy Newman, Correspondence Coordinator, Office of the Premier.

The Ministerial Correspondence Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet was also asked to undertake an exhaustive search of its tracking systems, which are separate to my office, to locate the memo. The director-general's office also completed a comprehensive search of its systems to see if the memo was received. In addition, Dr Keliher has asked if he received a memo. Dr Keliher says that he asked Pat Vidgen, the deputy-director general of the governance division, to search the departmental document tracking system, and there is no record of it. Dr Keliher also advised that he has no recollection of receiving the memo. Finally, the Ministerial Services Branch also searched its archived computer drive for a record of it having arrived, and there was no none. The current Director-General of Queensland Health has also been indicated that Queensland Health does not appear to have a record of the memo.

I think there is perhaps a logical explanation. It would appear that the memo was only provided to the former director-general of health, Steve Buckland. He was dismissed from his position the following day, 26 July 2005, and it would appear that he neither passed on the memo nor acted on its contents. If at some future time some search does reveal the memo either being received by any of the people I have referred to, I will accordingly advise the House and make that public. But that is our searches to date, which have been exhaustive.

In terms of the correspondence coordinator in my office, her briefing to me says—

I have been unable to locate the memo from Mr Gordon Nuttall sent to Mr Steve Buckland dated 25 July 2005 despite an exhaustive search.

I have undertaken a comprehensive search of this office's electronic correspondence tracking system to see if the memo was held in this office.

I have also completed an extensive physical search of the office files and archives.

The Ministerial Correspondence Unit, Department of Premier & Cabinet, was asked to undertake an exhaustive search of their tracking systems—which are separate to this office—to locate the memo allegedly sent to the Premier and Dr Keliher.

The Director-General's Office has also completed a comprehensive search of their systems to see if the memo was received.

In addition Dr Leo Keliher was asked if he received the memo. Dr Keliher says that he asked Pat Vidgen, the Director-General, Governance to search the Department's document tracking system and there is no record of it. Dr Keliher advised that he has no recollection of receiving the memo.

Finally, the Ministerial Services Branch searched their archived computer drive, and found no record of it.

There is no record of this memo being received from this office or in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

I table that memo for the information of the House. Quite clearly, Steve Buckland has provided appropriate copies to both the *Courier-Mail* and, I assume, to the CMC. I have no difficulty with that at all, because it is quite clear that, having been dismissed the day after, he took no action on it, and I am not aware that the government either received or took any action in relation to it.

**Integrity and Accountability in Government**

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.03 am): I am proud to say that as Premier I am committed to the highest standards of integrity and accountability in government, both for parliamentarians and for the public sector. In light of recent unfounded suggestions to the contrary, it would be useful to remind members of the priority and the resources that the government puts into maintaining high standards of integrity in the public sector. No system is perfect and I will continue to implement changes to accountability mechanisms wherever they are necessary.

As members of this place we must all continue to be vigilant and ensure that our personal behaviour is beyond reproach. As Premier, I have worked to ensure, and continue to ensure, that measures are in place to enhance accountability, transparency and ethical behaviours. As members are aware, accountability mechanisms in Queensland have emerged in response to a range of factors. Most notably these include the reforms recommended by the Fitzgerald inquiry and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission.

Bodies such as the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Integrity Commissioner, the Queensland Audit Office and a range of tribunals and freedom of information mechanisms have increased public sector accountability, making the Public Service and the government more open to public scrutiny. It also includes a new body that the government established since my last statement on this subject, the Service Delivery and Performance Commission.

The estimated cost to government of running these external integrity structures in the 2005-06 financial year is \$49.753 million, as disclosed in the Ministerial Portfolio Statements. This expenditure enables the ongoing work of the CMC in relation to the promotion of public sector integrity and reduction of misconduct; the operation of the Office of Public Service Commissioner, including the promotion of ethical behaviour by public servants and a strong and sustainable Public Service; the performance of the functions of the Office of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner, the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner; and the auditing of all public sector entities by the Queensland Audit Office.

An additional accountability mechanism is the hiring of independent probity auditors engaged in the majority of large competitive bid processes for major projects. Their job is to establish whether bid procedures have been administered fairly and impartially to all parties. The probity principles are outlined in the government's Value for Money framework and ensure that bid processes on major projects occur in a transparent and open manner.

Accountability is associated with the process of seeking information and redress. When public agencies or officials are called to account, we expect them to report on their activities and to provide the reasons behind their decisions. There has also been some comment in recent days about transparency and accountability in this very place. When I took office in 1998 I moved to improve question time by setting a time limit of three minutes for ministers to answer questions. This has led to a 30 per cent increase in the average number of questions being asked in question time when compared to the Borbidge government. This increases the opposition's opportunity to scrutinise my government as it allows more questions to be asked.

In 1998 I also moved to ensure that private members' bills were debated in this place. For years private members' bills had been introduced into the parliament but on nearly all occasions they had been left to languish on the *Notice Paper*. My government has also improved accountability to parliament by moving to ensure that all petitions formally presented to this parliament are responded to by the relevant minister. This is something that has never been done before. As part of my government's commitment to constitutional reform and good government, I also moved to modernise legislation in these areas through the passage of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the rewrite of the standing rules and orders in 2004.

My government has continued to support the parliamentary committee and estimates committee systems, first introduced by the Goss government. I have also ensured that select committees have inquired into matters such as petrol pricing and issues surrounding Palm Island. Also in 1999 I moved to institute an Integrity Commissioner to give advice to ministers and others to avoid conflicts of interest and, in so doing, encourage confidence in public institutions. My government also strongly supported the development and implementation in 2001 of the *Code of Ethical Standards* of members of the Legislative Assembly and the statement of fundamental principles to guide the ethical conduct of members.

In addition to the government's integrity and accountability framework that I outlined above, we also have the courts and tribunals administered by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, which function at a cost to government of \$172 million, and the parliament itself, which has a state contribution of more than \$60 million. These entities play a fundamental role through reviewing processes, decision making and government action generally. My government has adopted a comprehensive approach to corporate governance, accountability and transparency. The government is committed to ensuring that its conduct is characterised by openness, integrity and honesty and that its decision making is fair, ethical, reasonable and appropriate.

### North Bank

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (10.09 am): Earlier this morning the Premier outlined the government's development position for the first stage of Brisbane's North Bank. The north bank stretch of our river is currently an eyesore, but its redevelopment is not what I think can be regarded as an essential piece of infrastructure in the same way that dams, roads, hospitals and schools can be. Therefore, the government's aim is to

deliver the redevelopment of that stretch of the river at no cost to the Queensland taxpayer. However, in order for the commercial sector to deliver the project at no cost, it is clear that a more intensive development for North Bank than was previously envisaged might be necessary.

Included in the proposal from Multiplex, the preferred bidder, is approximately \$270 million of public infrastructure—at no net cost to the state. Obviously what Multiplex is proposing is very different from the preferred strategic plan we released a couple of years ago. That is why we are seeking public reaction to the proposal. When the initial public feedback closes on 14 March, the government will then determine how the project should proceed. We have given Queenslanders a month to offer us their thoughts. Just as within the cabinet itself, there are differences of opinion among the public on this issue. ABC local radio and the *Courier-Mail* have links operating for listeners and/or readers to have their say. We also have links within government through departmental web sites and feedback boxes at the displays at the Executive Building and the Brisbane City Council's headquarters.

I am very pleased to advise the House that Queenslanders are indeed taking the opportunity to have their say. One week after this project was released the ABC has had more than 1,264 people vote online. Of that 61 per cent have said that they like the proposal and hope that it goes ahead, and 23 per cent said that they loathe it and hope that it is scrapped.

The *Courier-Mail* feedback has seen 311 responses. Of those, roughly 48 per cent are negative, 27 per cent are neutral and 25 per cent are positive. One hundred and fifty-one people have responded directly to our own feedback mechanisms within government, including emails, telephone hotline and feedback forms both in the Executive Building and the BCC headquarters.

There are 52 comments on the appearance and visual amenity of the project, and the majority of those—60 per cent—are positive. Of the 48 comments on the public space/facilities nearly 60 per cent, or 28, are positive. However, of the 39 who commented on the proposed building onto the river, all but one of those was negative.

Interestingly, of the 99 responses from the feedback form—both online and response boxes—82.8 per cent think North Bank should be upgraded in some way. Somewhat surprisingly, from 96 of those responses, 63.6 per cent would be prepared for the government to subsidise North Bank if intensity of the proposal were changed.

So all in all there have been more than 1,800 responses already noted. The views, as I have outlined, are many and varied. There are three weeks to go and we are very keen to seek more responses. I encourage every member of the House, not just those members who represent south-east corner electorates, to have their say and to be talking to their constituents about this issue. This is about the face of our capital city. Many Queenslanders will have a view and are entitled to that view and I hope they take the opportunity to express it.

### Water Efficient Gardening Guides

**Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.12 am): South-east Queensland residents deserve enormous praise for their water-saving efforts. Currently they are using 300 million litres a day less town water than they were in May 2005—that is the equivalent of 300 Olympic sized swimming pools each day.

**Mr Hobbs:** It's not your job anymore.

**Mr WALLACE:** Listen to them whinge about people saving water. It is absolutely terrible. The Beattie government has assisted south-east Queensland households to save water with our very successful WaterWise series of programs. These programs include the Home Garden WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which provides a rebate of up to \$50 on the purchase of water-saving plants and garden products.

Even with this government's help, our green thumbs are struggling to keep our gardens alive during the worst drought on record. As a further initiative to help home gardeners, the Beattie government has produced six water efficient gardening guides. The guides promote the use of native and drought-resistant plants and water-saving gardening practices.

The titles of the guides include: *Maintaining your lawn*, *Planning a water-efficient garden*, *Water-saving tips for your garden*, *Mulch and your garden*, *Understanding your soil type*, and *Watering your garden*. These publications will be distributed at nurseries and garden centres across south-east Queensland and will also be available on the Department of Natural Resources and Water's web site.

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** I take the honourable member for Lytton's interjection that he will be very interested in the guides. The guides are part of the Beattie government's election commitment to spend \$500,000 over two years on a WaterWise gardening education campaign. We have started to deliver on this important commitment. Further parts of the campaign will be announced in the near future.

The Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture industries, Natural Resources and Water and Primary Industries and Fisheries worked together to finalise the guides. Key industry bodies which supported the scheme include the Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland, the Flower Association of Queensland, Queensland Association of Landscape Industries, Irrigation Association of Australia, Queensland Turf Producers Association, Parks and Leisure Australia, and the Australian Institute of Horticulture.

The guides will help Queenslanders change their gardening habits and also provide support for the nursery and gardening industry, which has been hard hit by the drought. I am pleased to announce that over \$35,000 in rebates has been paid out under the Home Garden WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which is further publicised in the guides. I table a copy for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Six (6) Department of Natural Resources and Water Information Sheets on Water Efficient Gardening.

### Queensland Tourism Strategy

**Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women) (10.15 am): The Beattie government is helping Queensland's regions develop exciting new tourism initiatives. I am very pleased to announce that a \$4 million funding boost for regional tourism organisations is an early outcome from our \$48 million Queensland Tourism Strategy. The initial allocation of \$1 million this year will allow destinations throughout the state to create dynamic new tourism experiences to attract more visitors.

The extra funding has made possible a diverse range of projects in areas from far-north Queensland to the Southern Downs. Gladstone and the Sunshine Coast are targeting important international markets with the installation of electronic language translators and schemes to promote regional tourism products overseas. The Bundaberg and Capricorn regions will use their funding to employ staff dedicated to packaging and selling each destination by forging partnerships with businesses and local government. Here in Brisbane the development of a river transport system to improve access from the city to Moreton Bay and the islands will be explored.

The grants do two things: they reaffirm the Beattie government's commitment to the tourism industry and they continue the development of our important regions. The grants bring ongoing direct funding for RTOs to \$6 million a year. The government also provides more than \$3 million for marketing and administration and another \$1.89 million for convention funding.

The QTS, which was the first long-term plan for the tourism industry, was a key Beattie government election promise to secure the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the state's third largest export earner. These grants recognise the importance of our regions to our tourism industry. Quite simply, the more tourists we can attract to our regions, the more jobs are created.

**Mr Johnson:** You have not mentioned western Queensland.

**Ms KEECH:** This increased financial and resource support from the Beattie government will help the regions continue to grow as key tourism destinations. They will be further supported by the government's new \$6.5 million 'Where else but Queensland' television campaign, where western Queensland plays a key role, which the Premier recently launched. These initiatives are the first of many ongoing benefits to be seen by the industry under the Beattie government's Queensland Tourism Strategy.

### Aboriginal Policing

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.18 am): There has been much attention lately on policing in Aboriginal communities and the related issue of violence in these communities. Last week I travelled to the Cape York Aboriginal communities to meet with police and community members. I went to Lockhart River, Bamaga, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama and Thursday Island. I met with police and spoke to officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about policing matters and what they see as their needs.

Coincidentally, at the same time the Senate estimates committee hearings in Canberra were hearing that not a single cent has been spent from the first allocation of moneys for Indigenous policing, as promised by Mal Brough at his National Indigenous Summit in Canberra last year. The Howard government is quick to criticise the states for poor service delivery, but this failure to spend any of Mal Brough's promised \$40 million is a very good example of its inability to deliver services or infrastructure in an area which it sees as a high priority. All along I suspected Mal Brough was using the critical issue of violence in Aboriginal communities to suit his own political agenda.

We said that the priorities that the Commonwealth could help us with were: a plan for policing in the Torres Strait, a police station on Badu Island, funding towards police housing in Aboriginal communities so that we can increase police numbers in those communities and help with watch-house upgrades in Aboriginal communities.

The Beattie government has a good track record of building police stations in Indigenous communities, such as those built in the last few years in Hope Vale and Palm Island. We are also delivering new police housing at places like Aurukun and Kowanyama. We have funded police stations in all but one Aboriginal community in this state and that is the new community of Old Mapoon.

We are told by the federal government that it does not want to spend any of its money in the Torres Strait, that it only wants to spend money in Aboriginal communities. The Torres Strait is being ignored by the Commonwealth. If the federal government is fair dinkum when it offers its assistance, it will listen to Queensland's request because we understand our policing requirements.

The other strong message I received from my Cape York trip is that the alcohol restrictions are working. Those communities do not want to see the government wind back on those restrictions. I applaud Aurukun mayor, Neville Pootchemunka. On Monday in the *Cairns Post* he called for less alcohol to be served at the Aurukun Tavern. He is quoted as saying—

I think all this is related to the alcohol being brought into the community. The amount they are drinking is too much. It is probably 18 cans being given to patrons down at the tavern.

Like many of us, he believes that alcohol restrictions will reduce the violence in that community.

## EXPENSES OF THE OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

### Report

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (10.21 am): I table a report of the expenses of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2006 to 12 September 2006.

*Tabled paper:* Public Report of Office Expenses of the Office of Leader of the Opposition for period 1 July 2006 to 12 September 2006.

## EXPENSES OF THE OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

### Report

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.21 am): I table a report of the expenses of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 13 September 2006 to 31 December 2006.

*Tabled paper:* Public Report of Office Expenses of the Office of Leader of the Opposition for period 13 September 2006 to 31 December 2006.

## VOLUNTARY CARBON CREDIT TRADING BILL

### First Reading

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (10.21 am): I present a bill for an act to establish Carbon Credit Trading Corporation as a government owned corporation to manage a scheme for marketing carbon credit certificates, and for related purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

### Second Reading

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (10.21 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I have introduced a bill that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will establish a voluntary carbon credit trading exchange in Queensland. Credits will be issued for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and offered for sale to individuals, businesses and available for international exchanges. The bill creates a carbon credits trading exchange as a government owned corporation controlled within the Queensland Investment Corporation.

Out of the challenge of dealing with carbon emissions also comes a great opportunity for Queensland. There is an opportunity for Queensland, as with London in 2002, to obtain a first mover advantage in carbon trading schemes. Queensland could easily obtain that first mover advantage within Australia and the Asia-Pacific area. At the same time we could be showing substantial leadership in addressing this critical threat to our state and to the world generally.

It operates in the following way. The carbon credits trading exchange would provide certification on a voluntary basis to corporations and enterprises that reduce carbon emissions in three ways: sequestration, such as forestry or geo-sequestration; power produced from low or zero emission industries, such as biofuels, wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric, et cetera; and a third category of credits would be available, after certification, for traditional power sources, particularly power stations that are able to demonstrate that their per unit emissions are reduced by an amount exceeding any reductions achieved by the industry as a whole.

We must then ensure that there are market customers to buy these carbon credits. Again, there is a great opportunity for Queensland to be a world leader in generating active interest and strong markets for the credits sold by these industries. There are at least three standout prospects for generating the buying side. Firstly, the carbon credits would be available to corporations in Queensland who want to demonstrate their environmental credentials. There are many environmentally concerned companies in Queensland. Many small, medium and large companies would take advantage of the opportunity to buy sufficient credits to offset the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of their business activity. They can utilise their contribution to seek the support of the public and their customers. Secondly, and importantly, individuals will be offered the opportunity to offset the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of their activity in motor vehicles, electricity and gas consumption and airline travel, just as the current Energex green option can be selected on power bills.

This bill incorporates a regulation enclosing a voluntary carbon credit purchase with every electricity, gas or car registration bill forwarded to individuals. This would be on an entirely optional basis for Queensland households by which they could offset the impact of their consumption on the environment. This would be actively promoted to Queenslanders and I have no doubt would add significantly to the demand for certified carbon credits through the carbon credits trading exchange. Thirdly, and in the longer term perhaps the most important of all, the corporation running the carbon credits exchange would seek acceptance of Queensland carbon credits interstate and internationally.

Climate change calls for an immediate response. This bill is an effective measure that can be introduced now and will be completely compatible with any other measures introduced at a national level or, in fact, at an international level. It will be effective in driving down emissions. It will produce an enormous stimulus to innovation and emission-lowering industries and activities within Queensland. Unlike every other scheme, it does not rely on pushing up power bills, it does not tax our vital coal and gas power industries and, in fact, it rewards producers who drive down emissions.

It is an opportunity for Queensland to show leadership both in Australia and in the Asia-Pacific area. It brings responsibility to every level of society, from government and large corporations right down to an individual registering a car or buying an airline ticket.

We have learnt by mistakes made overseas. Governments in Europe handing out credits like confetti have damaged confidence in their carbon credits markets. The idea raised by some of the state governments of issuing licences would clearly be an additional cost and would push up the cost of power in Queensland. New and smart industries would receive a significant boost, helping to make Queensland a leader in climate-friendly industries and in the vital area of accrediting of emission reductions or substitution.

I am happy to make myself available to the Premier if he is willing to discuss the prospect of a bipartisan approach to this vital issue. I hope that he will avail himself of that offer. This bill is not in lieu of other measures that may be created. It would give Queensland the opportunity to be the first mover and to have in place its carbon exchange to benefit by any other measures that are put in place. Perhaps there is an opportunity for a bipartisan approach in relation to one of the most important issues confronting the state of Queensland. One of the greatest challenges confronting Queensland is to deal with this climate change issue without damaging our important coal and gas industries, but at the same time recognising that industries such as tourism depend heavily on the Great Barrier Reef. Queensland has a very substantial coastline that will be under threat from rising sea levels. Also, we have a viable agricultural industry. I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

There would be active measures taken to ensure our credits were acceptable and tradeable in other carbon credit markets around the world. The other states would be invited to participate on a voluntary basis.

Obtaining international recognition of our carbon credits underlines the importance of having a highly credible certification process. There are markets emerging in Asia, China in particular and corporations in the Asia/Pacific area would be potential large customers for Queensland's carbon credits creating a significant export industry for this state as well as creating a valuable government owned corporation for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

It would also be welcomed if local authorities wished to include voluntary participation with for example their rates notices. Once again this would be purely optional however there are many environmentally aware local governments around Queensland and Australia that may well participate.

The success of the scheme depends on creating an active and valuable market for credits. I think it is very apparent from my description of the approach to marketing that these credits would obtain significant value which will become one of the major drivers in Queensland leading Australia and in fact leading most parts of the world in dealing with climate change.

Queensland's new certification industry for carbon credits would ensure that baseline measurements were not manipulated to increase the potential credits.

Mr Speaker on the credits side clearly the voluntary nature of this scheme would not be a weakness given that the credits issued would be tradable and have potentially significant value, creating an incentive for companies to participate in the scheme and reduce emissions.

Companies participating in the scheme would also have the right to publicise that they have done so.

The idea is to reward industries that use technology, innovation and other means to cut their emissions substantially more than their competitors and to assist and improve the economics of alternative energy sources and of sequestration.

This potentially opens the door for these environmentally sustainable ways of dealing with greenhouse gasses to become a major growth industry for the state.

Farmers or forestry corporations would be able to draw an additional source of revenue assisting their projects which in many cases will not produce revenue for many years or even decades.

Queensland can obtain first mover advantage and potentially become an Asia-Pacific centre for carbon credit trading well as a leader in the certification of carbon credits. We could also become a leader in alternative energy and enhance significantly the economics of environmentally friendly activities as well as generating further stimulus to innovation with Geo-sequestration, new forms of alternative energy and new technologies to reduce emissions at a faster rate.

It is also apparent that the cash flow benefits to companies are the motive to improve performance. Not only would we avoid the implementation of a penalty that would reduce the competitiveness of industry in Queensland, we would actually improve the competitiveness of a whole range of industries whilst creating new so called smart industries for the state.

This is a scheme that can stimulate emission reductions, sequestration and alternative sources and improve the economics of all these activities.

Clearly if quotas, targets or other schemes are introduced elsewhere, these decisions make the existence of an active carbon credits exchange and even more dramatic advantage. Queensland would also benefit in the creation of new industries such as certification, in stimulating innovation, in improving the competitive advantage of alternatives, sequestration and emission reduction. This bill will create an environment in which Queensland can be a world leader in minimising greenhouse gases and dealing with climate change.

In Queensland, we have recently heard a great deal about clean coal technology and alternative sources of power. Many people may not realize that all of these things come at a substantially higher cost than traditional sources of coal fired power and accordingly will not become major suppliers of power unless the market is in some way regulated. This regulation may take the form of a mandatory mix of alternative energy, hefty government subsidies or penalties applied to the conventional power generating sources.

I applaud the efforts taken by the State Government and the Federal Government to advance clean coal technologies, I believe this voluntary carbon credit trading exchange would have clear additional merits. Essentially, it provides a stream of income that could be used to reduce the cost disadvantages of alternative energy sources or emission reduction processes, such as clean coal. Importantly, such a source of income comes at no cost to the taxpaying public and does not rely on Government subsidy, penalty or mandatory quota.

Mr Speaker, in closing let me emphasise that this is just the first step. This scheme will provide strong incentive to Queensland business to reduce emissions, source power from low or zero emission sources, while supporting other areas where greenhouse emissions can be reduced. Not only would this program give Queensland a first mover advantage, it would also create a valuable Government Owned Business enterprise that would serve as a significant asset to Queensland.

The scheme will also generate a new industry in certification, while promoting climate friendly activities such as plantation forestry and the use of alternative fuels.

Finally, I would strongly emphasise that this measure will be complementary to any subsequent national or international approach taken on this issue. Should such an approach involve more aggressive reductions in greenhouse gases, the need for a carbon credits exchange would become even greater. Queensland would be ideally placed to benefit, having already established this scheme.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wilson, adjourned.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Beattie Labor Government

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House calls on the Beattie government to focus on delivering the infrastructure and services needed to address—

- the water crisis;
- the long-running health crisis; and
- the infrastructure crisis;

rather than focusing on diversions and distractions aimed at diverting attention from these crises and the string of high-profile court cases involving former Beattie Government ministers.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Coppabella Mine

**Mr SEENEY** (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Earlier in a ministerial statement the Premier referred to the assistance package provided as 'an investment or financial arrangement pursuant to the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1997'. I ask the Premier: how many such investments have been made under section 41.3(g) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act during the term of his government? When was the last time such an 'investment', to use his words, was made under the terms of that act that was in excess of \$25 million as a package to a private company other than Coppabella?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, which in fact basically alters one of my own questions that I would have been only too happy to answer shortly. The position is this. There is a standard procedure here. There are other examples of the government providing loans to support industry expansion similar to that provided to Coppabella. Therefore, the Coppabella arrangement is not unique in itself, and I will give examples.

For EGR, a major automobile components manufacturer, the government provided a significant loan at the government's costs of funds that is lower than a commercial rate to assist its expansion. Like Coppabella, it was secured by bank guarantees. For the Brisbane Marine Industry Park, the government provided a significant loan at the government's costs of funds to assist in the acquisition of a ship lift. Like Coppabella, it was secured by bank guarantees. For Warner Bros, the government provided a significant loan at a concessional rate of interest to construct additional studios at Movie World. All of these loans in the three cases I have referred to—to answer the opposition leader's questions—were at concessional rates of interest. In contrast, the loan for Coppabella involved a commercial interest rate—

**An opposition member:** Was it a loan?

**Mr BEATTIE:** so its terms were tougher than these three other examples. I heard the inane interjection that it was not a loan. I thought we had made it absolutely clear in the documents already tabled that in fact it was. I want to highlight this again—and I will go back to the documents—because I do not want there to be any more misunderstanding than is obviously politically inevitable in this process.

If members go back to the document I tabled last night, the Executive Council minute in September 2002, they will see that it basically points out the arrangements that would be followed. It actually spells out—and I referred to these this morning—that DSD will borrow \$26 million from the Queensland Treasury Corporation for 10 years to fund the state's commitment, and these funds will be immediately drawn down. It goes on about it being progressively drawn down to match it. It talks about how this is going to be done. It is a 10-year facility. In other words, it was and is being repaid, is my understanding.

So this is the answer to the question. Was this unique? The answer is no. Were there other examples? The answer is yes. My government stands by—and I make this very clear—our encouragement and support for the growth of new industries in this state to create jobs for Queenslanders. The case in relation to Coppabella was very simple. They found coal under a transport corridor. They wanted to move the corridor to mine the coal, on which we would have received appropriate royalties, and it was a facility to be repaid. Under those circumstances, I believe Queenslanders would have supported what was done.

### Coppabella Mine

**Mr SEENEY:** My second question without notice is again to the Premier. In a ministerial statement the Premier indicated that, in relation to the Coppabella Mine assistance package, the corridor relocation facilitation deed, the rail infrastructure facilitation deed and the infrastructure user charge deed were all signed on 23 October 2002. The Premier said, 'This was in fact the final stage in a lengthy approval process.' Does the Premier not agree that reaching the final stage in a lengthy approval process and the signing of those deeds would make 23 October 2002 a very significant date for the company that was operating the Coppabella project?

**Mr BEATTIE:** The answer to the question is no.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Hang on, let me answer the question. This is a very important issue in the public accountability mechanisms, and I have gone some way through the means of last night and today to encourage a position where opposition members can ask these questions. We are not running away from any of this, so let me answer it. My answer is in these terms. Of course the signing of the formal documents is an important day, but is it the most important day in all of this? No. The reality is that, if

there had not been work started back in 2001 and subsequent dates along the line—like the negotiations—what happened in October 2002 could never have happened. You know as well as I do, if you have done any negotiations, what is the important—

**Mr Seeney:** When you signed the deed; when you signed the contract.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Do you actually want me to answer this or do you just want to score a point? I am happy to wait. If you want me to answer it, I will answer it. It is actually a fair question; I want to give you a fair answer. The fair answer is very simply this. When you are negotiating the deal, you know the important ingredients. If you are talking about a house, for example, what is the important thing?

**Mr Horan:** The signing of the contract.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Member for Toowoomba South, do you actually want an answer or do you just want to be silly?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker, I am happy to answer the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Can I say to the members on my left that we have got the question, which has been properly constituted and asked, so let the Premier now reply.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will tell you what is important to me, Mr Speaker, if I am negotiating a contract for the sale of a house when I agree on the price. When I negotiate—

**Mr Seeney:** You don't pay the money till you've signed the contract, though.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, can I ask you to not make any frivolous interjections or other.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The Leader of the Opposition does not want me to answer this because he knows my answer nullifies the nonsense of the question. What is the important thing when you start negotiations? If you look at each one of the stages I have set out here, you will see that I have set out exactly what authority was given to the relevant ministers to negotiate an agreement. They reached an agreement on what was to be moved, the price, all those costs, the loan facilities—and I have already pointed out that it was higher than the other facilities. That is right, it was higher. Do you notice what I said in relation to the other one? It was more expensive than the other three. The important thing is the price. They reached agreement along the process. All you got in October was the formal signing of an agreement that had been negotiated over months. What was the important time? It was the negotiations—May to September 2002. That was the important approval by Executive Council. That was the important time and then—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** You see, Mr Speaker—

**Mr Horan:** The ink on the paper.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr BEATTIE:** My time is up but I will finish the answer later. I just make the point that opposition members do not want an answer; they just want to play politics. They do not want an answer.

### **Coppabella Mine**

**Ms MALE:** My question without notice is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Can the Premier advise the House what processes were followed in the granting of financial assistance in 2002 to the joint venturers of Coppabella Mine and whether this was normal practice?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am delighted to do that so the answer is yes, I can. It was standard procedure under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd operates the Coppabella coalmine for the Coppabella joint venture. APC advised that it discovered that significant coal reserves lay underneath a six-kilometre length of road-rail transport corridor adjacent to the existing Coppabella coalmine and wanted to expand the Coppabella Mine by developing these coal reserves. So what happened was it had a mine, reserves were found underneath the transport corridor and it wanted to expand the mine. It is fairly straightforward what was required.

The transport corridor contained a six-kilometre section of the Peak Downs Highway, Queensland Rail's Goonyella-Hay Point dual track main line coal railway, Ergon's 66kV overhead powerline, BHP Coal's Braeside water pipeline and Telstra's underground fibre optic telecommunications cable. That is what was in the transport corridor that needed to be moved.

Moving this corridor would allow APC to mine the coal under the corridor. It sought assistance from the state to relocate the road and rail infrastructure. We own them so why would it not come to us to help get them moved? As I have already spelt out, on 22 November 2001 the then minister for state

development approved proposed funding arrangements as the basis for commercial negotiations between the Department of State Development and Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd. What was that? A very significant part along the way. If I had been in APC's position I would have regarded that decision as one of the most significant.

Negotiations then started. At the conclusion of these negotiations, a crucial time, 16 May 2002, Executive Council gave approval for an assistance package as an investment or financial arrangement pursuant to the total amount of the assistance package, which was \$28.787 million, including \$2.37 million in GST, repayable to the government over 10 years by way of an infrastructure user charge. So 16 May was perhaps, in many senses, one of the most crucial days in this.

On 5 September 2002 Executive Council recommended expenditure of \$28.787 million pursuant to the decision of 16 May. So what are the two most significant dates? May and September were the two significant dates. I understand that on 23 October the then Treasurer signed the formal documents. Those opposite want to know the two significant dates. They were May and September.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Those opposite do not like it because it ruins their nonsense argument. That is what it does. There is the truth. That highlights the truth and what was appropriate. I have already spelt out the arrangements with EGR, Brisbane Marine Industry Park and Warner Bros. I want to make the point that, in contrast, Coppabella met commercial rates.

### **Coppabella Mine**

**Dr FLEGG:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Last night and this morning the Premier indicated that assistance like that given to the Coppabella Mine was normal. Why was it then that this so-called investment was made under this section of the act rather than a more usual form of funding such as a grant under the Queensland Investment Incentive Scheme?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Can I ask government members on my right to give the Deputy Premier a fair go.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I am very happy to have a chance to explain the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act to the shadow Treasurer and it seems would-be Treasurer, God forbid. The provisions that he refers to in relation to the QIIS program are provisions in relation to the payment of grants. The financial arrangement entered into in the Coppabella arrangement was not a grant; it was a loan. Therefore it is done under the provisions for a loan.

**Opposition members:** It's not a loan!

**Ms BLIGH:** I keep hearing that this is not a loan. Somebody had better tell the company because it is making repayments. It has made every repayment. Maybe it is a donation. It has made the repayments.

**Dr Flegg:** It was tabled last night. It's an investment.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Can I just indicate to the member for Moggill that you asked this question and you are making repetitive interjections. I would ask you to desist.

**Ms BLIGH:** The company is making repayments as required under the deeds on schedule and it is on track with all of the repayments required of it. I just heard an inane interjection to the effect, 'How could you describe this as an investment?' I remind members opposite that this was about the further development of the coal industry in Queensland. Not only is the loan being repaid but the Queensland taxpayer is benefiting from the extra royalties that come from the expansion of the coal activity. In every respect, with a commercial rate of return on the loan and royalties that they would not have otherwise received, I cannot see how anyone would see this as anything other than a good investment in industry and a good outcome for the taxpayer.

### **Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd**

**Ms NOLAN:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the House whether any minister or caucus member, other than the relevant portfolio ministers, ever discussed matters with him relating to Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd and Queensland Rail?

**Mr BEATTIE:** The answer to that question is no. I want it clearly on the record: the answer to that question is no. I do that for very clear reasons. The second point I want to make is this. I have heard inane nonsense over there about this not being a loan. I want to make it absolutely clear that the company is repaying the loan as required and all payments have been made and are on schedule.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party said that there is no reference to this in the Executive Council minute. I am prepared to send a staff member around to read it to them so they understand it. It says this—

The Treasurer's approval for DSD to establish a loan facility with Queensland Treasury Corporation has been obtained.

**Mr Seeney:** It's a loan to DSD, not the company.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member has no idea how government works. All I can say is, 'God save Queensland from you.' He has no idea how government works. Under any level of government he has no idea about approvals.

I am determined to answer this because I want the people of Queensland to know that this was appropriately dealt with and dealt with in accordance with the interests of this state. If we have a look at the Executive Council minute—

**Mr Hobbs:** And Gordon, too.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Warrego under standing order 253.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I go back to the Executive Council minute of August. It says—

The Treasurer's approval for DSD to establish a loan facility with Queensland Treasury Corporation has been obtained.

I have already informed the House, as has the Treasurer, that this loan money has been repaid and the payments are on schedule. If we look at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2 of the Executive Council minute under 'background' it goes on and says—

DSD will borrow the money from Queensland Treasury Corporation for 10 years to fund the state's commitment.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Jeffrey, give up.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I have to tell the honourable member that he has to go and do Accounting 101. Fair dinkum! Thank goodness we have brought in prep year because he has still got a chance; that is all I can say. DSD got approval, the money was provided and there is a loan facility where it repays it. If we look at the top of page 2 it is very clear.

I want to make it clear that the formal process was followed to the letter in the granting of the financial assistance in this matter. The matter went to Executive Council and at no other time was the matter brought to my attention by any person—not by non-portfolio ministers, not by members of caucus and not by any member of the business community. The government's consideration of this matter was the subject of advice from at least five government agencies and departments and they included: Treasury, Crown Law, the Department of State Development, Queensland Rail and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

### Coppabella Mine

**Miss SIMPSON:** My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. I refer to the memorandum where it says the arrangement is considered to be an investment under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. I also refer to the Premier's remarks last night indicating that loans like the one given to the Coppabella Mine were normal, and I ask: why did the government choose to lend the moneys from QTC for the Coppabella Mine rather than have the company borrow the funds from a normal financial institution?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. It is probably a question that the company itself might ask itself because it may well have secured a better rate of interest on the loan if it had gone outside of government.

**Mr Johnson:** How much did you get out of it, Anna?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would ask the member for Gregory to withdraw that remark as unparliamentary.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I withdraw and I do apologise.

**Ms BLIGH:** I would just draw the attention of the questioner and the opposition to the fact that this was a set of financial arrangements that concerned the relocation of a railway line. This is something you cannot do without talking to the owner of the railway line, and the owner of the railway line was Queensland Rail.

In an effort to ensure that this coal resource could be exploited, that jobs could occur through the expansion of this coal deposit and that the economic value would accrue to the taxpayers and to the people of central Queensland, yes, the government sat down with the company and worked through, as we do with other companies, a set of arrangements in relation to common-user infrastructure. The mining industry in this state under any government of any political persuasion in the last 50 years would not have been developed if it had not been for recognition of common-user infrastructure and financial arrangements in relation to them.

In relation to the financial arrangements, the total package involved obviously, as I said, the relocation of a railway line and the company made a decision to go through the financial arrangements that were put in place. As I said, it got no commercial benefit because it paid a commercial rate of interest. Frankly, to be honest, it probably could have secured a better rate of interest on the open market. But the company was interested in a package that saw it working with Queensland Rail so that not only did the company's interest get served but the interests of all of the other users of the rail line could also be protected as the package was put in place.

### **Nuttall, Mr GR; Memorandum**

**Mr FINN:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Can the Premier tell the House what he knows of an alleged memo sent by the former member for Sandgate to the then director-general of Health?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I want to make it absolutely clear, because I notice there are some media reports in relation to this, that my government not only has the highest possible standards but also we will act appropriately and honestly on every possible occasion.

I am not certain why this memo, which was sent to the former director-general of Health, Steve Buckland, was not provided to my office or provided to my director-general, to the best of our knowledge, as indicated by the cc's on the bottom. There may have been some reason for that by the person who sent it; I have no idea. But I want to make it clear: no-one took any action on this, not even Steve Buckland whom the memo was directed to because I fired him the day afterwards. I understand that I am not going to be on his Christmas card list and he is not going to be one of the people who loves and admires and adores me.

The fact is that I do not regret any of the decisions made in relation to this matter. As I have said, we have checked these issues. We have checked them through very clearly. I have already tabled in the House this morning a copy of a memo from the correspondence coordinator in my office. I make it very clear that I am not going to hide for one minute my disappointment in relation to Mr Nuttall pursuant to this memo. I have never hidden the fact that I feel very disappointed. Not only do I feel disappointed, I feel very betrayed in these circumstances. I will not hide that. I just think that everyone who has shared some experiences with Mr Nuttall on my side of politics feels let down and betrayed, and I am the first who feels that way. I am not prepared to hide that, and I will not publicly hide it.

I understand that there will be an attempt to play politics on these matters. The real test of leadership is what you do when these matters are drawn to your attention. What happened is that I referred this matter to the CMC. I make no apology for doing so—either to Mr Nuttall or anyone else. I will be writing to the CMC later today and I will be referring to the CMC my ministerial statements that have dealt with this memo that was sent to Steve Buckland. I want the matter investigated and pursued, because under no circumstances will I allow any taint in relation to either my office or the government to remain. The CMC can fully examine it.

In terms of the matter involving Coppabella, I want to make this clear: I make no apology for my government expanding the coal industry and doing it on the appropriate terms. Here was a case where there was a public road and railway line that needed to be moved because there was a coal deposit. The company was charged commercial rates. Why would that company not come and talk to the government bearing in mind that we ran the railway line and we ran the road?

Time expired.

Interruption.

## **MOTION**

### **Extension of Time**

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.55 am): I move—  
That the Premier be further heard.

Motion agreed to.

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

Resumed.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Bearing in mind the importance of this issue, I want to make certain that I have answered every aspect of it in this parliament. I will not run away from this issue. I want to make certain Queenslanders understand the honesty and integrity of my government.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** If the member were not so rude, it might not have been necessary. He has already been warned.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I indicate to the member for Warrego that you have been warned and you are on thin ice.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I want to make this point: in terms of the advice given to the government in relation to Australian Premium Coals and this railway line, as I have said to members before, the government undertook considerable examination of this matter. It was the subject of advice from at least five government agencies and departments. Just look at who provided advice that supported this arrangement: Treasury, Crown law, the Department of State Development, Queensland Rail and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It was not some sneaky little arrangement. This was about as open and transparent as you can get. The whole world knew about it. Not only did they know about it—and we are talking about hundreds of pieces of advice, or hundreds of people knowing—they all supported the arrangement. Over the four years that this arrangement was developed and negotiated, literally hundreds of public servants provided advice to the government on this issue.

There is a proper, transparent and accountable process to be followed in matters of this kind, and my government followed it. As I said, I will be writing to the chair of the CMC today to put this information on the record and we will pursue it. If there is a coal deposit under a railway line and under a road, what do you do? You go to the government of the day and say, 'We want you to move it in some way so we can mine all the coal that's underneath it.' That is the first thing. We basically say, 'Yes, we want to do it.' Why? Because it is jobs for Queenslanders and royalties for Treasury, which pays for teachers, nurses, doctors, policemen and ambulance officers. So we say, 'Yes.' We say to them though, 'You've got to do it on commercial grounds.'

When the Leader of the Opposition asked me the question, the three examples I gave were more attractive than the ones given to Coppabella. We made Coppabella pay on commercial grounds. Not only did we make it pay—it is repaying the loan and it is on schedule repaying it. Why would we not arrange through QTC for this road and railway to be moved to earn revenue and jobs for the state, while at the same time making the company pay it back to us? Why would we not do that? That is a sensible and constructive thing to do. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: heaven forbid this be the case, but if you were Premier you would have done exactly the same thing.

**Mr Seeney:** I wouldn't!

**Mr BEATTIE:** You would have done exactly the same thing. I have to make this point—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I have made a ruling and I would ask you to observe that ruling and make no further interjections such as you have made.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Let me just sum up by simply making this point: I was asked a question before by one of the government backbenchers as to whether I discussed this matter with anyone appropriate outside the portfolio ministers other than the Executive Council minute formally going to cabinet. I have said clearly no. I made it absolutely clear. This is a financial transaction that was done in the state's interest. It was done in a way that created jobs and opportunities. It was a loan that is now being repaid at commercial rates. I say to Queenslanders: not only can you trust this government, you can trust us to deliver jobs.

### Australian Premium Coals Pty Ltd

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Is the Treasurer able to table all departmental correspondence, legal advices, including that of Corrs Chambers Westgarth, concerning the taxation implications of the arrangement, meeting and file notes leading up to the final decision being made by this government to source moneys to Australian Premium Coals?

**Ms BLIGH:** Yes, I carry it around in my handbag! I think it is important for the opposition to remember that this is a matter that has been thoroughly investigated and every single document that the government had in relation to this issue was provided to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. So all of the documents that the member has outlined have been forwarded to the appropriate investigators.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Ms BLIGH:** No, I do not have the documents that the member referred to here. What I can say is that every document that was requested—every document that Treasury could identify that had anything to do with this issue—was forwarded. Every document that was available to the cabinet office as requested by the CMC was forwarded.

Boxes and boxes and boxes of material went. Do I know every single document that was in the boxes? Of course I do not! What a ridiculous question. I was not the relevant minister at the time and, as acting Premier, I authorised the provision of that material without any concern. If there is any information that the CMC wants, it can have more. There is no attempt by the government to withhold any document that might be of use to it in its investigation.

I go back to questions that have been asked about the application of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. I suggest to members opposite that they should read section 41 of the act, because they will find that that part of the act goes directly to the powers of the Treasurer to invest surplus moneys. A significant number of powers are provided to the Treasurer, for example, to make investments in securities, to make deposits with a bank or to make investments by way of a loan to any body or person who is authorised by an act or law to borrow money from the Treasurer. Therefore, it is clear that the company involved here is not in that category.

The Executive Council minute refers to paragraph 41(3)(g), which authorises the Treasurer to invest surplus moneys in other investments or financial arrangements as may be approved by the Governor in Council. Clearly, that is a direct provision to the Treasurer to take matters to the Governor in Council to authorise financial arrangements, and that is precisely what was done. Any question that this was done other than in accordance with the law of the day is an absolute nonsense.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Bundamba, I welcome to the gallery today teachers and students from the Ipswich Grammar School, which is in the electorate represented in this House by Rachel Nolan.

I also welcome teachers and students from the Mount Warren Park State School, which is in the electorate of Albert held, of course, by the Hon. Margaret Keech.

### **Western Corridor Recycled Water Project**

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure to yesterday's question time, when she made the point that all major projects start with a work capacity and are progressively built up. Can the Treasurer detail to the House the latest build-up to ensure that the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project comes in on time?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As members would be aware, the great bulk of this project is occurring in and around the Bundamba area. I know that the member has been very supportive of the project, and I thank her for that.

Yesterday I outlined to the House that there were two essential components to the western corridor pipeline. One, obviously, involves the pipes and the laying of those pipes, which is on schedule. The other involves the construction of advanced water treatment plants, which are very complex pieces of technology. The completion of those is really what is driving the timing on those projects.

I am pleased to advise the House that arrangements have now been put in place that will take effect from next Wednesday to accelerate the construction on the advanced water treatment plant at Bundamba to ensure that no project delays will get in the way of us finishing this project on time. This means that from next Wednesday concrete pouring on the treatment plants will be occurring on a 24-hour-a-day basis, six days a week. In essence, this will ensure that we are on track to deliver 20 megalitres of recycled water to Swanbank Power Station by the end of August this year. It will also provide a jump-start on the project's next phase, which will deliver a further 80 megalitres a day to Tarong Power Station by end of June 2008.

I advise the House that at this stage the acceleration of the project does not involve any laying of pipes past 6.30 pm, and that is currently occurring. It involves concrete pouring and concrete batching work in relation to the advanced water treatment components of the pipeline. In essence, it means that tasks that would have run sequentially can now run concurrently. For example, steel fixing can occur while concrete is being poured on adjoining lots. There is a range of benefits to the timing of the project, but it also allows the project to pour greater volumes of concrete as, I am advised, the concrete is easier to work with when it is cooler.

I have had discussions with the Ipswich City Council, which has put in place a number of arrangements to minimise any impact on local residents, and there are 28 householders in the vicinity of the project. We want to minimise the impact on those householders. We have established a 24-hour hotline to ensure that, if there is any unreasonable disturbance, residents will have a direct line to have that remedied and managed as quickly as possible. I accept that inevitably there will be some inconvenience. In advance I apologise to those residents and ask them to understand the importance of this project. I thank them in advance for what I hope will be their understanding and patience. We look forward to having this project brought to fruition as early as possible.

### **Breaking the Unemployment Cycle**

**Ms LEE LONG:** My question without notice is to the Minister For State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations. I have been advised that his government has discontinued funding for the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle training initiative, even though the federal government is still funding it. This initiative has created many opportunities for the unskilled and unemployed to find work, but the loss of the state government's contribution will mean that a number of

organisations such as local councils, aged persons homes and so on will no longer be able to train such people. I ask: will the minister reinstate the state government's share of the funding for this program or, alternatively, substitute the program with something similar?

**Mr MICKEL:** Members would be aware that Breaking the Unemployment Cycle has been one of the most outstanding initiatives of this government. In fact, by way of example, I happen to have figures for the Atherton Tableland. From 1998 to 2006, the program has assisted 2,416 people in the Atherton Tableland, costing \$12.6 million and creating 1,618 jobs. This year, the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative has assisted 82 people and approved funding of \$993,430 for the electorate.

The honourable member has been very generous to the federal government. I have just received a transcript from ABC Southern Queensland, where a Darling Downs Indigenous training group has been defunded by the federal government for areas affecting Toowoomba, Dalby and Warwick. Why? Because it says it will shut down programs in communities where the unemployment rate is below seven per cent. In other words, the federal government will shuffle you off.

In my area, I was disgusted with the Work for the Dole program and most members would be. Why? Because it made people show up but never paid them or trained them. Our Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative offers wages and is a tremendous benefit to community groups. I know that from time to time it has been opposed by members of the opposition. I can remember they used to say it was a painting rocks program. I must say that I am very proud of the fact that, in my electorate and in many others around the state, the initiative has offered people meaningful skills and work.

Yesterday the honourable members for Nudgee and Greenslopes and I attended a program to help people suffering mental health issues access the workforce in a \$900,000 program. The member is right to this extent: when we have four per cent unemployment, we have to be about skilling. That is why our new program is skilling Queenslanders for work. I give the member this assurance for her electorate and any other electorate: where there are pockets of people who are highly marginalised, we will be there to assist them every time. I know that four per cent unemployment is fantastic, but it is not great if you are one of the four per cent. That is why this government and I, as minister, are determined that we will be there for the four per cent. Whilst we have a robust economy at the moment, I fear for those people who are currently suffering unemployment when the economy turns a bit soft. What are those four per cent of people going to do then?

As we showed yesterday, for people suffering from mental health issues, for people who may have been victims of domestic violence, for people who are victims of long-term unemployment and so on, the Labor Party will be there for them with these programs.

Time expired.

### **Bradfield Scheme**

**Mrs KIERNAN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland. As a lifelong resident of the north-west, and having more than a passing awareness of the Bradfield Scheme, could the minister advise the House as to what impact the Bradfield Scheme would have on the water planning strategies currently in force or being developed throughout Queensland?

**Mr WALLACE:** It will be a pleasure for me to answer that question from my colleague from north Queensland. She would understand the value of water, unlike the opposition which has gone to water when it comes to speaking up for Queensland irrigators whose water allocations may be affected by the Howard government's \$10 billion plan for the Murray-Darling Basin. The opposition members have maintained a profound silence, even when their constituents' core interests are at stake, lest they hurt the electoral prospects of the Howard government. In contrast, the members opposite squealed like stuck pigs when the Beattie Labor government proposed a nation-building water scheme, the so-called Bradfield Scheme. Without even looking at the scheme, they say that it will threaten existing water rights and water planning.

Dr Bradfield had a vision to divert flows from the Tully, Herbert and Burdekin rivers to the western-flowing Flinders and Thomson rivers and Torrens Creek. North Queenslanders support Dr Bradfield's vision and they support the Premier. The Beattie government proposes to take this scheme a step further by taking this water all the way to the Murray-Darling via the Thomson and Warrego rivers.

This government is not afraid to consider bold plans that could benefit rural and regional Queenslanders. The Beattie government is supported by the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the federal water minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who have both said that we need to have a look at this scheme. Indeed, I note this morning that that doyen of the Liberal Party, Alan Jones, said on the *Today* program that the scheme deserved inspection and comment.

The Bradfield Scheme could become the best news that irrigators and the environment in Queensland have received. It is about increasing water supplies, not reducing them. The plan would mean increased water security for people in the north, not less.

I am appalled to see the opposition and the federal member for Herbert, Peter Lindsay, oppose the Bradfield Scheme even though Mr Lindsay's constituents and his Prime Minister are willing to have a look at the plan. At least the former National Party member, Bob Katter, will stand up for north Queensland. He says that the plan needs to be tested. The Queensland Farmers' Federation also puts the faint hearts of the opposition to shame. The QFF has supported looking at the Bradfield Scheme but it says that the focus should remain on the proposed Commonwealth takeover of the Murray-Darling Basin. I have no problem with that position.

A study into the Bradfield Scheme will evaluate the impact of the project. The project will also be considered in light of the current water resource plans for the affected catchments and regional water supply strategies under development. I say to the opposition: stand up for your constituents. Stand up for Queensland. Back the Premier in this proposal. Say to Canberra that it needs to be considered. Get on board.

### **De Lacy, Mr K; Macarthur Coal**

**Mr HORAN:** My question is to the Hon. the Premier. Can he confirm that a former Treasurer, Mr Keith De Lacy, is the chairman of Macarthur Coal? Can the Premier advise what discussions he has had with the former Treasurer about these financial arrangements?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Can I just say I love you guys. I really do. I thank the member for asking me that question, because it gives me another opportunity to highlight just how ethical my government is.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The members opposite might think that ethics are a joke; I do not. I take them seriously.

**Mr Springborg:** Legalised lying.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member is not the Leader of the Opposition anymore. If he is going to make a bid, he should come down here and have a go. I have to admit that, based on today and based on the issues, if the Leader of the Opposition is doing as well as that, then maybe the member for Southern Downs should come back down. I did not really mean that, Jeff.

To answer the question, the member knows who the chairman of Macarthur Coal is. It is Keith De Lacy. That is not a secret. It is on the public record. Everybody in Queensland knows that.

Have I had any discussions with Keith de Lacy about any of these issues? The answer is no, no, no, no and, if the member did not get that, no—and nor would I. Let me make it clear: everyone understands one thing in relation to my behaviour. People do not come through my door and make any improper suggestions about anything, because if they do, they will end up either getting thrown out or going before the CMC. I make no apology for Keith De Lacy. Let me tell members, do they know who knows all about that? Gordon Nuttall and another minister.

### **Eastern Busway**

**Mr BOMBOLAS:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Could the minister inform the House about the latest plans for the Eastern Busway and how this vital infrastructure project will reduce congestion and save public transport users time? I am particularly interested, because it is due to service the Chatsworth electorate and its surrounds.

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member is someone who cares about the environment. Also, in many ways he is a breath of fresh air in the Chatsworth electorate. It is a great privilege to be the Minister for Transport and Main Roads in this government, particularly having such a record spend on public transport infrastructure. One of the things that I enjoy most about this job is working cooperatively with members of parliament, whether they be on my side of the House or on the other side of the House. The other day I was talking to the member for Cunningham about some issues relating to the Gore Highway. I was also speaking to the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party about some issues. I also spoke to the member for Gregory. It is a great pleasure to work with people to get a better outcome for this society. I will say one thing: the former member for Chatsworth singled himself out as a person who wanted to play base politics rather than do something about getting a benefit for his community.

The great news today—and I table it—is that we have announced the proposed final alignment for the Eastern Busway. That is an 18-kilometre dedicated link between Buranda and Capalaba. We hope to start work on the first stage, which is between Buranda and Bennetts Road, next year—2008—and have it finished by 2010. Construction of the busway from Bennetts Road to Carindale is planned to be completed by 2016.

*Tabled paper:* Maps numbered 1 to 6 showing final alignment of Eastern Busway.

Basically, for those members who do not know the area very well, the busway will follow an alignment along Old Cleveland Road. But by talking to the community and by working with them, we have made a number of improvements to that alignment. For example, the roundabout that was planned at Buranda has been eliminated and a better connection between the Eastern Busway and the South East Busway has been chosen. That will also connect into the busway station at the Princess Alexandra Hospital that is being built as part of the Boggo Road busway, which is currently under construction.

At Stones Corner there will be a bridge over Norman Creek. The busway will be enclosed in a tube from the tunnel portal near Cowley Street across the car park towards the Stones Corner busway station. That is in the area of the school.

At Coorparoo, the busway station will be located on the northern side of Old Cleveland Road on the old Myer building and Coorparoo Mall site. I went to school in that area and I have to say that—

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** No, St Lawrence's has a busway near it at Mater Hill. Coorparoo junction has certainly had its salad days. At the moment it is not experiencing its best times. This project will revitalise Coorparoo junction by integrating the Coorparoo Mall and the Coorparoo Myer site. There will then be busway access at Holdsworth Street in a tunnel behind the Myer building. There will be tunnel stretching all the way from Langlands Park to Coorparoo. The busway will not come to the surface there.

I will not go into further detail. Ultimately, there will be 11 high-quality bus stations, which will provide significant cuts in travel time from the city to Coorparoo—from 18 minutes to 10 minutes—and from the city to Capalaba, 54 minutes to 25 minutes. So we want to hear from the community about this project. This is a wonderful, iconic project. It is about making Brisbane more and more liveable in terms of public transport. People will use public transport when it is available to them. I thank the local members, the member for South Brisbane, the member for Greenslopes, the member for Chatsworth and the member for Capalaba.

### **Coppabella Mine**

**Mr JOHNSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. What charges were levied for the transport of coal from Coppabella Mine prior to the assistance package being granted? What is currently being charged?

**Mr LUCAS:** Obviously, that is not material that I have within my knowledge. I am happy to take that on notice.

### **Rent Assistance**

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** My question is to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology. Is the minister aware of comments by the Prime Minister yesterday that he is considering changes to rent assistance? Will those changes benefit Queenslanders?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I note his support in recent times for public housing in his electorate as a way of dealing with the escalating rents in the Keppel electorate. I thank him for that support.

The member for Keppel knows something that the Prime Minister found out only yesterday, apparently. I think the reason the Prime Minister found out about it only yesterday is that he looked at the Newspoll results and saw that he was on the beak with the people of Australia. One of the reasons he should be on the beak with the people of Australia is his arrogant attitude towards rent assistance. This is the first time in 11 years that the Prime Minister has even acknowledged that we have a problem with his policy of rent assistance. It is something that I have raised in this parliament many, many times. It is something that has been defended by those opposite by their insouciant silence on the matter.

I notice the member for Logan nodding. He knows better than anybody what has happened in recent times. Five years ago, the people in his electorate were not disadvantaged by the private rental market. In fact, the rent was about the same with rent assistance added—160 bucks a week. It ended up being about the same amount as public housing—around about \$107 or \$108 a week. That did not create a great deal of doorknocking at his office, requiring him to try to intervene to get people housing. Of course, we now know that the rents in Logan are now \$235 a week. So a family getting rent assistance in that area will be paying \$176 out of their own pocket. So it is little wonder that they come knocking on the door of public housing.

I note that the Prime Minister still cannot utter those two words 'public housing'. They are still not on his agenda. He is talking about his blank cheque for rent assistance. He is not talking about public housing for a very good reason. He knows that he has privatised public housing by stealth and taken away from public housing in Queensland alone nearly \$400 million. Again, there is silence from those opposite—not a word of support.

It is great to see that Kevin Rudd has put the fear of God into Howard to the extent that he is now starting to listen to the battlers out there, the same ones who he hopes will make a judgement his way on election day. The reality is that I have been saying this and saying this for 8½ years, and those opposite have criticised me time and time again in this regard. The truth is that come judgement day I know that the people of Australia—and this is not just people on low incomes but also those on \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year who live in the electorates of Mackay and Keppel who cannot sustain rent: they are police officers and teachers in regional Queensland—

Time expired.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Clayfield, I once again welcome a further group of students and teachers from Mount Warren Park State School who are in the gallery today and are represented in this parliament by the member for Albert, the Hon. Margaret Keech.

### Coppabella Mine

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. The Executive Council minute tabled by the Premier of 5 September refers to 'the complexity of the arrangement and the tax planning initiatives'. Does the Treasurer condone tax minimisation schemes such as the one apparently facilitated by her government with the owners of the Coppabella Mine?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. It is so typical of members of the opposition when they have no evidence and no facts: they come in here and assert nonsense. This document is the culmination of a very long period of negotiations with the company in which crown law advice was taken by Treasury, and all of the documents related to this have been provided to the CMC for investigation. I will read to members what the Executive Council minute says—

Due to the commercial complexity of the arrangement and the tax planning initiatives that have been adopted by APC and QR, an independent legal review of the proposed arrangements was sought from Corrs Chambers Westgarth lawyers.

From this, the member opposite has drawn the conclusion that this involves tax evasion. If the member honestly believes that, I presume he is saying that Corrs Chambers Westgarth has somehow advised Queensland Rail how to break the tax act. There are serious questions that have to be asked about this matter. They are being asked by the appropriate investigating body, the CMC, which has the powers of a standing royal commission. Any suggestion along the lines that have been contributed by the member opposite really do not contribute to a sensible, well-informed debate.

**Mr Schwarten:** It's his first question.

**Ms BLIGH:** It is the first question and it is a cracker. No-one up this end would have asked that question. They threw the dumb question to the member for Clayfield and he picked it up.

**Mr Lucas:** They used to do it to Ray Hopper.

**Ms BLIGH:** Yes, they used to do it to Ray Hopper but he got smart. So my advice to the member is: do not take the death seat question because it is usually really dumb. There are serious questions. This government does regard the issue seriously, but we think wild and nonsense allegations do nothing to contribute to the public debate or to the sufficient investigation of this matter. The CMC has the powers of a standing royal commission and it will exercise those powers as it has demonstrated in this case.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Cunningham to respect the order that I am calling for.

### National Skills Shortage

**Mr ROBERTS:** My question is directed to the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations. The national skills shortage is a significant challenge facing businesses right across Australia. How is the government assisting Queensland businesses to plug gaps in the workforce and maximise the availability of skilled workers?

**Mr MICKEL:** I again want to commend the member for Nudgee, who over a long period of time has shown great interest in our employment programs—and none better than the one yesterday that he and the member for Greenslopes attended to help people overcome mental health barriers. The other barrier we need to break through is the age barrier. There is no doubt about it: Queensland's population is ageing and so is the workforce. However, we are fitter, healthier and more active than in any previous generation. But over the next decade 80 per cent of all labour force growth will be generated from people from the age of 45. Forecasters are predicting a labour supply shortfall of up to 40,000 Queensland workers within five years. It is a real worry and I am told that it could be as high as 100,000 nationally.

One of the challenges facing many businesses is adjusting to these changes in the available workforce. As you travel throughout Queensland, most businesses will say to you that the biggest issue they face is a skills shortage. What we are encouraging employers to do is adopt age-friendly employment practices to cope with the dramatic changes in the labour supply. However, there are entrenched negative stereotypes and myths about older workers still held, unfortunately, by some employers and the community. It is time—more than time—that the value of older, experienced workers was recognised.

The economic impact of mature age workers leaving the workforce without reaching their full work potential is considerable. A further cost is the loss of corporate knowledge and experience. That is why the Queensland government has established the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy. It is part of our \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan. I was pleased to launch this the other day with the member for Burleigh at a fine establishment on the Gold Coast at Currumbin called Clancy's Pies. There is nothing better than a pie on Saturday and Clancy's was fantastic. They had 10 employees over the age of 65, and the oldest was 73 who loved working there, making an excellent contribution and, I might say, an excellent pie—most of which are sold to the people in Western Australia.

The first stage of the campaign is an advertising campaign and that is now underway. It encompasses direct mail booklets, TV, radio and press advertisements. There is also a dedicated web site that people can access for information, together with an 1800 helpline number for advice. In addition to that, we have put on eight industry liaison officers who have been appointed to work closely with employer groups and unions to ensure appropriate workplace planning. We are getting back to the three Rs—recruitment, retraining and retention of older workers.

Time expired.

### **Lockyer Water Users Recycled Water Agreement**

**Mr RICKUSS:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and minister for infrastructure. I refer to the Lockyer Water Users Recycled Water Agreement. As the government has not signed the recycled water agreement with this group, which runs the risk of jeopardising federal funding of in excess of \$400 million for the western corridor project, will the minister give a water supply agreement to the Lockyer and will she assist with funding their \$50 million project?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. I understand the interests of the Lockyer irrigators in ensuring that they get access, if possible, to water that will be supplied by the western corridor pipeline. I have said on the record on a number of occasions, and I am happy to outline it here, that the government's first priorities will be water to industry and water for drinking. We do anticipate that when the drought breaks there will be sufficient water available for irrigators to access.

I understand that officials from the Department of Natural Resources and Water have contacted the irrigators this morning. There will be discussions held over the next couple of weeks to ensure that we are in a position to work with them for the National Water Commission funds.

It might be very useful if the member was prepared to work in his party room to get bipartisan support for the state's application to the National Water Commission for the pipeline. I have received yet another letter from Malcolm Turnbull with a long list of sorry excuses about why he needs more information. The western corridor pipeline is becoming the Ipswich Motorway; the Commonwealth is finding every possible reason not to provide the funds that south-east Queensland deserves.

**Mr Lucas:** We had better get Cameron Thompson involved then.

**Mr Mickel:** Send Cameron Thompson in.

**Ms BLIGH:** We will not be sending Cameron Thompson to negotiate it, but perhaps the member for Lockyer could. I am very happy to keep working with the irrigators. We will do everything in our power to ensure that they access the National Water Commission funds that they are entitled to, just like other parts of south-east Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before we complete question time, I thank both the members of the government and the opposition for compliance with my ruling today and standing order 233.

## **TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from 20 February (see p. 382).

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (11.31 am): I rise in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. Firstly, I wish to speak about the proposed amendments to a number of transport related acts that will enable the Queensland Police Service to provide Queensland Transport with daily updates of any changes in criminal histories of individuals who hold particular authorities under legislation administered by Queensland Transport. The legislation to be amended is

the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 and the Tow Truck Act 1973.

These acts list a number of criminal offences that have the potential to disqualify a person from holding a particular authority. The criminal offences range from the very serious—such as paedophilia, rape, murder and drug trafficking—through to the less serious but equally important offences such as assault and theft. Queensland Transport uses criminal history information to assess a person's suitability to hold an authority to be, for example, a public passenger transport operator or driver, a traffic controller, a driver trainer, a Q-Ride service provider, an approved inspection station proprietor or nominee, an approved examiner, a dangerous goods vehicle driver, a tow truck driver or operator, or a person approved to conduct training for the operation of ships or to conduct examinations in the operation of ships.

People with these authorities have been given certain rights to undertake responsible roles in the community. Quite justly, the community expects Queensland Transport to undertake a rigorous and ongoing screening process to ensure these people have not committed or do not commit a criminal offence that would make them unsuitable for the roles.

Currently these acts do not support the daily monitoring of criminal histories by the police. At present the police can only provide criminal history information about individuals if it is specifically requested by the department. This is usually done on application or renewal or every six months for passenger transport authorities. As a result, Queensland Transport may not be aware that a person has been charged with a disqualifying offence for up to six months or longer from when the offence is alleged to have occurred. In addition, Queensland Transport would not know what the nature of the offence was—for example, whether it was serious. Clearly this time frame is not acceptable as it could put members of the community at risk from an unsuitable person.

Importantly, when this proposed bill is passed these amendments will enable Queensland Transport to receive criminal history information from the Queensland Police Service on a daily basis. It is proposed that this will be done by electronic means, which will reduce the associated administration time for both Queensland Transport and the Queensland Police. Receiving daily updates about criminal history information will enable Queensland Transport to take prompt action to suspend or cancel the authority of a person who has been charged with a disqualifying offence. In turn, this action will provide the community with a further assurance that the people issued with these Queensland Transport authorities do not have a criminal history that makes them unsuitable to provide transport services.

This bill also contains significant amendments that have come about due to the Queensland Road Safety Summit held last year and due to extensive statewide consultation, including a Logan young drivers forum which I was very happy to chair along with the minister for the environment. We now see the introduction of new rules in relation to the licensing and behaviour of young drivers. I do not need to stand here and remind members about the concerns of the community for our young drivers being killed on our roads. Too many times we read newspaper headlines or see horrific images on our news broadcasts of tragic road crashes that have claimed lives and wrecked families. It is not only the families that suffer. Our Emergency Services personnel are put into the situation of having to perform their duties under the most distressing circumstances. Police officers have spoken to me of the difficult job they have in informing a parent that they have lost their child due to a road crash. One can only imagine the impact this has on those officers. Also, we often forget about the doctors and nurses in the emergency departments who attend to the injured and their families and we forget about the witnesses who see these accidents. They are often first on the scene and get involved in helping those injured. A serious injury or fatal car crash has an impact far and wide and it comes with a cost that cannot be measured.

In respect to learner drivers, we will see the lowering of the learner licensing age to 16 with the additional requirement to record an additional 100 hours of supervised on-road driving experience. I welcome the introduction of a two-stage licensing system for provisional drivers. Some of the new licensing laws that this bill will introduce are the compulsory display of P-plates, peer passenger restrictions and high-powered vehicle restrictions for provisional drivers under the age of 25.

The amendments in this bill pertaining to young driver licensing certainly reflects the types of initiatives that parents told me they wanted to see implemented. I only hope that these new laws will not just have an impact but will have a significant impact on reducing our road toll. I congratulate the minister for tackling this emotional and extremely important issue and carrying through with the implementation of these new laws. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WEIGHTMAN** (Cleveland—ALP) (11.36 am): I rise to support the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. In particular, I will speak in support of the key amendments that are directed at learner drivers. Tragically, people are killed and injured on our roads every day. These crashes devastate families, friends and whole communities. What is even worse is that the fatal crash involvement rate of young drivers is twice the rate of mature drivers. Based on preliminary figures from

2006, there were 107 fatalities as a result of young driver crashes. Young drivers represent only 13.3 per cent of all licence holders yet they account for 31.8 per cent. This was iterated last night in the contribution of the member for Gregory.

As a police officer there is only one thing worse than delivering a midnight or early morning death message, and that is delivering a death message that relates to a young person. As I said earlier, these crashes devastate families, friends and whole communities.

A learner licence can presently be attained at 16½ years. The learner is eligible for the grant of a provisional licence at 17. The learner is currently required to gain a minimum of six months experience on the road before applying for a provisional licence. Once they obtain that provisional licence they are then able to drive unsupervised. Not surprisingly, a lack of experience is shown to be one of the major reasons behind high accident rates for novice drivers.

Research has also shown significant reductions in the post licence crashes for novice drivers who gain more supervised experience during their initial learner period. Further, that supervised experience at the learner level builds a bank of driver experience not usually encountered until driving solo. In addition, UK research shows that supervised experience exposes the learner driver to a lower level of risk than that in the first year of solo driving. That level is about 20 times lower. Obviously there is a great benefit there.

The need for increased measures to address road safety for young drivers was also brought out in the government's discussion paper titled *Queensland youth: on the road and in control* and at the Road Safety Summit held in February 2006. I am pleased to see, therefore, that the bill establishes a law-making power for logbooks to be introduced for young drivers. Those logbooks will be used by young drivers to record their driving experience. Before progressing to a provisional licence, a learner will need to record at least 100 hours of supervised on-road driving experience. It is proposed that within those 100 hours there will be a need for at least 10 hours of night-time supervised driving.

In most cases, overseas and interstate jurisdictions which have already introduced this initiative require the supervised experience to be entered into a logbook supplied by the licensing authority and signed off by the learner and the supervisor. This logbook is then submitted to the authority when the learner licence holder applies for a provisional licence. The experience of these driver-licensing authorities is that most people complete and submit the experience logbook honestly, with few people being prosecuted for falsification.

To allow more time to accumulate the required period of supervised driving experience, the following will be included: the learner licence age will be reduced to 16 years; the minimum period a learner licence must be held will be extended to 12 months; and the period a learner licence will be valid will be extended to three years. Increasing the minimum period a learner licence must be held from six months to 12 months will importantly allow learner drivers an additional six months to learn vital skills and challenge their existing attitudes about their driving ability.

The experience gained will be through supervised driving, which has been proven to reduce crash risk. It also allows learners to experience a minimum of a full year of changing weather, seasons and traffic conditions under supervision. Ensuring a learner licence is valid for three years may prevent learners from rushing into gaining the supervised on-road experience when they may not be ready. Further, it will take pressure off learner drivers and their supervisors, giving them the time to gain driving experience at their own pace.

I also wish to briefly mention that a further young driver initiative to be introduced following the passage of this bill is the requirement for drivers to hold a provisional or open car licence for at least one year before being eligible for a learner motorbike licence. Due to the lack of protection and increased vulnerability to injury, motorbike riding is a significantly higher risk activity than driving a motor vehicle. Further, motorbike riding requires a more complex skill set than driving a car. Research shows that the longer you delay access to a motorbike—age wise, that is—the safer the rider will be. This initiative will ensure that our young people have a minimum of two years on-road driving experience before being allowed access to a motorbike licence. I welcome the reforms which deal with some of our most vulnerable road users, and I commend this bill to the House.

**Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (11.42 am): It is a real pleasure to be able to speak on the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill today. It is not often that we have the opportunity to vote a bill through this House which has the potential to save many, many lives, particularly the lives of young people. Many of the initiatives in this bill relating to young drivers are here as a result of considerable consultation—with 10 or so forums conducted throughout the state, including one in my own electorate where the Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr, in her previous position, was the convener. While I was not able to be in attendance at the summit held here at Parliament House, I recall the huge interest that it engendered in the media and of course there were many submissions made by organisations as well as members of the public following the release of the discussion paper *Queensland youth: on the road and in control*.

Every member in this House would have been shocked over recent months at the tragic loss of young lives on our roads and I know there was a very tragic one in my own electorate just recently. All loss of life is tragic, and we too often hear of a late-night crash of a car with five young people out with their friends, the terrible scene which greets the police, the paramedics and the emergency crews, and the early morning knock on the door which every parent must dread. It has become all too familiar, and every case brings terrible grief to friends and family.

While today will bring in stricter conditions for young drivers, it is important that parents encourage responsible attitudes and do all they can to have their children comply with these regulations. It is demonstrably true that each new measure in road safety initiatives—such as seatbelts, random breath testing and mobile speed cameras—has resulted in saving many lives, and I have no doubt that these new measures will have a similar result.

It is proposed that the age at which a learners permit can be obtained be reduced to 16 and that this permit period be extended to at least 12 months. The licence will remain current for three years and the young person will be expected to log at least 100 hours of supervised driving experience. A provisional car licence in excess of 12 months will be required to apply for a motorbike learner permit. During this provisional period, P-plates must be displayed and passenger restrictions will apply between 11 pm and 5 am, where a young person aged under 25 will be allowed only one peer passenger aged under 21. High-powered vehicles will also be banned, as will the use of mobile phones, be they hand-held, bluetooth or speaker phones. An additional requirement will be to ban the use of speaker phones for the adult supervising the young driver. Should the learner driver be disqualified, they will be required to start once again at the first stage of their provisional period.

These measures are a serious attempt to save lives and ensure young drivers are supervised through an extended period to allow them to gain experience and realise the serious responsibility they have in driving on our roads. Cars are lethal weapons when driven carelessly and can kill and maim innocent people.

Young drivers should also adhere to a nil alcohol level while driving. This brings me to the next measure in this bill, which is the random drug testing of drivers. Some 18 months or so ago, I, along with a number of colleagues, travelled to Melbourne with the police minister, the Hon. Judy Spence, where we inspected a number of facilities and we had briefings with various departments. We were given a very comprehensive briefing on the drug-testing regime in Victoria, and I am pleased to see us introducing that here today.

The number of accidents caused by alcohol, drugs and driver fatigue is very significant and this will enable police to widen their testing through saliva samples to detect cannabis, speed and ecstasy. I was horrified to see the results of testing on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, where 1,152 samples revealed one in 23 drivers tested positive to illicit drugs in their system. It is indeed an epidemic. Should the first saliva sample detect one or more of these drugs, a second sample will be used to verify the test and then verification will be required in a laboratory before charges are laid.

The other measure I would like to briefly comment on is the introduction of fixed speed cameras. Similarly, a number of years ago, I was in a study group which investigated fixed speed cameras in a visit to New South Wales and Victoria, and I know the committee was very impressed with the way these were set up. Any measure which reduces speeding and irresponsible driving on our roads is worthwhile. We visited Monash University and were given briefs on the latest research available. Every time we go out on the roads, it is clear we need to adopt every measure possible to curb the dreadfully irresponsible behaviour of many drivers on our roads. Innocent, law-abiding drivers and their passengers deserve to travel safely, and we all know many crashes are certainly not accidents. They are caused by people who are impatient, have anger management problems, are affected by alcohol, drugs or fatigue or simply refuse to obey the rules of the road. However, sometimes all it needs is a moment of inattentiveness, and I know we can all be guilty of that. I want my family to be safe and it would be so good to see our road toll continue on a downward trend. We should all be ambassadors for safety on our roads and encourage safety whenever we speak to young people and in fact every age group.

I am indeed pleased to see the bill before the House. I know that it is as a result of many people who took the time to be involved, to attend forums and to prepare submissions. It is in fact the collective wisdom of many and I know will result in lives being saved. I thank the minister, his advisers, RACQ, CARRS-Q, Jim Pearce and his Travelsafe Committee and so many others. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—Lib) (11.49 am): I am pleased to join the debate on the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. As members have already heard from my colleague and shadow minister for transport, the honourable member for Gregory, the coalition will be supporting this bill for the many reasons he so articulately highlighted.

In essence the bill seeks to make amendments to eight transport acts in an attempt to improve road safety in Queensland. The main intent of this bill is to introduce legislation to assist the enhancement of road safety by the following measures: authorising a means for detection, prosecution

and deterrent of use of certain illicit drugs by people and then driving motor vehicles; providing for technologies to be used in conjunction with fixed speed cameras; and, further, addressing the problem of young drivers being overrepresented in Queensland's road crashes by introducing new rules in relation to the behaviour and licensing of young drivers.

Whilst the key initiatives are those that directly improve road safety in Queensland, of equal importance is the provision to create the offence of driving whilst a relevant drug is present in the driver's blood or saliva. The government is to be commended for including proposals resulting from the Queensland Road Safety Summit held in February 2006. However, I cannot let the fact that this government has adopted coalition policy No. 130, roadside drug testing, pass unmentioned. Imitation is the greatest form of flattery so the saying goes. Once again the Beattie government has proven it is devoid of original ideas and on yet another occasion has pinched our policy and sprinkled on some extra sparkly bits so that it can claim it as its own.

Primarily I would like to address the matter of drug testing on drivers. It could be said that the Queensland government has been dragging its heels on this issue because similar measures have already been introduced into other states across Australia. I do acknowledge that the minister purports the Queensland legislation is more advanced than that of other states which introduced it earlier. This contention will be further examined later in my speech.

Before I do, though, it is interesting to look at some of the background research that preceded this important and overdue legislation. A study by researchers at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne in April 2003 found that drugs were now responsible for more deaths on the road than alcohol and the most common drug identified was marijuana. These findings dispel one of the great myths about marijuana, otherwise known as cannabis, which has somehow attracted a belief in some circles not to be that dangerous. I am pleased to say that a recent study has emerged in the past week indicating that finally cannabis is being seen to be the harmful drug that it is.

Every person who ended up in a vehicular accident statistic in one Melbourne morgue during a period that stretched well over a decade had their blood analysed to see if the crash was caused by alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines or other drugs. Professor Olaf Drummer's results were confounding, to put it mildly. Drivers who use cannabis and are driving shortly after are at seven times higher risk of being involved in a fatal crash than a drug-free driver.

The Swinburne experiment was certainly a scientific trial with a difference. In order to reach their revealing conclusions researchers asked volunteers to smoke joints and drink alcohol and then jump behind the wheel of a driving simulator. One researcher said that the studies have found that the effects of marijuana on driving were quite different to alcohol. Booze makes a driver more likely to speed and take risks. Marijuana does do this but it does make drivers more likely to drift across the road. Another researcher commented on the following upshot of using cannabis—

Specifically your ability to maintain a specific position within a lane, so you tend to have two or more wheels of the vehicle crossing over lanes marked out for traffic coming in the opposite direction or in the same direction.

Simply put, when something unexpected happens a cannabis driver is much slower to react. Cannabis gets into the blood stream much faster than alcohol. If a cannabis cigarette is smoked by a person with a blood alcohol content of 0.04, which is below the legal limit to drive, that is in reality equal to a 0.14 blood alcohol concentration, increasing the risk of accident by 48. Not 48 per cent but a whopping 48 times higher.

Cannabis is very sensitive in urine and readily identified. However, collection of a urine sample is awkward to obtain at the roadside. Results of the study in 2003 highlight the urgent need for legislation to curb the number of drug drivers on roads. I ask the minister to clarify if there will be a comprehensive review of the implementation of these measures, such as a 12-monthly review to assess its effectiveness which has been written into parallel legislation in South Australia.

Another question I would like to ask the minister to address is how Queensland can perform the roadside saliva test in three minutes when other states require five to 10 minutes. Bearing in mind this time differential brings me to seek an answer as to the type of oral swabs that will be used and what quality they will be. Where will these swabs be sent for testing? Surely not the John Tonge Centre where the backlog of cases has seen reports of magistrates throwing out samples that were passed their use-by dates.

I note the comments by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in the *Alert Digest* with regard to a lack of clear definition in the legislation of what is a relevant drug. I seek advice from the minister as to why he has left this definition open to be determined by regulation instead of including, at the very least, the three drugs that are identified—THC, methylamphetamine and ecstasy.

Random roadside tests currently utilised in other states are able to check the presence of these three drugs but also list in addition other illegal drugs such as heroin. It is not uncommon for regular users of illegal drugs to take multiple substances. These combinations have even more serious ramifications when a person gets behind a wheel. Benzodiazepines, Valium and Serepax are widely

abused and trafficked in large quantities and can cause driver havoc. It would be unfair to punish therapeutic users of morphine and other prescribed medication. Nonetheless patients have a responsibility to know the restrictions and side effects of their prescribed medication and take due care.

I have already informed honourable members of the effects of cannabis on driving skills. Taking speed also increases the crash risk, particularly for heavy vehicle drivers. The second most commonly used illegal drug, speed, when taken by fatigue impaired persons can cause microsleeps which lead to crashes. Ecstasy is known to disorientate the user, slow their reaction times and impair driving ability by reducing the driver's basic vehicle control.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also commented on clause 57. It stated—

... an analysts certificate that indicates a 'relevant drug' to be present in a driver's blood or saliva is a conclusive evidence of that fact. This is subject to the defendant's capacity to prove the test result was not correct.

Further it stated—

These provisions effectively reverse the onus of proof since, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the court must accept the matters stated in the certificate as proven.

I ask the minister to address these comments in his reply together with what level of funding allocation for drug testing the government is committing. It is widely accepted that the primary reason behind utilising saliva testing is that it can be undertaken at the roadside, is easy to collect, is less intrusive and can be screened using a quick and accurate method.

I move now to the proposed amendments to the transport operations act 1995. These will seek to reduce the learner licence age to 16 years, extend the learner licence period to 12 months, require learner drivers to record 100 hours of supervised on-road driving, implement the compulsory display of P-plates, restrict provisional drivers from driving high-powered vehicles and introduce peer passenger restrictions between 11 pm and 5 am. The minister is to be applauded for bringing in these amendments which are a positive step in the campaign to reduce our appalling road carnage statistics. No doubt there will be a degree of confusion as these new amendments, with their significant changes to existing laws, come into play and a widespread education campaign is essential.

During 2005 I undertook a survey amongst senior high school students within my electorate to garner opinions and views of adolescents and young drivers. This was soon after the two students from Palm Beach Currumbin High tragically lost their lives due to a combination of inexperience, speed and driver incompetence. Many of the students who responded to my survey indicated an eagerness to undertake some form of driver education if it was offered within their school. However, other questions delivered some worrying responses. Their attitude to police enforcement if they or their friends broke the law was negative in the extreme. Many had been passengers in overloaded cars, gone without seatbelts and been in speeding vehicles with drivers who had consumed alcohol, which further highlights the urgent need for these amendments.

There is no doubt our young in particular are at high risk when we look at road toll statistics. Drivers between 17 and 24 account for only 13 per cent of Queensland's drivers yet they tragically account for 32 per cent of Queensland's road toll. Road carnage not only results in injury, either temporary or permanent, and in some cases loss of life, but it affects families, friends and those who work in our emergency and allied health fields. In December last year when 16-year-old Alesha Benjamin lost her life in an accident when her 17-year-old boyfriend's Holden Commodore smashed into a power pole, her father David Benjamin made a public plea that these kids should not have these vehicles because they are deadly.

In January this year south of the border of the Currumbin electorate four boys were killed in a disastrous car accident on the New South Wales north coast. Mr Wells, father of one of the boys, put it mildly when he said that his family was doing it tough after their son and brother became another statistic in last year's horrific road crash. A further poignant comment was—

We had a spare seat at the table at Christmas. I don't want this to happen to any other family.

This highlighted the enormous sense of grief experienced by those who have lost loved ones this way. The Queensland minister for transport has confirmed that young drivers behind the wheel of eight-cylinder cars involved in crashes in Queensland from 2001 to 2005 were twice as likely to be driving with excessive speed when compared with young drivers in cars with less than eight cylinders. Yet the disparity in this legislation is that the minister will not list excluded vehicles. He will only provide definition and specification of high-performance vehicles.

Stakeholders, too, have been strong in expressing their views. RACQ spokesperson John Wilkman stated—

It's still grey on which vehicles will comply and which won't comply.

Jeremy Davey of Queensland's Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety said—

Young people and high performance cars just don't mix.

It is not just the stakeholders who are actively putting forward their opinions. The average person in the street is joining the debate to reduce the bloodshed on our roads. Some of those comments include—

We could start teaching learner drivers using simulators before they even got behind the steering wheel.

Another citizen commented—

Road safety should be taught in all high schools and all young drivers should attend a driver safety course before being issued with their licence.

There has been some discontent regarding the lowering of the minimum age requirement for obtaining a learners licence from 16½ years to 16, even though the age to obtain a provisional licence remains at 17. Asking some teenagers for their comments in the last couple of weeks, a common response was that as Queenslanders generally finish high school in the year they turn 17 school leavers are heading off to university and into the workforce before they turn 18. Given that the public transport system in most of Queensland is woeful, transport needs to be available to these young people to help facilitate the smooth transition of potentially moving away from home to attend university or going to work full-time. These comments are supported by the argument that decreasing the age required to obtain a learners licence is in fact increasing the time Queenslanders spend behind the wheel in the supervised conditions of a learner driver, gaining more driving experience while still being able to obtain a provisional licence at 17. With these comments, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (12.04 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. The bill will amend the Maritime and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006, the Tow Truck Act 1973, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1995 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994. I will be confining my contribution to the amendments concerning the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 with respect to the introduction of random drug testing and changes to the regulation regarding the licensing of young drivers.

The Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 will be amended by this bill to introduce random drug testing for drivers based on the collection and analysis of a specimen of saliva, and this initiative should be welcomed by all members. I think it is a very positive step forward as far as road safety is concerned, and I congratulate the government for bringing this forward. The government is obviously confident that it has the technology to conduct these tests accurately and reliably. For anyone or any individual to get behind the wheel of a vehicle after taking an illicit drug and endangering the lives of anyone in that vehicle with them at the time or those who are innocently using the road in another vehicle is reprehensible, and this move to do something positive about catching and disciplining drug drivers is commendable. The provision of this bill will make testing for drugs in drivers very similar to the processes relating to existing drink-driving processes, except that it will be an offence to test positive for any concentration of drugs prescribed by the legislation. While the prescribed drugs will initially include cannabis, speed and ecstasy, I hope the government will move to add to this list as soon as it has the capacity to test accurately and reliably for other illicit drugs.

The Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 is to be amended to provide for a set of new regulations regarding the licensing of young drivers. The changes proposed for young drivers under this legislation include reducing the learner licence age to 16 years and extending the minimum learner licence period to 12 months; requiring learner drivers to record 100 hours of certified supervised on-road driving experience; and requiring motorbike learners to hold a provisional car licence for 12 months prior to gaining a motorbike learner licence. I support these initiatives, particularly the initiative to require learner drivers to record 100 hours of supervised driving. One hundred hours is not an insignificant period of time, and I certainly think that having that amount of documented driving experience will bode well for people moving from learner to provisional licences.

A two-stage licensing regime is proposed for provisional licence holders. This proposal is an interesting initiative and involves the compulsory display of P-plates both during the initial or red stage of a provisional licence which will last for 12 months and the subsequent or green stage of the provisional licence which will be for two years. There are also peer passenger restrictions between 11 pm and 5 am for holders of a first-stage provisional licence under the age of 25 years, which means that P-plate drivers will only be able to carry one non-family member passenger aged under 21 years while they hold that licence.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr CRIPPS:** No, 26 recently. I am in the clear. Also in place will be high-powered vehicle restrictions for provisional drivers under 25 years of age which also applies for the full three years that the driver holds the provisional licence. I think the exemptions being considered for young drivers learning to drive under supervision in high-powered vehicles owned by their family are sensible, especially for regional and rural areas. There will also be a restriction on all mobile phone use including hands free, bluetooth accessories and loudspeaker functions for first-stage provisional licence holders

under 25. I note that this restriction will also apply to learner licence holders. There will also be restrictions on mobile loudspeaker functions for supervisors and passengers of learner drivers and for passengers of first-stage provisional licence holders under 25 years of age. There will also be late night driving restrictions for young drivers returning from a licence suspension or disqualification. There will be a requirement for drivers holding a first-stage provisional licence for 12 months to pass a hazard perception test to progress to a second-stage provisional licence and a requirement that provisional and open licence holders less than 25 years of age who have been disqualified recommence at the first stage of a provisional licence. These are all very good initiatives from the government.

I have a suggestion for the minister that he may or may not like to pursue. I suggest that the minister considers giving provisional licence holders who can present some documentation to show that they have successfully completed a certified defensive driving course the opportunity to obtain their open licence after holding their green provisional licence for a period of 12 months instead of two years. The purpose of this suggestion is to try to encourage the uptake of defensive driving courses. This suggestion would give provisional licence holders an incentive to access and undertake defensive driving courses. Certainly I recognise that the best driver training is to have time in the car with responsible supervising open licence holders and I am not challenging that point of view.

This bill certainly takes steps to make sure that that occurs more than ever before by requiring 100 hours of documented supervision of drivers on learner licences. Provisional licence holders would still spend 12 months on the red P-plates and another 12 months on the green P-plates. If a provisional licence holder took the opportunity to obtain an open licence early, having successfully completed a certified defensive driving course, they would still have completed—

**Mr Reeves:** There is a bit of research around that if they do a defensive driving course they think that they are bulletproof.

**Mr CRIPPS:** I take the interjection from the member for Mansfield. I recognise that point, but if the member gives me the opportunity I will demonstrate that it will be complementary to the other arrangements that the government is trying to implement through this bill.

If a provisional licence holder took the opportunity to obtain an open licence early, having successfully completed a certified defensive driving course, they would still have held a restricted learner licence and then provisional red and green licence for a period of three years, but they would have the defensive driving course and the benefit of all the other experiences provided for by this bill. It is just a suggestion.

A proposal to explore the need for post licence education courses was recommended by the Travelsafe Committee of the 50th Parliament in report No. 40 titled *Reducing the road toll for young Queenslanders—is education enough?* and report No. 41 titled *Provisional driver and rider licence restrictions*, respectively. Certainly many of the provisions in this bill clearly reflect a number of the recommendations made in those two important Travelsafe Committee reports. Recommendation one of report No. 40 discusses post licence driver training, specifically things such as hazard perception, visual scanning and risk assessment. I suggest that defensive driving courses would not be inappropriately added to that list.

Even if the minister does not consider it appropriate to pursue that suggestion, I urge him to consider some other mechanism for encouraging the uptake of defensive driving courses for young people. It may not be effective to offer a defensive driving course at the secondary school level, as under this legislation young people at secondary school will generally still be learner licence holders or at the most hold a red provisional licence. At that stage, it is not likely that the majority of learner or red P-plate drivers have enough experience in the general handling of a vehicle to get some real benefit out of a defensive driving course.

Perhaps when provisional drivers move from their red P-plate to their green P-plate, the government may offer the provisional driver the opportunity to access a defensive course at a subsidised rate, where the government provides the subsidy. This might give the government the opportunity to pursue some general certification standards for defensive driving operators that it feels provide a high level of training, offering the subsidy to provisional drivers to undertake the defensive driving course of that operator. This was also recommended in report No. 40 of the Travelsafe Committee. That report identified a need to explore the possibility of the government making arrangements to require accreditation, registration and minimum standards for post licence education and training.

Certainly the Queensland coalition has a strong commitment to improving young driver training. The Queensland coalition believes that better training for young drivers and rewards for drivers with good driving records will reduce the road toll, educating young drivers more effectively about the dangers associated with speeding, drink driving and driving whilst under the influence of drugs or while tired. The Queensland coalition's good driver initiative will allow drivers who have not had demerit points

recorded against them to receive discounts upon the renewal of their drivers licence. This type of initiative provides incentives for drivers to improve their driving habits and, as a result, can have a positive impact on the safety of our roads.

One matter that I am concerned about is the advice that a regulation attached to this legislation will place significant restrictions on drivers of heavy vehicles. Yesterday the member for Gregory indicated the strength of our concern with respect to this matter when he moved a disallowance motion against that particular regulation. I acknowledge that we need to reserve our remarks with respect to that matter until a later time.

At the moment in my electorate of Hinchinbrook, transport issues and road infrastructure is the topic of much conversation in the wake of extensive and extended flooding in the region. Current flood mitigation works on the Bruce Highway are either being planned or designed for several sites, including just south of Tully between Corduroy Creek and Tully State High School, just north of Ingham at the crossing of the Seymour River and the Gairloch floodway, just south of Ingham between Lannercost Street and Tokalon Road including the Pound Creek crossing, and just south of Innisfail near the August Moon Caravan Park. I welcome those projects and the funding from the federal coalition government that made them possible, although I note that they are long overdue.

The minister knows that I have a strong interest in two other projects in my electorate, which I am currently pursuing with him and the federal government. They are the upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Black River and Bluewater, which has been identified as a secondary upgrade following the pressing need to upgrade the adjacent stretch of highway between Woodlands and Black River, which includes the notorious Mount Low/Bushland Beach intersection. There are plenty of willing participants in that debate, but I draw to the attention of the minister the need to be mindful that we ought not shift the problem at that site north by failing to follow through with the subsequent upgrade to the Black River to Bluewater stretch of the highway.

Lastly, as the minister knows, I have expressed the opinion that the northern section of the Cardwell Range crossing is a very important project that needs urgent attention. That relatively short section of road is notorious, especially in wet weather which we have plenty of. Recently, pressure on the road has increased with more heavy vehicles using it following the commencement of the harvest of state forest plantations at Cardwell and in the Kennedy Valley. More and more large trucks with full loads of timber are crossing the Cardwell Range with greater frequency.

I look forward to working with the minister to lobby the Commonwealth government to secure more funds to pursue that project, although he ought to note and recognise the fact that the Commonwealth was forthcoming with the funds to complete the consultation and planning process for that upgrade. I sincerely hope that the minister has resolved to list the Cardwell Range crossing as a priority as he engages the federal government with respect to the next AusLink package.

With those few comments I reiterate my satisfaction that the government is moving to introduce random drug testing for drivers. I also acknowledge the work of the Travelsafe Committee of the 50th Parliament, which obviously put together some very relevant and commonsense recommendations in reports Nos. 40 and 41, which are now being implemented through this bill.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006 and to indicate my support for that legislation. At the outset, I put on the record my appreciation not only to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, which provides us with information on FLPs for bills before the House, but also to the Queensland Parliamentary Library, which regularly provides us with research documents. Library staff provided a document for this legislation. I am sure that members do read those documents. We do not always refer to them in the chamber—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** Yes, the research briefs that are prepared are very informative. They present information about similar legislation and action being taken by other jurisdictions. They also provide statistical information. I put on the record my appreciation for the work that they do.

This legislation makes quite significant changes to the regime for learner drivers. Most of us here—or many of us—are parents. We understand, particularly those of us who have grown children who have received their vehicle licences, the angst and the concern that parents have as their kids go through the learning to drive stage. This legislation proposes to reduce the learner age from 16½ to 16 and to extend the minimum learner licence period to 12 months. Within that period, the learner driver will be required to record 100 hours of certified supervised on-road driving experience.

I think that is really important. One of the advantages that people who live out of town have is that their sons and daughters have an opportunity to travel on country roads at all times of the day and night. They experience a broader range of driving. People who grow up in the city are perhaps well versed in driving in traffic, which is probably what they do the most, but they may have less experience of driving

on gravel roads and country roads. In terms of access to services, there are not a lot of advantages to living out of town, but I think those young people who live out of town have the benefit of getting the experience of driving on country roads.

I wish to raise an issue—and it may sound unlikely, but I want to raise it, anyway—that relates to the potential cost to learner drivers in relation to the recorded 100 hours. In saying this, I am not opposed to the amendment. I believe that experience is the greatest teacher for young people. The constraints and the obligations that this bill is introducing will assist parents who are tutoring their sons or daughters to learn to drive, because it places obligations on the learner driver that perhaps parents may have wished to impose but did not have any legislative backing by which to do so. Parents can have some pretty big blues with their kids when it is will against will. However, I think it needs to be borne in mind that not all young people have access to parents who can teach them how to drive. For those who do not, they have to pay a driving school to give them 100 hours of supervised driving. I do not know what a half-hour driving lesson costs, but working on \$30 for half an hour and therefore \$60 for an hour, that is a significant impost on a young person who has no other way of receiving 100 hours supervised driving by an open-licence driver.

We all take for granted that mum or dad, a relative, or a friend is available to teach a young person how to drive. This amendment places a restriction on the people who can sit with a learner driver. But I would like to place on the record my concern that, if a young person has to pay for driving lessons in order to accumulate those 100 hours, it is going to be at a significant cost to that person. That in no way is intended to undermine the value of a life.

The other thing that we need to bear in mind, too, when we keep adding obligations on a group in the community—and I acknowledge that previous speakers have talked about defensive driving courses—is that, inevitably, when that group has to pay for whatever is required, often the cost of that service escalates. If governments are thinking of making defensive driving courses or the like mandatory, two things need to be looked at: one is the cost and the second is the location. Irrespective of the obligation, it should be easily accessible to everybody.

This legislation requires motorbike learners to hold a provisional car licence for 12 months prior to gaining a motorbike learner's licence. I certainly do not oppose that amendment, but my concern is that there are some young people whose goal is just to ride a motorbike. A motorbike is one of the most dangerous forms of transport that has ever been invented. Yet people who like motorbikes like them with a passion. Not everybody who rides a motorbike is a revhead or is irresponsible, either. But a motorbike offers a rider no protection. If a person has a fall off a bike, it is fairly unforgiving. If there is an incident that involves a vehicle and a motorcycle, the bike rider usually comes off the worse for wear. I can understand the theory behind requiring a motorbike learner to have a provisional car licence, but I need to state that there will certainly be some young people who will be significantly disadvantaged by that obligation.

The amendment that relates to drug testing is one that I do not think should surprise anybody. For quite a long time a lot of the major industries in my electorate have had random drug testing on site. I think the majority of workers on those sites have adjusted to that. Initially, there were some calls about intrusion into privacy, but the intrusion into privacy ceases to be an argument when a worker's ability to work safely, both for themselves and for their workmates, is impaired. The same principle applies to driving with a drug induced impairment, particularly when their impairment is caused by the taking of illicit drugs. A person should know that it is unsuitable for them to drive if they have taken drugs, particularly drugs that are not legally available.

I think the prohibition on mobile phone use is an excellent move forward. This legislation restricts the use of mobile phones, including hands-free bluetooth accessories and loud speaker functions, for first-stage provisional licence holders under the age of 25. That restriction also applies to learner's licence holders. When I read the bill I thought about this issue. Really, the only people who are going to notice that preclusion are those who are learner's licence holders now. If those people have been used to being able to answer the phone, under this legislation they will not be able to. But those people who are coming into the licensing system will not know any better. The situation is bit like when the wearing of seatbelts was introduced. Nobody even thinks twice about it now, because it is an obligation on everybody. Learner drivers will know that they cannot use a phone at all while they are driving. There will be those who will flout the law and get caught, but the majority will accept that law as part of the regime to get their drivers licence and, I believe, they will comply with it.

I commend the minister for having the foresight and fairness to introduce one amendment in this bill. The peer passenger restrictions will apply between 11 pm and 5 am for holders of a first-stage provisional licence who are under the age of 25. This initiative means that the driver will be able to carry only one non-family member passenger under the age of 21 during these times. Some time ago, in response to the high level of road deaths and serious injuries, there was some talk about restricting the hours that a P-plate driver could drive. Although it was a very valid argument, its weakness was that in a lot of towns there are shiftworkers. Young people who are apprentices may also do night shifts. Those young people need to be able to get to and from work safely. By this amendment, if at three o'clock in

the morning at work a young person is asked by someone, 'Can you give me a lift home?' they can say, 'Look, mate, I am not allowed to.' They are not annoying anybody. They are not fobbing anybody off. I commend the minister for making sure that young people on these first-stage provisional licences who may be involved in shiftwork will still be able to get to and from work under their own steam. As a parent and as someone who is not an early morning person, I cannot think of anything much to commend having to get up at three or four o'clock in the morning to pick up a young person from work.

I commend the broadening of the definition of 'disqualifying offence' in terms of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act to include offences committed outside Queensland. I believe that that ensures a broader traffic history and therefore a better response to a person's ability or suitability to drive.

In relation to fixed speed cameras, I commend the New South Wales system—and I have already spoken about this on the Summary Offences Act—where fixed speed cameras are, if anything, oversignposted. Nobody who gets an infringement notice as a result of a fixed speed camera in New South Wales could ever say that they did not know it was there. Short of neon lights flashing above the camera, they are very well signposted. I believe that is an approach that should be adopted in Queensland.

The only other issue I wish to raise is in relation to my electorate. The new requirements for learner drivers and P-plate drivers will increase the workload of Queensland Transport employees. The Queensland Transport office in Gladstone is already too small. It needs to be significantly enlarged and staff numbers need to be increased. There are commonly long waiting times to get attention, and that is not a criticism of the staff who work there. There are peak periods when the office is full and the waiting times are significant. The staff have to cop the brunt of the frustration of clients simply because they are often on their lunchbreak and cannot get their bills paid or get the business done that they have come to do.

I commend to the minister an enlargement of the Queensland Transport office in my electorate and an increase in staff. It certainly has not kept apace with the growth in the district and the growth in both the Gladstone and Calliope regions. This new legislation will increase paperwork for departmental officers, so I strongly encourage the minister to look at allocating funds to have that office enlarged and the staff allocation increased. I support the bill.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (12.31 pm): I think there are over 35 speakers on the list, so I will endeavour to keep my comments brief. However, I would not want this legislation to pass without putting my support formally on the record of parliament.

I think every member has so far spoken in favour of the introduction of random drug testing in Queensland. I could not imagine why anybody would be opposed to the introduction of such a measure unless they were a drug driver themselves. I think it is a good measure, a measure that should decrease the accidents on Queensland roads. But I do not think it is going to be the be-all and end-all.

Human beings always find one method or another to alter their consciousness, whether that be with illicit drugs or legal drugs like alcohol and prescription drugs. Many sorts of mind-altering substances can be used and abused. People can get behind the wheel of a car while they are on prescription drugs and all sorts of other substances. I think in the future, as technology improves, we are going to see more legislation come into this House to try to prevent people from driving a car while under the influence of all manner of substances. I think that is what we need to do to try to reduce the road toll in Queensland and throughout Australia.

I also support the provisions of the bill that deal with changes to licensing conditions, particularly those affecting young people. Young people statistically are more likely to be involved in an accident on Queensland roads, and that is a shame. We have all been young. Some of us, like the members for Hinchinbrook and Ashgrove, are still young. They may or may not be revheads. I was certainly a revhead when I was young. I note that in a previous debate the minister for police asked us all to put our driving history on the record of the parliament. I am ashamed to say that I do not have a clear driving record. I still have to get some points back in the next few months.

**Mr Choi:** Has that changed your behaviour?

**Mr O'BRIEN:** Yes, it has changed my behaviour.

**Mr Johnson:** I reckon you should sit down while you are behind.

**Mr O'BRIEN:** I will put myself further behind. In relation to fixed speed cameras and the signage—and people have talked about signage here today—I was so stupid that I saw the speed camera on the way into town and it got me on the way out of town. It is lucky that I am representative of my constituents! Many of my constituents are going to see the signs and they will drive straight past them at speed, and that is going to add to the revenue that we get here in Queensland. I have no problem with that. I will put my hand up. I have had a few speeding tickets in my life. When you get done, you get done. I think the only people who complain about speed cameras, whether they be fixed cameras or radar guns, are those people who speed. If you do not speed, you do not get done.

I have absolutely no problem with the introduction of fixed speed cameras. As I said, my last contact with a speed camera was over 12 months ago now. I learnt my lesson and it does help change behaviour. Some people say that it is just revenue raising. I do not believe that. I do not accept that for a second. I certainly believe that my behaviour since getting a speeding ticket has changed considerably. I do try hard not to speed. I spend a long time on the road. I just about live in my car during the dry season. It is difficult to keep up your concentration. There was a discussion in here last night about cruise control. It is not safe to use cruise control on dirt roads. I do not use cruise control on dirt roads, and I do not recommend that people should. You have to keep up your concentration over long periods of time. Sometimes on the long stretches you find your speed picking up. But when you do get done, like I have been done, it does change your behaviour. It does make you more conscious of your speed, and I think in the long term it does change driver behaviour.

I want to raise one issue that is pertinent to my electorate and the bill before the House—and that is the issuing of licences in remote Indigenous communities. This is a particular issue for me and one that members will be hearing more about from me in the near future. It is particularly difficult for young people in remote communities to get a licence, to get breadth of experience. Some of them get experience driving on dirt roads and some town streets, but when they go to the city or the provincial towns they get frightened and they do not know how to handle it. Some people coming from the country who go to Brisbane experience that same phenomenon as well.

One thing that would help the economic independence of young Indigenous people in the communities that I represent is greater participation from Queensland Transport and the Queensland Police Service in assisting them, training them and supporting them to get their licence. That is something that I will be raising more formally in the near future. That has ramifications across the spectrum—giving those people a good start in life, giving them the opportunity to get work out of the community in the country or in towns where work opportunities might be. With those few comments, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (12.38 pm): I rise also to speak in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. In doing so I thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for proposing this bill. This bill will increase the scope of police random testing of all drivers to include testing for the presence of drugs and a range of other measures to help our young people stay safe and stay alive, particularly in the first few years as a provisional driver.

This bill in its simplest form will put in place real changes and real gains in the provisional licensing system of our young people—being new to the driving scene and dependent on their motor vehicles to get to work or to school and of course, as all parents know, to their new social scene as well. At times parents like me are very concerned with those things, and I believe that this bill provides measures to ensure that young drivers will continue to learn through their experiences and keep safe.

In my view, random testing to include drug screening is also a very positive step towards increasing the safety of all drivers—young or old—on Queensland roads. The bill will ensure that work carried out by Queensland police to make Queensland drivers more aware of their driving responsibilities can continue. This work will now be strengthened by adding random drug testing to their power to stop a motor vehicle if they suspect the driver to be under the influence of any illegal substance. The Queensland police do an outstanding job. There are different demands on their time, different requirements of the public and the community which they serve. They stand up and perform their duty as pledged.

We read on a daily basis about the deaths that are occurring on Queensland roads. The period leading up to Christmas seems to be a particularly vulnerable time for young drivers. The lead-up to schoolies and its after effects could, to some degree, be held responsible but the real point is that our young people, while they may be old enough to receive a proof-of-age card that entitles them to a beer when they turn 18, are not necessarily old enough nor have the experience or maturity to handle a motor vehicle in all situations that can occur on our roads.

The sudden cutting in of a driver who may not have indicated early enough, the hesitancy of people moving through give way signs or roundabouts, the sudden braking of a vehicle unexpectedly, the slipperiness of a wet road, the impatience or anger of someone anxious to get home after a long day's work are all situations that can throw even the most experienced driver off guard.

Of course, there is the other temptation in front of all young drivers and that is speed. It would be no more than speculation on my part to try to explain why so many young people die in accidents that could have been prevented if they had just simply slowed down. As parents in this House and outside, we all wish and pray that they would learn. The bill goes to the heart of this issue by making it mandatory for young people to hold L-plates for a full period of 12 months, by restricting the use of mobile phones including the hands-free function, by making the display of P-plates compulsory and by restricting the number of non-family member passengers that can be in their car between 11 pm and 5 am. These changes will affect our most vulnerable people under the age of 25.

The final part of this bill allows speed cameras and other new technologies to be used by police to further reduce the deaths on Queensland roads as a result of drivers going too fast in marked zones. The success of mobile speed cameras and other deterrents such as RBT are well documented. The figures are undeniable. These measures are working. Queensland has one of the largest road infrastructures to look after in Australia. Drivers who use the roads in this state have a fair and reasonable expectation that they can travel safely. Speed cameras and other new technologies envisaged by this provision will increase the chances of catching those people who choose to speed and thereby endanger the life of other people. This bill provides an opportunity for the state government to support the Queensland Police in the great work that it does to keep our roads safe. I commend this bill to the House.

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (12.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. This bill provides for the introduction of a comprehensive package of road safety reforms directed squarely at young drivers. Specifically there is an amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to allow for regulations to be made prescribing rules about young driver education, behaviour and licensing.

In Queensland, a graduated licensing system is already in operation. The graduated licensing system allows new drivers to gain experience under safer driving conditions before progressing to an open licence. This system is used in all Australian states and territories and similar systems have been successfully used around the world. Both national and international research indicates that such graduated licensing systems have been successful in reducing young driver crashes. A provisional licence will still exist under the reforms with such a licence having to be held for a minimum of three years in most cases. However, there will now be a two-stage provisional licence with the first stage being subject to greater restrictions and conditions than the second stage. The first-stage provisional licence will be required to be held for a minimum of 12 months. It is this first 12 months solo driving which research shows is the time when the crash risk is highest for new drivers.

I wish today to speak in relation to two proposed reforms impacting on provisional licence holders, that being peer passenger restrictions and high-powered vehicle restrictions. Peer passenger restrictions will apply to persons holding a first-stage provisional licence. This will mean that first-stage provisional licence holders under 25 years of age will not be able to carry more than one passenger under 21 years of age between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am. The restriction will not apply to immediate family members of the first-stage provisional licence holder.

International research reveals that accident risk is higher where a provisional driver has more than one passenger, with the risk climbing as more young passengers are added. Research also suggests that young passengers may encourage the driver to engage in risk-taking activities such as speeding or tailgating. The effect of passengers on crash rates is also higher for young drivers. During 2005 in Queensland the serious crash rate of provisional drivers aged between 17 and 20 years with three or more occupants in the car was five times that of open licence drivers aged 25 to 59 years.

Having peer passenger restrictions applying specifically to late night driving also contributes greatly to crash fatality and injury reduction amongst provisional drivers. This is because provisional drivers are more likely to be driving recreationally at night and are more likely to be carrying passengers of the same age. Relevant research indicates that for young drivers aged under 26 years the highest fatality risk is driving at night. Restricting late night driving targets this high crash risk situation for young drivers and restricts driving experience to mainly daylight hours, which carries a lower risk.

Queensland will also be introducing high-powered vehicle restrictions for young drivers on provisional licences. This restriction will apply to both the first- and second-stage provisional licence. As I mentioned earlier, in most cases a provisional licence comprising both the first and second stages will have to be held for at least three years. Research suggests that drivers take more risks, such as deliberate speeding and reckless driving, when in charge of high-powered or performance cars. The fatality rate in crashes involving young drivers driving an eight-cylinder vehicle is twice that of young drivers driving a car of less than eight cylinders. The high-powered vehicle restrictions, along with other provisional licence holder initiatives envisaged by this bill, are designed to limit a young driver's access to riskier environments until the driver has gained sufficient driver experience.

I recently had an opportunity to visit Coombabah State High School and speak with the school leaders about these proposed changes. I have spoken to the minister, Paul Lucas, about a number of significant queries that they raised. One of the queries was in relation to the late night driver restrictions. The question was what would be the situation under these new laws if they were required to make a decision about carrying more than one passenger under the age of 21 for reasons such as they were out at night and there was an accident or someone was sick. I understand that the minister will respond to those queries in his reply speech.

I have arranged for an officer from the Department of Transport to speak about the changes with all year 10, 11 and 12 students from Coombabah State High School next week so that they are kept informed. Many students have questions in relation to their birthday, their experience in driving a car and what arrangements there are if they do not have someone at home to ensure that those 100 hours are performed. I am looking forward to providing them with the answers next week.

These reforms protect one of Queensland's key assets, namely, our youth. The reforms are based upon a sound basis of international research and experience. I have discussed the changes with my community groups, including my Neighbourhood Watch groups, and the feedback has been very positive. The minister needs to be congratulated for bringing these changes to the House today. I fully support the intended outcome of the road safety reforms envisaged by the bill, and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—NPA) (12.50 pm): I rise to support the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. Most members have said that they support the changes in this bill. It is a good piece of legislation and I have to congratulate the member for Gregory, who in 1997 started to bring in these measures with the introduction of speed cameras and those sorts of things.

The drug initiatives in the legislation are very important. We need to manage the level of drugs in our drivers. Some statistics we are starting to read show that the police pull over a very high number of people who have been using drugs such as ecstasy or speed. I wonder if the minister could provide information in his speech about whether any prescription drugs will be picked up in this. Is it detailed enough that it will be able to pick up any of those prescription drugs? There used to be a couple of chemists who supplied truck drivers with this sort of stuff. That could be a problem too with some of the testing, I do admit.

I think the government has to put fixed speed cameras in places where the risk of injury is high. Motorists find it very frustrating to be caught speeding at the bottom of hills where there is a very low risk of having an accident, but I do think speed cameras do their job where there is a high risk of injury. The problem on a lot of the roads now is that our cars have become very efficient. One of the previous speakers said that we may have to look at putting in speed limits that are appropriate for the type of road. On some of the straight, good roads, drivers probably can manage 110 or 120. I have been to Europe where drivers can do higher speeds on their autobahns and, if you look at Germany's road toll, I do not think it is worse than ours.

I represent an area which includes the Gatton, Laidley and Esk shires. The youth toll across Queensland is about twice the state average, and the youth toll in those sorts of areas is twice that. Once you get outside the metropolitan area, the road toll for the 17- to 25-year age group is exceptionally high. It is higher overall than in the metropolitan areas. This is simply because when there is an accident out there motorists are in trouble because they are usually doing 100 or 120 kilometres an hour and gum trees or whatever it is do not give too much at that sort of speed.

The idea of staggered licensing has come from the Travelsafe Committee, and that committee does a lot of hard work on travelling and safety issues for Queenslanders. Jim Pearce, who has been the chair of that committee for a long time, has put in a lot of work and is to be congratulated on his leadership. All members of that committee who have been involved with that—including Ray Hopper and the member for Maryborough—have put a lot of work into this issue and it is great to see a lot of their provisions being taken up.

I do support the fact that before motorbike riders can get a motorbike licence they need to have a car licence for 12 months. That road experience will make bike riders realise what traffic is all about. I have ridden bikes virtually all of my life—I still ride motorbikes—and I see a lot of young blokes who do not understand the high risk that they are in when they ride a motorbike.

There are some interesting things with younger drivers. I have some high school students in my electorate—and I am sure other members have this too—who have a child and who are not actually living in a de facto relationship with the other parent. How does that categorise them when they carry the extra passenger and they are both only 17 or 18? These are kids still at school with children and with partners.

**Mr Shine:** Family exemptions.

**Mr RICKUSS:** Even though they are not in that de facto type relationship and it has just been a liaison that has created a child?

**Mr Shine:** Apparently so.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is okay. I was just wondering, because I thought that could be a problem. The late-night restrictions on drivers could become a bit of a problem. When you stay late at any function, there always seems to be one car for about 10 people. It always does seem to be a bit of a problem late at night, so I do not know how that will work. It seems a bit tough to have to leave someone stranded in the middle of nowhere when there are three spare seats in the car. It will be interesting to see how it is managed, but it is a terrible shame when there are four or five young people badly injured in one car.

I also want to talk about the roads issue and the Warrego Highway, which passes through my electorate as well as through the member for Ipswich West's electorate—and I am sure he will support me in this—

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:**—and up to the member for Toowoomba North's electorate as well. Some of the road design there actually has to be looked at to make it safe for people to travel on. Unfortunately, it appears safe but at some of the intersections you have to cross eight lanes of traffic to cross the road because of turning lanes and that sort of thing. I do not think inexperienced drivers realise how dangerous these situations are. We had 17-year-old youths killed recently at Minden, which is in the member for Ipswich West's electorate and just bordering on my electorate. It was such a shame. He made an error of judgement. He did not see the vehicle coming down and it cleaned him up. It is a terrible shame, and that is the sort of thing that goes on. We have to put some thought into the accesses to these roads which have speed limits of 100 or 110. We have to limit the access a bit so that people cannot get on and off quite as many times as they can now. We will have to put some more feeder roads to the intersections and build flyovers. That is very important.

While I have the Attorney-General sitting there—and it is a shame the transport minister is not there—I would like to remind him that, with this extra workload that is going to be placed on transport centres, the Gatton Police Station is the busiest police station for Queensland Transport. We actually do need a Queensland Transport office down in Gatton.

**Mr Shine:** I deal with courthouses.

**Mr RICKUSS:** Unfortunately, they end up going to the police station. Kerry, when you are in those cabinet discussions, will you remind him about the fact that we need a full-time Queensland Transport depot in the Lockyer? It is a growing area. It is on the back end of that western corridor project that is promoted on the other side of the House. I really do feel that it is a busy enough centre and I am sure the police support me on this. I have talked to the police socially and I have talked to the assistant police commissioners and they do support me in the fact that they feel the police are overworked doing Queensland Transport type duties there. We should have a full centre there.

Some of the biggest trucking companies in Queensland are based in the Lockyer. We have Nolan Transport which now employs well over 200 people, we have a Lindsay Brothers depot that employs quite a few people, and we have some other smaller operators as well. We require a full Queensland Transport centre there. Otherwise, as the member for Gladstone said, people get frustrated with Queensland Transport staff, and it is not their fault; it is just the workload that is required.

Some members have mentioned that medical certificates will be required for older people and people with medical complaints. Unfortunately, it is a hard situation. Some older people have come to visit me because they have had their licence taken off them but they feel they are quite capable of driving. It is an awkward situation: you are damned if you do and damned if you don't. But I think we have to err on the side of safety there.

I encourage some of the families in my area who know that their parents should not be driving to not so much make them hand in their licence but take their car off them. Older people seem quite happy with the fact that they have their licence even though they do not necessarily drive. It is just the fact that they can still say, 'I've got my licence.' I know my mother was a bit that way. She had a licence. She did not drive for about the last two years but she still had her licence. She used to tell us occasionally, 'I've still got my licence, you know.' It is just the fact that they feel that bit of independence is taken away from them. I feel some of that responsibility should fall on the family. I support the legislation. I would like the minister to have a look at the Queensland Transport issues.

Sitting suspended from 1 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Messenger, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Murray-Darling Basin

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.30 pm), by leave: Yesterday I spoke to the Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, and I have seen the statement he has made. Today I have had long discussions with Mike Rann, the Premier of South Australia. As I have said, I have spoken to Steve Bracks. Just like Queensland, Victoria has real and specific problems with the Prime Minister's plan as it stands.

Steve Bracks and I agree on one major point: we must protect the rights of our farmers. In Queensland our farmers have worked closely with my government to sort out very complex issues regarding water rights and allocations. We do not want them to enter a long period of uncertainty as a result of the Prime Minister's plans because that would have financial repercussions for their investments, particularly their relationship with their banks. I will be reinforcing that with the Prime Minister during our meeting on Friday. However, I, unlike my Victorian counterpart, remain optimistic that we can work these issues through with the Prime Minister.

Today the South Australian Premier and I have written to the Prime Minister spelling out our joint position. We will have ongoing discussions with New South Wales and hopefully we can reach at least some consensus with some of the states before Friday. The letter from the premiers of South Australia and Queensland to the Prime Minister, which is being sent at the moment, in relation to the management of Murray-Darling Basin says this—

We thought it would be helpful and in the national interest to write to you before Friday's meeting in Canberra to set out our agreed high level position on matters of principle.

The Governments of Queensland and South Australia are prepared to work constructively with the Commonwealth Government and other States to better manage the Murray-Darling River System.

There are many complex issues to be sorted out and final positions will not emerge until this important work has been completed.

However, in the spirit of constructive co-operation and providing some important conditions are agreed, the Premiers of Queensland and South Australia have agreed to the following joint position:

1. Queensland and South Australia are prepared to refer or vest all appropriate powers with the Commonwealth Government to allow the integrated management of water across the Murray-Darling Basin with the detail of respective roles for the Commonwealth and States to be settled by way of Memorandum of Understanding to be completed as a matter of urgency.
2. We support the establishment of a new expert based body—the Murray-Darling Basin Planning Authority—composed of 5 full time independent Commissioners reporting to a Federal Minister to take responsibility for Basin-wide water resource planning.

In other words, we resolve those issues with experts and with the Commonwealth. We continue—

3. We support the Commonwealth appointing the Chair of the Authority. The appointment of the remaining Commissioners is to be made jointly by the Commonwealth and the States following an open and transparent process.

In other words, to get the best people. We continue—

4. Decisions of the Authority are to be by majority vote. Where the Commonwealth Minister does not accept the advice or decisions of the Authority, reasons are to be tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament. This will ensure full accountability and transparency.
5. The referral of powers and new legislative arrangements are to be reviewed after 5 years.

I say to the Prime Minister that this is not an unreasonable request. Surely if we are really concerned about the future of the Murray-Darling then it is not unreasonable to put in place a new system to manage it better and after five years review how well that system is going. That can be done in the national interest. If the Prime Minister is really serious—and I respect the fact that he is—about the future of the Murray-Darling, a five-year review is reasonable. I believe Australians generally would agree. We continue—

6. There is to be an equitable sharing of funding across Murray-Darling Basin jurisdictions.

In other words, we want to make certain that the \$10 billion is shared equitably between Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and, of course, South Australia. Again, this is not an unreasonable request. We continue—

7. The Commonwealth incorporate within its National Water Strategy a commitment to work with the States to examine prudent and feasible options to augment supply into inland rivers, including proposals recently canvassed by the Premier of Queensland to augment Murray-Darling water supplies.

The Prime Minister would expect me to continue to pursue this matter. We continue—

There are other issues relevant to each of our jurisdictions that we will write to you about separately. One important question to consider is the importance of maintaining community confidence in water resource planning. An issue of considerable concern, for example, to a number of communities reliant on the Murray Darling System is the need to provide certainty about the outcomes of prior water planning exercises where they conform with National Water Initiative processes and principles.

In other words, we have a lot of farmers who have done a lot of work with us based on these national principles who are now uncertain about their futures. We need to take that into account. We continue further—

Prime Minister, we urge you to give serious consideration to these matters in advance of our meeting on Friday as a basis for a possible high level agreement between us so that we can move forward to a productive discussion of the many issues still to be resolved.

In other words, here is a solution. Here is a way forward. The ball is now in the Prime Minister's court. Let us see if we can reach agreement. I table the letter for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of a letter dated 21 February 2007 from Hon. Peter Beattie MP, Premier and Minister for Trade, and Hon. Mike Rann, Premier of South Australia, to The Hon. John Howard MP, Prime Minister of Australia, regarding management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

## TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 428.

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (2.37 pm): I welcome any initiative to genuinely improve road safety in Queensland in order to protect drivers, passengers and all other road users. I note that the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill makes changes to eight transport acts. The main objective of this bill is to improve road safety by ensuring the effective detection, prosecution and deterrence of people using certain illicit drugs and then driving motor vehicles, addressing the problems of young drivers being overrepresented in Queensland road crash statistics and providing for potential technologies that may be used in conjunction with fixed speed cameras in Queensland.

Over the last three years I have been made all too well aware of the fact that if we get it right in this place lives are saved and if we get it wrong in this place then people die. I am happy to support this legislation along with conservative and government members because it is one of those cases where we come together and agree that it is great legislation and approach it in a bipartisan way.

I acknowledge that the bill also addresses numerous non-road safety related amendments to various transport bills. However, my focus today will be on road safety and I will address my comments directly to that topic. It has been said many times in the debate, but I will say it again, that even one death on our roads is one death too many and it is extremely disturbing that Queensland's recorded road fatalities just keep rising. It is more disheartening to see that young people are twice as likely to be involved in fatal crashes.

According to the Parliamentary Library research, in 1998 there were 279 deaths on our roads. The latest figures available for 2005 show that there were 330 deaths recorded in Queensland. That is the third highest number of fatalities recorded nationally, falling behind New South Wales and Victoria. Queensland is 104 above the national average. The latest available road fatalities per 100,000 population statistics for the year 2005 stand at 8.27. According to the *Courier-Mail* editorial on 9 January this year at page 14, the Queensland road toll for 2006 rose to 336 deaths. These statistics are proof that our system is not working. While the government's 'Enough is Enough' campaign is a step in the right direction, it is not having the effect that we desire. Our shocking road toll is more than enough of a reason to open additional driver training facilities throughout Queensland to improve road safety and address the major problem—the overwhelming number of young drivers involved in road crashes.

I would like to see a driver training program set up for young people and other interested parties in the Burnett to learn vital road safety skills. This would be invaluable to our community and would prove to be popular. Currently, in Bundaberg and the Burnett school students have to travel approximately 200 kilometres to Gympie to the nearest driver training facility in order to participate in such a course. The local Carina Speedway, which is situated on 100 acres of land away from residential areas, is closing down because the owner is looking to sell the property and the local club. The Bundaberg Speedway Sedan Club is struggling to keep up with the ongoing running costs associated with the facility. It would like to reach its ultimate goal, which is of course purchasing the complex or leasing the complex so that it is able to operate in the future. Not only does this large piece of land have great potential for motor sport and other sporting bodies; it is also ideal to be a venue where driver training and driver education schools could be set up.

People who have been brought up learning how to drive speedway learn a lot of valuable techniques and of course are more aware of what a car can and cannot do. It also makes them better drivers. The Bundaberg Speedway Sedan Club also envisages the land being used as a drag strip and a burnout venue to encourage young people to compete in a supervised and safe environment where public liability insurance is guaranteed rather than doing it dangerously out on the streets. It is about capturing the youth and putting them in a controlled environment. Bundaberg has shameful statistics that show that it is currently listed as the fourth worst hooning city, with 197 impounded vehicles since anti-hooning legislation was introduced. I consider this to be a great idea—that is, moving a drag strip or driver training education to Carina. In order to do that, the speedway club needs assistance to achieve its ultimate goal. I believe that the club has written to the Premier on this matter seeking assistance to set up the facility. I would ask that the Premier strongly take into consideration its reasonable appeal. It will go a long way to educating youths and young people on driving safety and ultimately it will save lives.

A significant amendment to the legislation is to allow Queensland police to test drivers of motor vehicles, trams, trains and vessels for certain drugs and prohibit a person driving with the presence of certain drugs in their system. This is a necessary step towards improving our road safety, and it has been a long time coming. As members would be aware, drugs can impair a driver's ability to drive safely by causing poor motor and coordination skills, impaired reflexes, blurred vision, an inability to judge distance and speed, fatigue, memory loss, distortions of time, place and space, nausea and vomiting, dizziness and fainting, and aggressive or psychotic behaviour.

Previously in this House I have spoken about drug driving with regard to a Victorian parliamentary road safety committee inquiry into the effects of drugs and alcohol. As it is relevant to the legislation, I will briefly speak on this issue again. The inquiry into the effects of drugs in road safety investigations of fatally injured drivers from 1995 to 1996 revealed that 27 per cent had drugs other than alcohol present that may have affected their driving performance. Late last year the *Courier-Mail* revealed that secret government testing showed that one in 25 Queensland drivers used illegal drugs before driving.

Dr Jane Mallick, the Australian Drug Foundation's director of youth studies, was quoted in a *Courier-Mail* article on 15 December 2006 by Emma Chalmers titled 'Warning for drug drivers' saying that some drivers were mixing lethal cocktails by consuming illegal drugs and alcohol. Dr Mallick said that current research suggests Australian drivers are increasingly prepared to risk their lives and the lives of other road users while driving while impaired by drugs. Dr Mallick gave advice that even small amounts of alcohol combined with drugs or medications can impair the ability to drive safely. The article went on further to mention that the research also revealed that while 90 per cent of drivers thought random roadside drug testing was a good idea, less than half thought the results were reliable. The article also quoted an AAMI survey which found that five per cent of Queensland drivers thought using a small amount of illegal drugs would not affect their driving, while 12 per cent were unsure of the influence of drugs on their driving ability.

I assume that police officers on traffic duties will be stopping more motorists with the introduction of these roadside drug tests, and this introduces a number of issues. First of all, there is the issue of police resourcing. I would simply note that the amount of funding spent per head of population for police services in Queensland when compared with other states is the lowest in Australia. It is around \$265.70 per head of population when compared with other states such as Western Australia at \$324, Victoria at \$268 and Tasmania at \$312. We really do need more resourcing for our police so that they can effectively implement and carry out this legislation.

We also need to make sure that Queensland police officers are adequately resourced to meet the law enforcement challenges of the 21st century. Often our police officers are on patrol by themselves and they have to administer these drug tests on some very—this is probably the best way of describing them—scary people. If those people are affected by drugs, especially if it is methamphetamine drugs like ice and other new-age drugs such as paramethoxy amphetamines, there is a likelihood that officers will be placed in greater danger because of the drug user's irrational and excessively aggressive behaviour.

Common sense tells me that in order to better protect police and the public we will need the backup and the support of a police helicopter. For the information of the House, I table a report into the trial of a police helicopter in Edmonton, Canada, which shows conclusively how patrol officers' safety in the metropolitan area was improved by the presence of a helicopter.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of report titled 'Edmonton Police Service Helicopter Final Report—August 1, 2001 to July 31, 2002'.

Why does Queensland not have a police helicopter? Queensland is one of the only states in Australia which does not have a police helicopter service. We could afford one if the Premier stopped all of the unnecessary and wasteful government advertising.

**Mr LUCAS:** I rise to a point of order. With respect, I submit that the honourable member has been given a fair bit of latitude talking about police costs and the like. Now he is talking about police helicopters. This transport bill in no way discusses those issues. He is clearly off the point.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): I ask the member to stay on the bill.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would simply make the observation that it seems as though the transport minister does not really care about police officer welfare or safety.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the member to stay on the bill before us.

**Mr LUCAS:** I rise to a point of order. That is offensive and untrue. Again, all it does is speak volumes about the member for Burnett and the way he sees himself and sees this chamber. No-one else in this debate has done this. It is so typical of him.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I withdraw. Out of respect for the chair, I withdraw those comments. I would make the observation though that a police helicopter does make—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let us move on from there, thanks. Just continue with your speech. Let us move on from that subject.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Of course, this legislation also refers to illicit drugs and the problem that we have from illicit drugs in Queensland. How bad or serious is the illicit drug problem in Queensland today? Crime writer and fighter Bob Bottom has referred to the following comments from our Premier made during an estimates committee hearing in July 2005—

... we are, unfortunately, the amphetamine capital of Australia.

An article which appeared in the *City News* on 5 October 2006 titled 'A chilling new trend' states—

An entire generation is at risk of falling prey to the illicit drug ice with Brisbane children as young as 10 smoking the deadly amphetamine, a youth worker warns.

Mothers Against Drugs president June Hintz said ice usage had skyrocketed in the past two years. Ms Hintz said that she was aware of six ice-related deaths in the past year alone.

Drug Arm said the rise in popularity of ice was a serious issue as it was the most addictive illegal drug available and could cause psychotic episodes and mental health problems.

Methamphetamines were now second only to cannabis in use among young people in Australia, according to the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre.

Ms Hintz said that something has to be done quickly; otherwise we will have a whole generation lost to this drug.

In relation to this issue of drugs and illicit drugs, we have to ask ourselves: why is the illicit drug problem so big in Australia? Is it any worse in Queensland when compared to other states? Noted crime fighter and writer Bob Bottom said in a speech on 5 August 2006 to the Brisbane and Northern Suburbs Branch of the Retired Police Association of New South Wales—

What has become clear is that organised crime is now more entrenched than ever—mainly because of the drug trade.

I hope this legislation will decrease the size of the illicit drug trade. That will mean that there will be a higher chance of illicit drug users being caught while they are being randomly stopped by police. That will also increase the likelihood that fewer illicit drugs will be bought. By decreasing the size of the illicit drug market, hopefully we will see the flow-on effect of decreasing profits and influence of organised crime within Queensland.

Bob Bottom is privy to a confidential intelligence assessment by the Australian Crime Commission on how many organised groups there are throughout Australia. He said—

Although I am not at liberty to disclose all contents of that assessment, I am able to disclose publicly in general terms that the ACC assessment has identified 95 organised crime groups now operating throughout Australia—and that 18 of them are operating in the state of Queensland.

We really have a massive illicit drug problem in Queensland. What is driving that massive illicit drug program is organised crime. If we really want to decrease the number of deaths on our roads and the number of people using illicit drugs, we should also be thinking of attacking the source of those drugs. I think it is entirely appropriate—

**Mr LUCAS:** I rise to a point of order. The matters that the honourable member is debating are extremely interesting, but transport legislation is not about attacking the source of organised crime; it is about road safety and about the laws in relation to it. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think you have been very tolerant of him.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Will the member return to the bill.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for your direction. While I am talking about legislation that relates to illicit drug use, another issue that I should canvass is whether we can change people's attitudes towards drugs, legal or illicit. I note that new research from the National Drugs and Alcohol Research Centre indicates that young Australians' perception of marijuana has changed, revealing that nearly one-third of young Australians find marijuana use unacceptable. That is obviously a positive step but, sadly, I have to say that is not the case closer to home. Marijuana use among people is still a major problem in the Bundaberg-Burnett region.

The *Bundaberg NewsMail* of 25 February on page 6 has a special report titled 'Bundy youth still looking to get high' by Zane Jackson, who spoke with a number of community groups such as Yaamba, a local rehabilitation centre for substance abuse for clients aged 18 years and older. A spokesperson from Yaamba stated that the group was dealing with more cannabis users than ever before, with around 90 per cent of people who come to the rehabilitation centre having problems with marijuana. These are the same people who will end up being tested randomly on our roads by police officers. If we can change their attitudes towards drugs, then we, once again, are attacking the source of the problem and reducing the road toll on our roads.

The Yaamba support officer said—

Just in Bundaberg it's getting around a lot more and at younger ages—I know from experience its happening here at around 14 years old.

In the newspaper article, the coordinator of Bundaberg Drug Arm, Don Cook, agreed that marijuana was still popular with youth in the Bundaberg region, with his group dealing mostly with cases related to the drug.

In closing, I note that drugs in the Bundaberg-Burnett region are still a real problem. The local paper is forever reporting drug busts and drink-driving/drug-driving incidents. We really need to attack the problem at its source. That source happens to grab the kids when they are five-years-old. We should start the drug education then. I can only advocate for Life Education within our schools.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, I enjoy my work when we get it right in this chamber and we are able to save lives. It is a life-and-death situation now. When we do not get it right, lives are lost. I am happy to support the bill, because it will ultimately save lives.

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. In doing so, firstly I would like to pay tribute to the work of the Travelsafe Committee since its inception as a standing committee of the parliament back in the early 1990s. I think that the body of work that this committee has produced is a fantastic testament to the vision of the early Goss government, which put this committee in place. This committee has not only produced a great body of work but also allowed many members from both side of this House to gain very valuable experience in dealing with the important issue of road safety, which they can take back to their electorates. Being a member of the Travelsafe Committee offers members a tremendously valuable experience.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr FENLON:** I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. This committee also undertook a lot of the initial work that was involved in formulating this bill. I would like to recognise the work of Jim Pearce, the member for Fitzroy, who is the long-serving chair of the Travelsafe Committee. He is very committed to the committee and has done a lot of work while being chairman of the committee. As I said, this legislation is the culmination of much of that work.

There has also been a fair amount of consultation on the amendments that are contained in this legislation, such as the *Queensland youth: on the road and in control* discussion paper, community forums, research, and e-forums for driver training users. It has been quite an extensive process. This legislation is also part of the wave of reforms to the transport legislation that have occurred over the past decade. This reform has occurred largely through the process of establishing a uniform set of road rules throughout the country. I think that is very important in terms of road safety. People should be able to drive throughout the country and be aware of the rules that they have to comply with and know what penalties that they could incur if they do not comply.

Also, the pressures of modern society are catching up on us and community perceptions and attitudes towards driver safety are changing. Those attitudes are certainly different from when some members of this place started driving. I can remember as a young boy standing outside the local police station and seeing a painted sign that was standing up like a billboard outside the police station which listed the road toll. In those days, it certainly looked like Vietnam figures per capita.

We have come a long way and we have a long way to go. But this is a very important step along the way. The amendments are also as a result of changing technology, especially the new provisions relating to drug testing. This was inevitable because impairment of driving has always been an issue for the law. Technology now allows for drug testing, and provisions are therefore required to allow testing for substances that impair driving.

I would like to make a very strong point. In my view driver safety comes down to one single word—and that is 'attitude'. Attitude is fundamental to whatever we do when driving. Driving is an art and vehicles are simply a tool for that art. A good analogy that Minister Lucas would be familiar with—as he is very interested in this—is the art of pugilism. When pugilism is being taught to predominantly young men, there is a fundamental set of principles imparted. One is that they do not practise the art outside of the gymnasium and ring. The safest place to practise the art is inside the gymnasium and ring. People who learn the art know full well the dangers of practising the art anywhere outside of the gymnasium or ring.

**Mr Pearce:** That's right.

**Mr FENLON:** I take the interjection from the member for Fitzroy. That is something that cannot be legislated for in any way. It has to be a matter of the person's attitude. So it is with road safety. We cannot legislate for everything, even though we try in this place. We see so much legislation coming through here that we sometimes wonder where it can possibly end. We try to legislate for almost every aspect of our lives and every possible illegality. There has to be a limit to what can be legislated for. The reality is that the only way we can ensure safety on our roads and in society as a whole in the future is for the attitude of drivers to be that of wanting to behave appropriately when driving. The Travelsafe committee has done a lot over the years, and I congratulate this minister and previous ministers from both sides of the House who I know have been very conscious of this. It has to come from that internal desire to behave appropriately.

The provisions of the bill that are most pertinent to me at the moment are those relating to young drivers. I am about to have my first driving session with my 16½-year-old daughter.

**Mr Lucas:** I am about four months off it myself.

**Mr FENLON:** I empathise with the minister and other members empathise as well. I am a bit nervous but I am trying not to show it.

**Mr Langbroek:** Be very afraid.

**Mr FENLON:** I thank the member. I am certainly very conscious of it. I have started to realise just what a complex set of motor skills and psychological aspects come into play while driving. As an adult driver who has been on the road for many years, when I am behind the wheel I forget what it was like and take it all for granted. When teaching people the rudiments of how to steer, one realises what an incredibly difficult thing that can be for some people. It is a set of motor skills that people have to apply while at the same time concentrating on the environment around them.

These provisions for young drivers are very important. Without detailing every one of them, what they do is provide a graduated achievement for young drivers in the driving marketplace, as it were, so that they understand that they are on a learning curve. They are not going to get out there on the first day of driving with all of their skills, entitlements and privileges, as it were. They are on a learning curve, and the P-plate provisions et cetera will help to ensure that they are restricted in terms of distractions that can prevail for young drivers, at least until they reach a more mature age. This is an important piece of legislation that will save lives.

This bill, above any other piece of legislation in the House—indeed, above any other piece of legislation about road safety—unites this House and unites all of us in our communities in this very important fight to save lives out there on our roads, because there is nothing more tragic and hopeless than losing lives on our roads unnecessarily, especially young lives. We all feel for the families in our communities who have lost loved ones.

I commend the minister for the advertising campaign that we are currently seeing. I think the ‘Enough is enough’ campaign is superb. It encapsulates exactly what all of us are saying, at least subconsciously. To anyone out there who thinks that some of these advertisements are too harsh or robust, I think they should go out and have a look at some road accidents and travel with the local ambulance brigades for a couple of nights. Nothing is too harsh to ensure that the message gets through. I think that the advertisement the Premier screened at the community cabinet last week depicting a young man from Rockhampton who lost the use of his legs in a road accident—

**Mr Lucas:** Nick Benjamin.

**Mr FENLON:** I thank the minister—is to be commended. I understand that these ads are particularly effective at a psychological level because they appeal to young individuals rather than having us old fogeys trying to tell them new things.

**Mr Lawlor:** Speak for yourself.

**Mr FENLON:** I thank the member. Those ads are tremendous. I commend the minister for screening those ads and for keeping up the good work. This is an important piece of legislation. We will see more legislation come into the House to incrementally build on this in the future. These reforms are a good step along the way. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. I acknowledge the contribution by the shadow minister and offer my support for the bill currently before the House. The bill effects several changes which I wholly support and strongly believe will vastly improve road safety in Queensland.

The amendments as they stand will for the first time allow Queensland police to carry out random roadside drug testing for certain illicit substances as well as strengthening the requirements and restrictions for young drivers on our roads. I believe these changes are much needed in Queensland in order to reduce the number of road accidents, thus also reducing the number of deaths on our roads.

Firstly, I note that random drug driving tests have been a long time coming, with the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee having handed down its report *Drug driving in Queensland* in 1999. The reports of the Travelsafe Committee have been outstanding. I refer to an article in the *Courier-Mail* on Monday about our committee structure. The article implied that it was pretty worthless. I think the Travelsafe Committee under the chairmanship of the member for Fitzroy has done a great job. I have read a number of its reports over the years. I have been able to get reports for constituents who have expressed concern to me about driving matters. A particular family, who I will come back to later in my speech, wrote and made a submission to the minister and the Travelsafe Committee and were responded to. We can actually see that the effect of the reports of the committee over the years is reflected in the legislation. Other matters that the transport minister has initiated in terms of having a summit and actually getting things done—far more than in other states—are also reflected in this legislation and that is very commendable.

Many other committees do a great job. I am privileged to be on the Public Accounts Committee. It was chaired by the member for Greenslopes and is now chaired by the member for Kallangur. I can honestly say that when I came into this place I did not know much about public sector accounting and auditing. I have learnt something at every meeting that I have been to. We have a number of members who do not know a lot about public sector auditing and we are learning all the time.

Many of us come into this place and do not know everything about everything. One of the things we try to create is the illusion that we know many things about many things. Often we know that we need to learn. We learn about matters of state and governance in these committees. I think they do a great job. Again I commend the Travelsafe Committee. Many other members would agree that whilst everything can be improved, our committees—under their current structure—are certainly doing a great job.

This bill contains a number of amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 which will enable our police officers to carry out a series of tests designed to detect drugged-out drivers. These amendments have been in operation in Victoria for a number of years, whilst other jurisdictions have more recently adopted similar legislation. Since Queensland police have taken a hard line on drink drivers, the inadvertent and unfortunate consequence of this is that the number of motorists driving under the influence of drugs is on the rise.

The attitudes of motorists towards drug driving is of serious concern. A study by car and insurance group AAMI surveyed young drivers aged between 18 and 24. The findings were disturbing, to say the least, and strengthen the Queensland coalition's resolve to see these important amendments enacted. The Young Drivers Road Safety Index 2005 found that 13 per cent of young drivers believed that using recreational drugs before driving did not really affect their driving ability. It found that 16 per cent believed that drug driving was safer than drink driving and 22 per cent of young drivers, as well as 13 per cent of older drivers, admitted to driving after using recreational drugs. These figures are in line with other research.

As many other members in this debate have mentioned before me, as with alcohol the use of drugs can significantly impair a driver's skill and reflexes to the point where they can become a serious road hazard and a grave risk to the public. The Australian Medical Association of Queensland has also recognised this dangerous trend and applauds the Queensland parliament's bipartisan support of this bill. The AMAQ has suggested that the use of reliable technology that allows for the random testing of drivers for detection of illicit drugs will reduce the road toll. I unequivocally concur with that. I also support the organisation's position on increasing education of drivers on the perils and potential consequences of drug driving.

In its final report into drug driving in Queensland, the Travelsafe Committee recommended that drug-driving material be incorporated into driver training literature and licence testing procedures. The Queensland coalition believes that reducing the incidence of drug driving on Queensland roads requires a concerted campaign of education, legislation and regulation. As I have mentioned, several states have also recognised the danger of drug drivers and have enacted similar legislation to allow roadside testing for drugs.

These roadside tests are akin to random breath tests for alcohol. Testing drivers for drugs involves police officers taking a saliva sample for analysis for traces of illegal relevant drugs such as cannabis, methylamphetamine and MDMA, or ecstasy. Where a test returns positive police are able to carry out further blood or urine tests to confirm the result. I note that provision has been made in the regulations to allow for the testing to include other drugs once they are able to be detected.

To date the Victorian experience has been very successful in netting and prosecuting nearly 500 drug drivers. New South Wales police also recently commenced roadside drug testing with success. As the chamber has heard, research indicates that random drug testing appears to be a more effective deterrent against drug driving than increasing sanctions or simply educating drivers about the risks associated with drug driving.

Furthermore, an investigation by AAMI insurance group concluded that the vast majority of drivers—98 per cent—support random roadside drug testing. It is therefore imperative that the government acknowledge the wishes of the people of Queensland by ratifying this legislation but also by making sure that we dedicate sufficient resources so that this program has the best chance of success.

I am supportive of fixed speed cameras. We need to do something. There are so many areas where people speed. The minister told the member for Kawana that he will deal with the issue of siting these fixed speed cameras on local roads. That is obviously something that will have to be sorted out between state and local government. I think that fixed speed cameras are something we have to consider given that too many people see where the mobile cameras are and change their driving patterns accordingly. If a person speeds they have to cop the consequences if they get a ticket. The only way to stop people speeding is if they get enough demerit points and they lose their licence.

As the member for Surfers Paradise, the renowned party capital of Queensland, I am pleased that police will now have the necessary powers to catch these drug drivers and get them off our roads. The specialist South Eastern Region Traffic Branch, led by Inspector Paul Biggin, does a fantastic job catching drink drivers in the party precinct with regular RBT blockades in hot spot areas such as Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach. I have always wondered how many drivers fly under the radar, so to speak, because they register a zero blood alcohol level but are affected by drugs in a similar way to drivers with a very high concentration of alcohol.

These vital amendments to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill will ensure that these menaces are more likely to be caught, which will make our roads safer for the general public. I applaud the government for introducing the necessary changes. I also ask the minister for transport to reveal how drug testing operations will be funded—whether his department will foot the bill or whether it will come out of the Minister for Health's budget. In New South Wales random roadside drug testing is funded by the New South Wales Department of Health, as well as a defraying of costs by a \$2 increase in drivers licence fees. As the shadow health minister I would hope that, if these vital tests are to be added to the ledger of Queensland Health, the department's budget is correspondingly increased so that the cost of drug-testing operations does not negate spending in other vital areas of health.

**Mr Lucas:** It will be coming from the Police budget.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the Minister. The second important change that this bill effects is toughening the restrictions on young drivers. Like other members, the member for Greenslopes has a daughter who is becoming a learner driver. Every time I have the pleasure of driving my daughter to school or somewhere else she asks if she can drive. Now she is having a couple of lessons with a driver training school. It is not that I am impatient; I want her to learn to drive properly. I got my licence a long time ago. I do not want to instruct her in the wrong way.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I like to think that I do drive properly, member for Gregory, but there may be times I might indicate things that may not be right. Last year the Queensland Road Safety Summit which I was pleased to attend recommended that a number of measures be introduced by parliament to ensure the safety of inexperienced drivers. In my electorate and the wider Gold Coast I have attended meetings and spoken with young drivers and their parents about what the government could do to reduce the number of children dying on our roads. I specifically recall the transport minister coming to the Holiday Inn and showing us a graph which revealed that young people have the lowest incidence of accidents when they have their learner's permit. That is replaced by the highest incidence of accidents when they have just received their licence. It was quite amazing. They have the highest likelihood of having an accident as soon as they get their licence, after having been so careful when they were learner drivers. It demonstrated that we had to do something about this.

As I mentioned before, some constituents have come to see me about the fact that their child died. They were Michael and Desley Robinson, the parents of Phillip Robinson who was killed in a motor vehicle accident on the M1 freeway on 7 September 2001. He was hit from behind by a young man in a Toyota Supra sports vehicle at such a speed that he was forced across the median strip of the freeway and into the oncoming traffic. It was an accident that devastated their family. They wrote submissions to the Travelsafe Committee and the transport minister, both of whom responded acknowledging their submission. Some of the things they said have come into this legislation.

I note what the member for Greenslopes said about people having to have the right attitude. With some of these changes to what provisional licensees will have to do—like restricting mobile loudspeaker functions for supervisors and passengers of learner drivers and for passengers of first-stage provisional licence holders under 25—we will be relying on people doing the right thing because it is very difficult to legislate for absolutely everything. When people are made aware of the things they are doing wrong or that are illegal, hopefully they will modify their behaviour. It will be very difficult to police some of those things that are in the car, and they could modify their behaviour once they are pulled over by the police. As I said, I think they are very good initiatives.

In November last year, a fatal accident by a P-plate driver tragically claimed the lives of three teenagers and critically injured a fourth near the Sunshine Coast. In 2005, four Townsville teenagers died in a single car accident when the 17-year-old driver collided with a tree.

**Mr Lucas:** I have been to the scene of that accident at Pallarenda in Townsville and it is like a shrine. It's very, very sad.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I take that interjection. As we have heard from so many other members, it is just devastating for the rest of the cohort. It is shattering for their friends as well as family members, and it has devastating effects on communities. Any young driver being killed in an accident is tragic, but when there are multiple fatalities we have to look at what we are doing wrong from a legislative and executive position.

As I have mentioned before, as soon as a young adult gets their licence at 17, the likelihood of having an accident in the first few years of driving skyrockets. As the father of a learner driver, I am concerned about these statistics, which is why I applaud these amendments. The relevant amendments concerning the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 will prescribe tougher rules on learner and provisional drivers in a bid to improve their road safety. Changes to the legislation—such as increasing driver training time, the compulsory display of L- and P-plates, and passenger restrictions—will make Queensland the toughest state in Australia in which to get a licence. As I am constantly reminding my own daughter, this is not because we want to prevent young people from obtaining a

licence; rather, we want to save lives. Just as we have laws to protect our children from the excesses of youth, I believe this bill is a leap forward in increasing road safety and protecting young drivers against themselves. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs LD LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.22 pm): I rise to support the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill. I believe this is one of the most important pieces of legislation that is likely to pass this House. In my contribution this afternoon, I want to focus on the amendments that affect how young drivers obtain a licence and the other amendments focusing on young drivers. Many members have already spoken about the distressing statistics of the number of young people who die on our roads each year. I do not propose to repeat those statistics here this afternoon, except to say that any preventable death is one death too many.

In my lifetime, I have seen many initiatives to improve road safety and also vehicle safety. I can well remember as a child driving in the front seat of our car with my mum and dad; there were no seatbelts. We now have seatbelts, airbags and roll bars for convertible cars. We have had introduced in that time drink-driving laws. The drink-driving laws have changed from a .08 blood alcohol level to a .05 level. We have seen the introduction of baby seats and baby capsules and also comprehensive education programs, but still we need to do more. Education campaigns, whilst useful, have also not been enough.

These very sensible amendments essentially do two things, both of which address the causes of the overrepresentation of young people in road accidents. First, they will increase the skill levels of young drivers before they become licensed and, second, they will put in place sensible restrictions that will enhance the safety of young people once they are driving. I want to briefly touch on the policy behind these changes.

The bill will allow for regulations under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 that will increase the skill levels of drivers. This will be achieved by increasing the minimum learner licence period to 12 months and requiring learner drivers to have 100 hours of certified supervised driving experience. A number of young people have contacted me in relation to whether there will be a transition period for those who are turning 16½ and who would be eligible to have a learner's permit under the present rules but anticipate that the changes will come into effect before they turn 17. I understand that, if the rules come in on 1 July this year, anyone who turns 16½ in the second half of this year would anticipate getting their licence when they turn 17 in the first half of next year—

**Mr Lucas:** Everyone will be able to get their licence at 17, so there will be a sliding scale. If you turn 16 on 1 June then you will still be able to get your licence at 17 but the 100 hours won't necessarily apply to that because it is a lesser period of time—the phase-in period.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** So will they still need to have their logbook at 100 hours by the time they are 17?

**Mr Lucas:** No. If you turn 16 after 1 July, you will. If you turn 16 before 1 July, as of 1 July you will be able to start learning but you won't have to have the full 100 hours.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Okay. That will probably relieve them but not their parents. There is a well-documented body of research and hard statistical evidence going back a number of years linking a lack of driver experience with an increased risk of accidents. This is why these amendments will make a difference. I want to join with other members and commend the chair of the Travelsafe Committee, Jim Pearce, and all the committee members for all the work they have done and the recommendations they have made over quite a number of years. I would commend to any person who wants to look at an overview of that research and the reports and recommendations in more detail to read the speech given by the member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce, in this debate. Some of that research comes from all over Australia and all over the world.

I want to mention in this debate a 1994 research paper from the Monash University Accident Research Centre which concluded that, for young people, crash involvement was found to be associated with a lack of driving experience and higher levels of recklessness. A more recent report by the Monash University Accident Research Centre from 2005 commissioned for the Western Australian government confirmed the same finding: crash rates have been shown to drop dramatically with increased driving mileage. The authors go on to say that the current, most protective factor in reducing crash risk of a provisional driver is many and varied hours of driving experience as a supervised learner. For those of us like me with potential young learner drivers in our homes, there can be no more salutary statement.

A number of opposition members have called for more driver training centres in their regions. I am not an advocate of driver training centres because I believe the research shows that it is many and varied hours in normal driving conditions that actually improve your skills, lower the risk of accident and lower the risk of injury. I think it would be a huge waste of state government money if it were put into driver training centres when it is the hours on the road in normal traffic conditions that will make it safer for our young people. We need to make sure that our young people get enough practice driving on the roads. Those L-plates need to be thoroughly used. It may just save our child's life.

I turn now to the second group of amendments—that is, those that will enhance the safety of young people once they are driving. Again there is significant research to back up the proposed changes. Young people tend to overestimate their abilities as drivers and underestimate the risks. This is not meant to be a pejorative statement critical of young people—and young people please do not think I am criticising you—it is simply a statement of fact. Best practice legislation should be based on how people really behave not on how we think they behave. This is why economic rationalists get it so wrong. We are not rational, dispassionate automatons carefully weighing up information; we are human beings with all the foibles that that brings.

These amendments will reduce road accidents because they will restrict drivers to drive in situations with lower risk. A similar example from the existing road safety framework is the requirement for provisional drivers to have a blood alcohol reading of zero. The amendments will introduce a graduated provisional licensing system with greater restrictions for drivers in the first stage. Again this is sensible policy based on research into driver behaviour.

Holders of first-stage provisional licences if under the age of 25 will face peer passenger restrictions when driving between 11 pm and 5 am. They will be unable to use a hands-free or loudspeaker mobile phone. I would also go so far as to say that loud music in cars is associated with high speed. The louder the music the faster they seem to go. Perhaps it may be that we need to look at the stereo systems in cars driven by young people. Provisional drivers under the age of 25 will not be able to drive high-powered vehicles.

As I said at the outset, this may be one of the most important pieces of legislation that is likely to pass this House. We will not know which lives will be saved because of it. We will not know which families will be spared the pain of losing a son or a daughter. What we do know is that more of our young people will live to see their own children grow up and get their licences. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.31 pm): I rise to support the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill. The main objective of the bill is to improve road safety, particularly in relation to young people. It allows Queensland police to test drivers for certain drugs and to prosecute those drivers who have a presence of those drugs in their saliva or blood. It allows age specific regulations to be made regulating the behaviour of young drivers to further address the problem of young drivers being overrepresented in Queensland road crash statistics. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Travelsafe Committee over the last few years under the excellent chairmanship of the member of Fitzroy. I acknowledge their great research and consultation regarding road safety.

Research has revealed random based drug testing appears to be a more effective deterrent against drug driving than either increasing sanctions or providing factual or educational information about the risks associated with drug driving. The 'Bloody idiot' campaign to change the culture of drink driving worked extremely well and random breath testing has provided the checks and balances.

This bill largely compliments the existing scheme for the random detection and prosecution of drink-driving offences, the RBT program. In 1989, shortly after RBT commenced in Queensland, one in 40 drivers tested were found to have an illegal blood alcohol concentration. In 2005 this number had decreased to one in 92 drivers tested. This bill aims to significantly contribute to reducing the number of people driving with a relevant drug in their saliva or blood.

Young drivers as a road user group are overrepresented in Queensland's road crash statistics. Despite young driver fatalities between 1993 and 2004 reducing by 25 per cent, young people are still twice as likely to be involved in fatal crashes. In 2005 there were 106 Queensland fatalities as a result of young driver crashes, which amounted to 32 per cent of the road toll. The new powers to make regulations specific to young drivers are justified due to the need to protect drivers, their passengers and all other road users.

In Victoria a drug-driving trial revealed that 21 per cent of drivers under 25 admit to driving under the influence of illegal drugs. Drug driving is a huge problem. We are always concerned and very shocked when we hear news that so many young Queenslanders lose their lives on our roads. Consequently, this government needs to be proactive in our policies in relation to this issue. Any type of drugs, whether they be prescription or recreational, can have the effect of impairing the judgement of drivers and their ability to respond on the road. It is important that young people are continually educated about being responsible when they get behind the wheel of a car.

During investigations as chair of the safe youth parties task force it was clear that drinking and drugs were becoming more of a problem with young people. In some circumstances drinking and drugs led to the act of gatecrashing and/or violent behaviour. Education about the effects of drugs and alcohol is absolutely mandatory and should begin in the very early years of primary school. It is a serious matter as the consequences of actions of overuse of alcohol or drugs can be extremely devastating.

The results of a 1998 national drug statutory household survey suggest that 46.4 per cent of Australians aged 14 years and over have used an illicit drug at least once in their life while 22.8 per cent reported having used an illicit drug in the proceeding 12 months. In 2004 alcohol and other drug use

were identified as a contributing factor in 114 deaths on Queensland roads or almost 35 per cent of Queensland's road toll. In 2005 alone there were no fewer than 106 fatalities in Queensland as a result of young driver crashes. This figure amounted to 32 per cent of the state's road toll in that year.

For learner drivers it is proposed that regulations will reduce the learner drivers licence age to 16, to extend the minimum learner licence period to 12 months and to require learner drivers to record 100 hours of certified, supervised on-road driving experience. To facilitate this, learner licences will be valid for three years. Motorbike learners will be required to hold a provisional car licence for 12 months prior to gaining a motorbike learner licence.

The reforms are appropriate, balanced and necessary given the overrepresentation of these road user groups in road fatalities and crash statistics. Unfortunately, people still see it as much more convenient to get into their cars to go places rather than to work around the bus and train timetables. This is particularly relevant in the western suburbs where there is an average of 2.5 cars per family and per household.

As far as our environment is concerned, public transport is the much preferred, much healthier option and we should do everything we can to encourage its use. The benefits of public transport are that people can have a stress-free trip to work every day without having to worry about travel snarls, getting there on time or finding reasonable cost parking when they get to the city. Some people use their time on public transport to catch up on reading or to think about or plan the day's events. Funds are inevitably saved on parking, vehicle maintenance and the rising cost of fuel.

There are a number of transport and main roads issues that I am happy to say are underway or have been completed in my electorate which enhance safety in the use of our public transport and major roads. The Oxley and Corinda railway stations have been upgraded, and lifts and improvements to lighting and security cameras in the car parking areas have been completed. The platform at Oxley station was raised for easier access to the train. Darra station has become a Citytrans station with buses from Sinnamon Park meeting the trains and picking people up from the station to take them to the Centenary suburbs. Darra station also received 60 new car parking spaces. Oxley station is going to be upgraded with extra car parking in the future.

There is a proposed transit orientated development around Wacol Railway Station due to happen over the next few years. In terms of a railway line to Springfield, Queensland Rail is working with the Department of Main Roads and John Holland in an interim project alliance which has allowed final feasibility to be fast-tracked and construction will begin in early 2007. I am advised that the projected completion date for the Springfield railway line is 2011.

As far as bus services are concerned, a new school bus service route 776 commenced on 29 January 2007. It departs Windermere estate, which is quite a new estate in the suburbs of Mount Ommaney electorate, at 8.25 am and travels through Sinnamon Park to Seventeen Mile Rocks and arrives at Centenary State High School at 8.45 am. The return service departs Centenary State High School at 3.15 pm and goes through Sinnamon Park and Seventeen Mile Rocks and arrives at Windermere at 3.35 pm.

The timetable for bus route 106 has been changed and it now departs Mount Ommaney at 8.10 am and arrives at Indooroopilly at 8.52 am. This change allows trips to pass Corinda High at approximately 8.29 in time for the 8.30 bell at school. New service route No. 467 to service our newer suburbs departs Windermere to Seventeen Mile Rocks to Oxley station and then on to the city. Another new service, route 486, departs Indooroopilly to Windermere, Sinnamon Park, Seventeen Mile Rocks to Oxley station. I am happy to say that both these new services began on 19 February.

The bikeway link from the Centenary Bridge to Fig Tree Pocket was completed last year and the number of cyclists utilising the bike path to commute to work is steadily increasing. There is a long-term proposal to build transit lanes along the Centenary Highway to ease congestion at the Toowong roundabout end and a four-lane link is almost at completion on the other side of the Centenary Highway roundabout. Darra station is on the list for an upgrade for disability access. However, there have been occasional issues with buses not waiting for trains to disembark at this station to take people to the Centenary suburbs. There needs to be more parking around railway stations. This may mean the airspace above stations being utilised for this purpose. TransLink is undertaking ongoing reviews of transport needs in south-east Queensland. We as a government need to do what we can to make our roads safer and to encourage people of all ages to make use of public transport wherever possible. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. One purpose of this bill is to address the problems of young drivers being overrepresented in road crash statistics. Anything that addresses the road toll is positive, but I believe there is a bigger picture that has not been fully addressed. There were 231 road fatalities in Queensland in 2005. Of that number, 47.2 per cent of these accidents occurred outside the south-east corner. They occurred in the southern, central, northern and far-northern areas. Approximately only

30 per cent of the population of Queensland lives in these regions. We must look at the reasons why rural and regional Queenslanders are losing their lives on the roads disproportionately to those in metropolitan areas. Without a doubt, the fatal four contribute to too many of our accidents, but why is a greater proportion of the population in regional and rural Queensland dying in accidents?

The condition of roads is a major concern within many of these regions. Many of the state controlled roads in rural areas are still unsealed or in urgent need of upgrading. Fatigue is a major factor in accidents. Mining companies provide single-person accommodation and then employees are frequently travelling home on their days off. This has resulted in greater risks. If we add to this the increase in traffic volume and the poor state of the roads, it is a recipe for disaster. Residents are tired of regular reports in the media of accidents and fatalities on their roads.

The Gregory Development Road, the Peak Downs Highway and the Clermont-Alpha road are roads that are frightening not only to young drivers but to all who are game to use these roads. I want to bring to the attention of the house the shocking state of the Gregory Development Road, particularly the section between Greenvale and Bluewater Springs. It is not ethical and it is downright dangerous to allow regular road users to be confronted by triple road trains on a single sealed road with winding bends, no vision or warning of any oncoming traffic and any slight veering will see you end up down an embankment into a tree or head-on into an oncoming prime mover. Local road users refer to this road as a billygoat track and a one-lane nightmare. There has been at least one fatality and 23 accidents in the last two years between Charters Towers and Greenvale. Two of them involved bulk fuel tankers which overturned and ruptured, spilling diesel which took up to nine hours to be cleaned up.

In recent times there has been a significant increase in population, both within the township of Greenvale as well as the surrounding districts. Greenvale has grown from a population of 60 to 150 since 2002 and there have been a number of new mines kicking off, such as Kagara zinc mine at Conjoboy Station which employs 200 people at the mine site. There are also a number of other mines such as Sapphire mine at Mount Fox, Christmas Creek mine at Christmas Creek Station just 40 kilometres south of Greenvale and the Pandanus marble mine at Pandanus Station. Metallica Minerals is also aiming for a 2009 nickel-processing operation tipped to generate up to \$120 million a year in revenue. This site is in the vicinity of the old Greenvale nickel mine as well as a smaller deposit at Lucky Break south of Greenvale. Ark Homes also uses this section of road to transport home units through to the gulf. Ark Homes has already moved 50 of these homes through to the gulf and will move 50 more in the next 12 months under escort because they are 2.5 metres wide.

Transport, grazing, tourist, and mining industries as well as Townsville Enterprise, Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, local residents and parents are screaming out for this road to be fixed. This road is heavily used by ore road triples that service these mines, livestock carriers, an increasing number of tourists—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Member for Charters Towers, which section of the bill does your speech refer to?

**Mr KNUTH:** If I am going too much off the track here, I will deliver this in the adjournment debate tonight. I want to bring these issues to the attention of the minister. I also invite him to come up and have a look at this road. I would appreciate it if the minister could read my adjournment speech tonight. Just to finish off, in relation to licences, there are towns in the Central Highlands and the Bowen Basin where it is impossible to be tested for an HR-class licence as the police being sent to these areas do not have the qualifications.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Charters Towers, resume your seat.

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (3.45 pm): I start by thanking the minister for the Caloundra Road upgrade. It is going to be a great piece of work when it is done. That connection with the Pierce Avenue commercial precinct will add a lot to Caloundra, so I thank the minister and the government for that.

In January and February 2006 the RACQ published the results of an online survey covering a number of matters including licensing, fines and penalties, enforcement, engineering, education, and other road users. When one reads the statistics it is quite clear that there was a strong feeling that young drivers needed a much better education and understanding not only of their responsibilities as a driver but an understanding of how to drive and handle a motor vehicle. The survey indicated that in excess of 90 per cent believed that learner drivers needed to obtain a mandatory number of supervised driving hours recorded in a logbook; 81.4 per cent believed that there should be more restrictions on provisional drivers, including passenger limits and curfews; 95.8 per cent believed that there should be a permanent reintroduction of L-plates and P-plates; and 95.2 per cent believed firmly that there needed to be more comprehensive testing and training for learner and provisional drivers.

The survey clearly identified the necessity for younger drivers to face a range of tasks before they obtain an open licence. That is in essence one of the prime responsibilities of the bill before the House. If one considers the RACQ submission to Queensland Transport of February 2006, it is quite clear that a lot of the online survey results have been taken up by that body and incorporated into its discussion paper. I note that at page 4 of the paper it states—

One area that offers significant scope for road safety interventions for all young drivers however is the graduated licensing system (GLS). Components of the GLS fall into two broad categories:

- Pre-licence measures (those which primarily encourage more supervised driving experience);
- Post-licence measures (those which place restrictions on driving to allow experience to be gained under low risk conditions).

In 2003, 17- to 20-year-olds comprised 15 per cent of the total road toll in Queensland but only six per cent of the population. It is against this background that the bill is mainly targeted—in essence, to try to keep young people alive whilst we continue to produce more and more powerful cars within a price range that allows access by a greater proportion of younger people. The list of reforms is significant, and I note that the RACQ discussion paper clearly raises the necessity for a uniform and coordinated whole-of-government approach to the development and delivery of road safety in the school curriculum involving parents and carers, school communities, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders together with increased awareness and promoting the use of road resources amongst teachers and schools in a consistent manner.

The RACQ has adopted a proactive approach as it believes that it is important that young people, prior to obtaining the right to drive a motor vehicle, be taught that they have an obligation to understand the road rules and, more particularly, the dangers associated with driving on our roads. In addition, parents hold a very responsible position. Often parents give their children a motor vehicle when they turn 18, or perhaps 21. Simply handing over a motor vehicle is not the end of a parent's responsibility. In fact, responsibility begins way before then. It is important that parents comprehend that they are an integral part of educating their children.

This is recognised at page 8 of the RACQ's report, where it supports initiatives to enhance parents' involvement in teaching young drivers and supports the preparation of an education kit so that learner drivers and their parents better understand their responsibilities. I also note that the RACQ believes that consideration be given to the extension of the zero tolerance level for all young drivers, even those with open licences, until at least 24 years of age.

The RACQ plays a vital role in providing road safety education in schools. It supplies to schools and TAFE campuses 30,000 car-buying information guides. It also holds information sessions on car buying at high schools in Brisbane and regional centres across Queensland, covering issues such as contractual rights, buying and owning a vehicle, drivers licences, car insurance and technical and related issues. The RACQ delivers a program in primary schools called Street Scene, which was developed in Victoria. It is an interactive road safety program for primary school students emphasising pedestrian, passenger and bicycle safety. The RACQ also finances what are called docudramas that are aimed at secondary school students. Those docudramas depict realistic recreations of crash scenes with a commentary provided by relevant professionals. Finally, the RACQ has developed a movie titled *Tightrope* for year 12 students, which provides the details of the 20 major factors that contribute to crashes involving young people. The RACQ has been extremely proactive in regard to the protection of our young people. A lot of its recommendations are contained in the bill before the House.

The predominant provisions that deal with regulating young drivers are contained within clause 52 of the bill. They are part of what will become section 150AA. Pursuant to that new section, a regulation will be able to provide for a number of matters, which I do not intend to go into. That section also provides that regulations so made are not unlawful due to discrimination on the basis of age. The shadow transport minister has ably dealt with those provisions. Therefore, there is no need for me to canvass them again, except to give accolades to the RACQ and the government for producing this bill and introducing it into the House.

The second portion of the bill that I wish to touch on briefly relates to driving whilst under the influence of a drug. Certainly, there is more than enough evidence to establish that many people drive after using illegal drugs, which causes as great, if not greater, impairment than drinking alcohol. Clearly, it is time that those people who believe that they can get away with using illegal drugs and then driving a motor vehicle suffered the same consequences as those who believe that consuming alcohol and driving a motor vehicle is acceptable behaviour. Too many people die on Queensland roads on a daily basis for us not to ensure that proper safeguards are in place for those who comply with the law and that those who believe that they have a God-given right to risk the lives of others understand that they will no longer be tolerated.

I note that clause 58 of the bill prohibits any specimen of saliva being used for DNA analysis and that specimens must be destroyed as soon as possible after a qualifying event—the event being either that the analysis does not indicate the presence of a drug or, if it does, after the results are no longer required for legal proceedings. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (3.52 pm): For nearly two decades now—since the introduction of random breath testing in Queensland in 1988—there has been a steady decline in the road toll. This welcome trend in our state has occurred in many other jurisdictions around Australia and elsewhere where random breath testing occurs. It marks the achievement of an almost universal acceptance of random breath testing, as the community has reached a much deeper understanding of the risks of driving whilst affected by liquor.

But, as has been pointed out by honourable members during the course of this debate, that has not always been the case. When random breath testing for alcohol was introduced, it is fair to say that many people were either ignorant or immune to the risks of drink driving. Over time, the combination of the introduction of new laws, stricter penalties and falling fatalities have brought a much greater and deeper understanding and acceptance of the risks of drink driving and its appalling consequences.

During the course of this debate more than one honourable member has reflected on that dreaded knock on the door in the middle of the night that so many parents, families and friends have answered and which all of us fear. Late on Christmas Eve in 1969 my parents answered the door to learn that their eldest daughter, then aged 21, was involved in an horrific crash and that she was fighting for her life. I was six at the time and I awoke, too. I will never forget it—nor the day after when the shock descended on our family and engulfed my parents in mixed emotions of grief and hope. For the next six months, as my sister lay in a coma, my parents never gave up hope. Miraculously, neither did my courageous sister. She survived, but then there were the long months—turning into years—of rehabilitation, of legal proceedings, of the very long road to recovery and of learning to live with all the complexities and hardships associated with severe brain injury. During the course of this debate, in supporting this legislation, many honourable members have identified with those families throughout this state and this country who have been in that position. It is heartening to hear that that is the case. Today, as my sister approaches her 60th birthday, this parliament is considering measures that will, we all hope, create a safer road transport system.

Earlier in the week we learned of measures being taken by this government to assist in expanding the choices for people in this state with acquired brain injury, in particular, focusing on expanding the choices for those young people who, for a variety of reasons, have found themselves housed—sometimes inappropriately—in aged-care facilities. This government, together with the federal government, has committed resources to a project to move those young people with acquired brain injury—many of them as a result of road trauma—out of aged-care facilities and into more appropriate accommodation facilities. That is a very welcome development in this state and around the country. I want to take this opportunity to say to all of those families who have been affected by road trauma, whether through the loss of a loved one or through injuries sustained by families and friends, that all of us have those circumstances in mind when supporting this legislation.

I hope that these new laws, as well as creating an effective deterrent, will also change attitudes about driving after consuming drugs, whether that be cannabis, amphetamines or ecstasy—which are the drugs that are identified in the legislation—or any other intoxicating drug, whether illicit or prescribed. In the course of this debate other honourable members have reflected on earlier times when the risks and dangers of driving whilst under the influence of liquor were neither well understood nor accepted. I expect that, just as attitudes to drink driving have changed, so attitudes to drug driving will change. I hope that these laws will be an important catalyst for changing those attitudes as much in consequence of a greater understanding of the risks of drug driving as by the fear of being caught and detected.

To that end, comment has already been made during the debate about the excellent road safety community education campaigns that have been conducted in this state and elsewhere. I urge the minister to continue those campaigns because community education is a very important component and must be complementary to achieve the objects of this legislation in that it ought to focus on the risks of driving after using any drug, whether it be illicit or prescribed.

The timing is right for broad community education about these new laws. That will promote acceptance and respect for the laws as the community at large gains a better understanding of the health risks of using illicit drugs in particular and also, in the light of recent research, as more and more young people gain an understanding of the negative attitudes to cannabis use in particular. Our education campaigns must ensure that negative attitudes to cannabis use do not reflect or translate into acceptance of other potentially more harmful drugs.

This bill also enables a new regime for learner and probationary drivers. The most significant of those proposals will enable regulations to be introduced in relation to lowering the learners age to 16 and extend the minimum learners licence to 12 months. A number of honourable members have spoken in the debate about the 100 hours of certified, supervised on-road driving experience that will be required under proposed new regulations enabled by this bill.

A number of members during the debate have referred to statistics which, in general, support and justify these new laws. They are accompanied by important and necessary safeguards to the rights and liberties of the individual including, importantly, that saliva samples obtained will be destroyed. When a sample is obtained from a person who in the opinion of a police officer is exhibiting behaviour consistent with intoxication from drug use but the subsequent analysis of the sample proves negative to drugs, such samples will also be destroyed. In those circumstances, the person will have the right to have a sample given to him or her to conduct their own independent tests. They are important safeguards in the legislation. An additional one is that DNA cannot be obtained from a sample to be used to determine whether or not some other offence has been committed. Those are important safeguards that address concerns that have been raised during the debate in the community that preceded the introduction of this legislation.

The penalties that will apply to convictions under the new drug-driving laws, if I am not mistaken, have not been mentioned during this debate. I think it is important that the House and others know what they are. For a first drug-driving offence without any previous convictions in the past or in the previous five years, the maximum penalty is 14 penalty units or three months imprisonment, and the disqualification period is one to nine months for the holder of a licence or three to nine months if unlicensed or the holder of a probationary, provisional or restricted licence.

The penalty regime in the new legislation is dependent upon previous convictions. For one low blood alcohol concentration offence—that is, under 0.15—or one previous offence for drug driving, the maximum penalty is 20 penalty units or six months imprisonment, and the disqualification period is between three and 18 months. For two or more low blood alcohol concentration offences or a drug-driving offence, the maximum penalty is 28 penalty units or nine months imprisonment, and the disqualification period is up to six months. For one high blood alcohol concentration or drug-driving offence or an offence of dangerous driving, the maximum penalty is 20 penalty units or six months imprisonment, and the disqualification period is a minimum of nine months.

For one low blood alcohol concentration offence and a drug-driving offence and one high blood alcohol concentration offence or a drugs offence or a dangerous driving offence, the maximum penalty is 30 penalty units or one year's imprisonment, and the disqualification period is a minimum of one year. All of those disqualification periods are minimum periods. That is a sensible penalty regime reflecting an increasing range of penalties having regard to persons who persist in engaging in drug or drink driving. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.05 pm): I rise in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006 and place on record that I fully support this legislation aimed at improving road safety in our community. I take on board the comments by the member for Barron River in relation to a Christmas Day tragedy in his own family, and I would like to talk about that in relation to my next-door neighbour's family.

On Christmas Day 2006 tragedy struck the residents of Paul Tully Avenue and Collingwood Drive, Collingwood Park. I live in Paul Tully Avenue, and it was a typical Christmas Day. Families were busy unwrapping presents and neighbours were wishing each other a happy Christmas and phone calls were being made across Australia. Paul Tully Avenue is a street where Christmas is a big deal. For example, houses are decorated with lights every year, so when Christmas Day finally arrives it is with a sense of delight. Each year the Ipswich City Council advises residents of the change of traffic conditions—instead of Paul Tully Avenue being a two-way street, it is converted to one way. There is one sign, which is a blue sign, that says, 'Christmas lights,' with a right turning arrow on it.

By lunchtime Christmas Day many local families were preparing to visit their own families to have a nice Christmas lunch. My family went up to my parents' place as usual. My next-door neighbour, however, Jan Finlayson and her son Alan were to host Christmas lunch for their large extended family. Their tables were all decorated under the pergola in the backyard, the meal prepared and the presents waiting to be opened. But unfortunately Jan's grandson, Robert Lee Brown, never made it to her house to celebrate Christmas Day. He was tragically killed in an accident less than 100 metres from her home. The corner of Paul Tully Avenue and Collingwood Drive will never be the same for any of us ever again. Robert was a marvellous son and will never be forgotten. He was aged 24 years and five months. He was a boilermaker and fitter. He worked at Chinchilla at the power station currently under construction. He went to Minden State School and Bundamba State High School. He was the son of Robert and Soraya Brown. He was very much loved by his family, who are highly respected in our community.

Road signage is so important for all motorists as well as pedestrians. One blue sign with the words 'Christmas lights' and a right arrow on it is inadequate. There are many hundreds, if not thousands, of cars that visit the Collingwood Park Christmas lights spectacular each year. The locals—that is, the residents—know the change of traffic conditions to one way but tourists and visitors to the area do not. In fact, they do not have a clue. There is no signage indicating that Paul Tully Avenue is a one-way street from Collingwood Drive until you reach that particular corner and then there is a small one-way sign on the traffic diversionary devices.

I have called upon the Ipswich City Council to urgently review the lack of signage for Christmas visitors and tourists. Residents and the family of Robbie have requested flashing signage further up Collingwood Drive to indicate that Paul Tully Avenue is one way only and that clearer, more distinct signage be placed further along Collingwood Drive, Gibbs Avenue and other streets that have Christmas lights.

I will never forget the sight of the accident on Christmas day. The scene of ambulances, police and firemen trying their best to revive young Robbie will stay with me forever. The professionalism of these emergency workers was outstanding. One young police constable was posted outside my family home diverting traffic. He had tears in his eyes. On a hot Ipswich Christmas day our suburb was saddened in mere seconds in time. As a mark of respect, in particular for those of us who were home that evening, the Christmas lights were turned off in our street. Christmas day will never be the same for any of us.

As the member for Fitzroy and the member for Barron River have said, parents should not be burying their children and grandparents should not be burying their grandchildren. Unfortunately, accidents do happen, but every effort must be made to save lives, be that with signage, random roadside breath testing, an extension of the minimum learner licence period, restrictions on all mobile phone use or mobile speed camera programs. It does not matter, as long as we are able to save lives. This is an important bill that I wholeheartedly support. I hope that the bill will save lives in the future and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (4.10 pm): It is clear that we all agree that more needs to be done to reduce the road toll. The Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill before us aims to do just that. I am very pleased to support the bill. It is good to see all members of the House supporting this bill, which introduces significant changes to the way in which young people are licensed to drive as well as measures to combat drug driving. In many ways this is a groundbreaking bill, bringing in measures which are bold and will not be welcomed by everyone but which are absolutely necessary if we are to curb the terrible rate of serious and fatal crashes among young drivers and make our roads safer for everyone.

I was delighted and honoured to serve on the Travelsafe Committee in my first two terms. I was a member of the Travelsafe Committee that conducted inquiries in the 50th Parliament into novice drivers and riders. That committee made quite a number of recommendations about licensing and the education and training of young novice drivers. That committee worked particularly hard. We worked very well together and did enormous amounts of research. There were many, many submissions and hours of reading. We spoke to many experts right across the country and, indeed, to people from overseas who shared with us their expertise. We attended many forums across the state in which a wide diversity of views were presented to us. We looked at many models in our deliberations and we made some hard recommendations in 2003.

Since that time there has been a significant shift in community attitude. The toll of young drivers has continued to increase. Legislators in many states have looked towards harsher measures and real restrictions for some outcomes. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. This is a very important bill. It takes a certain amount of courage to bring these measures before the House. One of the most important things that we can do in this place is introduce good laws to save lives.

I commend the Gold Coast *Bulletin*. It has done a good job in the last couple of years to shift community attitude. It has been highlighting road safety issues consistently and regularly. It has made a point of highlighting crashes involving young people and the issues surrounding the driving of those young people. There have been crashes on both sides of the border, so the *Bulletin* has had the opportunity to tell the story on both sides of the border. Last year in Northern New South Wales there was a particularly tragic crash involving young drivers and passengers resulting in multiple fatalities.

The New South Wales government is still struggling with this issue. It is moving forward but it is still grappling with the kinds of changes that we are talking about and how to introduce them. What are we looking at? While our road fatality rate overall is declining, young drivers aged 17- to 24-years are still 2½ more times likely to be killed in crashes compared to drivers over 25 years of age. They make up something like 30 per cent or more of the state's road toll yet they are only about 3½ per cent of the total of drivers.

Over the last 12 months the government has worked very hard to address road safety concerns with this group by extensive consultation, additional research and developing the changes that we have come to. There was a discussion paper, many forums, market research and an online e-forum for driver trainers. There was overwhelming interest from the community. Support for these harsh restrictions and changes—which will be difficult for some people to digest and get a hold on—has been slow in coming, but it is good to see. Where it has not come I am sure it will, because generally people are starting to accept that something serious has to be done. We are losing our future generation. We are losing many, many good young people.

There were 2,000 submissions to the committee, more than 500 people attended the forums and there were 20,000 hits on the web site. Using all that information we have developed new licensing regulations. These are very important because they will assist young drivers in that learner phase when they are building their skills and first going out on the road. One of the measures will be to actually reduce the licence age to 16 but extend the minimum learner licence period to 12 months. That gives those young people a minimum of 12 months in which to learn, practise and drive supervised at a time when they are actually safest behind the wheel. A young driver who is on their learner's cannot be safer than when they are with a supervising driver.

Those learner drivers will also be required to record 100 hours of practice on the road. Learner licences will be valid for three years. They will have time to build up that experience on the road in different conditions. I accept that some young people will struggle to find a good role model; they may not have a parent able to supervise them driving. I understand that there are many community organisations that are already involved but will become even more involved when these changes come into effect. It could be Lions clubs, Apex groups, other road safety community groups, teachers, parents of friends who will be there and be able to be called on to help supervise and give young people that experience. It is absolutely vital that they have that experience on the road in different conditions.

The bill also provides for regulations to be made in relation to provisional licence holders. Once provisional licence holders are driving unsupervised they move into a whole area of danger and are then most at risk on the roads. One of the changes is to introduce the compulsory display of P-plates. Queensland did not have P-plates and in our deliberations and discussions on the Travelsafe Committee it was pointed out over and over again by police just how important it is for them in their identification of drivers or their ability to police young drivers out at night. The P-plates will give them some idea what to look for. Many young people were afraid that they would be victimised. Young women were much more receptive to the idea. They actually want other drivers to know that they are provisional drivers and to give them a bit of leeway, a bit of space and be patient with them as they are learning to drive.

The bill provides peer passenger restrictions between 11 pm and 5 am for holders of a first-stage provisional licence who are under 25. That means that the driver will only be able to carry one non-family member passenger aged 21 or under during these times. This is all part of a two-stage provisional licensing system. It accepts that as people get more experienced they will have better skills and a better attitude towards their driving. It was absolutely vital that we introduce these measures. It may be difficult for young people to understand as they first go out and drive.

There will certainly be understanding from the police and the department of transport in relation to young people who work shifts and take a few people with them to work or home. They were concerns that were raised. Also, there will be high-powered vehicle restrictions for first- and second-stage provisional drivers under 25; a restriction on all mobile phone use, including hands-free, and restricting mobile loudspeaker functions; and there will be late-night driving restrictions for young drivers returning from a licence suspension or disqualification or driving under a good behaviour driving licence.

The changes will also require drivers holding a first-stage provisional licence for 12 months to pass a hazard perception test to progress to a second-stage provisional licence. During our research, the Travelsafe Committee members looked at the hazard perception tests that were being done in other states, and we all agreed at the time that there are certainly benefits to be had and that any difficulties that may exist in rolling out the hazard perception test to all parts of rural and remote Queensland could be overcome by certain efforts being made and by just the will of the government. I am sure that if funding is required it will come through too because this test really does make a difference. Even those of us who had driven for many years—like most of us on the committee—found the hazard perception test quite tricky and difficult. It really required focused concentration.

The hazard perception test involves identifying how fast an approaching vehicle is moving so that you know when to turn a corner or turn in front of oncoming traffic. All of these things are experienced based learnings. Young people need those years as provisional drivers in which to collect the experience to become safer and better drivers. Additional education and training based on increasing those skills—and not building their confidence too high or making them overconfident—can be developed as well by a number of organisations. The department is also working with the driver training industry to identify and develop the right sorts of driver training courses.

The bill also has another very important amendment with the introduction of random drug testing. I was also on the Travelsafe Committee when we looked at drug driving. Many members have referred to that. It is a no-brainer. If you take drugs and then drive, you are really stupid. You are taking your life and the lives of others in your hands. The problem until now has been that it has been very difficult to detect these drugs, but technology has caught up with us. CARRS-Q, the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, has undertaken some brilliant research. I want to congratulate them and everyone who was involved in that research and in undertaking the trials which has brought us to this point, particularly Dr Jeremy Davey, who was very committed to this development.

**Mr Pearce:** He's a great man, a great bloke.

**Mrs REILLY:** He is a very committed road safety researcher. He undertook some trials first in Townsville and then in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Frighteningly, basically what he found was that one in 23 drivers tested positive to an illicit drug. This bill will amend the operations of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to allow for the introduction of a random drug-testing scheme based on a quick collection of a specimen of saliva. It will also give police the powers to stop a vehicle and administer a saliva test.

For this saliva test, the driver will be screened at the roadside. If you get a positive test result, you will undergo a second screening test that will be done under laboratory conditions. Some good lawyers in the chamber today have already covered various aspects of that legal procedure. All positive tests will be confirmed by a laboratory analysis, and I think that is very important. Drivers will only be charged on the basis of a laboratory analysis that confirms the presence of an active drug. The drugs that will be prescribed by the regulation are cannabis, speed and ecstasy. So it is not just the one drug, but it is those three. I think it is fantastic that we have been able to develop this sort of technology that will very quickly make a big dent in the behaviour of drivers. As others have said, drink driving has become a social no-no—it is very unacceptable—and drug driving will go the same way.

I want to congratulate again the minister and the department who worked very hard to bring these measures here today. I reiterate how very important it is that all levels of government do everything possible to try to reduce the road toll. We have to accept that we may never get a zero road toll, that we will never be able to guarantee that we can stop crashes and fatalities, although that is what I hope we will be able to aim for. We cannot legislate against stupidity and people doing the wrong thing, but these measures provide young people with a guide and the opportunity to do the right thing and to learn under safer and better conditions. Hopefully, this will protect them until they reach a stage of maturity and experience where, as road users, they will be less tempted to do those stupid things that we all know we do when we are young. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (4.25 pm): It is with unbridled joy that I join in this debate this afternoon. The Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill has the bipartisan support of this House because it brings in a wide raft of legislative reform that will contribute to making our roads safer. One of the biggest problems facing our society generally is the lack of individual and personal responsibility.

Part of this bill relates to the introduction of fixed speed cameras. Speed cameras quite often get a work-out by people in this chamber and in the media. It was pleasing to hear the member for Mudgeeraba compliment the positive steps taken by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in an attempt to improve road safety in the area. However, I must say that I cannot stomach the rampant hypocrisy of members in this House who try to have a bet both ways. When any member of this House or any member of the media tries to have a bet both ways when it comes to road safety, it turns my stomach. I urge them: do not be hypocritical, take a stance, take a position.

I congratulate the honourable shadow minister, the honourable member for Gregory, for the introduction of the current speed camera program. It was introduced by a coalition government and it continues to have the ongoing support of the Beattie government. It is a good program; it is a fair program. Some members of this House occasionally jump up and bang on about it being a revenue-raising tool. If they truly believe that, then it is their duty to jump up in this House and move a private member's bill to seek to do away with it. But no. The level of hypocrisy, as I said, turns my stomach.

If they believe that speed cameras are just about revenue raising, then why don't they do something about it? Why don't they move a bill in this House to do away with them? They do not do that because when it suits them they want to pander to some delusional public perception that it is only about revenue raising. But they also know the facts; they know this is about saving lives. I have a hint for everyone who does not wish to contribute to the government coffers: do not speed. It is about the only fee that is optional. Do not speed and you will never contribute to our coffers.

My challenge to some of the members opposite who have already spoken on this bill and have banged on about revenue raising in relation to speed cameras is this: when are you going to introduce a private member's bill? I challenge those members who want to peddle this ongoing fallacy to have the courage of their conviction and stand up and honestly and honourably say, 'I believe this is about revenue raising and I'm going to do something about it.' Let us see what the educated body of road safety opinion then has to say about their shallow, populist view. As I said, I would like to congratulate the member for Gregory for his unwavering support for the speed camera program.

The member for Mudgeeraba spoke about perception tests and said that experience is one of the most valuable tools you can have when it comes to road safety. I encourage members of the public who enjoy driving vehicles fast to please join a recognised motor sport club, to please undertake some form of organised motor sport activity—be it kart racing, car racing or bike racing.

There is a range of organised motor sport activities across the width and breadth of Queensland that will fit people's budgets. They range from the very cheap gymkhanas that people can do in their road registered vehicles on weekends to Formula One if they have that budget. People can find a form of motor sport to get their thrills in a completely legal, acceptable and as safe as possible way.

I will tell one story. I have to declare—and I do not know whether it is a conflict of interest—that I am currently a car racing driver. I am not saying that I am good but I enjoy it. For many years I have raced around Lakeside in the formula Vee category. I have spent many, many hours and many, many days doing laps around the Lakeside circuit. Whether it was wet or dry, it was possible to take the back straight under Dunlop bridge flat out in that particular category of car. It got tricky on occasions but the car was able to do it. On one particular day in qualifying it was wet—just like many days before it—and I was coming down the back straight. To this day, I do not why this particular lap was different to any of the hundreds of laps that I had done before but I aquaplaned off the circuit and tore the right- and left-hand sides off my car.

Motor sport has a significant education role. A lot of people like to drive fast but they really do not understand how quickly out of control they can get and the distances it takes to stop when they are out of control. Motor sport is an environment where people can push themselves and push their vehicles. There are emergency rescue crews and doctors there to respond and all their safety equipment is checked beforehand.

In my opinion undertaking formalised motor-racing activities speeds up the learning process because it puts drivers and their vehicles in extreme positions more often and more frequently. Experience is a great teacher. I believe organised formal motor sport is also a very good teacher. In many cases people can undertake that activity more cheaply than they can hot up their car, hoon around the roads and collect speeding tickets.

I will briefly mention some of the raft of changes that this bill seeks to introduce. It allows for the undertaking of drug testing. Many other members have spoken about the horrific statistics. With the technology now available it is fair and reasonable for the government to introduce legislation to test for those three drugs—cannabis, methamphetamine and ecstasy.

Our young people are disproportionately represented in the crash statistics and this bill takes a number of steps not to make it more difficult for the learner or young drivers to get their licences but to try to protect them and cocoon them as much as possible while they undertake those formative learning years of driving experience. Whilst we are reducing the learner age to 16, we are extending the minimum learner licence period to 12 months. We are going to require learner drivers to record 100 hours of certified, supervised on-road driving experience. We will allow learner licences to remain valid for three years to try to not force learner drivers to get all their experience in a short time and to encourage them to take their time and drive in a wider variety of conditions and environments and therefore maximise the learning experience.

This bill will enforce the compulsory display of P-plates and peer passenger restrictions between 11 pm and 5 am. I think we have all experienced peer group pressure. If a person is in a car with one of their friends and that friend says, 'Go fast, go fast,' it is a lot easier to tell one friend to pull their head in and be quiet than it is to tell four or five mates in a car if they are chanting to go faster, go faster. The peer passenger restrictions will be a significant step forward in minimising the pressure to do stupid acts.

The late-night driving restrictions for young drivers is a move towards protecting or increasing protection for young people. We are also going to require provisional and open licence holders under 25 years who have been disqualified to recommence at the first stage of the provisional licence. This may seem like a very draconian step. It is an attempt to motivate these young drivers to drive carefully and obey the laws in the formative years when they do not have as much experience as is ideal.

As I said at the start, we will see introduction of fixed speed cameras. I believe the mobile speed camera program has been extremely successful in saving lives in Queensland. Given the conditions that are going to surround the locating of fixed speed cameras again I believe that this will be a positive step forward towards improving road safety and decreasing the loss of life on our roads. I commend the minister and his staff for the work they have undertaken on this broad-ranging bill and commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—Lib) (4.37 pm): At this stage of the day and after all this debate I almost have some sympathy for the minister. I feel like saying, 'I came, I saw, I concurred,' and sitting down. I am sure people would be delighted if I did, but I am going to say a few words—perhaps not as many as everybody else. Like other honourable members who have spoken to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill, I am happy to support the amendments that have been proposed today.

Many of the speakers today have highlighted the tragedy of the road toll in Queensland. In the last three years we have in fact seen the road toll on the rise to reach last year's total of 330. We know many of these deaths, a disproportionate number, occur to young men in the 17- to 24-age group. They make up 30 per cent of all the road fatalities despite making up only 12 per cent of the population.

Any death on a road is a tragedy, but for young people, and young men in particular, the risk is higher and for some of us the tragedy seems greater. So governments must act to address changes in behaviour, to encourage responsible driving and to take action to outlaw that behaviour which endangers the lives of drivers and others on the road.

The honourable Minister for Emergency Services yesterday referred to the horrendous road toll on Queensland roads this February. He was doing so in the context of discussion about a program that is in place in Emergency Services. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding job our police and Emergency Service teams provide in crashes in horrendous circumstances, which I am sure most of us have not experienced and do not want to experience.

In my area of Hendra I know that the Hendra fire brigade responds to many accidents on the stretch of the Gateway Motorway between the bridge and Toombul Road. In fact last Sunday the senior officer from the Hendra division of the Fire and Rescue Service was telling me that it is a good day when that station does not get two call-outs to accidents on that stretch of road.

I am sure that many, many members know that stretch of road and would support my calls to the minister to make sure that the Gateway upgrade project is completed as quickly as possible. While work is underway—and I compliment the minister for starting this undertaking—there is no doubt that it is two years behind from where it ought to be at this stage. There is still more work to be done on the roundabout at the junction of the East-West Arterial Road and the Gateway to improve safety, particularly for vehicles travelling west from the airport towards Clayfield trying to exit to Nudgee Road. I am not sure whether members know that left turn where drivers have to swing across three or four lanes of traffic to get across. The minister also knows that that roundabout must be modified if it is to cope with future traffic growth from the Airport Link in an efficient and safe manner. The minister will have my 110 per cent support when he brings that project to fruition, as I know he is no doubt planning to do.

When we consider road safety it is not just speed, alcohol, drugs or fatigue that cause accidents; it is also the road conditions, the geometry of the road and, as the experience at Federal shows, the road surface. This legislation to a large extent mirrors the current legislative provisions that apply to drink-driving detection. I remember, as I suspect many people involved in the legal profession do, when that legislation was brought in many years ago.

One of the great concerns about that legislation was that it fundamentally reversed the legal principle of the privilege against self-incrimination by requiring the provision of a sample of breath randomly and irrespective of any reasonable suspicion by a police officer of an offence. At that time the concern with the road death toll was such that the legislation was introduced with support and it was thought that overturning that long-established principle in limited circumstances was sufficient justification. But it is the case that in that sense such legislation must be highly prescriptive about the way in which the state exercises its power. Over many court cases faults in the legislation were often strongly construed by the courts against the state and in favour of the individual. Many people will remember the barrister Bob Brewer, who used to conduct many drink-driving cases in Queensland to get people's licences—

**Mr Lucas:** He's an absolute gentleman.

**Mr Lawlor:** And didn't drink himself.

**Mr Lucas:** His brother Frank, too!

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Frank as well. I take that interjection. They were both highly respected members of the profession—of the community in fact—who explored the outer limits of the legislation. I do not think anyone would say that that is not as it should be in a free and democratic society where we prize the right of the individual in those circumstances. Nonetheless, we do need such legislation and it does need to be in place. I think the honourable member for Barron River identified the issue of the safeguards—and I think he has left the chamber—that are needed when such legislation comes in, and I commend the minister and the legislation for containing those safeguards.

In the current debate there has been a fair bit of focus on the ability for police to obtain a saliva sample for the purpose of testing for a prescribed drug, and in that respect the reliability of the roadside chemical screening methods has improved in recent years. I have no doubt that there will be cases that challenge the accuracy of such tests and I am sure that there will be other barristers like Mr Brewer who will attempt to challenge it on behalf of their clients. But I think that over time with the aid of the courts the legislation will probably need to be strengthened and also the technology will improve such that the accuracy will be improved, as it has with the breathalyser and drink driving.

Nonetheless, it is important that the process begin in Queensland and that we do have random drug testing, particularly as such legislation has been in place in Victoria since at least 2003 when the first legislation authorising the trials for roadside random drug testing was introduced. That legislation was in fact cemented in place in mid-2006. The major difference in the legislation between the provisions applicable to drink driving and drug driving is that any concentration of a drug is a

disqualifying offence as opposed to the prescribed limits for alcohol. This would seem to be on the basis that there are still a number of questions raised as to whether drugs do in fact or can in fact be shown to impair driving ability.

I am grateful for the information provided by the Queensland Parliamentary Library research paper in respect of that. It is interesting to note some of the comments made about that in that particular document. I refer to page 3 where two tests are referred to—one by the Swinburne University of Technology which found an increase in driver impairment as a result of drugs, while on the other hand one by the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found only limited evidence to support the claim that cannabis use increases accident risk. The paper goes on at page 5 to also identify a number of other issues in relation to people being impaired as a result of consuming or having ingested drugs. While the jury is still out in a scientific sense, I think any common sense would say that the precautionary principle is important. Now that we do have a reliable and rapid means of testing on the side of the road, it is in fact the far better option to introduce random roadside drug testing.

The changes to the rules for young drivers, particularly the requirement for 100 hours of certified supervised on-road driving, are well worthwhile. I am a great believer and have been for a long time that our system for teaching young people how to drive has been inadequate. It is getting better with the programs that have been in place. Everyone knows the apocryphal story of getting a test with the local sergeant and driving around the block compared to the much more stringent tests that are required now. Things are on the improve. But I guess we have all heard or made the comment, 'Where did he or she learn to drive?' The imposition of the 100 hours certified supervised driving will go a long way to addressing this issue. It is a worthwhile change, as is the change to the provisional licensing system.

The changes in relation to peer passenger restrictions will be very worthwhile. Today a number of members have reflected on their own past experiences and I am going to indulge and reflect on a couple of mine. I can remember first getting my licence a while ago and jumping into mum and dad's car with a group of mates and heading over to a party from Ascot to Coorparoo.

**Mr Lucas:** Hang on! It wasn't Santo Santoro branch stacking, was it?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** No. It was actually before I joined the Liberal Party and I do not know what the honourable minister is talking about anyway! At the age of 18 we were four blokes in the car heading across the Story Bridge and down Ipswich Road. I am sure members remember the old Woolloongabba Police Station on the left-hand side. All four of us probably had a smoke going and there was smoke pouring out the back. One of them yelled out to me, 'You're going through a red light!' So we did a four-wheel drift straight through that intersection in front of the Woolloongabba Police Station without too much concentration. I guess there but for the grace of God in a lot of respects go I and certainly a lot of other people—at least four others in that car. However, having the family on board can be just as distracting. I remember another time going to town with dad in the front seat and my sisters and mum in the back—

**Mrs Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Another graceful interjection from the rear. My whole family was on board and I was getting directions from everyone going down Edward Street and again we had a very close experience with a red light. I think training is important, and the 100 hours certified training is by far the most important thing. Proper behaviour learnt early on is the best cure for a lot of the silliness that we see on the roads.

Overall, the position adopted by the amendments is in line with the coalition policy for young drivers. We have no hesitation, as the honourable member for Gregory has indicated, in supporting this very worthwhile piece of legislation. I only reiterate that education must be at the core of changing attitudes, whether it be about speed, alcohol, drugs or fatigue. Penalties are required and are necessary to enforce that and our roads must be up to scratch, but education is the core of it. I commend the bill to the House and congratulate the minister.

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (4.46 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. Firstly, as I said, I am very pleased to speak on the legislation and, secondly, congratulate the shadow minister on his great summation of the legislation. There are only a couple of issues that I want to talk about at some length, and they relate mostly to my patch between Rockhampton and Mackay and out to the coalmines. Reflecting on some of the comments that have been made today, we have to wonder about the, in some ways, callous attitude that many drivers in recent years have had on the road. The district has had some horrific accidents not only on the Peak Downs Highway but around Mackay and on the Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and Mackay. There have been an exceptional number of cases of young drivers being killed or badly injured in accidents. Only recently two 17-year-old girls were involved in an accident. One was killed and the other was in a very serious medical condition in hospital after that crash at night.

The issue of road safety is all-encompassing. Indeed, when we think about it, if the number of people being killed on our roads in Queensland happened in a war zone—and with our troops overseas—there would be an absolute outcry. Unfortunately, we are becoming a little blasé about the whole issue of trauma on our roads. Indeed, the *Daily Mercury*, the local paper in Mackay, highlighted some issues in terms of a very serious fatal accident on the Peak Downs Highway where people on their way to the mines for work were driving through and around a very severe accident without any regard for the dead driver and others who had been seriously injured. Indeed, some people were getting out of their vehicles and taking photos and then moving on. It was quite bizarre. In some way that behaviour reflects the attitude that people have on our roads. I am not sure that any legislation that passes through this House will rectify that, which is sad.

The other section of the legislation, which deals with drug driving, has to be commended. In my own mind, drug driving is a very substantial factor in accidents. We cannot predict what people who drive on our roads while drug induced, particularly if they have taken mood-modifying drugs, will do and when they are going to do it.

On Friday, 9 February a group of concerned residents in the Nebo area held a Roadsafely Rally between one and six o'clock that afternoon at the Nebo truck stop on the Peak Downs Highway. The organisers of that rally placed corflute sized signs on the side of the highway to mark where an accident or a fatal accident had occurred. Quite frankly, as I drove from Mackay through to Nebo and beyond, I could see that there was almost a continuous line of these corflutes on the side of the road indicating where a fatal accident or a serious accident had occurred. That highlighted not only the fact that the Peak Downs Highway has become very busy but also people's driving attitudes on that road. A lot of drivers on that highway work at the mines. After working four 12-hour shifts at the mines, they endeavour to get back to their families and drive fatigued. Basically, they drive off the road or cause other accidents while they are driving fatigued.

As I said, I am not sure how legislation will change people's driving attitudes, but certainly the locals at Nebo have had enough. As members would know, Nebo was once a small rural community, but it is now part of the mining industry in central Queensland. The people of Nebo decided that, in respect of the carnage on the Peak Downs Highway, enough was enough. That community was tired of losing family members, friends and visitors to the shire through death or serious injury on the notoriously poor roads that lead to the coalfields in the Northern Bowen Basin.

The purpose of the Roadsafely Rally was to gain broad community support for a campaign to have our roads made safer through a wide range of initiatives. The organisers of that rally were Councillor Joy Deguara and Mrs Sue Whitehead. Quite a number of issues were raised by the speakers at that rally. One issue that came to the fore was the fact that there are only two police officers stationed between Mackay and Moranbah: one at Nebo and one at Eton. Those officers are kept very busy dealing with escort duties as well as other duties instead of patrolling the highway. I call for the Nebo Police Station to be manned in a more effective manner. Possibly, in the interim an administrative officer could be placed at the police station, but it should be brought up to a two-man station as quickly as possible. I will be writing to the police minister in respect of that matter.

Apart from me, the other people who spoke at that rally were the mayor of Nebo, Councillor Bob Oakes; the mayor of Belyando shire, Councillor Peter Freeleagus; the deputy mayor of the Broomsound shire, Councillor Geoff Bethel; the Mackay district manager of Main Roads, Mr Ken Williamson; Trevor Newman from Queensland Transport in Gladstone; and Councillor Trevor Shelley from the Nebo Shire Council. He is also the chairman of the Nebo Bushman's Carnival. I would certainly like to congratulate the organisers of the rally. It was well done. Hundreds of cars pulled up and people signed petitions. The Nebo CWA provided and served refreshments all afternoon. The SES and Nebo Shire Council workers set up the site. Sponsors throughout the district provided the material for signage and sausages and bread for a sausage sizzle that was held later in the afternoon. The local QAS officer, Lindsay Baumann, and his wife, Narelle, did the signwriting on the corflutes. I would like to thank all the drivers who showed responsibility by pulling up and signing the petition. It was truly a community effort. I congratulate all of those people involved.

The other issue that I would like to raise relates to the driver reviver sites, particularly those on the Bruce Highway. These are all manned by volunteers, which is great. There are two driver reviver sites in my electorate: one at Yaamba and one at Waverley Creek. The people at those sites do a great job. Quite often the volunteers do four-day shifts, which is quite gruelling. A lot of those people are not young—they are not teenagers—and they camp out at those sites.

At the Yaamba driver reviver site, people were having trouble unlocking the signage on the road, which in some cases is about three metres off a sloping road. There are 60- or 70-year-old volunteers trying to climb up to reach the locks on those signs to undo them. They were climbing up on milk crates or onto bullbars to try to unlock them. I spoke to officers from Queensland Transport about this matter. The department was able to modify some of those signs so that they could be unlocked from ground level. I would like the minister to look at modifying all of those signs on the road that are locked up so

that they can be unlocked at ground level. It is a workplace health and safety issue. The people who man these driver reviver sites are volunteers. They are doing it at their own expense. They should be given every consideration in terms of what they do.

The Waverley Creek driver reviver rest area is of particular concern to me. It is situated on a 110-kilometre an hour section of the road. There is no slowing-down lane that drivers can use in order to access it. The entrance to that rest area is not clearly defined. A lot of backpackers travel along that road. I can imagine them trying to find the entrance to that rest area, on a 110-kilometres an hour section of the highway, early in the evening and almost being wiped out by a B-double. I am quite surprised that there has not been an accident there already. I raised this issue with officers at Main Roads. They have told me that some development work is to be done there. But this work needs to be done as quickly as possible.

In respect to the heavy vehicle regulations that will come into effect shortly, whereby the truckies will have to have spells every 5½ hours—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I remind the member that that is a matter, as I understand it—

**Mr MALONE:** I was speaking about the driver reviver issue.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is a disallowance motion in relation to long-distance travel. I ask the member not to stray on to that matter and to come back to the bill.

**Mr MALONE:** The driver reviver issue is a safety issue. It concerns me greatly that there is a dangerous entrance to a driver reviver stop. It is used extensively. It is manned by volunteers. The other issue is that the driver reviver stop at Waverley Creek is located quite a distance from anywhere. There is no accommodation for the people who come down and look after that site 24 hours a day. I ask the minister, if he is dealing with that issue, to look at putting in some cost-effective accommodation for the volunteers who man that site.

Another issue that has recently been raised in my electorate—and it is about driver fatigue—is in relation to the coal train operation based at Jilalan, but it also affects other coal group QR operations around Queensland. There has been a push to move the 11-hour shift to a 12-hour shift. A lot of drivers and unions have come to me—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I would remind the member that we are dealing with the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill. Shifts for QR employees would not seem to be relevant to the bill.

**Mr MALONE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, if you allow me two minutes I will explain what the issue is. The reason I am raising this is that drivers have come to me about this issue. They believe that the extra hour on their shift driving trains places them in a similar situation as a lot of the coal operation workers—after working a 12-hour shift, by the time they get back to the depot and then drive another 45 minutes to Mackay, where most of them live, they will be fatigued and that causes concern when driving because it is a risk not only to their own life but also to the lives of others travelling on the road.

Quite frankly, I believe that the situation we have in central Queensland cannot continue. We cannot have fatigued drivers on the road. This is causing a huge increase in the number of accidents and the number of fatalities. I concur with the drivers who are raising this issue. There has to be some compromise between QR and the drivers. We have too many accidents, and driving fatigued is certainly a big issue.

I support the legislation. From my perspective there are a lot of issues to be raised over and above this legislation, but I genuinely support the legislation.

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (5.01 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak on this very important bill, the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. I would like to take the minister and members directly to clause 62, which amends section 124 of the current act and deals with the issue of facilitation of proof. I thank the minister because this is the first step towards the introduction of fixed speed cameras in Queensland. The minister has my total support.

I again would like to put on the record that we have a wonderful location on the Nambour Connection Road at the entrance to Nambour where we would love to see the very first fixed speed camera. I invite the minister to fast-track the legislation so that we can have this very first fixed speed camera in the electorate of Nicklin, the heartland of the Sunshine Coast, on the Nambour Connection Road, which is a very, very busy road. I thank the minister for this first step and look forward to seeing fixed speed cameras in Queensland.

I take members to the other important part of the bill that deals with the initiative of random roadside drug testing. The minister has my total support. He has the support of all of my constituents. I congratulate the minister on the bill. I look forward to hearing his reply to the contributions.

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.02 pm), in reply: That was a typically brief but spirited contribution from the member for Nicklin. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the bill. The enthusiasm with which members spoke about the road safety initiatives in the bill highlights the fact that this legislation is welcomed not only across a wide section of the community but also across this House. A number of people have said that it is a pity that people do not listen to what happens in parliament more often. We agree on a lot of things and the media often does not report that. Most people in this House—99 per cent—are people of goodwill. We may share differing views as to how things are done sometimes, but we come together to make this state a better place to live in, and this legislation is no exception to that.

The three main road safety initiatives in the bill are: random roadside drug testing; the introduction of a head of power to allow regulations to be made about driver behaviour and licensing of young drivers—and we have discussed some of those initiatives; and the introduction of provisions to allow for technology associated with fixed speed cameras. The bill also contains a number of administrative and minor amendments to other transport legislation to improve processes and clarify existing provisions. The most significant of these allows Queensland Transport to receive daily updates of criminal histories from the Queensland Police Service for persons authorised, approved or accredited under various transport acts. This ensures that the people driving buses and taxis and those involved in the transport industry are continuously scrutinised to ensure that they remain suitable to do their jobs.

A number of speakers commented on the time involved in introducing drug testing on Queensland roads. I make no apology for taking time to get it right. We cannot have a system where we are testing people and the technology is not absolutely foolproof. We have to have the right technology, and we are satisfied that is now the case. These are important and wide-ranging changes that have the potential to impact on a large number of Queenslanders. It is important that we take the time to get it right to put the processes and technology in place to ensure that these laws work. They are based on research and extensive testing to support processes being implemented.

Several speakers raised the potential of using fixed speed cameras on local government roads. It is proposed that the fixed speed camera program will be extended to local government roads. However—and it is really important that members understand this—these roads must meet the selection criteria to be considered for a fixed speed camera site. This policy now applies to mobile cameras and will be continued with fixed cameras. In other words, there has to be a crash history. Some people have a go and say, 'You are just putting them there for revenue raising.' That is why we want to have a crash history before we put them there. But of course we will have others placed in high-speed environments where it is dangerous for police to be there—for example, at the top of the Gateway Bridge, tunnels and the like.

I make this point: when we were in opposition—and I know this because I was in the chamber when we did it—we moved an amendment to make sure that the money from the speed camera program went to road safety and other initiatives. Hypothecation they call it. After the costs of collecting it et cetera are taken out, the money goes into our Safer Roads Sooner program. A little bit goes to the Blood Bank as well. Local governments, along with other stakeholders such as the RACQ, approve sites for mobile speed cameras through local speed management advisory committees.

The member for Gregory made a very good contribution, as we would expect from someone who knows the material as well as he does. He has been very supportive of road safety initiatives. The member for Gregory is one of the members on the other side of the House who I know is consistent on many of the views that he holds. Some of his views in relation to highway issues are not the subject of this bill, so I will not talk about them. But he is consistent in his drive for road safety initiatives.

He raised what I thought was a good issue about provisional drivers under the age of 25 where the family's only vehicle is a high-powered vehicle. It might be the case in a rural community. There will be exemptions in appropriate cases. One of those cases will be where the only family vehicle is a high-powered vehicle and that is the only vehicle that someone can access. Of course, we will be careful to ensure that they do not use a loophole. So if the family vehicle is a V8 they can use that. But, if we catch them in Brisbane in a V8, that will not be acceptable. There are also vehicles that fall within the definition but are not considered to be a risky vehicle for a young driver, such as smart cars that might have a turbo in them but are low in power.

The member asked for details of the criteria for obtaining heavy vehicle licences under the new legislation and how a provisional driver can get a truck licence. The new graduated licensing scheme will not change the laws relating to obtaining a truck licence. In other words, a provisional C class licence holder, regardless of a P1 or P2, is authorised to learn to drive light rigid, medium rigid or heavy rigid class vehicles. After a period of one year, the provisional licence holder is eligible to undertake a driving test for a provisional LR or MR class licence. After a further period of one year, the person is eligible to undertake a driving test for a class HR licence. They are the standard rules that apply at the present time.

The member for Mansfield spoke about the importance of the drug-testing regime and how RBT has been instrumental as a positive influence on drink-driving behaviour. He visited Melbourne and Victoria to see their random drug-testing program in place. The Queensland process will allow police to undertake drug and alcohol testing at the same time.

The member for Inala referred to random drug testing interstate and the need to act to reduce the number of lives lost. The member for Algester spoke about the community consultation process that we have gone through and the fact that constituents had asked questions about storage of DNA and the measure of drugs in the system. The bill makes specific provisions for the privacy requirements involved. In other words, if it is a positive test, it is held until the court proceedings and appeal proceedings are over; if it is a negative test, it is thrown out. It is not allowed to be used for a DNA database or anything like that. That is not the purpose of this legislation.

The member asked about the measure of drug presence. The testing does not show a reading of .08 or .06 as with blood alcohol levels. It is a presence test. It tests the presence of drugs at a level of impairment. If you are positive, you are impaired according to the test but it does not tell you the degree of impairment. A blood test would, and ultimately I am sure the technology will allow us one day in the future to do that. That is why the penalties based on saliva tests are equivalent to the lesser of the drink-driving offences, because we are not in a position to test otherwise. One of the reasons that we waited was that previously the presence of the drug could be tested but the presence did not necessarily reflect the level of impairment. Now we know the presence and its level of impairment.

The member for Gympie spoke about learning to drive coming at a complex time of life. He is very correct in his observation. Our problem with young drivers is the same as young people generally: they undertake risky behaviour. Whether that is diving in shallow water, binge drinking or undertaking sexual relations when they should have maybe reconsidered them. All of those things are inherent in young people. We want to encourage young women, who are not as risk taking as young men, to be a positive influence. That is one of the areas that I want to have a think about in relation to future advertising. He also spoke about the Mary Valley railway. Rail sublease provisions are provided for.

The member for Fitzroy had an excellent contribution. I do not want in any way to underestimate the outstanding contribution that he has made to road safety in this parliament. Much of this bill is as a result of the very good work that the Travelsafe Committee has done. I thank the Travelsafe Committee members, current and past, and also the member for Fitzroy. He is very educated in this area and has made wonderful contributions. He spoke about the top four contributing factors: inexperience, undue care and attention, alcohol and excessive speed. He referred, of course, to the fact that the safest time, in terms of supporting having the learners permit age lowered to 16, is when you are actually teaching people how to drive and they are under supervision.

The member for Kawana spoke about the issues of fixed speed cameras in local government areas. I have dealt with that. The member for Toowoomba South spoke about forums around the state. He was present, as were a number of other opposition members, in various locations. It was great to see them there. He spoke about the biggest problem with young drivers being inexperience and supported the 100-hour supervised driving requirement. He spoke about Victoria Whitley, a young racing driver in his electorate, in terms of positive road safety messages. Another member spoke about that as well. We are very supportive of using young people to get the message across. We used Nick Benjamin in the current advertisements and Shem Aitken, another great young guy seriously injured in a car accident, to send a message in the *Never the same again* DVD that goes out to every young person when they get their provisional licence.

The member asked about the drugs that might be tested for and why it is limited to three drugs. The answer is simply because the technology allows us to detect only those three drugs at the moment. If in the future heroin, for example, is able to be detected by a saliva test to test impairment, then the provision requirements allow us to do that. He asked about intercoolers and turbos. Turbos, of course, are banned. Very low-powered turbo vehicles such as smart cars are not banned.

The member for Tablelands spoke about the use of stimulants in the heavy vehicle industry. Drivers of heavy vehicles, like everyone else, will be subject to this testing regime. A number of members spoke about issues not pertinent to the bill, such as road issues, which I would be happy to talk about but time does not allow us to do that.

The member for Hervey Bay spoke about the significant progress we have made in driving down the road toll. There has been progress in that regard but in recent years it has plateaued. That is a concern. The next big issue will be electronic stability control which my department is pioneering within the government in terms of preferring ESC-equipped vehicles when they are available. All Commodores come standard with ESC. The member for Yeerongpilly and I experienced that firsthand at the Holden Performance Driving Centre.

A number of members have spoken about driver training in terms of going around race tracks. As the chairman of the Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee and other members, including the member for Kurwongbah, pointed out, it is not about teaching people to drive to the limit of their or their vehicle's ability; it is actually about teaching drivers not to get in that situation. If members go out to the Holden

Performance Driving Centre at Ormeau, which is a very good operation, the instructors point out that learning how to drive should be boring, that is the appropriate training, not screaming around a racetrack. We have to be very careful about that. The federal government is doing a world's best practice study of driver training. It is running quite a long way behind but we do support that so that we can arrive at what is the best program.

**Mr Johnson:** Get on gravel roads and administer ABS braking and you will find out about driving, I tell you. They are the most dangerous damn things you could have.

**Mr LUCAS:** I take the interjection from the honourable member. One of the problems we have in Queensland is on rural routes where there are B-doubles or a road train where people think they can have half the road each. That cannot be done with a road train. The road train has to have the road because there will be worse problems if the road train has to come off the side of the road, half on and half off. That is a big education for tourist drivers.

**Mr Johnson:** There is an unwritten rule on those roads. I think signage would be a good thing.

**Mr LUCAS:** That is something that we will look at. People need to understand that those sorts of things do not apply to people in the city or even in regional centres. The member for Warrego spoke about the drug-driving issue. He asked whether blood tests would be used as a backup. That is not needed because there are two saliva tests done. A confirmatory saliva test is done. A blood sample is generally only done where there is a negative saliva test but the police might believe that there is another drug they might be under the influence of or the equipment is not working.

I was disappointed that the member linked speed cameras to revenue raising. I thought the member for Gregory dealt with that very adequately. It is not revenue raising. Indeed, the money goes into black spot eradication under our Safe Roads Sooner program. If people do not want to pay a fine, do not speed. It is as simple as that. He also spoke about medical fitness. I dealt with that in a number of comments I made at the time.

The member for Cunningham spoke about the fact that young driver licensing is not a popularity contest but is a matter of making no apology for getting the right things done. With my eldest son almost ready to get his learners, I am now getting very worried about what happens at night. I want to pick him up when he goes out. It is funny how one's life goes through stages. One does not understand the seriousness of people who are cruel and inhumane to children until they have their own children. The Leader of the Opposition has kids who are older than mine, as has the member for Gregory. The next phase for me now is having the worry of wanting to hear the key in the door. I will stay awake until I hear the key in the door and I know that he is there.

**Mr Seeney:** And the phone rings at midnight.

**Mr LUCAS:** Absolutely. There are a number of former police officers in this House who have had the terrible job of knocking on someone's door when someone has been seriously injured or killed. That must be the most terrible thing in the world for them to have to do.

The member for Cunningham asked about high-powered restrictions. A high-powered vehicle is a vehicle with an engine above 200 kilowatts, with eight or more cylinders, a turbo or supercharged engine other than diesel, a rotary engine above 1146cc or significant engine performance modification. Small engine turbo cars such as smart cars are specifically exempted.

The member for Maryborough commended the Travelsafe Committee. He spoke about silly behaviour in relation to mobile phones. The member for Springwood spoke about the daily monitoring of criminal history in terms of taxi and bus driver requirements and also noted that these laws in terms of young drivers are broadly reflecting community opinion.

The member for Cleveland, a former operational police officer, knows very much about these issues and has experienced them himself. He pointed out the importance of the learner provisions and canvassing the community. The member for Woodridge spoke about community consultation and the huge interest through the Road Safety Summit. She was horrified by the results of the drug trials that were done in Townsville and south-east Queensland that showed a prevalent use of drugs, far higher than drink driving. As the member for Gregory may have said earlier, that is because we suspect that people do not think they will get caught. This legislation will change that.

The member for Currumbin asked if the speed of drug saliva testing will be faster. Yes, it is. We are using a more advanced technology, I am told, than in Victoria. There will still be a time that people will have to wait. It is not like a breath analysis instrument which is instant. People will need to be patient. That is the price that we pay. It will go to John Tonge and be available between seven and 14 days. It is a confirmatory sample. There will be the appropriate scientific instruments purchased and lab assistants funded for that.

I have spoken in relation to the drugs being prescribed under the regulation so that we can add them later on. We will not be reviewing the legislation after 12 months, but it will be constantly under review. Some matters were raised in relation to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to which I have responded. The member for Hinchinbrook said he would hope that we would add new drugs to the list

as technology becomes available. I can assure him that that is what we will do. He supported the 100-hour logbooks. He said that we should look at defensive driving courses as part of the P-plate licence stage. As I said, we have to be very careful about the training that people undertake. We do not want to increase the crash risk. We are keenly awaiting the federal government's study.

As the member for Kurwongbah said, the more that a driver practises with their mum and dad or a driving instructor the better. The member for Gladstone raised the importance of foresight and fairness in peer passenger restrictions. We have tried to design them to be practical but firm.

The member for Cook supported fixed speed cameras. He pointed out that they are very avoidable: if a person does not speed they will not get a ticket. He believes that they change behaviour. The evidence is that fixed speed cameras have saved lives, according to research commissioned by the state government. The member for Capalaba indicated that he was very positive about random drug testing and fixed speed cameras.

The member for Broadwater made an important point in terms of peer passenger restrictions. Her point on peer passenger restrictions is supported by research, but her concern is to ensure that we encourage public transport use. We have designated drivers, but there will be more people driving if people cannot have four or five people in the car. That concern is outweighed by the danger of having four or five people in the car. The member for Clayfield spoke about that previously.

I can remember a number of instances when I was an 18-year-old where there, but for the grace of God, went I. We had four or five blokes in a car going stupid in high spirits. That did not even involve alcohol; we were just doing silly stuff. One of my best mates—I had a drink with him on the weekend—put his hands in front of my eyes when I was driving along the Gold Coast Highway once at Palm Beach. A car accident could have been caused by that behaviour. We do silly things when we are young.

The member for Lockyer supported the bill. He spoke about the extensive work of the Travelsafe Committee. The member for Burnett spoke about the need for advertising campaigns. He wanted us to go further than the 'enough is enough' campaign. The member for Greenslopes spoke about the Travelsafe Committee. He spoke about young drivers, as a parent who is about to teach his daughter how to drive, and government advertising campaigns.

The member for Surfers Paradise spoke about drug driving and testing. He asked how the testing will be funded. I indicated that it will be funded by the police and, of course, funding for the John Tonge Centre will go to the Health department. He spoke about mobile phones and speaker functions. It is difficult to enforce that, but it is about encouraging people to do the right thing.

The member for Kurwongbah asked about the transitional provisions. I dealt with that in my response to her during her contribution. The member for Mount Ommaney spoke about the benefits of the RBT scheme—how it worked well—and the legislation is based on that. She spoke about drinking and drugs not only in relation to driving but also in relation to gatecrashing, violence and antisocial behaviour.

The member for Charters Towers made a good contribution. His contribution was not actually on the bill, but it raised a number of local issues and road issues that I will talk to him about. The member for Caloundra spoke about the important responsibility of parents, which is a very critical issue. Parents need to understand that how their kids drive on the road is a matter they need to take an interest in. If parents supply a car for their children, they have every right to say to their kids, 'This is the basis upon which you use this car.' Parents should check up on their children. If the children do not use the car according to that basis the car should be taken off them. Having a car is a privilege not a right.

The member for Barron River spoke about the personal circumstances he had gone through with a sister who had been seriously injured in a car accident. A number of members have had similar tragedies befall their families. He also spoke about the various penalties that were involved under the legislation. The member for Bundamba again recounted a number of experiences of sadness and lost lives. The member for Mudgeeraba spoke about the Travelsafe Committee's research and work. She also spoke about the learner's phase giving young people time to learn to drive.

The member for Redlands, a former serving police officer, spoke about the bill, road safety and the importance of understanding the benefits of speed cameras. The member for Clayfield supported the bill and the safeguards for drug testing we outlined earlier and the 100 hours driver training. The member for Mirani spoke about the disproportionate number of young drivers who contribute to the road toll. He also spoke about the Driver Reviver program. The member for Nicklin spoke about fixed speed cameras and his desire to have them looked at in his electorate.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everybody who took part in this very extensive process of young driver policy reform throughout the state, including organisations such as RACQ, CARRS-Q and the local police emergency services that came along. I would like to thank people such as Nick Benjamin and Shem Aitken. I would also like to thank Mike Stapleton from my department and his team, and before him was Tony Kursius, who performed an outstanding job.

It is very difficult to do, but I think that by working together we have taken Queensland from not leading driver reform to clearly leading young driver licensing reform in Australia. I would like to thank everyone for the enormous amount of work they have done and the loyalty, professionalism and dedication that they have shown.

As Linda Lavarch very eloquently said: this will save lives. We will not know whose lives it will save because we will never know that, but I know that this legislation will save lives. I also know that when we pass this legislation and implement these provisions, tragically, young lives will still be lost. The government has to play its role and continue to do so. Parents have to play their role and continue to do so. Most of all, young people need to accept responsibility for their actions, and we need to provide them with the tools to do that. We hope that this legislation will in some way go towards doing that.

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

Motion agreed to.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr LUCAS** (5.25 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 After clause 2 (Commencement)—**

At page 8, after line 13—

*insert—*

**'Part 1A Amendment of Criminal Code**

**'2A Code amended in part 1A**

*'This part amends the Criminal Code.*

**'2B Amendment of s 328A (Dangerous operation of a vehicle)**

*'Section 328A(5), definition *prescribed offence*, paragraph (c), after '(2),'—*

*insert—*

*'(2AA), '.'.*

This amendment introduces a drug-testing scheme for drivers. It also introduces a new offence for driving with drugs present in saliva or blood. That will be in section 79(2AA). Currently, a court sentencing a person for dangerous driving under section 328A of the Criminal Code must consider past convictions for drink driving. We want to add drug driving history in there as well.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 51, as read, agreed to.

Clause 52—

**Mr JOHNSON** (5.26 pm): I wish to ask the minister a question in relation to the clause regulating young drivers. Numerous representations have been made to me by the owners or proprietors of motorcycle dealerships in relation to young drivers. I spoke with the departmental people about this because it is in the regulation. Proprietors are concerned that young riders will now have to have a car licence for 12 months. What discussion or exchange of dialogue has occurred with owners in relation to this clause?

The minister might also refer to section 150AA(1)(g) on page 34, clause 52, 'the granting of exemptions from conditions of licences'. Could the minister explain that a little further?

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for his query. This clause provides the head of power for the various regulations. The exemption, as I indicated in my contribution earlier, might be for a high-powered vehicle. We are exempting this person because they need to drive a V8 vehicle. This person is the apprentice for the only plumber in town, and the plumber has a V8 vehicle. This exemption will allow the apprentice to drive the V8 vehicle to and from work and for work, but the apprentice will not drive it to the football match on the weekend. This gives us that power.

In relation to the motorcycle licences, the first thing I say is that this gives the head of power. Ultimately, if the opposition took the view that it did not like what we are going to do with motorcycles it could move a disallowance motion when we bring the regulations in. I intend to have those regulations out there for people to see so people can comment on them prior to us proclaiming the regulations.

I have to say this about motorcycles. Young people are 2.5 times more likely to die on the roads than other people, and for young people driving motorcycles it is massively higher than that. People can do 100 hours supervised driving experience in a car because generally a car is used when people are being taken somewhere. However, if someone wants to have 100 hours supervision on a motorcycle they would have to say to dad, 'Dad, come on a motorcycle behind me while I go for 100 hours.' It is actually very difficult to get to that 100 hours.

**Mr Hobbs:** I reckon you would make a great pillion passenger.

**Mr LUCAS:** I reckon I would not.

**Mr Hobbs:** Maybe better in a sidecar, Minister.

**Mr LUCAS:** Exactly, with the goggles on and a scarf. So that is our reason. We are happy to work with them, but we need to understand that there are two groups that I am concerned about in relation to motorcycles. One is young drivers and the other is blokes in their 30s who get a bit of money and go and buy a very high-powered motorcycle, notwithstanding they have not driven one for 15 or 20 years. They open it up on the road and end up killing themselves. This bill does not deal with them, and we are going to work on that on an ongoing basis. That is the reason. We will continue to negotiate and talk about that. Ultimately, if the parliament does not like the policy, it would have the power to disallow that in a regulation.

Clause 52, as read, agreed to.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lucas, adjourned.

## MOTION

### Beattie Labor Government

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.31 pm): I am going to move a motion that is slightly different from my notice of motion this morning. For the information of members, I inform the House that, after discussions with the Clerk, I have agreed to amend the motion slightly to take account of the ruling the Speaker has given. I move—

That this House calls on the Beattie government to focus on delivering the infrastructure and services needed to address—

- the water crisis;
- the long-running health crisis;
- and the infrastructure crisis;

rather than focusing on diversions and distractions aimed at diverting attention from these crises and the string of high-profile court cases.

It is somewhat regretful that the debate in recent times not just in this parliament but in the public domain has not focused on the issues that are important to the people of Queensland. The issues that impact on the people of Queensland, wherever they might live in our state, are not the ones that have been at the centre of the political debate in this House, in the general media and in public debating forums.

I believe the issues I have listed in the motion have been around for awhile. They are issues that are a direct result of the mismanagement of the Beattie government. They are issues that have been building for a long time, and they are certainly issues that will take a long time to solve. They are the issues that this government should be focusing on. They are the issues that should be the focus of political debate and political discussion. They are the issues that all of us who seek to represent our constituents in the political debates both in this place and in public debates should focus on.

One such issue is the water crisis, and my colleagues will deal with that in some detail. That issue is affecting people here in south-east Queensland who have seen their property values fall as the gardens and landscaping that they put so much work into fade away and die. That issue is affecting people who carry around buckets of water to try to keep their gardens and pot plants alive. That issue is directly affecting businesses, especially those in the nursery and horticultural area which have had to put off staff and wind their businesses back. Those effects are going to get greater.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing now is only the tip of the iceberg. As we get further and further into our traditional wet season, if we do not get that rain that we are all hoping for, this crisis will get worse. It is a crisis that cannot be fixed overnight. It is a crisis that requires the construction of major infrastructure that the government should have started building years ago. The government should have started building that infrastructure years ago when we were urging them to build it, when we were getting ridiculed for it. Now that infrastructure has to be built in a panic and a rush. We should be focusing on making sure that everything is done to ensure that infrastructure is delivered. The minister answered a couple of questions in parliament this week, and it is clear from those answers that there is not even any real indication of how well those projects are progressing.

There is also a long-running health crisis. If you were an outsider to the Queensland community listening to the public debate, you could be forgiven for thinking the health crisis has gone away. No doubt the political operatives in the government hope it has gone away, but those of us who sit in our electorate offices and deal with our constituents and the issues that affect them and their families know only too well that the health crisis is every bit as bad now as it was 12 months ago. The impact on people is every bit as severe now as it was 12 months ago. If there is any progress being made, it is infinitesimally small compared to the size of the problem.

They are the issues we should be debating. They are the issues the government should be focusing on. We have not heard anything this week in parliament from this government about its so-called Health Action Plan that got so much airtime during the election campaign. During the election campaign, Peter Beattie talked endlessly about his Health Action Plan and his water grid but it has to be more than words, it has to be more than glib labels. There has to be a focus from this government to ensure we get some real action and real concrete results to address these crises.

The other crisis is what I have called the general infrastructure crisis. It is reflected right across a whole range of government services and right across a whole range of our communities. The most visible feature of that infrastructure crisis is the increasing traffic problems that all of us endure, no matter where we live. The impact of that increasing traffic volume on a road system that has had no significant money spent on it for so long is another crisis that will envelop people across Queensland wherever they live.

Rather than focusing on finding resolutions to these difficult issues that have been simply brought about by the government's own mismanagement, we have instead had a series of diversions and distractions that have got sillier and sillier and sillier as the weeks have gone on. There is no doubt that it is politically opportune for the government to try to distract attention away from these issues and ensure that the media outlets focus on something else other than these particular crises and those string of high-profile court cases that I have referred to in the motion but out of respect for your rulings, Mr Speaker, I will not list. But we all know what they are, and we all know that the revelations from those court cases are embarrassing for the government. The government's intention has been to try to distract attention away and come up with all these other nonsensical things that will somehow keep the public and the media busy so that people will somehow forget about the issues that the government should be ashamed and embarrassed about.

There are a couple of notable examples that some of the other speakers in this debate will talk about. First of all there was the North Bank proposal. What a nonsense approach by the government to come out with a proposal that the Premier himself did not even know whether he supported. It came out with a cardboard model that was designed to provoke debate. It was designed to provoke an argument.

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** Whatever money was spent on it was wasted irrespective of what the model was made of. The Premier went so far as to say that he wanted all ministers to express their own points of view. 'Get out there and start an argument,' he said. 'Get out there and start a debate. Get out there and get people talking about it. We want people to be arguing about whether we should build high-rises in the Brisbane River. We do not want them talking about the water crisis. We do not want them talking about the health crisis. We do not want them talking about the fact that we cannot drive anywhere because of the traffic. Get out there and have a debate about whether we should fill in the Brisbane River and build high-rises,' he said. What a ludicrous approach to government in this state!

But of course the grand-daddy of all diversions was the Premier's sudden conversion to the Bradfield Scheme. It should be called the Beattie scheme. What hypocrisy and what a cruel hoax on those people who have waited 20 years for governments in this state to build some water infrastructure. What a cruel hoax for those people in north Queensland whom the minister over there likes to make fun of and take for granted; those people between Hughenden and Richmond who have long pinned their hopes on things like the Bradfield Scheme.

Of course the Premier and the government have no intention of proceeding with those projects. All they wanted to do was create a distraction. They need bigger and bigger distractions all the time. They needed something to create an argument. It is an absolute misuse of this parliament and the political positions that they hold to use those issues in that way. If nothing else, it raises false hope for those people who want to see those projects progress and who have waited for so long for water infrastructure to be built.

It is a measure of the government's shame and embarrassment that this type of nonsense has been deliberately introduced into the political debate. The government should be ashamed and embarrassed. It should run for cover and hope that people will look and talk about something else.

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (5.42 pm): It gives me great pleasure to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The new number plates in Queensland are likely to be something along the lines of 'State of diversion', because that is all we ever get. It is a deflection and a diversion. We have had a couple of beauties this week. The Premier has excelled himself with diversions this week.

I pulled out his North Bank proposal to have a look at it. I thought people who may live in the seven buildings cut off from the CBD by the south-east freeway might actually want to get to the apartments if they live there so I looked for parking. It will surprise members to know that there is barely any parking at all. Those opposite would jam all the cars of those who live in the seven buildings out in the middle of the river, cut off from the CBD and the car parks that already exist in the city. I had a look

to see whether the Premier's plan gives them any advice on how they might get to these buildings since they cannot take their cars. There is very limited vehicle access because they cannot get past the south-east freeway.

There is some advice. The advice for people wanting to use the Premier's North Bank proposal is to catch the train. The North Bank proposal comes all the way down to where we are sitting tonight. I drive along North Quay every morning and I have never seen one of the backbenchers opposite walking down from Central Railway Station, but it is good enough to tell everybody else that they can walk from the railway station all the way to North Bank because there is no parking and no access.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Bradfield Scheme where the Premier wants to spend billions of dollars in order to run water through the evaporation channels to end up in Adelaide with roughly a bottle of water left. If we want the world championship of diversions then we should go back to the health crisis, which is still largely unresolved, and see what the Premier and his ministers had to say about the crisis hitting our hospitals. They started off blaming the GPs. They said that GPs do not bulk-bill. The premier said that they are to blame for everything. I am not quite sure what operations on his waiting lists he thinks should be bulk-billed by a GP.

Then he blamed the patients themselves. He said the people of Queensland are guilty because they are too fat, they eat too much, they smoke too much, they do not get enough exercise. Then he blamed the public servants. Every time something went wrong, the department got the blame. The minister just shoved the blame on to the department and even sacked senior people in the department. Not running out of ideas for his diversions, the Premier blamed the federal government. He said that it was not putting enough money in. It was not doing this and it was not doing that. Then we look at the real statistics. We see that fewer operations were being done, the lists were blowing out and staff were being lost everywhere.

We see ministers come in here morning after morning and make ministerial statements on trivial things. I had a bus smash in my electorate on a piece of road that this government has promised to fix for eight years. Many kids from the local state high school were injured. Where was the ministerial statement about that? The appalling broken promises for eight years and then the bus smash and the minister did not front up to make a ministerial statement about that. He has not got the courage to explain why he did not fix that bit of road.

We have a water crisis. We would not know that we have a water crisis when we are talking about the sorts of things we are. We have a water crisis. Where is the ministerial statement telling us about level 5 water restrictions? Where is the ministerial statement telling us about all the job losses that we will have? The Premier has issued press release after press release. In fact, he has made 875 references to the word 'drought' in his press releases but he cannot tell us what the level 5 water restrictions will be or how many jobs are going to be lost because of it.

He had proposed a water recycling plebiscite but the people never got to vote. Now we are heading for a world record in pipe laying. We are working 24 hours a day to achieve a world record in pipe laying to supply water. At the end of June last year there were 127 capital works projects that were meant to be finished in Queensland yet were not completed. It is not a world record for laying pipes; it is world record for the number of capital works projects that remain unfinished. We have a backlog of 8,000 reports of potential child abuse.

Time expired.

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.47 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'notes the Beattie government's focus on delivering infrastructure and services'.

In moving this amendment, can I say that the proposition from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party that we need some diversion is not only a nonsense but is ridiculed by the fact that we have Jeff and Bruce. What more do we want in terms of any sort of diversion? They are a diversion on their own! I have been very generous not to raise this week the sorts of problems that exist within the National Party and the Liberal Party. That is only because of my generosity of spirit.

Why would we need a diversion when we have the member for Burnett, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party? Why do we need a diversion when we have them? I want to make it clear: I am the strongest possible supporter of the three of them. I do not want anything to ever happen to them. I am prepared to consider extra police protection to look after them because, frankly, they are one of the best investments this government could ever make.

Let us move on. The Leader of the Opposition has led with his chin again. Not only has he ridiculed the suggestion that we as a nation take the opportunity to investigate water plans that could secure water for generations of men and women on the land—and I notice that Senator Ron Boswell

agreed with me in his maiden speech—but he is also ignoring the largest infrastructure plan in the nation's history. The Queensland government is currently implementing a massive plan that does not only meet our state's immediate needs but also provides for future generations of Queenslanders.

We are building tomorrow's Queensland today not just for the 1,500 new Queenslanders who join us each week but for their children and grandchildren. We are building and planning to ensure that we meet current and future growth and maintain our enviable lifestyle. We are creating new hospitals and schools, we are building new roads and bridges and we are improving public transport.

The worst drought on record in Queensland's south-east has put enormous pressure on our water resources, and we have responded with a far-reaching plan to secure water not just for our immediate needs but for the next half a century. We have outlined some of the major projects now being delivered across Queensland in the document *Building Tomorrow's Queensland Today*. I would advise the Leader of the Opposition to take just a little bit of time to peruse the document. Last sittings I tabled in the House the 2006 achievements of my government. I thought I had sent it around. I will table it again for the Leader of the Opposition so he understands it. I also table *Building Tomorrow's Queensland Today*.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of Queensland Government paper titled 'Beattie Government's 2006 Achievements—presented to Parliament February 2007'

*Tabled paper:* Copy of Queensland Government paper titled 'Building tomorrow's Queensland today'.

Look at all of the infrastructure planned in this document! Look at what we are doing! No other government in the history of Queensland has built such infrastructure—no other government in the history of Queensland. I will table that, too. I will table that for the information of the House because all those opposite do is whinge, whinge and whinge. Of course I reported to this House just two weeks ago the achievements of my government over 2006 which I tabled, and I would commend it to members of the House as it details agency by agency the good work the government is doing in providing services and support to Queenslanders.

Let us take a look at some of what we have done and what we are doing. In terms of infrastructure, there is a long list of water infrastructure that is being provided. We have roads and transport and major road upgrades. We have major public transport projects. We have health and energy. The lists go on and on. I will table them at the end of my speech. It would be nice and helpful if at some point the opposition actually did some homework. My government continues to build a better public health system for Queenslanders. We have allocated \$10 billion and the Health Action Plan is working. The latest recruitment updates show that we have increased our clinical workforce in public hospitals by a staggering 4,030 since June 2005. We now employ 736 more doctors, 2,363 more nurses and 931 more allied health professionals than in June 2005. This is translating to record numbers of patients treated and record amounts of surgery performed. In the December quarter of 2006 public hospitals treated a record 482,000 people as in-patients or emergencies. They also delivered 9,564 babies and provided outpatient services to more than two million people. In other words, the list goes on.

Let me table for the information of the House the list of water projects that we have delivered or are delivering, the road and transport projects, the infrastructure projects, the major roads projects, the Gateway upgrade project, the Tugun bypass project, the Centenary Highway project worth \$270 million, the Sunshine Motorway project, the Inner Northern Busway expansion, the Boggo Road busway project and the Eastern Busway project. As I said earlier, the list goes on and on. There is also energy. No government in the history of Queensland has ever built such projects, and I table that for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Private Members Debate Wednesday February 21 2007'.

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (5.52 pm): I second the amendment moved by the Premier. At the heart of tonight's motion is an allegation from the opposition that the government is fundamentally distracted by some high-profile court cases and is putting in place some projects or activity to divert public attention from these matters. So I thought I would have a look to see which side of the House is actually focused on these said high-profile court cases and see who really is distracted by these matters.

If one looks at the sitting days we have had since we came back from the Christmas break, of the questions asked by the opposition today one question was asked on water and seven questions were asked about matters pertaining to certain court cases. Yesterday four questions from the opposition were all in relation to the Premier's proposed alternative water schemes for the Murray-Darling, including the Bradfield Scheme. So it was the opposition that used question time yesterday to raise that issue. On 8 February in the last sitting only four of the opposition's questions were on infrastructure and on the day before that—the 7th—there was not one question on infrastructure. Then tonight in a spectacular own goal the opposition has come in here and moved a motion on these matters so that we can have a whole hour to talk about North Bank and the Bradfield Scheme and infrastructure and

services. If one wants to have a look at which side of this House is focused on these matters, it is not this side. This side of the House is focused with the job of getting on with delivering the services that Queensland needs and building the infrastructure on which our future will be based.

In my ministerial portfolios, since the beginning of this year I have dealt with many approvals and infrastructure projects and keeping them all on track. By way of example, I have announced that Rio Tinto will be moving ahead with a new mine at Clermont. I have used the new powers under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act to prescribe the three key water projects for SEQ—the desalination plant at Tugun and the southern and western corridor pipeline projects—to ensure that their delivery can proceed at pace. While I am on the issue of water infrastructure, just remember as you listen tonight to members of the opposition bemoaning their views on water infrastructure that every single piece of infrastructure being built in the south-east corner at the moment they voted against. If they had been elected in September last year, not one of these projects would be proceeding. They came in here in August and voted against every single one. Every one of those pieces of infrastructure they voted against. Just go and have a look at their election policy. There are a number of them they never committed to.

I have approved progress payments in excess of \$30 million for those water projects since January. I have approved the procurement of \$244 million worth of pipes for the water grid. Expressions of interest have been called for the Cedar Grove Weir, the Bromelton offstream storage and the Wyaralong Dam access road. Land has been acquired in the western and southern corridors to allow the advance of these projects and to secure land for future development at Ebenezer and Narangba for industrial purposes. I have worked with Treasury to finalise the sale of the state's retail energy businesses for \$3.1 billion and prepared the Airport Link project to go to expressions of interest. I am very pleased to say that, along with the Premier, last week I released the preferred bidder in the proposal for the North Bank development. I note the Liberal member for Moggill—and presumably the role he has in the opposition is to represent the urban parts of our state here in the south-east given that he is a Brisbane member—calling the proposal to develop the North Bank reach of the river ludicrous. This project went to market early last year. Two major construction companies in Queensland put in a considerable effort, as all bidders do, in putting forward their bid, including a very significant financial investment in the—

**Dr Flegg:** Do you support it at this stage?

**Ms BLIGH:** They put a significant financial investment into the model. What they have come up with is a very interesting model for the North Bank reach of the river which I have said I support. I have been on the public—

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Dr Flegg:** You don't even support it yourself.

**Ms BLIGH:** But I support it with some modifications to height and location of buildings. I make no apologies for asking the people of Brisbane and the people of Queensland what they think about this. Just imagine the criticism we would be under if we had not released it. The bidders—

Time expired.

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.57 pm): We have heard the Deputy Premier try to defend the lunacy of seven high-rise towers being built on the Brisbane River. Seriously: if this is a government that thinks it has a vision, then I think it had better get its eyes tested!

**Mr Hobbs:** Get a snorkel!

**Miss SIMPSON:** Or get a snorkel! This government talks about promoting high growth and high density and not about building timely infrastructure in the areas where it is needed in this state. Its focus is not on building timely and cost-effective infrastructure; it has been on managing its own image. The water crisis in south-east Queensland is not about global warming; it has been caused by seat warming by this Labor government. We now have a business community that is potentially facing much stricter and harsher water restrictions of level 5—the details of which this government has not yet released, but we do know it will mean job losses. Are these water restrictions only going to apply to business during the current water crisis? Apparently not. The word is that businesses will face these ongoing restrictions on a permanent basis. Those water restrictions presumably will apply not only to those areas that face an immediate water crisis but to the wider south-east Queensland network that is going to be put into a water grid by this Beattie government. That means that areas that actually have an ample water supply for quite some time will find that their businesses will be impacted by being brought on to level 5 water restrictions and paying up to double the water prices at the same time.

When we look at the range of decisions that this government has made, we find that they are knee-jerk reactions, poor planning and at a great cost not only to businesses but also to the taxpayer. When a government undertakes panic driven infrastructure planning rather than timely and cost-effective infrastructure planning, it is always more costly.

I want to talk to members about a very interesting phrase that is part of the image management of this government. It is called the government's just-in-time policy for infrastructure development. I kid you not. In a briefing of Sunshine Coast members, because we wanted to know what was happening with the water infrastructure needs of our areas and how that infrastructure would link into the greater south-east corner, we were told about the just-in-time policy. This government is trying to make a virtue of not having timely infrastructure. It says, 'You don't want to build infrastructure too far ahead because that is costly. No, under our just-in-time policy, we will build it just ahead of when it is needed.' Gee, that just-in-time policy sure did not work very well for Brisbane, which is finding that it is a just-a-joke policy.

Under this government, the just-in-time policy means that people are facing increasing hardship. In one industry alone—a nursery related industry—at least 300 jobs have been lost and up to 600 jobs potentially could be lost when the next level of water restrictions come in. That has ramifications for a number of other businesses. What has this government's answer been? 'Don't worry, there's low unemployment.' That is true for some parts of the state, but there are suburbs in Brisbane that have an unemployment rate of between 13 and 17 per cent. That is a different story. Every job is precious. When a government fails to manage the timely planning of infrastructure, the impact is significant. It is felt in the pay packets of those people who can least afford it.

When we look at what is occurring in terms of water infrastructure in south-east Queensland, we see that people are being told many furbies by this government in regard to the program. I refer to the northern interconnector with the Sunshine Coast. The government's justification is that it will be a two-way interconnector. The reality is that it is only a one-way interconnector. The situation is that the greater region will pay—under postage-stamp pricing—for this poorly delivered infrastructure by this state government. We are concerned that this government has failed to heed our advice over the years about the appropriate infrastructure that should be put in place. Unfortunately, the range of options that it has on the table, including the Traveston Dam, has an unacceptable triple bottom line impact.

We urge the government to adopt our water infrastructure plans, which are sensible. Our concern is that the government's style of infrastructure delivery is one where we will see towns facing job losses not only now but also in the future under level 5 water restrictions.

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.02 pm): It is wonderful to follow the member for Maroochydore, because it gives me great pleasure to point out how much money was spent on roads on the Sunshine Coast when her party was last in government—\$50 million under the Borbidge government. This year, this government will spend \$190 million and \$466 million over the next two years. So I am more than happy to compare her government's road expenditure in her region with that of this government, of which I am privileged to be a member.

This year, we will spend \$3.98 billion on transport infrastructure, including \$1.98 billion on Queensland's roads. I will remind members of how we perform compared to the other states. We spend twice per capita on roads than do the Victorian and New South Wales governments. We return 177 per cent of road registrations; the Commonwealth returns 19 per cent of its fuel tax. When it comes to road funding, we lead Australia. Members only have to pick up the *Australian Financial Review* and the southern newspapers to read that that is the case. When the *Courier-Mail* and the Local Government Association, on their own objective tests, show how the Queensland government performs, then the opposition has absolutely no credibility in this place.

At the moment, the Tugun bypass—a \$543 million project—is halfway towards being completed. In fact, the other day we broke through in the tunnel. The federal government is contributing \$120 million to this project. Let us see the colour of its money when it comes to the rest of the work that is required on the Gold Coast. This government has \$400 million on the table for the next stage of works that we want to do on the M1. In terms of the Gold Coast rapid transit project, \$550 million has been committed. This government is working with the Gold Coast City Council to get a great outcome for that city in terms of the trunk route up to Brisbane and also the internal route.

The duplication of the railway track from Ormeau to Coomera is completed. The third railway track from Salisbury to Kuraby is under construction. The second railway track from Helensvale to Robina is under construction. The new trains—the first of the 72 carriages—have already rolled off the line at EDI Bombardier and are due to be in revenue service in the first part of this year.

The extension of the Centenary Highway from Springfield, to Ripley and to Yamanto, at a cost of \$270 million, is underway, and is expected to be completed in mid-2009. In terms of the Gateway Bridge upgrade project, at a cost of \$1.9 billion, the federal government deserted the Queensland taxpayer. The contract has been signed. Leightons is building it. There will be a progressive opening from mid-2007 to 2011, including the early work that will be done on Wynnum Road. I will be there shortly with the Brisbane Lord Mayor to mark a milestone in the joint funding of that work.

I turn now to the extension of the Inner Northern Busway. On the weekend there was a protest about public transport. I thought, 'Of all the places to have a protest about public transport, why was it held outside Parliament House?' The protesters should have gone to Canberra, because the federal government exited from capital funding for public transport when it was elected in 1996. Of course, the protesters could not go to King George Square and hold the protest there as it is a construction site,

because this government is building public transport. The protesters could not go to the Roma Street Forum, because the government is building public transport there. The protectors could not go to Boggo Road, because the government is building public transport there as well. The Inner City Busway will take buses off the city's streets. It will connect about 300 trains with about 800 buses every day. Today I announced the final alignment of the Eastern Busway for community consultation. It is a wonderful project.

The member for Maroochydore had the cheek and the embarrassment to talk about the planning of this government. What does she think the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan is? No other state has done such a plan. Again, when that plan was released Queensland was recognised as being unique in Australia. Indeed, when people come from overseas—as they often do and I talk to them—they think that it is incredible that we have a 25-year plan, including guaranteed funding by Treasury for the first 10 years, not just in the forward estimates of the budget. I thank Peter Beattie, Terry Mackenroth and Anna Bligh for their commitment to the funding of that plan.

**Mrs Reilly:** They never did it.

**Mr LUCAS:** That is right. The members opposite can see only short term. With the M1, as good a project as it is, they were absolutely panicked into building it. That is why its budget went through the roof.

**Mrs Reilly** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** It is a great project, but in terms of talking about planning along guidelines, the opposition had to scramble about and do something when it scrapped the koala road.

There is \$284 million worth of work being done on the Sunshine Motorway. There is pile-driving being done across the Maroochy River at the moment. The Regional Bridge Renewal Program is taking place in most of the electorates of National Party members. The program is increasing mass limits on bridges, thereby increasing the productivity of heavy vehicles. At the same time, under that program the government is replacing timber bridges with concrete bridges, which is good for the environment.

The Bundaberg ring-road is a wonderful project that will improve access to the port. In Mackay, this government is replacing the Forgan Bridge and the Hospital Bridge. It is also constructing the east-west interconnector on the Mackay-Bucasia road. This government has completed stage 1 of the Townsville port access road. We now want a commitment from the federal government for stage 2. We are waiting for planning approval from the federal government for the upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road. We are asking the federal government for money for the Peninsula Development Road. The upgrade of that road is critical for the people in that part of the world.

In relation to the southern missing link for Queensland's coal industry, conditional exclusive project mandate status has been signed off. The proponents can now proceed with that. Of course, in relation to the northern missing link, we have acquired the corridor. In the past, a non-planning government would say, 'This is a private sector thing. You go and see us when you are ready to do it.' But we sat down with the coal industry and we asked, 'How can we work together to progress this?'

**Mr HOPPER** (6.07 pm): I listened with interest to that five-minute speech by the minister for transport. It simply amazes me. This is the very same minister who had a shot at me this morning about asking silly questions in the House. I have a couple of questions for him. How many highways has the government built since he has been minister? Over the past eight years, how many highways has this government built in Queensland? I have another question. What has the minister done with the \$225 million that was allocated by the Howard government to flood-proof the Bruce Highway at Tully? For the past seven months the minister has sat on that. For three weeks the people in that area were locked out of Cairns with no bread on their shelves because of the floods. The minister has received money from the federal government for that work, but he has done nothing. That is just the start.

**Mr Lucas:** Ask me a question tomorrow morning about that.

**Mr HOPPER:** Let us compare some track records.

**Mr Lucas:** Have the guts to ask me a question tomorrow morning. I'll tell you about the federal government.

**Mr HOPPER:** Listen to the minister squawk now. The minister has done nothing for Queensland.

**Mr Lucas:** Ask me whether they are going to approve the work we're doing. You have the guts to do that.

**Mr HOPPER:** The minister is one of the dud ministers of the Beattie government and he knows he is a dud. Let us compare the track records of Labor governments with conservative governments. Between 1956 and 1964, 12 major dams were built.

**Mr Lucas:** You are one of the greatest duds who has ever sat in this place. Ask me a question tomorrow morning about it. I'll be happy to take it. You don't want to do that, though, do you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Excuse me, I would like to thank you both for waking up the chamber. Could we get back to it without so much shouting.

**Mr HOPPER:** Twelve major dams were built by Water Commissioner—

**Mr Lucas:** You ask me a question about any federally funded road and I'll give you the story on it.

**Mr HOPPER:** Mr Speaker, I would like to hear myself speak without the interjections.

**Mr Horan:** What about all of that money you're sitting on for Ipswich Road?

**Mr Lucas:** Ask it all tomorrow. I'll give you a whole day.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Can the member for Toowoomba South give his member a go.

**Mr HOPPER:** Twelve dams were built by Water Commissioner Fred Haigh in 18 years under united conservative governments. How many dams has the government built in the last 18 years? One, the Paradise Dam. We announced it and this government had to build it. That is the only piece of water infrastructure built in Queensland in the last 18 years of Labor governments.

History describes the economic development achieved by Queensland conservative governments very positively, particularly those achievements of previous united conservative governments during which time the nation saw Queensland surge ahead and become the leader in economic development and infrastructure provision. Time does not permit me to outline in detail the various massive infrastructure projects constructed under united conservative governments. Suffice to say, construction included ports, rail electrification, the South East Freeway, a network of decentralised highways, bridges, water storages, powers stations, transmission networks, hospitals, schools and universities.

Infrastructure stagnation occurred under the Goss government. Queenslanders, particularly south-east Queenslanders, would clearly remember it was Wayne Goss, assisted by his chief of staff, Kevin Rudd, who cancelled the construction of the Wolffdene Dam. The Wolffdene Dam would have held as much water as Wivenhoe. Have a look at what happened to the Hinze Dam just before Christmas. It was overflowing. It is the same catchment area. So if that dam had been built Brisbane would not be being forced to drink recycled sewage. Every Labor voter in Brisbane who voted for these people has voted to drink recycled sewage. That is what this government, through its lack of infrastructure, is going to force on the people of south-east Queensland, and that simply disgusts me.

This government has rested on its laurels. It has sat on its hands. It has done nothing. It has built no dams. It has put no water infrastructure in place. Fifteen hundred people a week are moving to Queensland and we heard Henry Palaszczuk say, 'We don't have to build a dam until 2050.' They were his exact words. Look at what is happening now. You cannot have a farm and bring a truck load of cattle in every week without putting infrastructure in place, because they will starve to death. That is exactly what will happen.

We can thank Kevin Rudd and this Beattie government when Brisbane runs out of water. Anna Bligh, the Minister for Infrastructure, and the Premier, Peter Beattie, must be on their knees every night praying for 10 or 12 inches of rain in the Crows Nest area because that is the only thing that will save the people of Brisbane. We will be forced to drink recycled sewage because of their lack of effort.

Queenslanders had a short reprieve when the Borbidge-Sheldon government was elected to power. Let us have a quick look at what it achieved: a \$4.8 billion five-year road program—the minister for transport can squawk. Have a look at that record in just two years. Have a look at what happened with the South East Freeway. We were given the reins of government and we put infrastructure in place because a united conservative government had the runs on the board. We have the runs on the board and we will provide for the people of Queensland.

**Hon. RJ WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (6.12 pm): He is a very excitable young man.

**Mr Messenger:** You would be too if you had to drink sewage.

**Mr WELFORD:** You poor fellow. It is interesting that the previous speaker was whingeing about Wolffdene Dam not being built. The government, as I understand it, is building a major dam at the moment and the opposition oppose it. I have not yet heard the opposition's support for the building of Traveston Dam or any other infrastructure that is currently being built by the government to deal with the water crisis.

**Mr Messenger:** A \$3 billion swamp.

**Mr WELFORD:** I would like to hear how the opposition propose that Wolffdene Dam is now built. Does the opposition propose that we go back and build Wolffdene Dam? Does the opposition have any solutions? It does not have a clue.

**Dr Flegg:** You sold the land.

**Mr WELFORD:** Well, what is he going on about Wolffdene Dam for? He gave us a catalogue of all the types of infrastructure that exists—roads, dams, freeways and all the rest of it. They were in government for 32 years. If you could not do something in a generation, there would be something wrong with you.

There is no more foundationally important infrastructure than that which we invest in our young people, in our children and in the intellectual capital that will become the wealth of this state in the years and generations ahead. On this aspect, our government has an admirable record, and so has the Goss government, in terms of investing in education and education infrastructure that underpins the future economic prosperity of this state.

No government in the history of Queensland has delivered such a comprehensive infrastructure plan for our schools and for our TAFE system. Our investment of \$1 billion over the next five years in Tomorrow's Schools is the most comprehensive school renewal program ever undertaken in our state. These funds will be directed to modernising and building new school facilities right across Queensland. It will see an unprecedented degree of parent and local community involvement in deciding primary and secondary school requirements for the future. It is important to note that this funding is over and above our annual spending on school capital works.

The main features of the program are: a five-year \$850 million capital injection into state schools—the largest one-off investment in school building projects in our state's history. This is in addition to the existing \$427 million capital program in 2006-07. We have already allocated \$50 million to the School Community Development Fund for state school communities for minor capital works projects to improve a school's learning environments, such as libraries and science lab upgrades.

A \$100 million one-off contribution to the state's non-government school sector will also provide a huge boost to non-state schools throughout the state, and that was paid to the non-state school sector at the end of the last financial year. We have allocated \$12.5 million for the first stage works at our two Queensland academies at Toowong and Kelvin Grove, and we are in the process of planning for students to be able to attend the health sciences Queensland academy on the Gold Coast from the start of next year.

We have allocated \$170 million for new schools, classrooms and facilities across the state, and we are building new schools every year. We have allocated \$11.5 million for the first stages of a new primary school at Burpengary West; \$11.5 million for the first stages of a new primary school at Edmonton West in Cairns; \$10.5 million for the Redlynch Middle School in Cairns; \$11.5 million for the new Springfield Lakes State School; \$35 million plus for further stages of construction at several schools including Stretton State College, Chancellor State College, North Lakes State College and Upper Coomera State College.

Our government was the first in Australia to comprehensively address the replacement of asbestos roofs—a \$120 million Asbestos Roof Replacement Program—which successive coalition and conservative governments let languish for decades. Our government has fast-tracked programs to get specialist tradesmen into schools so these replacements can be achieved.

Time expired.

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the opposition leader and oppose the amendment moved by the Premier. The people of Queensland are losing faith in this state government because Queenslanders are facing some of the biggest crises in the history of our parliament. They are losing faith because, while Queenslanders face these problems in health, water, parliamentary accountability and infrastructure, the Labor government continues to deny these challenges. We have every reason to be disenchanted with the Beattie government: if it does not admit the problems exist, it certainly will not fix them.

Last February—a year ago—the Premier stood up and heralded a new direction for Queensland Health. To his credit he recognised the insidious problems within the health department and, with the health minister, vowed to fix this sick system. In February last year the Premier assured the Queensland coalition and the people of Queensland that the embattled health department had turned the corner, so we waited as the Premier talked about the Health Action Plan and told Queenslanders that he was spending billions of dollars. More than one year on from the Beattie government's turning the corner on health it would be nice to stand up in 2007 and say that the Queensland coalition was optimistic and free of scepticism about the government's plan for Queensland's health system. Unfortunately, this will not be the pivotal year Queensland patients have been waiting for.

The Queensland government has already shown its 2007 health cards and it holds a nasty hand. In 2007, the Beattie government still cannot manage the state's public hospital system. Let us look at the amendment moved by the Premier on a focus on delivering infrastructure and services. Let us look at recent events since the election, which indicate a budget blow-out last week when the health minister

admitted that there is a \$130 million Queensland Health budget blow-out that will affect elective surgery, despite the fact that a month ago the latest public hospital performance report with regard to elective surgery identified that fewer patients were treated last quarter than in the previous period and that more patients overall were waiting longer for elective surgery procedures.

Last year the government announced a \$1.3 billion increase in the budget for Queensland Health. One billion dollars of this was spent on increased wages for doctors and nurses. Of course that was welcome, but it left only \$300 million to deal with the problems of elective surgery, waiting lists, increased population and all of the problems identified by the Forster and Davies inquiries. The Premier and health minister have ignored the warnings of the coalition. They continue to mislead the people of Queensland on the true cost of fixing the health system.

This year we are spending \$6.65 billion out of a budget of \$29 billion. How much more will they say they will spend, with no result? Let us look at the focus on delivering services around the state. At the Gold Coast last week the skin cancer clinic closed, even though there were hundreds of people on the waiting list. Last year, radiation oncology services on the Gold Coast were unable to be delivered.

Let us look at the regions of Queensland. Last month many regional hospitals refused to perform complex elective surgery because of a lack of resources to outpost health facilities. We will end up with a two-tier system such as in Cunnamulla, where there has not been a doctor in town for two years. Patients have to travel long distances for vital treatment.

It is unconscionable that patients needing lifesaving surgery are going through the added trauma and expense of having to travel to city centres for treatment. Let us look at five-year cancer survival rates. If you live in the country, you are less likely to survive five years with cancer than if you live in a city. That is an abhorrent and tremendously unfair system.

Let us continue to look around the regions, bearing in mind the Beattie government's focus on delivering services. In January in Townsville cardiac services collapsed when a medical specialist could not be found to provide those services. Queensland Health claims that it was not aware that all three cardiac surgeons would be on holiday during this time and failed to put in place suitable arrangements to provide ongoing care. Queensland Health's inability to manage its human resources was once again the cause of a medical crisis.

That happened in Townsville at the same hospital that only this morning turned away a young prostate cancer sufferer from Charters Towers. That man is 43-years-old and he has had that cancer for five months, but there are no ICU beds for him in Townsville, even though the government has claimed that it is creating space for beds. A total of 1,300 beds was promised in the last election campaign. How many have been delivered?

We could look at Caboolture and the problems associated with the government outsourcing the emergency department to a private company at double what it costs Queensland Health to run it. In Longreach and Mackay there are problems. I could go on with examples of this government failing Queensland Health patients. However, because I would risk completely destroying whatever faith there is in the system, I will not do that. I put it to the House that, thanks to Peter Beattie, health in Queensland has turned the corner so many times that we are going back in the same direction. Under this government, that is the road to nowhere.

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (6.22 pm): It is only 25 weeks since the people of Queensland returned the Beattie government for a historic fourth term. No other government in this state's history has been returned so often with such commanding majorities. During the last election, the government slogan was 'Building Queensland'. The people voted for us because that is what they know we will do: build a better Queensland. That is what we have done for the past three terms and that is what we will continue to do.

Tonight I found myself agreeing with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that he wants us to focus on issues that matter to the people of Queensland. That is exactly what the members of this government and I want to do. Tonight I would like to talk about some of the infrastructure capital works projects happening in my own portfolio.

At this point in time, we are building a new 150-bed women's prison in Townsville. We are rebuilding and expanding the men's prison in Townsville. We have closed the Sir David Longland centre. We are spending \$76 million building a new prison at Sir David Longland. We are providing for another 180 beds at Arthur Gorrie. We are planning to expand Lotus Glen and are buying land to build the prisons of the future at Gatton. That shows a commitment to building for the future.

This afternoon I asked the police to pull together a list of what we have built in the police portfolio in the past three years when I have been the minister. I will go through that list quickly. In the first year, we built and opened police stations at Sherwood, Childers, Hervey Bay, Ravenswood, Coolumb and Pomona and the Nerang Scenes of Crime. In 2005-06 we built the Caloundra watch-house, Hope Vale Police Station, Weipa police housing, Mount Gravatt Scenes of Crime, Quilpie watch-house, Tin Can

Bay Police Station, Mount Isa police accommodation, Redland Bay Police Station and at Cooktown we built a duplex for police housing. Last year, we built and opened Mackay Northern Beaches Police Station, Sarina Police Station, Yamanto communications centre, Stafford Police Station and the brand-new Southport Police Station. We built police accommodation at Weipa and Rockhampton, and the Gympie Police Station. In the last three years we have built and delivered police beats at Highfields, Tewantin, Vincent, Bald Hills, Hemmant, Buderim, Yorkeys Knob, Seaforth, Point Lookout, Biggera Waters, Kingston, the PA Hospital, Burpengary, White Rock, Mooroolbool, Rainbow Beach, Margate and Hemmant.

That is the activity of the police portfolio of this government in the past three years. From listening to my colleagues tonight, I know that that activity has been reflected across this government. As well, we have upgraded many police stations and watch-houses. I table that list tonight, because I do not have the time to read it.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled '42 Police Stations, Beats and Watchhouses in total—Future capital works projects over next 4 years'.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Upgraded police stations & watchhouses'.

We have also committed \$260 million over the next four years to build new police stations and new police divisions around this state. This is an unprecedented period in Queensland police history, as we have seen so much activity and so many new police stations being built around the state.

Finally, we went to the election with an incredible promise to spend \$450 million to build a new police academy on the Wacol precinct. We are planning to build the best police academy in the Southern Hemisphere. That police academy will be the finest in the Asia-Pacific region. It will be an international police academy and the envy of all the world.

This is a government that has firmly focused on the things that matter to the people of Queensland. Law and order is an issue that does matter to the people of Queensland. Having good police facilities does matter to the people of Queensland. Having decent prisons to house people also matters to the people of Queensland.

I look forward to having more debates on those issues with members of the opposition. If they really do care about coming into this place and talking about the things that matter to the people of Queensland, maybe occasionally they will ask me a question or two in this place.

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

**AYES, 54**—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, English, Fenlon, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wottenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Finn

**NOES, 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

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to, viz—

That this House notes the Beattie Government's focus on delivering infrastructure and services.

**AYES, 54**—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, English, Fenlon, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wottenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Finn

**NOES, 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

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. LH NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.40 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

## PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 7 February (see p. 189).

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (7.40 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2007. I do so somewhat reluctantly. I think it is unfortunate that this bill is before the House, but I understand the reasons that it is here, and I will go through some of those reasons as part of this contribution. However, at the beginning of my contribution I suggest that all of us need to be careful when we start making political issues out of the conditions, salaries and allowances that politicians receive. It is too easy to make cheap politics out of what politicians receive to do the job they have to do.

Those of us who serve in this chamber and in chambers like this around the country know only too well how difficult these jobs are. We know how difficult it is for all of us who serve in a representative role. We know the financial costs and the personal costs that are incurred, but we will never convince anybody else of that. We will never convince anybody in the general community of that. It is almost an Australian sport to pick on politicians. We all know that when we put our hands up for the job.

There is certainly an element in the general community who would have politicians work 24 hours a day for nothing, and they still would not be happy. These are not just members of the general public. People in some sections of the media can always get a run if they make an issue out of politicians' salaries, their allowances, conditions or whatever. It is just cheap politics.

All of us need to be careful when we start making political issues out of these sorts of things. None of us win when they become an issue. The people we represent do not win because it restricts our ability to do our jobs. In the 8½-odd years that I have been in this place I have always made a point in all of our discussions, strategy meetings and whatever of avoiding the temptation of playing cheap politics with this sort of thing. I hope that I can always avoid the temptation of playing that sort of cheap politics. I believe that it does not just belittle all of us; I believe that it lessens the ability of this parliament to serve the purpose that I am passionate about and that I believe is incredibly important to everybody in the community, even those who like to criticise us and find fault with what we receive and the allowances we get.

I know that there are very few people in this place who are not here at a financial cost; they could be earning more money in other places. I know that there are very few people here who do not use some of their own money to top up the allowances that they receive at different times. I know the personal costs that each of us incur.

However, let us look at the bill before the House. The bill before the House seeks to clarify the situation that exists in relation to the electorate allowances that we all get paid. It is here simply because this became an issue during the last election campaign. It is regrettable that it became an issue during the election campaign, but it did. In the overheated atmosphere of an election campaign it is understandable that the commitments were made by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. They both made different commitments and expressed opinions about what should happen with this particular issue.

The issue arose because the election was called early. I have spoken about that before in this House, and I am not going to introduce that element into this debate. However, the election was called early. It has always been understood that these allowances were paid six months in advance. There has never been any suggestion up until then, and of which I am aware, that it was somehow a pro rata allowance; that it was a weekly or a monthly allowance. It was paid six months in advance.

I know in my particular situation, as in the situation of some of my colleagues, when I get that payment I actually use it to pay off an overdraft—an accumulated debt—from the previous six months because some months I spend more money than other months. It is not a constant expenditure. In the run-up to an election especially there are plenty of instances where that allowance would be spent in a way that did not reflect any sort of monthly or weekly or pro rata model.

However, this issue became an election issue. The Premier made a commitment that he would introduce this legislation into the House, so it is that legislation which is before us tonight. The Leader of the Opposition at the time and I agreed that there was an obligation on members who had not spent the money in the way that it was meant to be spent to repay it. It only became an issue because there was a disagreement about what the rules were. It is well to remember that the previous Speaker, the member for Mount Isa, initially ruled that there was no obligation on members to repay the money. That was the way he interpreted the rules at the time. If it had not been for the fact that there was an overheated atmosphere of an election campaign the matter would have ended there.

Of course, in an election campaign we all know what happens. The media pack loves to make an issue of these sorts of things. The media pack demanded answers from the Premier and they demanded answers from the Leader of the Opposition. In that election atmosphere those answers may not be what they would have been at some other time.

I acknowledge that the Premier made a commitment to introduce this legislation, and the Premier is carrying through with that commitment. At the time, the position that we took as the opposition was that each individual member should look at whether they had expended the money in a way that was appropriate and decide for themselves whether they should repay that money. The Leader of the Opposition asked the members on our side to do that. Some of them looked at the situation and decided that in all fairness the appropriate action was to repay some of that money. Other opposition members decided that in their situations they had expended amounts of money that meant they did not have anything to repay; they believed the money had been expended in an appropriate way.

However, one thing is certain: there was no obligation on any member at that stage to repay the money. It was universally seen as a six-monthly allowance, and it was to be spent at the behest of the member depending on their individual circumstances.

The legislation before the House tonight, unfortunately, retrospectively changes that situation. It retrospectively changes the rules. If the legislation before the House did not do that, I would be happy to support it. I would be happy to come in here and support a clarification of the rules from this point forward. I think that would be fair enough. We would all know then what the situation was and what the expectation was, and we could all abide by that.

But the fact that this legislation seeks to retrospectively change the situation and retrospectively apply to a number of members' obligations that were not previously there and that were understood to be different to what is now being applied means that I do not believe I can support this legislation. I believe that retrospective legislation at any time is unwarranted. Retrospective legislation at any time is incredibly difficult to justify. While that may open me up to some sort of an attack especially from the shallow end of the media and from those people who like to attack politicians for the allowances they receive, I can live with that. I can live with that, but I do not think this House should pass legislation that retrospectively changes the rules that we all have to abide by.

I will say this again for the purposes of clarity: if the government wants to change the rules tonight and make them apply from here forward, then I think that is a good idea. It is a good idea to clarify the situation and ensure that everybody understands it so we can all work with it. Whether we like that or not, it does not really matter; if the House passes this bill and makes that rule, we all have an obligation to abide by it.

For the record, I think it is a good idea. I think it is a good idea for that obligation to be put in place. But, for that obligation to work, we need to understand it at the beginning of the six-monthly period so we are aware of it and can manage the expenditure of those moneys accordingly. But that is not what this bill does. Therefore, I am certain it is not the fair thing and is not doing the right thing by any member of this House.

The Premier has come into the House. He was not here for my opening remarks, so I want to say to him, as I did at the beginning, that I am not going to debate this extensively and make a huge political opportunity out of this, even though there are a number of opportunities to do so in this bill. I have always maintained and I will always maintain that, when we make a political issue out of our entitlements and the allowances and salaries that we receive, we all lose. All of us lose and the institution of parliament loses. It is just too easy for cheap politics to be made out of this sort of thing.

However, I do acknowledge the commitment that the Premier made during the election campaign. I also acknowledge and do not back away from the responses that were given by the Leader of the Opposition at the time that those members should be requested to consider repaying that money, but we will not support retrospective legislation that creates a legal obligation that did not exist at the time. As I said, it is regrettable in my view that this legislation is before the House. I acknowledge it is to honour that commitment, but let us do it, get it over with and get on with more pressing business.

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (7.53 pm), in reply: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution and participation in the debate. I acknowledge what he has said and I will come back to that in a minute. As I stated in my second reading speech, I regret it has been necessary to introduce legislation to address this issue. This bill is not a matter of politics; this bill is about accountability. We never made this a public issue, as opposition members would know. We did not seek to make the anomaly a public issue. It was made a public issue by some member of parliament who went out wanting to big-note themselves. I do not know who it was or what side of politics it was, but someone did and inevitably both the then Leader of the Opposition and I gave a commitment to deal with this matter. Had we lost the election, Lawrence Springborg would be standing here doing exactly what I am doing.

**Mr Seeney:** No.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Well, that is what he said.

**Mr Seeney:** Yes, but the difference is in the retrospectivity of the legislation.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Maybe I am wrong. You know what he said, so I am not going to argue. You know what he said, and I know what I took to be the case.

The bill addresses an anomaly in the current system of payment of parliamentary entitlements by clarifying that a person is only eligible to receive allowances for the period that they remain a member of parliament. The Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 already states that a member is not entitled to receive salary or additional salary from the day the person stops being a member. The proposed amendments will extend the same conditions to parliamentary allowances. While it is unfortunate that this anomaly has resulted in allowances being overpaid to former members which now need to be repaid, the government is acting in line with public expectations that this money be reimbursed to the state. I am pleased that the vast majority of former members acknowledged this explanation and made prompt arrangements for reimbursement of the pro rata amounts of their allowances. I have gone on the public record many times indicating my intention to ensure this money is repaid. Unfortunately, the non-legislative measures have not secured the repayments of all the funds so I have introduced this bill delivering the commitment.

I just want to say a few little things about this. Members have to remember that this became a matter of public record in the first few days of the campaign—and that was in August, well before the 9 September election date. I said it then clearly to give people notice.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I know that, but the reason I did that was because we all know that people incur as we progress in a campaign and I wanted to warn people of the repayment requirement so they did not expend it. When I say campaign expenditure, I am talking about serving constituents who come through the door in a perfectly legitimate way. That is a little bit different to normal campaign expenditure. I wanted to give people notice, and I did it as quickly as possible. Members have to remember that in that sense I do not regard it as retrospective even though this legislation has to be retrospective, because I gave notice of it in August for the future before the allowance had run out.

I have to say—and I am not going to hide this and I am not going to be political about it—that I am disappointed that some people have not repaid it because I went to great lengths, and the Clerk and I talked about actually encouraging people to repay it or reach some accommodation about how they could repay it. I know that some individual members from both sides ended up in severe financial difficulties as a result of losing their seat and as a result of the fact that some of them were in a position where they could not access any superannuation payments and, unlike normal citizens who were public servants or otherwise, got no termination pay, no holiday pay, nothing.

Bearing that in mind, I tried to say to them, 'When you do eventually get your superannuation payments, if you give a commitment that you'll pay it or you'll pay it over a period of time, that will be reasonable.' It is just that some people got extraordinarily bloody-minded about it. Frankly, bearing in mind that I had given an election commitment and warned people, I thought it was reasonable we go down this road.

There is one final thing I want to say—and I do not want to delay the House tonight either, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the spirit in which he has handled this. I am now closing the debate in reply and then we can obviously move on on this. Members have to remember that during the 1998 election campaign before I became Premier I gave a commitment that we would look at all members' entitlements. There was a committee set up, with Rob Borbidge, Terry Mackenroth and Peter Wellington on it; I forget who the Liberal representative was. David Watson might have been on it; everybody was on it. We came back with a number of recommendations. The actual rule that applied here was wrong, and it was never intended by the committee. I know that. It was a misunderstanding of how it was written. I know that because I was the Premier at the time. I do not expect you to know that, but I knew that. The way it was written up was in my view not what was intended by the committee.

As I said in my second reading speech, and I repeat it because I want to be clear about this: we are not talking about some nitpicking exercise over a few days at the end of a campaign. We are not going to seek to recover that sort of money, and I put that on the record again so everybody understands. The way I have worded it is that recovery is done by the Clerk on the approval of the Premier of the day. We are not going to waste taxpayers' money recovering a small amount of money. The bureaucracy of it would not be worth it, so we are not going to nitpick about it.

The period of time we are dealing with here is a reasonable period of time. We are talking about from 9 September to the end of December. The anomaly was never intended. Can I explain why it was never intended. When Terry Mackenroth retired from the parliament and when the member for Redcliffe retired they had to repay, because they resigned, the pro rata amount of allowances until the end of the year, which they did. In a sense that rule was the one that applied. It was intended that if a member left with a significant period remaining they would repay pro rata. It was one of those oversights that was

never intended. The way it was meant to work for general elections when there is a long period of time remaining is the same way as it works when someone retires, such as in the Mackenroth and former member for Redcliffe matters.

I know that the Speaker in good faith wrote to the members concerned. I can understand why they feel that way. It was one of those oversights that was never intended. Under those circumstances I believe any sensible construction of this would lead to the view that the money should be repaid. I am disappointed that some former members have behaved in a very bloody-minded way about this. I think the community would be very disappointed in them. I do not intend to go through it.

**Mr Schwarten:** The Leader of the Opposition asked them to repay it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take the interjection from the Leader of the House that the Leader of the Opposition had asked them to repay it. I acknowledge and appreciate that. I am not suggesting that the Leader of the Opposition acted other than in good faith on this matter. He would understand that I tried to get people to repay it. I had a recalcitrant former member of the government who was unwilling to repay too. She has said that she will now repay because we have introduced this legislation. I think it is sad that it requires a bit of legislation to force people to do it. We would never have had to go through all this if they had repaid. We have now prescribed it in a way that is tougher than would have been necessary had they simply repaid it. It has created a rod for their own backs and created a rod for all of us. I have to do what I promised I would do and that is the end of it. I thank members for the contributions they have made.

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

Motion agreed to.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

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

Motion agreed to.

### Long Title

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

Motion agreed to.

## TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 457.

Clause 53 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.03 pm): I move the following amendment—

#### 2 Clause 53 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))—

At page 35, lines 30 and 31 and page 36, line 1—

*omit, insert—*

*‘issued under this Act that is subject to conditions, including restrictions, imposed’.*

This is an amendment to schedule 4, the dictionary, of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. The amendment to clause 53 of the bill ensures that conditions can be imposed on a provisional driver because of their age. This relates to young driver initiatives being progressed.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 53, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 54, as read, agreed to.

Clause 55 (Amendments of s 79 (Driving etc. whilst under influence of liquor or drugs or with prescribed concentration of alcohol in blood or breath))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

**3 Clause 55 (Amendment of s 79 (Driving etc. whilst under influence of liquor or drugs or with prescribed concentration of alcohol in blood or breath))—**

At page 37, after line 12—

*insert—*

'(3A) After section 79(2A)—

*insert—*

'(2BB) Definition for subsection (2A)

In subsection (2A)—

**learner, probationary or provisional licence** includes a licence, permit, certificate or other authority issued under a law of another State, the Commonwealth or another country that corresponds to a learner licence, probationary licence or provisional licence.'

(3B) Section 79(2J), from 'to whom' to '79F'—

*omit, insert—*

'is a section 79E driver'.'

Section 79 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act contains offences for drink driving. This new section clarifies that all relevant drink-driving provisions apply to learner, probationary and provisional drivers who hold a licence issued outside Queensland. When they come into Queensland we can apply this provision to them.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 56 (Amendment of s 79B (Immediate suspension or disqualification))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.06 pm): I move the following amendments—

**4 Clause 56 (Amendment of s 79B (Immediate suspension or disqualification))—**

At page 38, after line 13—

*insert—*

'(1A) Section 79B(1)(a)—

*omit, insert—*

'(a) charged under section 79(1) with an offence committed while under the influence of liquor or a drug; or'.'

**5 Clause 56 (Amendment of s 79B (Immediate suspension or disqualification))—**

At page 38, after line 19—

*insert—*

'(3) Section 79B—

*insert—*

'(1A) However, this section only applies in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (ca) if the person is charged under a provision mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (ca) with an offence relating to—

(a) driving a motor vehicle; or

(b) attempting to put in motion a motor vehicle; or

(c) being in charge of a motor vehicle.'

(4) Section 79B(5)(a), 'an order under section 79E'—

*omit, insert—*

'a section 79E order'.

(5) Section 79B(7), definition *section 79E order*—

*omit'.*

Amendment No. 4 extends immediate suspension provisions in section 79B to all drivers charged under section 79(1) with driving under the influence of liquor or a drug. It currently applies only to high-level drink drivers. It also brings consistency with the new provisions in the bill relating to the random drug testing of drivers.

Amendment No. 5 inserts new subsection (1A) into section 79B clarifying that immediate suspensions apply not only to offences involving driving motor vehicles but also where the person is attempting to put a motor vehicle in motion or where they are in charge of a motor vehicle. New subsections (4) and (5) are primarily redrafting amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 56, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.07 pm): I table the explanatory memorandum to the amendments. I move the following amendment—

**6 After clause 56 (Amendment of s 79B (Immediate suspension or disqualification))**

At page 38, after line 19—

*insert—*

**'56A Amendment of s 79E (Court may allow particular person whose licence is suspended under section 79B to drive)**

'Section 79E(2), 'the licence, including a renewal of the licence,'—

*omit, insert—*

'a Queensland driver licence'.

**'56B Amendment of s 79F (Replacement licence if there is an order under section 79E)**

'(1) Section 79F(1), from 'an order'—

*omit, insert—*

'a section 79E order'.

'(2) Section 79F(2), 'an order under section 79E'—

*omit, insert—*

'a section 79E order'.

**'56C Insertion of new s 79G**

'After section 79F—

*insert—*

**'79G When person is disqualified while s 79E order applies**

'(1) This section applies if—

(a) a person in relation to whom a section 79E order applies is, for any reason, disqualified by a court for a period from holding or obtaining a Queensland driver licence; and

(b) the period of disqualification ends before the relevant charge for the person's suspended licence, in relation to which the section 79E order was made, is dealt with by a court or is withdrawn or is otherwise discontinued.

'(2) The person is, by operation of law and without a specific order, disqualified from holding or obtaining a Queensland driver licence until the relevant charge is dealt with by a court or is withdrawn or is otherwise discontinued.

'(3) In this section—

**relevant charge**, for a person's suspended licence, means the charge that resulted in the licence being suspended under section 79B(2) of the Act.

**suspended licence**, of a person, means the person's Queensland driver licence that has been suspended under section 79B(2) of the Act because the person has been charged as mentioned in section 79B(1)(a), (b) or (d).'

This is an amendment to section 79E and 79F of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act and new section 79G. New clause 56A amends section 79E(2) of TORUM to ensure that restrictions imposed under a section 57E order can be imposed on any Queensland drivers licence held by a person during the period of the order. For example, the restrictions imposed under a 79E order will continue to apply where a person obtains a new licence after the expiry of their previous licence.

New clause 56B is primarily a drafting amendment. Clause 56C inserts new section 79G into TORUM to clarify that if a person driving under a 79E order is disqualified for any reason they will remain disqualified until the charge which led to the initial immediate suspension is finalised. It caters for situations where a disqualification for a later offence is fully served before the original offence is finalised.

*Tabled paper:* Explanatory notes to amendments moved in consideration in detail.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.08 pm): I move the following amendments—

**7 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**

At page 44, line 23, 'doctor or'—

*omit.*

**8 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**

At page 44, line 28, 'doctor or'—

*omit.*

**9 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**

At page 48, line 15, 'doctor or'—

*omit.*

- 10 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 49, line 10, after 'or'—  
*insert—*  
'the police officer operating or to operate'.
- 11 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 53, line 6, 'or health care professional'—  
*omit.*
- 12 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 53, line 8, 'part of the'—  
*omit.*
- 13 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 53, lines 9 to 12—  
*omit, insert—*  
'(73) Section 80(20A), from 'blood' to 'such person'—  
*omit, insert—*  
'blood or saliva, the health care professional must give the second specimen of blood, or the police officer must give the second specimen of saliva, to the person'.
- 14 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 53, lines 24 to 32 and page 54, line 1—  
*omit.*
- 15 Clause 57 (Amendment of s 80 (Provisions with respect to breath tests and laboratory tests))—**  
At page 54, lines 22 to 24—  
*omit.*

These amendments relate to section 80 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act to include provisions relating to the taking of saliva specimens from drivers for certain drugs. We drafted them to replicate provisions for the taking of breath specimens. The bill inadvertently included a reference to doctors and health-care professionals who can take breath specimens in certain circumstances. Only police will be taking saliva specimens. We are removing doctors and health-care professionals or clarify that they only apply to breath testing.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 57, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 58, as read, agreed to.

Clause 59 (Amendment of s 86 (Disqualification of drivers of motor vehicles for certain offences))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.09 pm): I move—

- 16 Clause 59 (Amendment of s 86 (Disqualification of drivers of motor vehicles for certain offences))—**  
At page 56, after line 11—  
*insert—*  
'(1A) Section 86(2)(e), from 'person to' to '79F'—  
*omit, insert—*  
'section 79E driver'.

This amendment complements amendment No. 3.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 59, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 60 (Amendment of s 87 (Issue of restricted licence to disqualified person))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.10 pm): I move—

- 17 Clause 60 (Amendment of s 87 (Issue of restricted licence to disqualified person))—**  
At page 56, after line 28—  
*insert—*  
'(2) Section 87(5B)—  
*insert—*  
'(f) a suspension, if a court has, on application made in relation to the suspension, made a special hardship order'.

This amendment amends section 87 of TORUM. It provides for the issue of restricted licences to disqualified persons following a drink-driving offence—that is, work licences. Section 87 sets eligibility criteria for applications. It excludes a person whose licence has been suspended in the previous five years but not if the suspension was set aside on appeal. The amendment is just clarifying that a person is also not excluded if a special hardship order was granted in relation to the suspension. Special hardship orders will replace the existing driver licence suspension appeal process.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 60, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 61 and 62, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.11 pm): I move—

**18 After clause 62 (Amendment of s 124 (Facilitation of proof))—**

At page 58, after line 30—

*insert—*

**‘62A Amendment of s 131 (Appeals with respect to issue of licences etc.)**

‘(1) Section 131(1C), ‘subsection (1)’—

*omit, insert—*

‘subsection (1AA)’.

‘(2) Section 131(1C)—

*insert—*

‘(d) in respect of the suspension of a Queensland driver licence of a person because of the allocation of demerit points; or

(e) in respect of the suspension of a Queensland driver licence of a person who has been convicted of an offence against a regulation for driving more than 40km/h over the speed limit.’.

This amendment inserts a new section 62A, which is an amendment of section 131 of TORUM. It contains general appeal provisions. The amendments will remedy an incorrect reference in subsection (1C). The amendments will also clarify that section 131 does not apply to decisions by the chief executive under a regulation to suspend a drivers licence because of demerit points. In other words, it will stop people trying to be funny in terms of that. Generally, the appropriate mechanism will be an application for a special hardship order. Where a person is already driving under a special hardship order or a 79E order, the amendment clarifies that there will be no further access to appeal processes.

**Mr Johnson:** Is that going to be applicable to all modes of transport, Minister?

**Mr LUCAS:** In relation to the special hardship order, yes, it is a general application—that is, if you go to the appeal provisions and then try to circumvent that by then going to the chief executive.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 63, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.12 pm): I move—

**19 After clause 63 (Amendment of s 143 (Confidentiality))—**

At page 59, after line 13—

*insert—*

**‘63A Amendment of s 150 (Regulating driver management)**

‘(1) Section 150(1A), from ‘the licences’ to ‘circumstances’—

*omit, insert—*

‘Queensland driver licences in stated circumstances (**special hardship orders**)’.

‘(2) Section 150(1A)(a)—

*omit, insert—*

‘(a) the persons who are eligible, and who are not eligible, to apply for the orders; and

(aa) how and when applications for the orders are to be made; and’.

‘(3) Section 150(1A)(c)—

*omit, insert—*

‘(c) the types of restrictions the court may or must apply to licences; and

(ca) the periods for which orders are effective; and’.

**‘63B Insertion of new s 150AB**

‘Before section 150A—

*insert—*

**‘150AB Driver licensing regulation prevails over rules of court**

- ‘(1) This section applies if the driver licensing regulation provides for how and when an application is to be made to a court.
- ‘(2) If there is an inconsistency between the driver licensing regulation and any rules of court, the regulation prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.
- ‘(3) In this section—

**driver licensing regulation** means the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Driver Licensing) Regulation 1999*.’.

This is an amendment to clause 63A(1) to ensure that the restrictions imposed under a special hardship order can be imposed on any Queensland drivers licence held by the person during the period of the order. For example, the restrictions imposed under a special hardship order will continue to apply where a person obtains a new licence after the expiry of their previous licence. Other amendments in clause 63A more closely align the regulation-making power for special hardship orders with that for section 79E orders. Clause 63B clarifies the interaction between the rules of court and certain provisions in the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Driver Licensing) Regulation. The regulation contains provisions for appeal that will override any court rules if there is any inconsistency.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 64, as read, agreed to.

Clause 65 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))—

**Mr LUCAS** (8.13 pm): I move—

**20 Clause 65 (Amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary))—**

At page 60, after line 19—

*insert—*

‘**section 79E driver** means a person—

- (a) who holds a Queensland driver licence; and
- (b) in relation to whom a section 79E order applies; and
- (c) to whom a replacement licence under section 79F has been issued.

**section 79E order** means an order under section 79E.

**special hardship orders** see section 150(1A).’.

This amendment merely inserts a number of new definitions into the TORUM dictionary. The newly defined terms relate to amendments previously discussed. This is the last amendment. Again, I want to thank the shadow minister for his cooperation in relation to this. I again want to place on record my thanks to my staff and indeed the staff of the department. Mike Stapleton in fact worked with the shadow minister when he was a minister. He has worked diligently with me. So for what it is worth, Mike: if you ever want to put it down, both Vaughan and I think you have done a good job.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** Absolutely. I just make that clear: if you ever need to quote it in the future, both Vaughan and I think you have done an excellent job, and that must be worth something I hope.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 65, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 66 to 68, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

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

Motion agreed to.

### Long Title

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

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. LH NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.15 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Woodford Correctional Centre, Gymnasium

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (8.16 pm): I want to bring to the attention of the House a situation at Woodford Correctional Centre which is just amazing. It has a gymnasium which was closed allegedly due to the increasing concerns regarding the operation of the social club, particularly the possibility of liability exposure faced by the Department of Corrective Services. There are around 378 employees at the centre and, until two years ago, every one of them had full access to the gym for over eight years. This gym was equipped, maintained, cleaned and organised by the staff themselves during their own time and at their own expense. There was never an injury claim submitted by even one staff member in the entire eight years it was in use.

Staff followed all of the rulings that the department put out regarding this gym, comfortable in the belief that things were fine. The department then shifted the goalposts and demanded that it be staffed by a full-time fully accredited trainer. The staff addressed this problem by supplying a fully accredited trainer, but because the gym is used at different hours because of staffing rotation et cetera that trainer was not there for the full 24 hours a day and this was unacceptable in the department's view. Personnel took care of the department's concerns of liability and the social club by no longer operating the gym as a social club and buying insurance. Prisoners work out constantly, as we all know, and one would expect that prison officers should be similarly equipped to be physically able to diffuse potentially harmful situations. They want to be fit, but the government seems not to support them in being fit at their premises by accessing the gym.

The gymnasium at parliament provides for members and staff. It does not have a full-time trainer et cetera and has a deed of indemnity and release form which states—

I will indemnify the State against all claims, liability and expenses (including legal expenses) that may be made against the State in respect of personal injury or death to myself or any other person or loss or damage to my property or the property of any other person arising (directly or indirectly) out of my access to and use of the facilities, including all claims, liability and expenses arising from the negligence of the State.

Why can this same deed of indemnity and release form not be used to allow our prison staff to keep fit on the premises after or before work and meet the demands of their job? The government urges staff to consider using external services within the community around the prison to improve health and wellbeing. However, some staff live in Ipswich, work 12-hour shifts and do not get home until late at night. There is no gymnasium at Woodford, so these staff cannot avail themselves of external services. Therefore, their fitness level is dropping and they have real concerns about this. I am asking the government tonight to look into this. Let them sign this indemnity release form.

Time expired.

### Animal Welfare League of Queensland

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (8.19 pm): Since 1959, the Animal Welfare League of Queensland at Coombabah has been providing healthcare, food, shelter and love to society's unwanted, abandoned, injured and homeless animals. Annually, the Animal Welfare League cares for over 10,000 animals that arrive on its doorstep. Tragically, not all animals can be rescued and rehomed by the efforts of the Animal Welfare League volunteers.

Every year many companion animals are euthanased because there are too many animals and not enough responsible homes for them. In fact, in 2005 the Animal Welfare League of Queensland received 4,197 stray and surrendered cats and kittens from the Gold Coast and its surrounding areas. Of those, 43 per cent—1,800—were euthanased. Of the 5,480 strays and surrendered dogs and puppies that were surrendered in 2005, 19 per cent of them had to be euthanased.

The figures are even higher for the RSPCA and council pounds. It is clear that large-scale euthanasia is failing to reduce the problem of stray and abandoned animals. It is a reactive measure that does not adequately address the root cause of the problem. Cats are the most significant issue due to seasonal or summer breeding, which is referred to as the kitten tsunami. There is an increase in the euthanasia of cats in summer. On one day alone, the Animal Welfare League processed 87 unclaimed stray and surrendered cats and kittens.

It is really sad that in 2005-06, 75 per cent of all cats and kittens were handed in by their owners. These litters could have been prevented if all cats had to be desexed and microchipped prior to sale or exchange. This is the most easily policed and cost-effective way to ensure that animals that are not intended to be bred responsibly are desexed.

It is time that communities became more committed to working to reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanased each year. In December last year, I tabled a petition in this House signed by over 7,000 people who were committed to the compulsory desexing of animals to be the solution to this sad and tragic reality of pet overpopulation.

This Sunday I will be attending the Dogs Day Out event at The Spit, Main Beach, to demonstrate with hundreds of other people who want this issue to be addressed. I will be launching the next round of petitions that I will present to this House. Indeed, registered breeders would not be required to desex all of their animals. The aim of this petition is to highlight the unnecessary backyard breeding of cats and dogs and the consequences of humans not taking responsibility for that. I am pleased to support this petition and I call on all members of this House to promote the need for pet owners to microchip and desex their cats and dogs.

### **Moggill Electorate, Roads**

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (8.21 pm): Earlier today on a number of occasions I raised the issue of a serious bus smash that occurred at the intersection of Moggill Road and Kilkivan Avenue last week. I have protested very loudly and for very long the failure of this government to deliver its promise to fix that treacherous piece of road.

For every year that this government has been in office, we have had promises in terms of the Roads Implementation Program. Yet this morning I drove along Moggill Road and saw that still not one shovel load of work has been done on that road. This road is dangerous. Regularly, there are accidents at a number of intersections in my electorate, which is intolerable. One morning at the intersection of Rafting Ground Road and Moggill Road, a surgeon on an emergency call to the Ipswich Hospital tried to make a right-hand turn. It took 22 minutes for that surgeon to get out of Rafting Ground Road into Moggill Road for an emergency call at the Ipswich Hospital. I do not think that anybody in Queensland would think that it is tolerable to wait for relatively minor roadworks to double-lane a short distance of road and control a couple of very dangerous intersections. That is not too much for the people of my electorate to ask. This is a safety issue. It was highlighted dramatically by this bus smash that occurred last week.

While this work is left undone, we are risking the lives of children. Three schools in central Kenmore are accessed by this stretch of road. We are risking the lives of road users. That is not good enough. This road has been identified as a priority and it simply has not been addressed.

We have had a lot of success in getting people to use public transport instead of using Moggill Road. But in my entire electorate—geographically, the largest electorate in Brisbane by far—people do not have anywhere at all to park their cars. I will write again to the minister, and I appeal to the minister, that in the process of double-laning Moggill Road he provide residents with a park-and-ride facility for their vehicles. Currently, people either park in the street or they park in the dirt down at Grandview Road. For an electorate of this size to not have any paved area on which to park a car so that people can catch a bus is totally unacceptable. If we are serious about public transport, we will provide people with convenience so that they can use that public transport. So I will go away tonight and write yet again to the minister and ask for the—

Time expired.

### **Gateway Motorway**

**Ms DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (8.25 pm): Residents on the north side of Brisbane are watching their arteries narrow. I am not talking about cardiovascular systems; I am talking about the pressure on our national road system. The increase in the number of road users in south-east Queensland is far outstripping the rate at which the federal government is investing in transport infrastructure.

Currently, the section of the Gateway Motorway between Nudgee and Pine Rivers, which weaves through the suburbs of Deagon and Bracken Ridge in my electorate, carries an average of 50,000 vehicles per day, and there are big blockages on a regular basis. As the major link between the Gold and Sunshine coasts, the motorway carries cars, trucks, B-doubles, caravans, campers and trailers. Just one accident will force the entire motorway to a complete standstill with no way to move the traffic off the motorway until the wreckage is cleared. The motorway is not only the major traffic route from the southern states to the northern tip of Queensland, it is used by people travelling to the airport, the port of Brisbane and the city.

**Mr Roberts:** It is the Ipswich Motorway of the north.

**Ms DARLING:** It is the Ipswich Motorway of the north and it is being woefully neglected. The time and money lost to industry and individuals when this essential road artery becomes blocked is immeasurable. We need the current four lanes expanded to six as a matter of urgency.

The Queensland government has had to go it alone to duplicate the Gateway Bridge and upgrade the motorway to six lanes from the Gateway Bridge to the airport. We need a proper financial commitment from the Commonwealth not only for roads but also for the national rail system to take heavy freight off the roads for the safety of travellers and the environment. AusLink provides no extra funding for rail in Queensland.

The next Treasurer of Australia, Wayne Swan, has fought hard for improvements to the Gateway Motorway north of the bridge, which runs through several suburbs in his electorate of Lilley. But Wayne Swan is not just interested in his own backyard; he is a future Treasurer who understands the big picture. He knows that empty rhetoric does not build roads. Wayne Swan is the Treasurer that the Australian people need and deserve, because he understands the critical role of Queensland in the Australian economy. I know that the next member for Petrie, Yvette D'Ath, knows how to fight for her constituents. When she is elected she will not let the federal government forget the importance of the growing area that the electorate of Petrie covers.

The federal government must honour its responsibility to service the people of south-east Queensland and the individual and industry users of the national road network. The federal government needs to recognise that Australia does not stop at the Queensland border. Quite the contrary: Queensland is the first port of call for an increasing number of overseas visitors and a steadily increasing number of national and international companies are calling Queensland home.

The state of our National Highway and railway in this state is not only an embarrassment but also it is unsafe. For every \$1 that the federal government has spent on roads in Queensland, the Beattie Labor government has spent \$4. The Howard government has short-changed the people of Queensland for over a decade.

Time expired.

### **Bundaberg, Australia Day Celebrations**

**Mr DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—NPA) (8.28 pm): Almost every member of the House would have been involved in one or more of the many Australia Day celebrations throughout the country and would have been further inspired by the tremendous national pride and amazing deeds that have been achieved by many of our citizens. I was fortunate to be part of the Bundaberg celebrations, which not only honoured the award winners in the various categories but also, importantly, acknowledged the original inhabitants of this great land, past and present heroes and welcomed nine new local people as Australian citizens.

Richard Tyler—who has ignored his own debilitating illness to be a driving force in the establishment of one of the best renal units and support services in Australia and in the organisation of the annual thanksgiving services for organ donors families, and is a strong advocate for healthy choices—truly epitomises the Australian spirit. He was a very deserved recipient of the Australia Day Citizen Award.

Other champions who were acknowledged included young citizen awardee Daniel Auer, who has been profoundly deaf since birth but has inspired all with his achievements in sport, school and in the broader community. Senior citizen award winner Mrs Jessie Evans is one of those hardworking unsung heroes who expects no recognition but is the sort of person who is the lifeblood of the community.

Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce President Rod Ainsworth and accomplished flautist Amy Clements took out the cultural and young cultural awards. Queensland table tennis and AFL representative Billy Moorhead and Australian age touch star Kirsty Beer shared the young sports award.

Mrs Betty Wallace and Mrs Marlene Rayner, who have given years of dedicated service to the community, especially in the fields of netball and Girl Guides respectively, claimed the sport administrator and achievement awards. The Bundaberg Sunrise Rotary Club was also on the honours' list with its Multicultural Festival 2006 hailed as the Community Event of the Year.

The day ran like clockwork and it encompassed everything that is good about Australia, with the event positioned on the banks of the Burnett River and surrounded by the scent of the eucalypts. Under the direction of the Bundaberg City Council, Mayor Kay McDuff and her fellow councillors, many community organisations including the Rotarians, Lions, Scouts, youth groups, Girl Guides and church groups added to this special day. The Bundaberg Municipal Band and a local vocalist performed, while the various stallholders provided food and entertainment to complement a 'true blue' occasion.

A lot of these people would consider themselves ordinary, but I consider many of them extraordinary Australians, and we must continue to strongly support all of those individuals and groups who make such a major contribution not only to their community but also to this great state.

### Peninsula Development Road

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (8.31 pm): I rise again in this place to speak about the state of the Peninsula Development Road. For those who have come in late, the Peninsula Development Road is 550 kilometres of road that stretches between Lakeland and Weipa in far-north Queensland. Most of that 550-kilometre stretch remains unsealed. There is probably only about 50 or 60 kilometres that are sealed. It is the lifeline of the Cape York Peninsula and provides important tourism access during the dry season for people travelling from Cairns to the tip of Cape York Peninsula.

It has become an iconic drive for many Queenslanders and people from southern states who want to see the tip of Australia, the most northern point. The road remains dangerous and unacceptable in terms of providing access to tourism and the ability for cattle properties in far-north Queensland to get their product to market.

A few years ago the federal government named the road a Road of National Importance. It might as well have called the road a pork chop for what it meant, because in describing the road as a Road of National Importance it has committed very little money to the program. In fact under AusLink, the federal government has committed no money to the Peninsula Development Road this year. That was announced just recently. Under AusLink, some money has been allocated to the road that links the Peninsula Development Road to Bamaga, which is what we call an Indigenous access road. It has allocated \$1.6 million, but no money has been allocated to the Peninsula Development Road itself. That is a sad indictment on its commitment to regional Australia. It is a shameful road.

The Queensland government has said to the federal government that we have \$10 million on the table. In May last year the Premier announced that there is \$10 million on the table for the Peninsula Development Road if the federal government is willing to match that commitment. Up to this point, the federal government is unwilling to match that commitment that the Premier gave last year. I think that is a sad indictment. That is a way for the federal government to prove its commitment to the people of Leichhardt in the upcoming federal election.

It is an important issue for people on Cape York Peninsula. That \$10 million from the state government stands if the federal government is willing to match that commitment, but so far the silence from Canberra has been deafening. This is an important road in terms of the economic development of the far north of this state. It is an important road for Indigenous communities as it enables them to participate in the economic activity of this state.

Time expired.

### Feral Pigs

**Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (8.34 pm): I rise to draw the attention of the House to the growing feral pig problem in north Queensland and to highlight the ignorance of the Beattie government with respect to this issue. The Beattie government has consistently demonstrated that it is unwilling to assist landowners suffering economic losses from pig feral damage. The Beattie government is also abrogating its environmental responsibilities by not properly controlling feral pig numbers on state controlled land such as national parks and state forests.

Not only is the government not doing enough to address the problem; the responsible ministers in the Beattie government have had the audacity to deny that there is a problem. In a letter responding to representations I made to the government last year about the feral pig problem, the Minister for Natural Resources and Water had this to say in reply—

With regards to feral pigs in the Wet Tropics, there is no evidence to suggest that the population is 'rapidly growing'. At this time of year the feral pig population appears to be larger due to increased feral pig human encounter rates. People are more active with cane harvesting operations and feral pigs are moving around more as the water and food supply dwindles, which is common at the end of the dry season. Feral pigs are therefore seen more often and the community assumes the feral pig population is expanding.

The minister should be embarrassed that he signed a letter offering this nonsense as a serious response to a serious issue that is causing environmental damage and inflicting economic losses on landowners in north Queensland.

The minister is not alone in his unwillingness to acknowledge the feral pig problem in north Queensland. The minister for environment has made public statements that indicate a similar lack of understanding. The minister for environment had this to say in the local media while trying to defend her indefensible inaction on feral pigs in my electorate—

Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff have advised that in areas affected by Cyclone Larry they have not observed an increase in feral pig populations in protected areas, nor had there been an increase in the number of reports of pig activity from the community.

I say to both ministers that, if this is the advice they are getting from their departments, it is the wrong advice. So frustrated are the landowners and industry organisations in my electorate, Canegrowers has initiated a petition calling on the Beattie government to face up to its responsibilities by properly controlling feral pigs on state controlled land. My office is assisting with this petition and it has my full support.

### **Springfield Overbridge; Springfield Lakes State School**

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.36 pm): I would like to talk about two matters tonight: the new permanent overbridge at Springfield and also our new Springfield Lakes State School. I have been overwhelmed by the positive support for the new overbridge at Springfield Lakes, which will connect the two suburbs of Springfield Lakes and Springfield. The Woodcrest College school community have expressed their absolute delight at the solution because it is permanent solution to the problem of students running across the Centenary Highway. This problem will be fixed once and for all for our entire community.

The Woodcrest travelsafe committee, which is a subcommittee of Woodcrest College, and members of the community wanted a permanent solution to the issue—in other words, a permanent bridge across the highway. They did not want a temporary solution. They did not want a temporary bridge. They wanted a permanent solution so that the whole of the community could get on with their lives.

The permanent solution of the overbridge provides safe access for all residents in the communities of Springfield Lakes and Springfield. It provides safe access to the future railway station that will be built at Springfield Lakes. It also provides a safe crossing for students coming from Springfield Lakes across to Woodcrest College. This is what the community wanted and this is what I fought for. In fact, the minister for transport, Paul Lucas, and the Department of Main Roads officers were so sick of my representations to them that I am sure that they fast-tracked this project so that they could get on with their other important work. Day in, day out I was making representations on behalf of our community to get this very important outcome.

I would like to thank the minister for transport, Paul Lucas, and also members of the community for their telephone calls of support in relation to this wonderful announcement of the permanent overbridge. I look forward to working with the good, decent, honest members of the Springfield and Springfield Lakes communities in the consultation process, which will begin soon.

The new Springfield Lakes State School is led by Tom Byrne. This year, 399 students were enrolled from prep to year 7. There is an after-school care program for 50 schoolchildren. Children walk or ride their bicycles to school and some are picked up. However, of an afternoon all students have exited the school within 20 minutes. Interactive white boards will be in place by 15 March. Religious education in all year levels will start this week with Pastor Phil Cutcliffe. The community is using the school facilities such as the Springfield Lakes online group, the marshall arts group and also soccer skills training.

I place on record my thanks to Caroline Holt, Rachel Gambarini, Vice-President Bruce Morton and Mark Kelly of the P&C who have done an absolutely fantastic job in making sure that Springfield Lakes State School is one of the best state schools in our community. I also compliment the parents because the uniforms look great in navy blue and jade.

Time expired.

### **Gregory Development Road**

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (8.42 pm): I bring to the attention of the House the shocking state of the Gregory Development Road, particularly the section between Greenvale and Bluewater Springs. It is not ethical and is downright dangerous for regular road users to be confronted by triple road trains on a single sealed road with winding bends and no vision or warning of any oncoming traffic, and when any slight veering will send them down an embankment into a tree or into the path of an oncoming prime mover.

Local road users refer to this road as a billy goat track and a one-lane nightmare. In the past two years there has been at least one fatality and 23 accidents on the road between Charters Towers and Greenvale. Two of those accidents involved bulk fuel tankers which overturned and ruptured, spilling diesel. It took up to nine hours to clean up each of those accidents.

In recent times there has been a significant increase in population both within the township of Greenvale and in surrounding districts. Since 2002 Greenvale has grown from a population of 60 to 150. A large number of new mines have kicked off, such as Kagara Zinc Mine at Conjuboy Station. Two hundred people are employed at the mine site. There are a number of other mines such as Sapphire Mine at Mount Fox, Christmas Creek Mine and Pandanus Marble Mine. Metallica Minerals is also

aiming to develop a nickel processing operation by 2009, which is tipped to generate up to \$120 million a year in revenue. Ark Homes also uses this section of road and will move 50 of its homes through to the Gulf in the next 12 months.

The transport, grazing, tourist and mining industries, as well as Townsville enterprises, the Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, local residents and parents are screaming out for this road to be upgraded. The road is heavily used by road train triples that service the mines, livestock carriers and an increasing number of tourists who are usually hauling caravans on what is, for extensive sections, a one-way road. Many of those tourists are not accustomed to driving on roads in such a shocking state. It is a recipe for disaster if the road is left in its current state. Each day Kagara Zinc alone requires 48 round trips by 80-tonne payload triples travelling from Balcooma to Thalanga. That will happen every day for the next five years.

Huge amounts of royalties and payroll taxes come from local mines. That money is paid directly to the state government. It is estimated to be up to \$18 million per year in full production. In the past few weeks, those in charge of school buses made the decision not to transport children to school while it was raining, as it is too dangerous to face oncoming prime movers in wet conditions. Kagara Zinc ceased transport operations for two weeks because it was unable to transport during the wet. In addition, during recent wet weather the Bruce Highway was cut off for almost a week and supplies ran out very quickly.

Fast-tracking the upgrade of the Gregory Development Road would not only create an inland highway during the wet but would also relieve traffic congestion from the coast, reduce accidents, open up investments to the region and save lives. I call on the minister for transport to recognise the urgent need to fix this road once and for all and to seek extra funding through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee.

### **Motor Neurone Disease**

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (8.45 pm): Some three years ago I became the patron of the Motor Neurone Disease Association of Queensland. I did not know very much about that disease. I have to admit that I had only heard the term mentioned a few times, but that is understandable because it is a very rare although very cruel terminal disease. The statistics show that only one in 40,000 people will contract motor neurone disease. That is based on the number of estimated new cases to occur each year. At any one time, one in 15,000 Australians have or are living with motor neurone disease. That is about 1,300 or 1,400 Australia-wide and about 350 in Queensland.

Motor neurone disease is the name given to a group of diseases in which the nerve cells controlling muscles and movement are slowly destroyed. The muscles that are affected are those that allow us to move, to speak, to eat and to breath. We do not know what the nerve cells are activated by. The cause of motor neurone disease is unknown.

Motor neurones are located in the brain and the spinal cord. Something triggers them to destroy themselves. As the nerves die, the muscles weaken and waste away. The symptoms are horrendous, with people losing the ability to swallow, having difficulty speaking and slurring their speech. It can start with a weakness in the hands and legs, but the body then deteriorates very rapidly.

Motor neurone disease is difficult to diagnose and it can take a long time to diagnose. The expected life span of someone who has motor neurone disease is variable, but anything from two to five years is common. Therefore, neurologists are very reluctant to diagnose. From the point when they finally do diagnose the disease, because that can take such a long time, the patient pretty much requires palliative care because of the rapid deterioration that they face.

Associated with motor neurone disease is grief, anxiety and fear because of the knowledge that your body is going to fail you to the point that very soon you will choke or stop breathing. That is devastating for a young adult in the middle of their productive life, which is usually the case. That is unimaginable.

The Motor Neurone Disease Association of Queensland does a fantastic job providing support, equipment and aids, counselling and information for families of victims and for the victims themselves. Some great research is going on. Only about 10 per cent of cases are genetic, but genetic research is being done in the hope that we will be able to arrest some development in some people. Last night I attended a symposium held at the Wesley Research Institute. I commend the work of the people who attended the symposium last night.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.46 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, Palaszcuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson