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FRIDAY, 8 JUNE 2007

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

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling—Alleged Misleading of the House

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 1 November last year I outlined to members the general requirements of seeking a referral of a matter of privilege and the onus on members making a complaint of privilege to provide me with evidence and analysis of all elements of any allegation of contempt. In the case of allegations of deliberately misleading the House, I expect sufficient particulars of not only the misleading statement but evidence that the matter was deliberately misleading. Where there have been subsequent statements in the House that are relevant, this material should also be included. The member for Gympie raised a matter yesterday about which he subsequently wrote to me. The matter alleged that the Premier had deliberately misled the House in respect of a statement on 6 June 2007 about recent rainfall in the proposed Traveston Dam catchment area. I have considered the member's correspondence and I have also considered the parliamentary record, including a clarifying statement by the Premier yesterday. A case has not been made to me that the Premier has deliberately misled the House. I will not be referring the matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. I remind members of their duty—

Mr Mickel interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, can I ask you to treat the chair with some respect. I am actually dealing with a matter of privilege and I would ask that we deal with this in a proper way. I remind members of their duty to be careful in their statements, and if they find themselves in error it is their greater duty to clarify or correct their statements. I also ask other members to acknowledge when the record is properly clarified and corrected.

TABLED PAPER

SPEAKER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following Speaker's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Speaker of the Queensland Parliament (Mr Reynolds)—

- Letter from the Speaker (Mr Reynolds), dated 8 June 2007, to the Clerk of the Parliament advising of Mr Speaker's absence from Queensland between Sunday 8 July 2007 and Tuesday 17 July 2007 inclusive to attend the 38th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in Rarotonga, Cook Islands

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coal Industry

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 am): My government is committed to driving coal infrastructure to ensure that the Smart State continues to meet international demand for our world-class supply of coal. We have invested \$720.5 million in rail and port infrastructure so far this financial year, with a further \$518.9 million to be invested in 2007-08. Eighteen months ago the Queensland government commenced a feasibility study—an environmental assessment of the northern missing link project, a 69-kilometre rail link that has the potential to increase coal exports from the Bowen Basin by 70 per cent. Along with the minister for transport, Paul Lucas, I am pleased to announce to the House today that this study is now complete and the government has reached agreement with landowners to acquire the rail corridor. We are ready to go, and with industry support this project will deliver long-term benefits to the Queensland economy. This infrastructure will

ensure that Queensland keeps pace with future international demand for our world-class coal. I invite coal companies to come on board and make a commitment to this critical infrastructure. My government will continue to work with mining companies to deliver a strong, healthy and competitive coal industry.

South-East Queensland, Rainfall

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): In terms of the recent rain that we have had, as I said yesterday, the rain has been good—but the drought is not over. The rain that has fallen in south-east Queensland for the past two to three days is very welcome. The rain has filled thousands of new water tanks, it has greened our lawns and lifted the spirits of the people in the south-east. But we need a lot more rain before we can say the drought is over. The latest rainfall is consistent with the predictions by one of Queensland's leading climate experts, Professor Roger Stone of the Australian Climate for Sustainable Catchments at the University of Southern Queensland.

Professor Stone says there is a much better outlook for rain this winter and beyond, but not drought-breaking falls. He says that, while the Southern Hemisphere autumn saw the demise of the most recent El Nino event, drought conditions associated with the lowest six- to 10-year rainfall period in history will persist in south-east Queensland. Professor Stone has produced a map which shows the probability of reaching or exceeding the long-term median rainfall—what we commonly call normal rainfall—for each respective rainfall station in Queensland for the June to August period. I table a copy of the map.

Tabled paper: Two maps titled 'Probability of exceeding median rainfall for June-August based on a consistently near zero phase for April/May' prepared by the Department of Natural Resources and Water.

I will also table a second map which is a larger scale version of south-east Queensland. The map shows that the probability of receiving the long-term median rainfall over southern Queensland this winter is between 50 per cent and 70 per cent, depending on the exact location. For example, the chance of Esk receiving normal rain this winter is 60 per cent compared with 21 per cent last year. The current patterns suggest Toogoolawah could receive 130 millimetres total rainfall over winter compared with the long-term median of 99 millimetres.

This is good winter rain, but in absolute terms it is still not enough to break the drought. To produce a major impact on our river and dam system requires rainfall amounts in the order of 200 millimetres a month. According to Dr Stone, we are unlikely to get this type of fall before the core summer period and it is still a little premature to suggest that that type of outlook will occur this summer. I table a news release in relation to this matter and I will be making some public comments later this morning with Dr Stone, but I thought that that would be of some interest to all members.

Tabled paper: Press release, dated, 8 June 2007, issued by the Premier, titled 'Rain was good and there could be more to come'.

World Expo 2010

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): There are other matters that I would like to report on quickly, and I am mindful that today there is reduced time for question time and ministerial statements. My government is investing \$3.6 million in the next four years on our World Expo 2010 showcase in terms of Smart State ideas, arts, sciences, products and culture. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Smart State continues to build our cultural, research and trade linkages around the world.

Later this year we will be renewing our Sister State agreement with Shanghai, China, where we will also be heavily involved in World Expo in 2010.

My Government is investing \$3.6 million in the next four years on our World Expo showcase Smart State ideas, arts, services, products and culture.

As part of this, Mr Speaker, our promotional plan will target business partners and world media, and we are planning to again take part in the Australian Pavilion.

In 2005, our involvement in Japan's World Expo attracted more than 71,000 visitors to our pavilion site, so I am keen to lift our profile to new heights in Shanghai.

China is Queensland's third largest merchandise export destination, and our largest source of international students.

World Expo 2010 will give us the platform to strengthen our existing relationships and ignite new ones.

Fortitude Valley

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): Fortitude Valley is known around Australia and internationally as the hub of night-time activity and entertainment in Brisbane. As the local member for almost 18 years, I have watched the transformation of Fortitude Valley from a rundown part of Brisbane to a vibrant and exciting place for people to visit and live. One of the most important factors in ensuring a safe nightspot is quality policing and easy public access to officers on the beat. Later today I will join my colleague the minister for police, Judy Spence, to officially open the newly refurbished police beat on the Brunswick Street Mall. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Valley hosts up to 60,000 people on Friday and Saturday nights. We need a good base for our police and easy access for the public.

We have spent more than \$500,000 dollars upgrading the police beat to meet the demand for police services in the Valley.

We are also going to construct a new multi-million dollar Fortitude Valley police station. That process moved a step closer this week with the government calling for tenders for the project.

My government has also dramatically increased police numbers in Queensland.

Everywhere has benefited from this policy with the Brisbane Central District now having an approved strength of 388 sworn police officers.

The numbers for in the entire Metro North Region have increased about 30 per cent from 895 in 1998 to 1,165 today.

Police in this area are now well equipped to continue protecting the community.

Mr BEATTIE: I also table the news release that goes with it.

Tabled paper: Press release, dated 8 June 2007, issued by the Premier titled 'Beattie and Spence open new Fortitude Valley police beat'.

Smart Awards

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): As I indicated yesterday, last night Minister John Mickel, Minister Warren Pitt, other members and I attended the Smart Awards for small business. Queensland has a lot of smart businesses, as was shown last night. The award winners were Oakey Abattoir, Ludowici MPE, the Brisbane Airport Corporation Pty Ltd and Acacia Ridge based BSD Robotics. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland has many smart businesses—in biotechnology, information and communications technology, creative industries, aviation and aerospace.

We also have businesses at the forefront of change in our more traditional industries like agriculture and manufacturing.

And last night the best and most innovative of them were honoured at the Smart Awards presentation ceremony at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This year we had close to 100 applications, so the judges have had their work cut out for them.

The overall winner was Mincom, a Brisbane-based company known as Australia's largest commercial software developer.

Mincom was the overall winner of the 2007 Premier of Queensland's Smart Awards, it also took out the awards' Science, Innovation and Technology category and was a finalist in the Services category.

The Smart Awards, now in their fifth year, reward innovative Queensland-based businesses like Mincom that have helped make the Smart State philosophy a reality.

Another stand out winner in this year's awards was Gold Coast surfboard manufacturer Firewire Limited which took out the Rising Star category for exciting new firm.

The company is using fibre composite technology, not fibreglass, to manufacture the next generation of surfboards.

Other award winners were:

- Oakey Abattoir which has developed a quality system that is able to trace each piece of meat back to its property of birth.
- Ludowici MPE for its innovative and competitive range of mineral process equipment.
- Brisbane Airport Corporation in the Service category; and
- the Acacia Ridge-based company BSD Robotics for winning the Small-to-Medium Manufacturing and Mining category.

I table the full list of winners and finalists for the information of members.

The full list of winners and finalists in the 2007 Premier of Queensland's Smart Awards is:

Food and Agribusiness

- Winner—Oakey Abattoir Pty Ltd, Oakey (4691 1277)
- Finalists—Di Bella Coffee, Bowen Hills (3252 5858); Australian Country Choice, Morningside (3902 4141)

Large Manufacturing or Mining

- Winner—Ludowici MPE, Banyo (3292 4444)
- Finalists—Easternwell Group, Toowoomba (4659 1555); Dingo Australia, Dalby (4672 5400); Rio Tinto Aluminium, Brisbane (3867 1698)

Rising Star

- Winner—Firewire Limited, Burleigh (5587 7700)
- Finalists—Broadcast GP, Milton (1300 761 956); Grabba International Pty Ltd, Coopers Plains (3344 6599)

Science Innovation and Technology

- Winner—Mincom Ltd, Brisbane (3303 3716)
- Finalists—Biolytix Technologies Pty Ltd, Maleny (5435 2700); Micreo Limited, Eight Mile Plains (3340 6245)

Services

- Winner—Brisbane Airport Corporation Pty Ltd, Hamilton Centre (3406 5702)
- Finalists—Signmanager Pty Ltd, Milton (3876 2411); Mincom Ltd, Brisbane (3303 3716)

Small to Medium Manufacturing and Mining

- Winner—BSD Robotics, Acacia Ridge (3273 0273)
- Finalists—Fibre King Pty Ltd, Clontarf (3889 4400); JKTech Pty Ltd, Indooroopilly (3365 5842); Platypus Graphics, Stafford (3352 0300)

Smart Award of the Year

- Winner—Mincom Ltd, Brisbane (3303 3716).

Ludowici MPE

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): As I said, one of the last night's award winners was Ludowici MPE. It happens that Ludowici was one of the companies that participated in a Queensland government mining trade mission to India in November last year. That trade mission was led by my colleague the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations, John Mickel.

Today I am delighted to announce that Ludowici MPE has made successful inroads into the Indian market and secured export deals worth more than \$1.35 million for mineral processing equipment, including centrifuges. Ludowici only recently moved its base to Queensland. One of the big reasons for that move was the level of support that Queensland provides for businesses here, particularly those with a strong focus on exports.

Magic Millions

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I am pleased to announce that our government has secured Magic Millions' two most prized events under contract to the Gold Coast until 2012. The five-year deal between the Queensland Events Corporation and Magic Millions Pty Ltd retains the lucrative January and June sales events on the Gold Coast. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The horses sold at Magic Millions have become internationally renowned for their quality and investment value, and this is backed by strong domestic and international marketing campaigns.

These events show even greater potential for growth.

Our investment will concentrate on initiatives aimed at further leveraging overseas buyers, with a particular focus on the growth of the June sales.

Since 1999, Queensland Events has enjoyed a successful partnership with Magic Millions through its January sales, during which time the event has undergone remarkable growth.

The number of horses sold has more than doubled—in excess of 1600 yearlings were sold at this year's event.

In addition gross sales have exceeded 500% growth, and the median sale price per horse has risen by more than 200%, with the January 2007 average sitting just under \$182,000.

The rising success of the Magic Millions brand has been demonstrated at this month's National Sales where the Australasian record for a thoroughbred weanling sold at auction was smashed with a \$1.15 million sale.

This new agreement which extends until 2012 will further strengthen the Gold Coast's reputation as the place to purchase future horse-racing champions.

The Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions National Sale is running until June 14, 2007.

The next Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions Carnival incorporating the Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions Yearling Sales will be held from January 9-18, 2008.

Duyfken

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): The Queensland government will be contributing \$100,000 each year for the next three years in support of the *Duyfken* project. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In 1606 Dutch navigators from a tiny wooden ship stepped ashore on Queensland soil on the north western side of Cape York.

That tiny ship, the *Duyfken* has now been reproduced at a life-size scale complete with all its original details. The captain Willem Janszoon was the first European to map and record Australia.

The Foundation responsible for this magnificent piece of craftsmanship is based in Fremantle, and has been touring the ship to a range of Australian ports since its completion in 2000.

But this ship's strongest Australian links are to Queensland and particularly Far North Queensland—where *Duyfken* Point remains as testament to that first arrival in 1606.

That is why the Queensland Government in conjunction with the Cairns Port Authority, Cairns City Council, and the *Duyfken* Foundation have recently joined forces to keep this magnificent replica in Queensland waters as a sea going vessel for as long as possible if not forever.

The Queensland Government will be contributing \$100,000 each year for the next three years.

The ship has recently returned to Brisbane from Hobart and Sydney where it was a centrepiece at this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race. It has been moored at the Maritime Museum at South Bank since early May.

Today it will depart for Cairns where it will begin its new life as part of that city's booming maritime tourism industry. With the onset of the cyclone season later in the year the *Duyfken* will return south and play a similar tourism role in Moreton Bay.

Queensland has a rich European maritime history that extends beyond Captain James Cook, John Oxley, and Matthew Flinders and our efforts to keep this wonderful replica in Queensland waters will be further testimony to that rich history.

Queensland Economy

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.43 am): For the sixth consecutive month, the unemployment rate for Queensland has fallen. As the Premier advised the House yesterday, Queensland's trend unemployment rate for May dropped to an extraordinary 3.5 per cent. The government's mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs continues, and Queenslanders are benefiting in droves.

Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics yesterday confirm that Queensland's trend unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points from the previous month, to be 3.5 per cent in May, the lowest rate in over 29 years. This is a remarkable achievement for Queensland.

The ABS statistics indicate that full-time employment continued to be the key driver of jobs growth in Queensland. In May, full-time trend employment increased by 6,400 positions—that is, 6,400 in one month. For the year, total employment in Queensland has risen by 104,300 jobs, more than 100,000 of which were full time. This represents around 40 per cent of the full-time jobs created across Australia.

These figures show that Queensland continues to lead the way as the nation's economic engine room, creating more than one-third of all new jobs in Australia this year. Queensland's unemployment rate continued to be below the national rate, a trend that has now occurred for almost three years.

While those opposite continue to criticise this government for actually investing in this state, by building infrastructure and by delivering services, this area of activity will be one of the hallmarks that separates us from the opposition. We provide opportunities.

Queenslanders who are benefiting from jobs across a number of economic sectors and those who are working on the vast number of infrastructure projects across the state would hardly be complaining, because under us they are too busy working.

Northern Missing Link

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.44 am): As the Premier announced earlier, the Northern Missing Link is a step closer thanks to the agreement between the state government and landowners across the 69 kilometres of the proposed rail corridor. This link would correct the existing Goonyella and Newlands systems and upgrade the Newlands system, both in the Bowen Basin, and would open up the potential for a massive increase in Queensland coal exports. The acquisition agreement provides the certainty of tenure for the rail project to proceed, so the ball is now firmly in the court of industry to determine the next step in this project.

Completing the link in conjunction with the potential expansion of the Abbot Point coal terminal to 50 million tonnes per annum capacity will allow an additional 35 million tonnes per annum to be exported. This will be worth an extra \$4 billion a year of coal exports for Queensland.

The Northern Missing Link also allows coal exporters access to the port of Abbot Point should there be congestion or other issues at Dalrymple Bay. This is clearly testament to the government's commitment to building on the already strong foundations of Queensland's growing export coal industry.

The Queensland government and Queensland Rail are not the only players in the coal chain and they are not the only ones who can make a difference. Upon demonstrated industry commitment to construct the corridor, QR will begin discussions with mine owners on staging the construction subject to commercial agreements.

Normally, projects such as the Northern Missing Link would not occur unless the mining companies agreed to fund the study at the outset. However, the Queensland government stepped in to fund the \$26.5 million study because we were not prepared to allow any lack of agreement among industry to delay this important project.

I invite mining companies to step up to the plate and show that they are willing to get this project happening. The ball is now in their court.

Spit Net Trial

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.45 am): I rise to inform the House of an important new trial commencing this week in a number of police watch-houses around the state. At the end of last year, a 10-week trial of innovative safety headgear called spit nets was undertaken in 11 Queensland watch-houses to examine the possible benefits and effectiveness of the garments.

As a result of this trial, the Queensland Police Service Ethical Standards Command has recommended a further and more comprehensive evaluation be undertaken via a 12-month trial in eight major watch-houses statewide. This 12-month in-depth trial commences today and will be evaluated in conjunction with officers from the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Watch-house officers have now undergone training in how to use the spit nets and watch-house managers have been briefed regarding the objectives and evaluation methods of the trial. Under the guidelines of the trial, the spit nets will only be used on offenders who spit at police or have a history of spitting at police. If offenders cooperate with police and behave themselves, they will avoid the wearing of spit nets completely.

Spitting at someone who is doing their job is repulsive. Unfortunately it is on the rise. In the 12-month period from October 2005 to October 2006, there were 222 recorded incidents in which at least one police officer was spat at by an offender.

It is even more heinous when we realise that some of the people who are in watch-houses have diseases such as hepatitis and may be only too willing to spit at police officers to try to pass on their diseases. These actions are not only abhorrent but also potentially expose police officers to three months or more of worry while they wait for extensive and expensive medical tests, and often psychological treatment. This is a daunting and stressful process that one of these spit nets may be able to prevent.

This is about workplace health and safety for police, and a protective measure for other prisoners, as well as the nurses, chaplains, lawyers and cell visitors who come in contact with these offenders.

The spit nets do not pose any danger to offenders. The single-use, disposable nets are much like what a beekeeper wears. They are lightweight mesh garments through which an offender can see and breathe easily. I have one here and, if any member wants to have a closer look, they are welcome to come to my office today to look at it.

This is not about encroaching on the civil liberties of offenders, as some lawyers and community advocates will try to suggest. It is about protecting the safety and health of police officers going about their job.

I look forward to reporting back to the House regarding the findings of this trial and the evaluations by the Ethical Standards Command and the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Collective Bargaining

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (9.47 am): I wish to bring to the attention of the House a statement made on 23 June 2004 on collective bargaining. I quote—

... collective bargaining provisions which are being introduced into Parliament tomorrow are the most significant step forward in legislative terms for small business in the last thirty years. It allows independent petrol stations to collectively bargain with the big petrol suppliers.

It means that small farmers can collectively bargain with the big retailers. And they do have powers of boycott. It is important to recognise that the ramifications of this initiative are all beneficial to small business and provide them with an equal playing field to big business for the first time.

Who do members think made that statement? Greg Combet or Bill Ludwig? Who was it who was promoting the virtues of collective bargaining?

Mr Wallace: A socialist?

Mr MICKEL: A socialist? Perhaps. Who was it who was arguing that there is unequal bargaining power with big corporations? Who said that in negotiations, groups of employers should be able to strike by not supplying goods to large corporations? It was the then federal Minister for Small Business, Joe Hockey, who held that view.

A government member: Not Fidel Castro?

Mr MICKEL: No, it was not Fidel Castro. All members would know that over the last couple of weeks the papers have carried ads that advertise the virtues of collective bargaining.

The minister who made those statements, Joe Hockey, is now responsible for the WorkChoices laws that allow large corporations to insist that new employees accept individual contracts. Those employees are denied the right to collective bargaining. Minister Hockey is responsible for laws that allow large employers to offer the 'Billys'—the small people of this country—a job as long as it is on an individual contract.

Under WorkChoices, large corporations starting on new projects can register an agreement by which all new employees will be covered. Workers have no say in these employer greenfield agreements. For the life of the agreement, workers are prohibited from taking strike action.

Yet small businesses or farmers negotiating with the same employer can get together and place a ban on supplying goods to that corporation. Joe Hockey recognises that small business cannot bargain on equal terms with these large businesses, but he still expects individual workers to have to negotiate with these large firms. It is hypocrisy and it should be exposed for what it is.

Queensland Ambulance Service, Intensive Care Paramedics

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (9.50 am): Last sitting I informed the House that just last month paramedics were again voted Australia's most trusted profession. There is good reason for this, given the skills and expertise of modern paramedics.

I am pleased to inform the House that the latest batch of Queensland's intensive care paramedic students are being put through their paces. They are now reaching the final stages of the Graduate Diploma of Intensive Care Paramedic Practice, from which they will join the ranks of the most highly trained ambulance officers in the state—and, I would say, in the world. In addition to the high level of skills held by paramedics, ICPs can administer a greater range of drugs and perform more complex medical procedures.

Recently, 20 student ICPs from across the state underwent a week of scenario based training in Brisbane. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Rescue and police special operations were also involved in the exercises. It was a chance for the students to develop their newly acquired skills. Every ICP student participated in every scenario, playing a different role. That allowed them to get a realistic experience of what it will be like to be the primary patient care officer. They also had an opportunity to review their fellow students and to assist them as they would in real life. The focus of the week is on good debriefing, with students encouraged to reflect on their performance after each scenario.

The intensive care paramedic program is now in its 10th year in Queensland. Their ranks are swelling every year, with more than 200 paramedics having already completed the university training required to become an ICP. Initiatives such as the ICP program, the rural and remote paramedic program and the introduction of new drugs such as the meningococcal antibiotic show how the QAS continues to drive clinical excellence. It is clear that all Queenslanders have every right to place Queensland's paramedics as their No. 1 most trusted profession.

Blueprint for the Bush

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth) (9.52 am): There has been some scaremongering and mischief-making, particularly from some of the wet blankets opposite, about the future of the Blueprint for the Bush. I want to reassure all members that the Blueprint for the Bush is alive and well and that the government is absolutely committed to it. Furthermore, support for the blueprint in rural and regional areas is evident by the number of local governments that have applied for grants through the blueprint's Our Place, Our Future funding initiative. This initiative has been set up under the blueprint to provide funding for activities that strengthen and enhance relationships between rural and urban areas and to help attract and retain skilled workers in regional areas.

I am pleased to inform the House that just yesterday I approved more than \$145,000 in funding for local governments to attend the inaugural Country Week Expo in Brisbane next month. Under the Our Place, Our Future program grants of up to \$10,000 were available to consortia of local governments to attend Country Week. A total of 14 submissions from both councils and regional local government associations have been approved for funding. Both the funding program and the Country Week initiative are important parts of the Blueprint for the Bush.

So while the Local Government Association of Queensland has withdrawn from the blueprint agreement, councils themselves are receiving funding under a blueprint initiative to attend a blueprint initiative. They recognise the value of the blueprint, just as we in government recognise its value. More than \$150 million in new funding has been allocated to the blueprint and we are happy to share some of this with local councils to help support our fellow Queenslanders in rural and regional areas.

Strong rural communities are characterised by innovative local leadership, active citizens and strong community networks, which is what the Blueprint for the Bush seeks to promote. I am confident that the blueprint will continue to deliver benefits for the people of rural and regional communities.

Great Barrier Reef, Effects of Farming Practices

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (9.54 am): A recent study of Queensland's coastline by a leading marine researcher has found that farming and development practices are impacting on our coral reefs. According to reports, researchers studied 200-year-old coral skeletons from the Great Barrier Reef to chart changing water quality. The results showed that intense farming and other human activity are sending soil and chemicals into the ocean. I am not blaming anyone in any particular industry. We recognise that there are a whole range of different impacts from different activities.

The Beattie government is playing its part by helping central Queensland farmers fight the flow of pollutants into their major waterways and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef.

Mr Malone interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I note that the members of the National Party have no concern for the future of the Great Barrier Reef. They should be ashamed.

The innovative neighbourhood catchments project will study the movement of pollutants originating from broadscale land use. These pollutants include elevated levels of sediment, nutrients or pesticides in the water discharged from coastal rivers. The project focuses on two catchments: Gordonstone Creek, north of Emerald, and Spottswood Creek, west of Moura. Each catchment covers about 300 square kilometres and both ultimately drain into the Fitzroy River.

This project will help landholders better understand the relationship between the landscape condition and management and the levels of pollutants delivered to major waterways and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. The neighbourhood catchments project will focus on the initial stages of the process, where rainfall runs off the landscape into local drainage lines and small, rarely flowing, creeks.

Mr Malone interjected.

Mr WALLACE: Again, I note that the National Party opposes farmers looking after their land better. Landholders will learn how they can conserve soil, maximise water use efficiency and reduce costs on things like fertiliser and fuel while also increasing yields and profits. By improving in these areas, farms can become more sustainable in the long term.

The project helps identify both high-risk and low-risk landscapes, depending on the level of pollutants they send to the Fitzroy River. Potential projects to minimise pollutants off site include constructing contour banks and waterways, providing additional livestock watering points, controlling traffic or minimising use of till farm machinery and revegetating riparian areas.

The program is a contribution to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, a joint state and federal government project.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Questions on Notice

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, standing order 114 requires that every question on notice shall be lodged with the Clerk by the end of question time each day. I remind all honourable members that, as question time will conclude by 10.30 am today, pursuant to sessional order 1(g), questions on notice asked today must be lodged with the Clerk by 10.30 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Local Government Reform

Mr SEENEY (9.58 am): The ranks of the coalition are a little depleted today because many of the members are attending local government protests in their communities. Those of us who are here would like to be participating in the Red Friday protest. My first question is to the Premier. There is a protest meeting in Gayndah today protesting against the forced amalgamations of councils, which will tear the heart out of regional communities in Queensland. Gayndah is in my electorate. It is a 15-minute flight by government jet. I would like to be there. How about the Premier and I, after question time, hop on the government jet and go to Gayndah so that we can hear the protests of people whose communities the Premier is about to destroy.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are asking a question?

Mr SEENEY: I am asking a question.

Mr SPEAKER: You have not asked it yet.

Mr SEENEY: I am asking the Premier: will he come with me to Gayndah immediately after question time and hear the protests of the people whose communities he is proposing to destroy?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I say to those people who are protesting today that we will listen to what they are saying. The independent commissioners who have been appointed to look at these boundaries will report by 1 August. I will note very carefully the protests and the views expressed by those who are concerned about particular matters. But I just remind them that the terms of reference that were drafted and approved by the government ensure that the community interest that exists will be protected.

What we are about is protecting their communities for the future. I warn people not to be sucked in by the National Party rhetoric that is about politics.

Mr Copeland: You go and talk to them and find out what they say.

Mr Hopper: You are not game. Answer the question.

Mr BEATTIE: If you weren't being so rude I might have a chance. The reality is that debate in a democracy means that you allow people to have a view. The member is saying that I should listen to these people. He asks me a question about it, then he interrupts so I cannot even answer him. A bit of courtesy is not a bad thing. When I grew up in the country good manners were important. That is something worth remembering.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned his community. As he knows, someone from his community, Di McCauley, is actually one of the commissioners. She knows this area very well. She knows Gayndah very well. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, she used to represent that area. I have no doubt that she will represent the views of those people very well. Like the Leader of the Opposition, she knows Gayndah very well.

An opposition member: Better than you do!

Mr BEATTIE: I am not suggesting that my knowledge of Gayndah would be anywhere near as good as Di McCauley's and therefore I know it will be represented clearly when the commissioners express their view. I note that at one point there was going to be a rally outside of Parliament House. That was the initial arrangement. In fact, one of the councillors—

Mr Seenev: Don't go away, there still might be.

Mr BEATTIE: It was to be today—this morning. The letter reads—

I am a councillor from the Wondai Shire. I have been working with—

and it mentions a lady from the west—

... helped me to organise this rally and I am in the process of engaging support for Red Friday march on parliament against amalgamations while parliament is sitting.

Is that happening today?

Mr Seeney: Watch this space.

Mr BEATTIE: I will see this morning. They said they were going to march today and that is fine and what they agreed to do—

Mr Seeney: 80 communities—80 different communities.

Mr BEATTIE: You don't like this because, as you well know, what happened was they were going to march here today—

Mr Seeney: 80 communities!

Mr BEATTIE: Could I ask for a little latitude because I have been interrupted?

Mr Seeney: Would you have talked to them if they had been here today?

Mr BEATTIE: You are so rude. As I was about to say—

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.03 am): I move—

That the Premier be further heard.

Motion agreed to.

Mr BEATTIE: I only need another minute. I make the point that if Leader of the Opposition showed some courtesy I could have answered this within the time limit. I set three minutes so that we actually get three minutes. If the members opposite want to interrupt, then inevitably they disrupt this place. No-one wants to take away their time for asking questions. They should just give us a fair go.

The point I want to make is very simple. We know that there was going to be a protest rally here today. It was moved to Gayndah because there was not enough support to hold it outside of parliament.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Miss Simpson: Is this like the rainfall figures?

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Maroochydore.

Mr BEATTIE: You have provoked me now. I will read out the email. It is from Kathy Duff. It is to a mayor and it is titled, 'March against forced amalgamations'. The email states—

Dear Mayor Joy,

I am a councillor from the Wondai Shire. I have been working with Kelsey Neilson from the west who has helped to organise the rally. I am in the process of gauging support for a Red Friday march on Parliament House against forced amalgamations in conjunction with a campaign in the west to name June 8 as Red Friday. Parliament will be sitting. The permits and everything are organised. The time frame is short but I have a fair swell of people ready to go if we can shore up the numbers. I am waiting on Redcliffe and I will know more about it tomorrow.

It goes on and on. Basically what happened is they moved it to Gayndah. I table that for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 29 May 2007, from Kathy Duff to 'Mayor', relating to a march against forced amalgamations.

Mr Copeland: 60 communities all over the state.

Mr Seeney: All over the state.

Mr BEATTIE: If you actually want to me to finish I will, but give me a chance to answer the question. I am not being critical of the fact that there is not a protest rally outside parliament today. Had there been one I would have been happy to meet a delegation from it.

Mr SEENEY: Oh!

Mr BEATTIE: What is the matter with you today? Are you on red beans as well as red ties? Could we not have red lollies handed out on Fridays to the opposition.

Mr Mickel: It's red cordial.

Mr BEATTIE: Is it red cordial, is it? I make the point that I do respect the views of those people in the communities who are protesting today. I will listen to what they have to say and so will my minister Andrew Fraser, but no-one should misunderstand us: we are absolutely determined that there will be stronger local government in Queensland. We are determined to ensure that the regions in Queensland are well represented. We are not going to have weak councils. We are going to have councils that will be able to stand up and look after ratepayers and that will be able to give job security to those people who work in councils. We are not going to allow our councils to be second rate. We want strong, powerful councils and that is what Queensland will get.

Queensland Ambulance Service

Mr SEENEY: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I table an ad which calls for volunteer emergency ambulance drivers in Calliope to undertake emergency driving to hospital and undertake extrication of patients from vehicles and residences. What happened to the world's best ambulance service that the Premier promised us when he introduced the ambulance tax?

Tabled paper: Copy of advertisement from the Calliope Shire Newsletter dated June 07, titled 'Wanted—Emergency Ambulance Drivers.'

Mr BEATTIE: May I please have a look at the circumstances? I do not know the particular circumstances here. This states—'Wanted: emergency ambulance drivers. Seeking voluntary emergency ambulance drivers to assist the paramedics.'

Mr Seeney: It is a call for volunteers.

Mr BEATTIE: I do not know the particular circumstances. I am happy to obtain those and provide them to the Leader of the Opposition. I will give this information to the minister. If we can provide the opposition leader with extra information we will. Let me make this point—and I said this yesterday: we have funded the Ambulance Service in a way that it has never been funded before. It has certainty in terms of the levy; unfortunately it does not provide funding. The proceeds of the levy provide about 30 per cent of the Ambulance Service budget. We top that up from general revenue.

As I have indicated, since I have been Premier we have actually doubled the amount of funding to the Ambulance Service. In the budget brought down by the Deputy Premier, which I am not in a position to discuss, there is provision for an extra 250 ambulance officers—paramedics—this year. We have exceeded \$400 million for the first time and this year's increase in expenditure—in the vicinity of \$50 million—is the single most dramatic increase in one year in the history of the Ambulance Service. It has never happened before.

I do not know every tiny detail, nor should the member expect me to and nor would he, but I am happy to find out the details on this. I noticed yesterday that in the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply—he spent 30 minutes and 30 minutes only—he never put forward one positive idea.

Mr Seeney: Yeah.

Mr BEATTIE: It is all very well to whinge.

Mr Seeney: You ought to read it again!

Mr BEATTIE: I have, and it is a tragic experience.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I will take that interjection; let me talk about times. The Leader of the Opposition spent 30 minutes yesterday. Mr Springborg, who I have my moments with, did 50 minutes in 2006.

Mr Malone interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: What did I do? I will come to that. In 2005, 50 minutes for Mr Springborg; one hour for Mr Springborg in 2004. Mr Springborg took 50 minutes in 2003. Mr Horan did 50 minutes in 2002. In fact, in 2001 Mr Horan did an hour. He felt very expansive that year. In other words, the current Leader of the Opposition is only half as good as Mike Horan and only half as good as Mr Springborg. That is what it means. I have not finished yet; I am warming to the case. Mr Borbidge did 45 minutes in 2000; Mr Borbidge did 50 minutes in 1999. I, of course, being a person of very, very few words, did 50 minutes when I was Leader of the Opposition in 1998.

Mr Mickel: But you had good staff then.

Mr BEATTIE: I did, too. They went on to bigger and better things. I did an hour in 1997, I did an hour in 1996, and Mr Borbidge did 50 minutes in 1995. The Leader of the Opposition's speech yesterday is the shortest speech in relation to the budget by any opposition leader in over 10 years.

Queensland Economy

Mr ROBERTS: My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House of how Queensland's economic performance compares with the rest of Australia?

Mr BEATTIE: I certainly can. I thank the member for Nudgee for the question, because, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, he has a keen interest in these matters. Yesterday was a historic day. We had the lowest unemployment figure that has ever been recorded in our state since figures have been kept. The trend unemployment level of 3.5 per cent, which the Treasurer made reference to before, is an extraordinary figure. Everyone in the business community, everyone who has been working hard as part of the Smart State strategy's philosophy of innovation, should be very proud of themselves. A trend unemployment level of 3.5 per cent is unprecedented. That is the trend figure.

The May unemployment figure represents a decline of 0.2 per cent from 3.7 per cent in April 2007, and remains well below the rate of 4.6 per cent recorded a year ago. More than that, we are leading the nation. We need only to compare several key economic forecasts of Queensland and the nation in 2007-08. Queensland's economic growth is five per cent. What is the national economic growth? It is 3¾ per cent. Queensland's employment growth is three per cent; national employment growth is 1½ per cent. I hear this nonsense from time to time, 'What about John Howard?'

Ms Bligh: What about John Howard?

Mr BEATTIE: What about John Howard?

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, he will be unemployed shortly. Queensland employment growth is three per cent; the national employment growth is 1½ per cent. I repeat what I said last night at the Smart State dinner: we have created 40 per cent of all the full-time jobs in Australia, yet we are only 20 per cent of the national population. We are making John Howard look good. The truth is that Kevin Rudd should be very angry with us because we are actually making John Howard look good.

But there is more than that. Business investment in Queensland is 8¾ per cent; national growth in business investment is 7½ per cent. We are leading the nation. Queensland's unemployment rate, in a general sense, is four per cent; the national unemployment rate is five per cent. Queensland's population growth is two per cent; the national population growth is 1¼ per cent.

To put these indicators into a regional and global context, the Queensland economy—as the Treasurer said at the budget lunch the other day—is forecast to grow faster than those of many industrialised national economies such as Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA in 2007-08. In fact, our economy is predicted to outperform 25 of the 30 member countries of the OECD, and the rate of Queensland's economic growth is forecast to almost double their average.

Ms Bligh: That's with a state of four million people.

Mr BEATTIE: And that is a state of four million people. Queensland's unemployment rate has been below the rate recorded in Australia for almost three years. It is better than the rest of the nation. The latest figures show that over the year total employment rose by 104,300 persons, comprised of 100,700 full-time and 3,600 part-time jobs, and accounting for 37 per cent of all jobs created nationally. We are the engine room of Australia—no-one laughs about my five per cent unemployment rate target any more.

Local Government Reform

Mr ELMES: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. I table material from the *Noosa Journal* of 23 May 2007 in which a two-time state Labor candidate and current federal Labor candidate and the former Labor candidate for Noosa both support Noosa remaining as a stand-alone local council. In this, they reflect the strong opinion of over 31,000 or 86 per cent of the submissions to the Local Government Reform Commission and the strong views of the Premier's good friend Sir Richard Branson. Instead of continuing with his dictatorial approach on this issue, will the Premier now lend his public support to the community of Noosa in our desire to sustain the unique lifestyle we have developed?

Tabled paper: Copy of article from The Noosa Journal, dated 24 May 2007, titled 'Still time to have your say'.

Tabled paper: Copy of article from The Noosa Journal, dated 24 May 2007, titled 'Letters to the Editor'.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to answer this question. We appointed an independent commission to examine submissions from the community. The member's community in Noosa has put in a range of submissions. I understand that there is support from sections of the tourism industry to support amalgamation. There are people who understand that a strong local government means a strong tourism industry and a strong base for ratepayers, but all the views that have been expressed by the member's local community in the submissions that were made—and I could be wrong about this, but I think the member's community made more submissions than anywhere else—will be taken into account by the independent commissioners.

The member for Noosa is a member of the Liberal Party—well, at least he is today. His former leader, Bob Quinn, is represented as one of the commissioners. He is there because he was a member of EARC, which was one of the bodies that initially looked at electoral boundaries. Why did the government put him there? Because, one, he understands politics in terms of regional communities and local government and, two, he was a member of EARC. I have no doubt at all that he will take into account the views of the people of Noosa. As the Deputy Premier said, he is also a fair and decent person.

We were strategic in this because we wanted to listen to Queenslanders. The views of the people of Noosa will be considered by all of the commissioners. To guarantee that, we have Bob Quinn, the former Liberal Party leader, there. The Leader of the Opposition asked me a question about Gayndah.

To guarantee the people of Gayndah and those in the bush and the regions are listened to, Di McCauley, a former National Party local government minister, is there. When we put these things out there, none of those opposite can argue against this independent process because the former Liberal Party leader will be on it—

Mr Elmes: They want your support.

Mr BEATTIE: Please do not be rude.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Please do not be rude. The former Liberal Party leader will be on it, and a former National Party local government minister will be on it. You do not particularly like that because you know that she will be fair. It does not suit your current National Party agenda. That is what it is. I did not come down in the last shower; I understand the agenda. Those views will be taken into account, as will Sir Richard Branson's. His view will also be taken into account.

Mr Elmes: That's good. That's what they want to hear.

Mr BEATTIE: Please do not get excited. You are a bit red and flushed in the face now. Do not get excited.

I do urge local councils to be mindful of what they are doing with their chief executive officer contracts. I made some comments in this House the other day in relation to the members for Burnett and Bundaberg and they both got their knickers in a knot. I will table two letters that I received from the mayors, which I am quite happy to do. I do not necessarily share the views expressed, but because of my openness and my goodwill to those councils—and I have spoken to the mayor of Bundaberg—I table them for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 May 2007, from Tim Rose, Chief Executive Officer of the Burnett Shire Council to the Premier, relating to the renewal of his employment contract.

Tabled paper: A letter, dated 4 June 2007, from Rob Whiddon, to Mr Fred Monk, President, South Carolina Export Consortium, relating to the proposed trade delegation to Queensland.

Tabled paper: A letter, dated 25 May 2007, from Cr Kay McDuff, Mayor, City of Bundaberg to Premier relating to statements in the House about the renewal of the CEO contract.

Let me make it clear: we will end up with strong local government. We are not going to have weak local government in this state.

Queensland Events Regional Development Program

Ms CROFT: My question is directed to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Can the Premier update the House on the latest round of funding in the Queensland Events Regional Development Program?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Broadwater for her question. Under the latest round of funding in this highly successful Queensland Events Regional Development Program, I can announce that 47 events will be taking a share of in excess of \$1 million. This will support festivals, competitions and celebrations that crisscross the state from Scarborough to Richmond, Kenilworth to Goondiwindi, Toowoomba and the golden west, to Noosa and the tropical north.

The Sunshine Coast's colourful Coolum Kite Festival this September, for example, is a big winner this round. It will receive \$150,000 over three years to grow even bigger and better. A \$25,000 grant for the Flight Centre Cycle Epic, which travels through the Lockyer Valley, Ipswich and Toowoomba in August, will enable the race to expand to nine days this year. There is \$25,000 for next year's Australian Orienteering Championships in Maryborough, \$20,000 for the Country Cricket Championships in Mackay—

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mr BEATTIE: We can see who is an orienteer! There is \$25,000 for the Goldfield Ashes in Charters Towers.

Mr Wallace: Hear, hear!

Mr BEATTIE: I understand that the minister has played in that event—two ministers have; Minister Pitt as well.

In many communities events like these are their lifeblood. They attract visitors and investment, and they generate what we have been doing a lot of in this state: jobs, jobs jobs. Because of this funding support, almost every weekend in the coming year there will be an event somewhere in Queensland from jazz and music concerts to fossil exhibitions and historic re-enactments. In fact, this funding program has invested more than \$8.9 million in some 420 events since I established it in 2001. This program identifies events that have the capacity to grow; it provides them with the financial injection they need to provide key infrastructure and develop their marketing and business plans. I congratulate this round's grant participants and I encourage event organisers across the state to apply for a part of this generous funding program.

In terms of more detail, we can see that this program is based on encouraging all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live or how they voted, and we can see that this is making a significant difference to the state. If we look at the Gold Coast, for example, there is the Wintersun Festival in Coolangatta and the Anaconda Adventure Race and Anaconda Junior Survivor at the Gold Coast, both of which have been funded. Gladstone has the 1770 Festival. Mackay has the Tagalong Charity Ride and Bush Carnival as well as the 2008 Australian Country Cricket Championships.

In the outback, there is the Southern Cross Television Isisford Fishing Competition, the Annual Bilby Festival and the 2007 Richmond Great Outback Challenge. In the Southern Downs, there is the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival. On the Sunshine Coast, there is the Noosa Enduro 2007 and the Noosa Jazz Festival. Gee, we look after Noosa; it is amazing how much we look after Noosa. There is also Kenilworth Celebrates!

Time expired.

Victims Register

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to media reports regarding Bruce Sheedy, a convicted killer currently serving a five-year sentence after pleading guilty to dangerous driving which caused the deaths of Chantelle Shalice and her two-year-old daughter, Ellora. Sheedy wrote to Chantelle's parents accusing their daughter of causing the accident and even suggesting that she was to blame for killing her two-year-old daughter. Even if victims' families consent to contact—which occurred in this case initially—what checks will the minister now put in place to ensure that the horrific emotional turmoil Chantelle's parents went through will never be visited upon other grieving relatives?

Ms SPENCE: This came from an article that was in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* yesterday that had a number of inaccuracies in it, and no doubt that is what the honourable member is relying on. The article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* said that Mr Sheedy was given permission to write a letter to the Rennie family and that his letter was a disgrace. There is no doubt that his letter is a disgrace, but it is absolutely inaccurate to say that he was given permission by anyone to write to these people.

The issue is that the family concerned had not registered on the Victims Register and that is why he was able to write to them. Anyone who does not want to receive a letter from a prisoner does need to get themselves on the Victims Register, and these people are entitled—

Mr Seeney: That's terrible.

Mr McArdle: You can't put the family through that.

Ms SPENCE: I am just telling you the system that exists.

Mr McArdle: Well, change it.

Ms SPENCE: The system that exists is the system. If people do not want to receive a letter from someone who is in prison, all they need to do is contact the general manager of the prison and get themselves on the Victims Register and they will not receive mail.

Mr McARDLE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I am not questioning what occurred initially.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr McARDLE: I am asking: given the point that has arisen, what will the minister do to ensure this never occurs again?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms SPENCE: I think it is a fair system. The prison authorities are able to open and read prisoners' mail. In that way, they are able to determine that prisoners should not send mail to people on the Victims Register. I would encourage this family to get on the Victims Register. In fact, I understand from a brief that I received from the department that someone from Corrective Services has already contacted the family to ask them if they want to be on the Victims Register so that in future they will not receive mail from this man. I agree with the opposition. Undoubtedly, this family was upset to receive this letter, as we all would be, but there is a way to stop this and that is to get on the Victims Register.

Mr Rickuss: How would they know?

Opposition members interjected.

Ms SPENCE: If opposition members have something very positive to suggest about a way that we could improve the system, I am happy to receive representations from them.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Speaker, I will take that challenge up that the minister has laid out to me. Screen the mail!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, you are interjecting. There is no point of order.

Ms SPENCE: If the member for Caloundra wants to write to me with a suggestion of how we might improve the system, I am happy to look at it and I challenge him to do that. At the present time, we do have a system which prevents prisoners sending these types of letters if people are registered.

Coalition, Service Delivery

Ms NOLAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. Service delivery in a growing state is vital, especially given that we have 1,500 new Queenslanders a week. Can the minister advise the House how the alternative government proposed to support or otherwise the service needs of this growing state prior to the last election?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. It seems to me that while we are listening to varying levels of economic analysis this week now is as good a time as any to remind ourselves of what might have been happening in June this year if the people of Queensland had made a different choice in September last year.

On the Friday before polling day, the coalition outlined their promise of an extraordinary level of election commitments of \$10 billion—that is an absolutely, unbelievably profligate level—and that it would pay for that by cutting the public sector by 1.5 per cent in every agency. So there would be a 1.5 per cent cut across every department, netting \$1.6 billion. I am not entirely sure how \$1.6 billion was going to pay for \$10 billion of promises, but we will put that to one side.

What does it actually mean in real terms, in real service delivery? A 1.5 per cent cut to the education budget is a cut of \$75 million, which is equal to 900 teachers. At the same time as this government is increasing teachers and teacher aides by 192, the coalition would have been cutting them by 900—a net loss by the end of this year of 1,092. What would the coalition have done to the police? It would have cut the police budget by \$20 million, or 180 police officers. So instead of an increase of 200 by the end of this year, under the coalition we would have seen a net loss of 380 police officers.

What would the coalition have done in Emergency Services? We listen to all the feigned outrage and moral indignation from coalition members on ambulance officers, but what would they have done if the people of Queensland had given them the chance? They would have cut their budget by \$11 million, which would have meant 120 fewer ambulance officers. So at the same time as we are increasing the numbers by 250, under the coalition we would have seen a cut of 120—a net loss by the end of this year of 370 ambulance officers.

Nowhere is the coalition's genius more apparent than in the area of health. It would have cut the health budget by \$100 million. In another horrible new record for the coalition, it would have become the first Queensland government in living memory to cut the health budget—and by nothing less than \$100 million. Of course \$100 million pays for 1,100 nurses, so instead of the 3,000 increase in our nursing workforce that this government has delivered into hospitals across the state, under the coalition we would be in the process of taking 1,100 nurses out of the system. Never forget the coalition's service delivery approach.

Corrective Services, Dog Squads

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Minister, it has been reported that there has been a cessation of night shifts by the Dog Squad unit at certain prison precincts. If suspicious activity is detected in surrounding bushland, the only responses available are (1) to use the perimeter vehicle, which is not permitted to go off-road; (2) to page the Dog Squad, which is on call but may take 30 minutes to respond; or (3) to ring 000. I ask the minister: have these cutbacks been put in place to cover the huge increase in overtime generated by the new rotational roster, and have potential escapees been instructed to stay on the roads so that the perimeter vehicles can catch them?

Ms SPENCE: I did make a ministerial statement about the Dog Squad on Tuesday of this week, but I am happy to go through it again. The fact is that Queensland has the largest Dog Squad of any prison system in Australia. We have 63 dogs and we are going to increase the number of dogs and dog handlers in the Brisbane precinct. We had a review of the Dog Squad, and on Tuesday I outlined who did that review, why we did the review and what the outcomes of that review were.

I accept that a lot of people find change very difficult and some dog handlers have found the change very difficult. What it means is that the Brisbane Dog Squad is no longer run from the central Dog Squad precinct in Wacol; the Dog Squads now come under the management of each prison, so each prison now has its own individual Dog Squad, and the general manager of the prison is in charge of the Dog Squad.

Mr Lucas: He's a top dog.

Ms SPENCE: Top dog. What it means is that the general manager can determine whether the Dog Squad is needed at night time. If the general manager of the prison—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr Beattie: You are so rude, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Seeney: You are so dishonest, Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to withdraw that comment.

Mr Beattie: Stand up, be a man.

Mr Seeney: I withdraw. Perhaps the Premier might like to too.

Mr SPEAKER: No, let us get going. I call the minister.

Ms SPENCE: I am happy to spend hours talking about the Dog Squad. I am a great fan of the Dog Squad. I believe that the changes we have made to the Dog Squad in terms of the way it operates are going to be very good for the future. But I do acknowledge that some Dog Squad officers are struggling with any kind of change.

What this change means is that if the general manager has intelligence that things are happening outside the perimeter of the prison at night that person can roster the Dog Squad on duty at night time. What happened before is that we had one Dog Squad officer with a dog patrolling all the prisons in the south-east corner at night time. I question the effectiveness of that. What we have put in place now is a much smarter system for the use of the Dog Squad in the future.

Let us not forget that the Dog Squad is not the only security we have at night time in a prison. Every prisoner is locked down in their cell, which is escape proof, by seven o'clock at night. We have state-of-the-art perimeter security which has meant we have not had an escape from a secure prison for the nine years of the Beattie government.

Mr Lucas: Unlike them.

Ms SPENCE: That is unlike the track record of those opposite. We are the only state in Australia that has perimeter patrol vehicles patrolling our prisons. Our prison security speaks for itself.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queensland Ambulance Service; Paint Your Town Red

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.32 am), by leave: This morning in question time I was asked by the Leader of the Opposition about volunteer emergency drivers. Volunteer emergency drivers are a longstanding feature of the Queensland Ambulance Service. It is common for single-officer stations like Calliope and Mount Larcom to have a number of volunteers whom they can call on if the officer is attending a case where they think they may have to attend to the patient in the back of the ambulance. The minister will spell out more details in a minute.

For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, this happened under National Party governments and it will continue under my government. I thank those volunteers for their efforts. What I was being asked about this morning by the Leader of the Opposition was a matter that also happened when the National Party was in office. It is about volunteers and there is nothing new about it.

On another matter, I draw to the attention of the House a copy of an email I have received which is from Kathy Duff to Joy Leishman. It says—

Hi Joy,

The march in Brisbane is unfortunately postponed. Contacts concerned the time frame was too short to do it well and advised to hold off until August. We are holding a Burnett Communities rally on Red Friday. I will keep you up to date if anything happens with a march in Brisbane.

Thanks for getting back to me.

Kathy Duff.

I table that email.

Tabled paper: Email dated 5 June 2007, from Kathy Duff to Joy Leishman, relating to the postponement of a march in Brisbane.

One thing I am worried about is that I have received a copy of a communication dated 8 June in which the 'Paint your town red' program was set out. There are a number of things it advises people to do. One of them states—

Decorate your cenotaph and lay red wreaths with messages about amalgamation on them.

I have to say that I think that is reprehensible. I would say to anyone who is involved in this protest, 'You have the right to send the government a message. You do not have the right to denigrate those who died for this country.' Let me make it clear, I am personally embarrassed that anyone would want to use the Anzac spirit of this nation—

Mr SEENEY: Point of order, Mr Speaker. Could I ask the Premier to table that document so that I might—

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SEENEY: Can the Premier table that so that I can determine its authenticity. I would like to determine whether or not it is authentic. I move that the Premier table the document he is referring to.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I am about to incorporate it—

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that the Premier is actually referring to the document.

Mr BEATTIE: I will incorporate it. There will be no problem.

Mr SPEAKER: Let us look at tabling it after that.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition never wants the truth. Not only am I about to table it—

Mr Seeney: I want to see it.

Mr BEATTIE: Do not be rude.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Can I finish my ministerial statement? What I was about to say is this: not only am I going to refer to it but I will tell the world about it. I will make sure that everybody sees it and not just this parliament. I think it is a disgrace that the National Party would go out there and denigrate the Anzacs of this country. I think that it is an absolute disgrace.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I find that offensive. I ask that it be withdrawn. If the Premier tables the document I will give him a response.

Mr SPEAKER: I will now go on to the tabling.

Mr SEENEY: I find that offensive and I have asked for it to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: There was no personal reflection on you, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SEENEY: As the Leader of the National Party I believe there is.

Mr SPEAKER: There was no personal reflection and I would ask you to take your seat. Take your seat, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr HORAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I actually find that remark personally offensive. I am in the National Party. That has not been done by the National Party. I find it personally offensive because I do not agree with that being done to cenotaphs. I do not think anyone on this side of the House would agree with that. I find it personally offensive, I do not like it, and I want it withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I indicate again: as members are well aware, the standing orders provide that when a personal reflection has been made on a member, the member who has made that personal reflection is asked to withdraw. There was no personal reflection. You have the chance to get up in debate and discuss this matter in the parliament. There is no personal reflection. I am now going to go on to the—

Mr BEATTIE: In a moment I will move that it be incorporated in *Hansard* so everybody knows. Let me make it clear that there is only one wreath we lay on a cenotaph and that is in memory of the dead. That is what we do. We actually go out and honour those who fought for this nation.

Mr Seeney: Nobody disagrees with that.

Mr BEATTIE: You do not even have any respect for the parliament.

Mr SEENEY: Point of order, Mr Speaker. That was a personal reflection and I find that offensive. Nobody disagrees with what the Premier is saying. Nobody on this side of the House disagrees with what the Premier is saying.

Mr SPEAKER: Make your point of order.

Mr SEENEY: He is trying to make political mileage out of cenotaphs.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me make it clear that what has happened here today is—

Mr Seeney: That is a personal reflection and I ask it for to be withdrawn.

Mr BEATTIE: I will withdraw whatever he has referred to. I do not know what he is referring to. I withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: What are you referring to, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: It has been withdrawn. Please sit down.

Mr BEATTIE: What we have found out today is that those opposite have been caught out. That is what happened. As the Premier of this state, I am not going to allow the cenotaphs of this state to be denigrated by the National Party or anybody else.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: You have no right to come in here and defame the dead. You are a disgrace. The lot of you are a disgrace.

Miss SIMPSON: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Premier's comments are offensive and untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn. He is lying about who is behind it.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: Those opposite are not fit to be members of this parliament.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am on my feet.

Mr BEATTIE: You are a disgrace.

Mr Seeney: And you're a liar.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, let me make it clear—

Mr SPEAKER: Having previously warned the Leader of the Opposition, I ask the member for Callide to withdraw from the chamber under the provisions of standing order 252.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Before you continue, Premier, I ask the member for Callide to withdraw from the chamber immediately.

Whereupon the honourable member for Callide withdrew from the chamber.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the document be tabled.

Mr BEATTIE: I will move, if I get a chance, that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I will take the motion from the member Gladstone that the document be tabled.

Motion agreed to.

Mr BEATTIE: I now move—

That it also be incorporated in *Hansard*.

I want this disgrace to be shown to every Queenslander and I move that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Opposition members: Table it!

Mr BEATTIE: I need a copy. I have not finished referring to it yet.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has moved that the document be incorporated as well as tabled.

Motion agreed to.

Red Friday 8th June

8/6/07

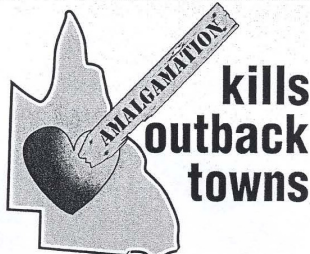
Paint your town red

Old says **NO** to FORCED COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS
Please join in with RED Friday on the 8th of June

- ✓ Advise all your contacts
- ✓ Wear red shirts and red hats
- ✓ Wear red face paint
- ✓ Decorate your cenotaph and lay red wreaths with messages about amalgamation on them (our Anzacs fought for our democratic rights)
- ✓ Make up a red flag for your flag poles
- ✓ Use red crepe paper to adorn your car/house/ shop fronts/ power poles
- ✓ Use acrylic water based paint to write a message
- ✓ Use red cellophane
- ✓ Paint your median strip lawns red
- ✓ **IMPORTANTLY** Organise for local photographers to get shots & videos of your town and send them to the newspapers and television stations

You are only limited by your *imagination*
HOW RED CAN YOU MAKE YOUR TOWN!!!

Help SAVE OUR SHIRES and get behind RED FRIDAY 8th June
Contact: Kelsey Neilson 4748 4979 email DKNeilson.TwoRivers@bigpond.com



Mr BEATTIE: Thank you.

Mr COPELAND: I rise to a point of order. The motion has been carried that it be tabled. The Premier must table that immediately.

Mr BEATTIE: All right. I am happy to. Can I get a copy of it? I want a copy of it because I want to make sure I make absolute reference to the connection that exists between an article that appeared in the paper and the authors of this document. Let me make it clear: I am absolutely furious that anyone would go out and denigrate the dead of this state. It is absolutely unacceptable—absolutely unacceptable!

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Red Friday 8th June paint your town red'.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Cunningham.

Mr BEATTIE: The diggers gave a lot for this nation and they are not there for some cheap political stunt that those opposite have been part of. That is what this is. Those opposite are a disgrace! None of them are fit to be members of this parliament! They are an absolute disgrace!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: I rise to a point of order. I find that personally offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: That was not a personal reflection on yourself, member for Darling Downs. I say again: read standing orders.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Darling Downs, I warn you.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me make the point: in an article in *The North West Star* on Friday 1, June 2007 Boullia councillor Kelsey Neilson said that red wreathes would be at the city's cenotaph next Friday to be followed by a town meeting which will be in the form of a sausage sizzle. I table that for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Copy of article from the North West Star, dated 1 June 2007 titled 'Boullia to go red in protest'

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to disassociate himself from this, but it says 'Help save our shires' and it sets out Kelsey Neilson's email address. It has got the lot! What checks did the Leader of the Opposition make? What checks did the National and Liberal Party make about this campaign that was widely publicised? They are all in here wearing red ties. What checks did they make so that they were not part of this denigration of the great Anzacs?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I would remind members that this is the last sitting of the parliament until August, and I suggest to you that unless you want to have an early day let the Premier continue. Premier.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I am going to finish my remarks by saying this: in this country Anzacs fought for the right to protest. They fought so that we can enjoy the freedoms of this country. They fought and died for the democracy that we enjoy. Part of that democracy means that we have to have some respect for those who gave their lives. I have to say that I am just absolutely appalled that anybody could do this to a cenotaph that is there to honour the dead of this country. It is absolutely appalling! The National Party has been out there supporting this campaign. It made no checks and balances. It was in the press. This was on 1 June. It is absolutely clear that this campaign was part of it. The article and program sets out exactly what was going on. It just seems—

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Not only was she in the email; this is so clear. I am embarrassed for members of the National Party that they have allowed themselves to be associated with this. Why are they screaming in here today? Because they got caught out. All they have done is use cheap politics. That is all they are involved in.

Miss Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I have warned the member for Maroochydore and under the provisions of standing order 252 I would ask the member for Maroochydore to remove herself from the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Maroochydore withdrew from the chamber.

Mr BEATTIE: All I am arguing for is some respect for those Anzacs. That is all. I am not asking for anything else. I call on the Leader of the National Party and I call on the Deputy Leader of the National Party to issue a public apology today to the Anzacs. I want to say to all those diggers who served this nation, whether they voted Liberal, Labor or National Party: I apologise to them today on behalf of all members of parliament, because this behaviour is unacceptable—totally unacceptable. Those opposite have been caught out and they should apologise to the diggers of this nation.

Valentin Report

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.43 am), by leave: Today I want to set the record straight about Mal Brough's claim that the Queensland government supplied limited information to John Valentin's assessment of Indigenous policing in Australia. His statement is completely false and misleading and, frankly, quite confusing. In December Mr Valentin met with high-ranking officials from the Queensland Police Service. At this meeting he was presented with a comprehensive 38-page report on policing in our Indigenous communities. I have read this report. It clearly sets out the location of Indigenous communities, it presents demographic information and it has maps. It clearly talks about the number of police officers and PLOs and QATSIPs. It talks about the police to population ratios. It has pages of crime statistics and it talks in volumes about our crime prevention initiatives in Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Police Service is in the best position to determine how it can best serve Indigenous communities, and this report formed the basis for Queensland's priority request which included, firstly, a plan for policing in the Torres Strait. Members will realise that that was our main priority and we have not waited for the dodgy federal government promises; we have done it ourselves

this week in the budget. We also prioritised a police station on Badu Island, funding towards police housing in Aboriginal communities so that we can increase police numbers, and help with watch-house upgrades in Aboriginal communities. I think they are very reasonable requests from a Police Service that is on the ground daily in these communities and best understands its own requirements. I will table a copy of the report which the Queensland police gave to Mr Valentin and Mr Brough for their inquiry.

Tabled paper: Report, undated, titled 'Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Communities'

The Valentin report, which came out last month, appears to contradict itself in that in the covering letter that Mr Valentin sent to me he says that the report has been prepared following extensive consultations with the Police Service of Queensland. But then in his own report on page 10 he appears to contradict his own statement by claiming limited information was received from Queensland. Page 2 of the Valentin report highlights that the states are responsible for policing in relevant jurisdictions and that it is the federal government's position to assist in the extension of policing services in remote areas. Clearly, the Howard government is not interested in this pledge, because there is no more remote area for policing in Australia than in the Torres Strait.

Tabled paper: A letter, dated March 2007, from John Valentin to Hon Mal Brough MP, relating to the assessment of policing in remote Indigenous communities.

Mr Brough has dismissed Queensland's request for a plane or for any of our requests in the Torres Strait. For him to say that we have not fully cooperated with Mr Valentin is nothing more than political game playing from a man who is not fair dinkum about these issues but merely wants to claim some political points. The Queensland government and police have worked hard to ensure the very best standards of policing and other services in Indigenous communities in this state. I do not think Mr Brough is fair dinkum, but I am still receptive to the Howard government's offer for assistance. I have got in touch with Mr Brough personally and said that I will sit down with him at any time at any place to talk about these issues. As someone who has been a minister for Indigenous affairs in this state for more than six years, I have visited every Aboriginal community at least more than once—some of them eight or 10 times. I have visited almost every community in the Torres Strait in that capacity and also as police minister. I think I do have something to contribute to this discussion. I think Mr Brough and his federal colleagues could learn a lot by talking to me and Queensland police about these issues without trying to play this pathetic political game which is getting no-one anywhere.

Queensland Ambulance Service

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.48 am), by leave: I want to reiterate what the Premier said with regard to what the opposition raised here today in relation to an advertisement which I will have authenticated. I do know the officers, but I will have that authenticated.

The volunteer drivers scheme is a longstanding feature of Queensland Ambulance Service. Many hundreds of volunteer drivers work throughout this state. As members of the opposition should know, they are usually SES workers or rural firefighters who volunteer to assist their local ambulance service. In this state, there are about 290 stations. Of those, 200 are in the bush. Two-thirds of our stations are in country areas. A lot of those stations are single-officer stations like Calliope and Mount Larcom. They like to have a number of volunteers to call upon when attending cases if they think they may have to treat a patient in the back of the ambulance and will need a driver. In those cases, the paramedic will contact a volunteer and arrange to pick him or her up, en route to the case. The opposition leader does not know that. He does not know how emergency services operate, even though they have been doing it for many years.

Volunteers never respond on their own unless they are trained as first responders, of which we have many hundreds, or are honorary first officers. I thought that that was fairly common knowledge among members from both sides of the House. Indeed, the scheme was introduced by the National Party and has been operating for many years.

This advertisement simply calls for more volunteers to boost the numbers available to communities. That is not a new idea and the opposition is being misleading by trying to make out that it is. I have the numbers here: 380 honorary officers work across the state. As I said, this happened under previous National Party governments and it will continue under this government.

I thank those volunteers from throughout the state for the great work that they continue to do for emergency services in country areas. We need them to assist our ambulance officers. They do a great job and they do it very competently.

Mr Malone: What are we paying the ambulance cover for?

Mr PURCELL: I can hear a tinkling bell coming from the other side of the House, but I will not respond to him. He knows very well what the ambulance levy is for. Two-thirds of our ambulance stations are in the bush. That is not a bad effort. They well and truly get great value for their ambulance cover.

**CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL**

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 7 June (p. 2081)

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (10.52 am): On this red Friday when so many shires are protesting about how the heart and soul is going to be ripped out of their communities, I wish to comment on the budget. As I start, I am reminded of the Mayor of Warroo Shire, based at Surat. Mayor Donna Stewart is often held up as a great mayor because of the way that that little township and the shire have been revitalised. Every Anzac Day, as mayor she stands at the cenotaph to receive the two or three remaining veterans of the district. How many of those shires will no longer have a mayor to represent them and acknowledge the great efforts that those veterans have made? It is the shire councils that maintain cenotaphs in such a respectful way.

This budget was brought down in a time of great plenty. Normally, it would be a hard budget to criticise because there is so much money coming in that the government should be able to do something with it. We should be in the soundest economic position that the state has ever seen. Despite the fact that Queensland is at the zenith of the greatest economic boom that we have ever experienced, we have the greatest amount of debt that the state has ever seen and I doubt will ever see again.

By the year 2010, this state will have a combined government and government owned corporation debt of \$52 billion. If we take a round figure interest rate of six per cent to seven per cent, the taxpayers of this state will be funding an interest bill of over \$3,000 million per year. Before we even get into the barriers, before each year has even started, the taxpayers are going to have to fund the government owned corporation debt through water charges, transport charges, rail charges and the like, and they will also have to fund the government proportion of that debt through increased taxes.

In this time of plenty we are being tipped over and drowned in massive government debt, and the greatest example of that is the Beattie car tax. This week, in a bill associated with this budget, we saw that the average battler in Queensland who wants to buy a second-hand Falcon for \$1,500 will have to put their hand in their pocket and find another \$225. A contractor, farmer or business person who wants to buy a Toyota LandCruiser trayback for work will have to put their hand in their pocket for another \$1,200 in stamp duties on that vehicle. Because of the financial mismanagement of the Beattie government, every single motorist in this state will have to find hundreds or thousands of dollars extra every time they buy a car.

There will be a 50 per cent increase for four-cylinder cars, a 75 per cent increase for six-cylinder cars and a 100 per cent for eight-cylinder cars such as the Toyota LandCruiser that I mentioned, which uses new technology and is actually more efficient than a six-cylinder car. That is what is happening in this state.

Like others, I would like to draw a comparison with the federal government. In 1996, the Howard government inherited a \$96 billion debt from the Labor government. Because of earlier high interest rates, that cost \$8.5 billion a year. Every year the federal government had to find \$8.5 billion a year that could not be spent on things that were needed in Australia. Over about 10 years, the federal government has repaid \$96 billion, so now extra money is available. The taxpayers of Australia have had tax relief and superannuants have a scheme that can provide them with some security in their old age in return for all the work that they have undertaken.

In Queensland, at the height of the boom, we are taking on absolutely massive mountains of debt. After the federal budget I heard the Prime Minister remark that, in a time of great plenty, they provided for today and they provided for the future. They paid off that \$96 billion debt so that Australia has become one of the very few nations in the world that is a net saver and not a net borrower. As a result, on top of all of the taxation concessions to people and the good arrangements put in place for superannuants, the federal government has been able to provide for a future fund.

By 2013, for the first time in history, the Commonwealth government will be able to pay the superannuation of its workers. Defence force personnel, federal police, public servants, quarantine officers and so on will have their superannuation paid out of the proceeds of that future fund. The federal government will not have to take millions or billions of dollars out of its current financial statements to pay annual superannuation. It will be there, provided for.

In addition, the federal government has developed a future fund for the education industry. This year, \$5 billion was allocated to that fund. Can members imagine, in a number of years time, having \$50 billion for tertiary education in Australia and the interest that that would earn? This massive boom and good financial management have provided for our children and education facilities into the future.

That is what government financial management is all about. Since 1998 when it took power, if this government had been gradually upgrading roads and building the dams and pipelines that we suggested back in 1998—indeed, we provided the initial seeding fund to have the plans developed—we would not see the obscene financial rush and mess that is happening.

I will give members an example of what is happening. The recycled water pipeline is costing hundreds of millions of dollars more than what it would have cost had it been done in an orderly fashion. The documentation is not ready. People are standing around being paid high amounts of money because the documentation is not done. At one stage, 72 of the easements were not completed. We are hearing reports of people who think they will get 'X' amount for their easement—and that is what it is worth—for a pipe to go under a corner of their paddock, and they get 10 or 12 times as much out of the blue because of this obscene rush. This is because we have a Deputy Premier who is also the Treasurer and also the Minister for Infrastructure who has said that this pipeline will be laid in record time. That is what is costing so much money in this budget. Projects such as the pipeline will cost hundreds of millions of dollars more than what they could have cost had they been constructed in an orderly, progressive fashion out of each of the past budgets.

As I have said, Queenslanders are often asking for more. They would like some more services. I am one who is asking for more mental health services in my electorate. On the subject of mental health services, I wish to say that it was very deceitful for this government, where the policy has always been that proceeds from taxation and royalties et cetera go into consolidated revenue and from there into the Education budget, the Health budget, the Police budget and so on, to all of a sudden impose this sneaky 50 per cent to 100 per cent increase in the tax on the purchase of a car. The government gave it a nice, soft label so that people would think, 'It is for mental health.' That is one of the most deceitful things that I have seen happen in this parliament. The Treasurer admitted in this parliament that the tax was to ensure that the budget stayed in surplus. Because the government did not have enough money for the Health budget, it had to find some more money some other way.

We are seeing in Queensland the results of financial mismanagement in a time of plenty. We have come to the stage of an obscene panic and nothing has happened. There has been a no new dams policy for years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): While the member pauses for breath, I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery students, staff and parents of the Chatsworth State School, which is in the electorate of Gympie that is represented in this chamber by David Gibson.

Mr HORAN: As I was saying, we have not seen good financial management over the years. We have seen crisis after crisis. Every time there is a crisis the government buys its way out of trouble. It whacks up the wage rises to people who are so discontented about what is happening in their department in order to lower that discontent and then it tries to move on. It is a political solution to something that needs good management. All that has done is cost this state an extra many millions of dollars.

In summary, here we are in a time of plenty, but we have the expense of running the government departments going up by 10, 12 or 13 per cent every year. We should be providing for the future, we should be reducing debt because of what we have done in other times, but instead we are just racking up this massive mountain of debt. I would like the Treasurer in her reply to indicate to us the repayments schedule for these debts and where that is located in the budget.

As I said, there will be about \$19 billion of government debt and \$32 billion of government owned corporations debt by 2010. All of that debt has to be repaid—not only the interest on it but also repayments on the debt, otherwise the interest burden will hang over the heads of our young people in the future.

During the speech of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to parliament, the primary industries and fishery industry in Queensland and the families who support those industries were snubbed. I do not think I have ever listened to a Treasurer's budget speech that did not mention primary industries and fisheries. Together they are an \$11 billion industry and the second biggest export industry in this state. They provide an enormous amount of direct and indirect employment and value-adding. I think it really describes how this government feels about primary industries and fisheries that those industries would be left out of such a landmark statement as the Treasurer's annual budget speech.

But no wonder those industries were left out because, for the sixth year in a row, the budget for Primary Industries and Fisheries has been cut. For the past five years the budget cut in the department has been quite clear. This year, the political spin is that the department has received a 4.4 per cent increase. But this year an entire unit, around 200 staff, from the Department of Natural Resources and Water and other staff from the Environmental Protection Agency have been transferred into a new biosecurity unit in the department of primary industries. So if we compare apples with apples and we take out the costs of those hundreds of staff—their cars, their buildings, their superannuation and

everything else—in the annual account of the department the budget for the DPIF has been cut. No wonder DPIF staff feel lost. They do not know the direction the department is going in. Recently, the department offered 121 redundancies. That brings the number of redundancies under the Beattie government to well over 400.

Those 121 redundancies—the loss of good corporate knowledge, experienced people, field officers, extension officers and other people—will be replaced by 100 new staff. One would think that a department would be bringing in new, fresh staff all the time and having small, modest increases in the department so that the department could do the new and additional work that is required to be done. If members read through the Ministerial Portfolio Statement of the minister for primary industries they would see that it contains a re-run of what it has been doing—it is a continuation of this, looking into this and looking into that. That Ministerial Portfolio Statement contains nothing new, nothing exciting and nothing refreshing. No wonder the recent staff survey shows that morale in the department has plummeted and that staff have gone into a passive and protective type of approach rather than getting out there and doing things.

That whole attitude is filtering down from the top of the department: it is all about process, it is all about not upsetting anyone, it is all about keeping the spin right. At the end of the day the taxpayers of Queensland are forking out about 30 per cent more tax in this budget than they were some three years ago. They are the ones who are paying, but they are not getting a 30 per cent increase in services.

During the last election campaign the coalition had an exciting primary industries policy that really did some things for this state, for primary industries and for fisheries. It included an extra 50 extension officers and stock inspectors. It included a 20 per cent increase in research and development. It included some exciting plans to bring the agricultural colleges under the umbrella of the DPIF. It also involved research colleges that had relevant field days. This made the colleges the sort of places that people wanted to go to. Our policy also included setting up a biosecurity unit. I am pleased that the biosecurity unit is being established. The coalition's policy also included setting up a special drought unit and a biofuels unit so that we could be at the forefront of developing biofuels.

Certainly, over recent years the fishers—the families who rely on fishing throughout the state—have received a hammering from both the federal and state governments with regard to licences and areas in which they can fish. If there is one group that needs some support, research and help it is the fishing families of this state. But again, all we see is another budget that, on a true comparison with last year, has been cut. So on a true comparison basis, for the sixth year in a row the budget for the DPIF has been cut.

There would not be one department in the whole of this state government's operation that has consistently received budget cuts over the past six years. The budgets of other departments have all gone up by heaps as the largesse of the extra taxes, the extra royalties and the extra GST has all rolled in. But it looks like it will be the DPIF that is going to pay for that largesse—the farmers, the fishers, the foresters around this state. It looks like they will pay for this massive interest burden that will sit on the shoulders of everyone in this state for the next 20, 30 or 50 years arising out of the mountain of debt that is being racked up. I think it is time that the second most important export industry in Queensland was treated with a little bit more decency by this government and not treated, once again, like a dirty doormat.

In the few minutes that I have left to me I will speak about three important issues for my electorate. There are a number of areas in the budget where funds are provided but it does not go into great detail. One of those is the area of disabilities and accommodation. I would like to speak today about the needs of elderly people who are carers of elderly children with disabilities, in particular intellectual disabilities. Many of these people are now in their 70s and 80s and many of their children are in their 50s and 60s. Crisis accommodation is found for them when their parents die. It is a big panic, but somehow or other crisis accommodation is found.

I think that in a time of plenty we should be looking after our families in Queensland. Those people who have looked after those in their family who have a disability and who have cared for them for decades should be provided with the comfort and confidence that their children will be provided with a house—it could be villa-style accommodation—where they could be provided with some form of supervision so that their parents, particularly those in their 70s or 80s, could feel comfortable that if they pass away or are not able to look after them anymore because of their frail condition, at least their children are warm, well fed and in secure, safe and comfortable accommodation where they can be happy. I would hope that some of the money that is in the disabilities section of the budget can be used for that particular purpose.

I also refer to the Police Citizens Youth Club in Toowoomba which does an absolutely fantastic job. I regard that as one of the greatest organisations we have in our city and throughout the rest of Queensland. It provides thousands of young children with the opportunity to be in a club and to have the support of the Queensland Police Service and the volunteers and the instructors who work at the PCYC. It is a place where they can learn leadership. There are young teenagers who are learning to be youth leaders and leaders of the future. I think that the best single thing that we can do for our young people,

in particular those who are in need of a hand and some activities and training, is support the PCYC. It has made an application through the Minor Facilities Program for \$133,000 for a new gym. Those details will be announced after the end of June, and I certainly hope that consideration is being given to the application by the Toowoomba PCYC.

We certainly need additional support for the mental health section of the Toowoomba Hospital. There has already been a situation addressed by the minister. I think everybody is well aware that it has suffered from a tragic plane accident, a lack of senior psychiatrists and staff, overseas trained doctors who have difficulty speaking English and serious problems of bullying in the management system. That mental health unit needs help. It serves all of south-west Queensland from Gatton and beyond. That is one area to which I want to see a substantial portion of the mental health money go.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (11.13 am): I am very glad to follow the member for Toowoomba South in this debate because, as members know, he is not only my National Party colleague but also my neighbour in Toowoomba, and many of the issues that affect the constituents of my electorate are shared with those of the member for Toowoomba South.

I would like to touch on a couple of those issues that the member for Toowoomba South has mentioned. I spoke about the mental health unit at Toowoomba Base Hospital at the last sitting of parliament. I know steps are being taken to try to address some of the issues at that mental health unit, and I would urge the minister to continue to do whatever he can to make sure that that is restored to a well-respected, well-functioning and serviceable unit because it does service such a huge area geographically as well as a substantial population.

The other issue that seems to have come to the fore in my electorate office this week is the difficulty of people with disabilities accessing public housing in Toowoomba. This week we have had a number of constituents ringing us asking for assistance to get housing and, specifically, housing for people with disabilities and it is impossible to get. It is very, very difficult to get. That is housing for people who are able to live alone but do need specialised accommodation to be able to manage that.

There is the growing issue, as the member for Toowoomba South raised, about what is going to happen to those children with intellectual disabilities, in particular those who are now quite elderly themselves and whose parents are simply not able to continue caring for them. I have spoken about it every year that I have been a member of the Queensland parliament and it is of real concern. In the last couple of months I have met with a group of parents who have raised this issue specifically with me. They are not to that age yet but they are trying to help because they are parents of children with disabilities and they know that in 10, 15 or 20 years time they will be in that situation. They are lobbying, on behalf of those elderly parents who are still carers, for some sort of assistance to get a place where those children can be cared for and looked after so that the parents can rest assured that they are being looked after well and that they can enjoy their life.

There has been much made in this budget about the increase in public housing for the coming years. It is not before time I have to say, because, while we have heard a lot of trumpeting about the public housing commitment in this budget, what we have not heard is the way that the government has sold down its public housing stock. The availability of public housing has decreased under this government. That is an absolute indictment on the performance of a government that says that it is providing for the social wellbeing of our state.

Just to illustrate the point, I have the figures from the Department of Public Works and Housing MPSs over this time. Since I was elected in 2001 there has been a decrease of 1,335 dwellings available. In 2001-02 there were 50,338 and down to 49,003 in 2006-07. That is a decrease in the stock available.

Ms Croft: That's crap.

Mr COPELAND: I don't know whether the Deputy Speaker heard that, but there was an unparliamentary comment to the effect that that is untrue. In fact, it comes straight from the MPS for those years 2001-02 through to 2006-07. While we have had an increase in population in Queensland, we have had a decrease in the public housing stocks. This government has sold off stock and not replaced it. That has happened in Toowoomba as well.

There has been much made, and I think quite rightly, about the increasing debt levels of the government once this budget comes into effect. I have real concerns about how this will affect Queensland in the years to come.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): As the member pauses for a drink, I acknowledge in the public gallery students, staff and parents from Kepnock State High School in the electorate of Bundaberg, which is represented in the chamber by the honourable Jack Dempsey.

Mr COPELAND: There will be an escalation of state debt under this government and not only in the general government sector. When one combines it with the GOC sector it will be a substantial debt. The debt will be \$52 billion by 2010. That is an enormous amount of debt, particularly when we think of how difficult it has been to pay off the federal government's debt of \$96 billion. This is \$50 billion that has to be repaid by the taxpayers of Queensland.

On my reading of the budget, I understand that there is absolutely no provision for the repayment of the government debt: there is simply the provision of repaying the interest bill. That will be over \$1 billion in 2010 on the general government sector. Over \$1 billion every year will have to be found just to service the interest bill. That will mean that in the years to come we will not have that \$1 billion to build hospitals, schools or roads. All of those projects that we know have to be provided in Queensland simply will not happen.

Time and time again we have seen in other states around the country and, indeed, with the federal government, huge debts racked up and financial mismanagement. We all remember the rust bucket states of Victoria and South Australia under Labor governments. The coalition had to come in in those cases and make very difficult decisions to rectify the economic standing of those states. I can see that that is exactly what will happen in Queensland in the years to come.

The reason we are racking up that debt is largely that of this government's inaction over the last nine years in providing infrastructure and the mad panic that we are now seeing in delivering that infrastructure at hugely elevated costs. I want to touch on one example so that people get an idea of it, and that is the desalination plant that is being built on the Gold Coast. Perth has just completed a desalination plant at Kwinana. It has a 130-megalitre per day capacity. That is a bigger capacity plant than what is being built at the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast plant will have a 125-megalitre per day capacity. The cost of the Perth plant was \$387 million and \$20 million per year in operating costs. The cost of the desalination plant on the Gold Coast was \$1.126 billion.

As other members have outlined, there are escalating costs because of the mad panic that is now going on to try to deliver this infrastructure. Previous members of the coalition have raised the issue of the western corridor pipeline. There is no doubt that these prices are having to be paid to deliver in the time frame that is being demanded and because of the planning-as-we-go mentality that is engulfing this government. Yesterday we had the Treasurer disclosing that the announcement did not actually include hooking it to Wivenhoe, even though that has been a fundamental plank. So that is part of the \$630 million.

Ms BLIGH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is untrue and I ask that it be withdrawn. It was never part of the original plan; it was announced in January.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the member for Cunningham.

Mr COPELAND: We also heard that there is a pipeline under the Brisbane River so that it connects to Luggage Point. We are having a blow-out of \$630 million in that project as well. There is going to be a significant debt load around Queenslanders for generations to come given the mismanagement of the budget by this government.

As far as the education budget goes—and I will not go into it in any great detail because we will be able to do that in the upcoming estimates process—the only significant announcement was the provision of laptops to teachers across the state. That is a worthwhile initiative. As the QTU said, it should have happened years ago. I have no particular issue with that. Most teachers do use laptops in the classroom now. There are laptops available for many of them. I note that the trial for this was conducted last year and was supposed to be reported on earlier this year, but we have not seen the report of the trial. We only saw the announcement in the budget.

Mr Reeves: Do you think the trial might have worked, then?

Mr COPELAND: Well, we do not know. It may have worked.

Ms Bligh: Do you support it or do you not support it?

Mr COPELAND: I did not say that I did not support it. I said that it is a worthwhile initiative. But for that to be the big headline item for the education budget means that there are a lot of disappointed people out there. Even the QTU said that it is a big glossy bucket with not much in it. That is pretty typical of this government: a big glossy bucket with not much in it. The claim of an increase of 192 teachers to meet enrolment growth is not an increase in teachers; it is so that we can educate the students who are going to enrol. There is no increase in numbers. We are not going to put 192 extra teachers in there while we have more students—

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I hear the Treasurer piping up over there. This morning we saw the errant nonsense that this government carries on with, the blatant political lies that it spins and the absolute disregard that it has for the truth. The Premier last night was quoted on TV—and I think this one will go down forever as an indication of just how he tries to spin things—as saying, 'The fact of the matter is

that it's the truth. The truth is the truth. I'm telling the truth.' He would not know the truth if he fell over it. He was found out on that yesterday and he was spinning a web of deceit this morning for all to see. I hope the people of Queensland see through him for the fraud that he is, after the performance that he put on this morning, and the fraud that this government is.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cunningham.

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Pumicestone!

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Ashgrove!

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Darling Downs!

Mr COPELAND: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. They do not like it because they know that that is what it is all about. They have their heads down because they know how bad it looks for them when the Premier is as loose with the truth as he is. That is exactly what we have seen. The performance by the Premier this morning was absolutely disgraceful. They treat local government with disregard. They treat them with disdain. They have absolutely no regard for those people in the 60 communities who are protesting today against forced amalgamations because they know what it is going to do to their communities. They know how it is going to affect their workforces. They know how it is going to affect the fabric of their communities. This government and this Treasurer have absolutely no regard for them.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr COPELAND: I can hear the Treasurer bleating over there at the moment. She cannot stand local government and neither can the rest of her colleagues. They hate councils. They hate councillors.

Government members interjected.

Mr COPELAND: Go back to the *Hansard* and read it. Read the member for Bundamba's proposal. Read the member for Keppel's contribution. 'Big frogs in little ponds' is what the member for Keppel called them. They hate local government. We have seen that this morning. We have seen that by the way they are treating them. We are seeing it when they try to disregard all those good people out there who are protesting today against those forced amalgamations. They try to put political spin on it and tell untruths about it, but that will not diminish the determination of the National Party to stand up for local government. It will not diminish the determination of the people in those communities who are determined to preserve the fabric of their communities. That is what those 60 rallies are for today. It is so local people can stand up for their own communities. For those opposite to say that it is a highlight of the budget that the forced amalgamations are going to go through is an absolute disgrace.

We have seen some spin from time to time in this chamber, but this morning's effort was even worse. After I finish this contribution, I am going to Millmerran in my electorate where the local community is coming together to voice its opposition to these proposals. It is nothing to do with the National Party, but I, as the local member and a National Party member, will be there to show that we support their right as a small community to have some say over their future direction. We support the role that they play, the goodwill that those people contribute and, importantly, the workers who live in those communities. The workers are very fearful for their jobs in the future.

This morning we heard the minister for communities stand up and say what a great thing the Blueprint for the Bush is. The Blueprint for the Bush is absolutely hollow because the fabric of regional Queensland is under threat from this proposal. This is just more hollow rhetoric from the government. The Blueprint for the Bush means absolutely nothing when we look at the real challenges that the government is foisting upon regional communities. I say again that I will be supporting those small communities in my electorate to make sure that their voices are heard.

The people of Toowoomba and the people outside of south-east Queensland can quite rightly feel that they are in some ways a forgotten group of people. Seventy per cent of this year's capital works budget is going into south-east Queensland, into the Brisbane and Moreton statistical areas. That means that, while we are racking up a huge infrastructure debt in those areas, the other parts of Queensland are being left behind.

We need only go through the budget papers to see that virtually everything that is announced in this budget is either reannounced or underway. Certainly in my area that is the case. I saw the press release that the government put out about the highlights for the Cunningham electorate. One of the highlights is that we are providing a maintenance budget to the schools. That is great! We are going to have a maintenance budget for our schools. It is like putting out as a highlight that we are going to pay the teachers their wages. It is something that of course we should be doing, but that is how low they had to scrape to find something to put in a press release; that we are providing maintenance budgets for the schools.

That is great. I am glad they did not cut the maintenance budgets for schools because then we would have been in real strife. The maintenance budget for schools is actually a serious issue because it is very difficult for those schools to provide upkeep for their school community with the amounts of money they have been given. I was at one school last week of around 600 students and they get \$20,000 a year, in round terms, for maintenance. That makes it very difficult for them to do anything to upgrade their school.

We often hear the federal government being criticised for its lack of funding of the state system, and I think that is largely unjustified. When travelling around schools, I have found that one of the most popular and significant programs at the moment in terms of providing infrastructure in our state schools is the federal government's Investing in our Schools Program where schools have been able to get literally \$150,000 to build infrastructure that the state has not been able to provide.

Ms Bligh: You're a fraud.

Mr COPELAND: Ha, ha! The Treasurer does not like hearing that either. Every school community out there loves the Investing in our Schools Program. They are getting money for things like air conditioning, halls, multipurpose courts—all of the things they could not provide because the state government does not give them the funding. That is a great program. I bet Labor backbenchers are out there when new facilities are being opened saying, 'This is a great facility.' I bet they go to those school openings and say, 'This is a fantastic program.' They do not say that it was the federal government that provided the money; they just say, 'This is a fantastic program.'

There are a lot of things that need to be addressed in Queensland. We do have a lot of challenges, and I fear that future generations of Queensland will look back at this time as a lost opportunity—which is what it is. They will look at the debt that will be around their neck for years to come with very sad eyes. We have got a great state and we have a massive opportunity with the resources boom. There is so much we could be doing but, unfortunately, we have a government that is incapable of doing it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prior to calling the honourable member for Darling Downs, I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery students and staff from Scots PGC College, Warwick in the electorate of Southern Downs, which is represented in the chamber by the Hon. Lawrence Springborg.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (11.32 am): In rising to speak to the annual budget bills, I have to start by saying that it is great to be the shadow minister for natural resources and water and I would like to touch on this portfolio at the start of my speech. Natural resources is an important link between government and rural industry, so it is important that it receives the resources to manage the restrictive legislation that has been imposed on our rural industries.

The department deals with land valuations, leasehold land rents, vegetation management, wild rivers, pest and weed management and, as the minister keeps telling us, water—but the department only deals with water outside the south-east corner. The way these issues are dealt with has a great effect on the productivity of rural Queensland.

There are several areas in this budget which are welcomed. The additional funding of \$26 million is very welcome. I have spoken in this place on a number of occasions about how compensation for rural industry for bearing the environmental cost for the state should be fair and just, and this money is a small step in the right direction. It is also an acknowledgement that the money this government has allocated is nowhere near enough to compensate for the burden rural producers are bearing.

I note that a Productivity Commission report into the cost of vegetation management to rural industry put that figure at \$500 million. Even more recently, it has come to light that DPI researcher Dr Bill Burrows put the cost at more like \$900 million. We are \$400 million out somewhere, because the actual cost is \$900 million. So I congratulate the minister for taking a very small step to improve the compensation for vegetation management.

Land valuation and the resulting rural rents are a great concern to the rural industry. Most of Queensland is made up of leasehold land, so the way the government manages rural valuations and rental rates is of vital importance to ensure continued productivity in the rural industry. The Queensland coalition welcomes the new arrangements that are in place for rural leasehold rents. The new formula system is a good compromise when the rents hit the cap. We would argue that the cap is too high and that it should be held at the CPI level. However, at least the 20 per cent cap gives some certainty to industry on how they need to budget.

I would like to focus on an often neglected section of the Department of Natural Resources and Water—the section of the department that actually deals with water. Water is an important part of the department's role and it is terrific to see that the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme is being supported and increased, with another \$100.8 million for that scheme. The statewide extension of the scheme has meant that all Queenslanders can be part of this incentive to save water. This is terrific. However, I hope that the waiting times for subsidies improve with the budget and are better than what we saw when this scheme was first implemented. But, in saying that, I do not want all the money to go into administering the scheme.

The minister has said on a number of occasions that he does not deal with south-east Queensland water, that this is the job of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, Ms Bligh. I therefore looked forward to how the minister would handle water outside the south-east Queensland corner. So I had a look and I cannot hide my disappointment at the lack of money for rural water. A budget release by the Treasurer said that in 2007-08 a total of \$17.835 million has been allocated, including \$3.359 million to progress feasibility investigation and planning and \$5 million for land acquisition. There are billions of dollars for the south-east corner of Queensland and only \$17.835 million for water outside south-east Queensland. Many times we have heard so many people say that this government stops at Noosa and that the rest of Queensland can wait.

Where is the money for the raising of the Borumba Dam? Where is the money for building the Nathan Dam? Where is the money for building the Nullinga Dam? Where is the money for building stage 2 of the Burdekin Dam? I recently went to the Burdekin and had a look. They say that the equivalent of Sydney Harbour was flowing over that wall every five hours; that is how much water was going over the wall of that dam. For a few million dollars, we could raise that wall and hold all of that water. Stage 2 must be looked at. Where is the money for building the Water for Bowen project? We ask all these questions. There is nothing in the budget.

We built every dam in Queensland. Every bit of infrastructure you see, except for a football stadium and a footbridge, was put here by us. Now we have to bite the bullet. As the member for Cunningham said, the generations to come—our grandchildren—will be laden with this debt and I think it is disgusting.

There is a lot of money for studies that we know will say that these dams are needed but there is nothing to actually build a dam. In fact there is more money put into cloud seeding than there is to build any of these dams outside the south-east corner. So we see more spin because that is easy to sell. The government mouths off about it but does not put any money in place.

I move next to the area of climate change, an area in everyone's hearts at the moment, an area that the community is crying out for the government to do something about. I looked with interest at the funding given to climate change, but again I was disappointed. In fact, it is questionable whether this government is truly committed to climate change.

The Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence has been open since 15 March 2007, and what do we find? The Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence is just a room in a department of natural resources facility. That is all it is. It is a room that was already in the facility, yet we hear all the spin about this great centre. There has been no capital works money spent on that centre at all, and it seems that in the next budget the only money that will be spent is for a \$1.5 million computer. It must be one heck of a computer; that is quite a laptop! They will need that computer in the next financial year because they do not have a web site to put any information on.

Why is it that until yesterday the links on the web site of the department of natural resources to 'What is climate change and the greenhouse effect?', 'How will climate change affect Queensland?' and 'Regional differences in climate change impacts' all went to the EPA web site and not the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence? The web site yesterday said that it was last updated on 15 March 2007—the day the Premier launched the centre.

Today I noticed that this site has changed. Today when someone visits the site because they want to know what climate change is, they at least get directed back to the Department of Natural Resources and Water site. But that site is not controlled by the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. That is certainly not an excellent response to climate change. Despite this, questions are still being directed to the email address. When someone goes to the domain climatechange.qld.gov.au it directs them to the department of natural resources site.

I would like to move on to some issues in my electorate. We heard the Deputy Premier announce \$100 million in funding for roads on the Darling Downs. A figure of \$100 million was quoted by the Treasurer in her speech. I guess it is the job of the member for Cunningham, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Toowoomba North and I to see that funding is implemented. \$100 million is a lot of money.

We have been fighting to get fixed the Dalby-Cooyar Road, the Bowenville-Norwin Road, the Dalby-Cecil Plains Road, the Dalby-Kingaroy Road and the Warrego Highway, which is a federal responsibility, since I was elected in 2001. Now we have an announcement of funding of \$100 million for roads. Let us see that money come forth over this term of the government. That is our job. It is easy to get up and spruik and promise money but so often we do not see it eventuate.

It is great to see the new Dalby Hospital being built by Carmichael Builders at the moment. They have probably built most of the buildings around Dalby. It is a very reputable firm. I remember being contacted by the director of nursing at the Dalby Hospital, Colleen Rasmussen, and I went out there. Gordon Nuttall happened to be the health minister at the time. I made an appointment to see Gordon. During that appointment we told him the area that the Dalby Hospital covers. I invited him to come out

and have a look at that hospital. The director of nursing, the then minister and I did a full tour of that hospital. He saw with his own eyes the need for a new hospital. I owe him thanks for putting the building of that new hospital in the budget. I see that the ongoing funds for that are there. That is one of the great things that Gordon Nuttall did for my electorate while he was a minister. It is great to see it being built.

I move on to Tarong Power and the energy situation facing Queensland. We have the Swanbank and Tarong power stations. Tarong is now working at 30 per cent capacity. We saw 160 staff from there sacked two weeks ago. What is going to happen when we run out of water? The Premier must be wearing his knees out praying for a flood. New South Wales is buying power from Queensland. So we cannot buy power off them. We cannot buy power off any other surrounding states. When Swanbank and Tarong cut down I think the people of Queensland will, in the very near future, see not only water rationing but also power cuts. That is what we will be faced with. Eventually there will be no power. That is what we will be faced with under a government that would not build dams, would not put infrastructure in place. They have been caught out badly. That is exactly what we are faced with now.

The people of Queensland are faced with a massive debt on which we are paying interest only. Any business knows that if it structures its debt in that way it is bound to fall unless it does something to reduce the money it owes. That is not the case here. We are heading for disaster.

We see the miserable effort regarding the dam near Gympie. It is going to be a swamp. It will be five metres deep. There will be evaporation. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the spin that has been put on that project is unbelievable. It is a 'get out of jail free' card. We have to look like we are doing something. Now the panic pipeline is being built.

I go back to the Tarong Power Station. People out there are faced with the threat of a conveyor belt going from Acland to Tarong which is 75 kilometres in length. I have fought bitterly on behalf of those people to try to get that conveyor belt to run along roadsides and property boundaries. The easement has been announced. It will go right through the middle of some of the best farming country in Queensland. Those farmers are fifth and sixth generation farmers. Part of the conveyor belt will go through dairies, between sheds and houses or straight over driveways going out to the road. The government does not want to follow the roads. It will not go through the national park. It will not go through the state forest. It will go right through the heart of some of the best farming land in my electorate.

We had a gentleman die out there last week. He dropped dead of a heart attack. His son swears black and blue that the stress of this project caused his heart attack. We do not know whether or not it did. But I know one thing for sure, during the drought those people have held on to their properties and now they are faced with having them cut in half because of this conveyor belt. We all know that industry must go ahead. We are not saying that it should not. It must go ahead in a decent way with the least possible impact on my constituents who stand to be hurt.

Five years ago the government announced the building of an easement to Glen Wilga to get coal for Tarong to burn. Glen Wilga is over near Chinchilla. They acquired that land off all those farmers and there was not one compulsory acquisition. That announcement is still out there. The government is saying to the people, 'We do not know whether we are building that rail line to Glen Wilga to provide coal for Tarong Energy or whether we are going to open up a coalmine a few kilometres north at Kanuun.' We have all the people on the rail easement to Glen Wilga wondering what is going on. We have all the people at Kanuun wondering whether they will get a coalmine. We have all the people from Acland to Tarong who do not know whether that easement is going to come through.

I called a meeting at Maclagan. The hall was full. To Tarong Energy's credit they came and addressed the meeting. At that meeting they told us that at the end of June they will let us know what the announcement will be. My people got a letter a week or two ago saying it has been extended for another three months. So they are in limbo until the end of September. We are playing with people's lives over a simple announcement. I have met with the minister and pleaded with the minister to make that announcement now so at least two thirds of the people can be released from the impost that may be put upon them. That is playing with people's lives. We cannot do that.

We have seen this government move from one thing to the next. The last two days I spent walking around FarmFest and talking with people. I had people waiting to talk to me. I have been to FarmFest every year since 2000. This year there is something in the wind out there. What is in the wind? The future amalgamation of their shires. The one thing that those people kept saying over and over to me is: how can this man do this? How can this be done to us?

Mrs Sullivan interjected.

Mr HOPPER: I hear the interjections. How can this be done? I must say that that is going to be the biggest impost on rural Queensland that I have seen in my seven years in this parliament. Today is red tie day and wear red day. We heard the laughs from the ministers and Premier this morning. Those opposite need to get out there and feel the angst among those people. They are concerned about what is going to happen.

Toowoomba city has put its plan in place. It is going to take half my Darling Downs electorate. It wants to take the town of Crows Nest. It wants to take Oakey. It wants to take Highfields. It is going to be very interesting to see what happens because Highfields is in the electorate of Toowoomba North. Highfields has been very well looked after by Crows Nest Shire Council. It will be very interesting to see what happens. There is a lot of money in this budget for the amalgamation of these shires.

What is the Attorney-General's attitude towards Highfields going to Toowoomba? That is what is going to happen. Toowoomba is going to sweep Highfields up—do not worry about that—and take their rates. It wants the money. That is what this is all about. The major centres are going to be wealthy councils. I bet the rates of the people in Highfields will triple over the next six years.

Crows Nest has looked after them and put services in place and now it is going to be taken away. Crows Nest and Rosalie were proactive and innovative. The SSS program—the Size, Shape and Sustainability plan—was put in place by this minister. The councils said, 'We will amalgamate. We will go forward. We will do what we are told to do.' Yet what do we have? We have a government that wields the big stick and says, 'It is not on. You are not going to do it.' Who knows where Dalby and Wambo will end up. The town of Oakey will be lucky to have one or two representatives from the shire. They will go from nine representatives back to one or two. It is simply unacceptable. I look forward to seeing what happens in the future.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (11.48 am): I am pleased to make a contribution to the debate on the appropriation bills and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. At the outset I have to thank the Treasurer for a far-sighted budget and congratulate her and her advisers on a responsible and sensible spending regimen. In saying that, I am reminded of the words of Victor Hugo, and it is time for a few people in the opposition to stop and think about them as well. He said—

Knowing exactly how much of the future can be introduced into the present is the secret of great government.

I remind the opposition that some of the future is introduced into the present in this budget to continue good government in Queensland.

I am surprised the Leader of the Opposition can stand in this House and make the assertions he did about infrastructure spending. He claimed that there has been no infrastructure spending over previous budgets. But for the last 10 budgets of the Beattie Labor government infrastructure has been funded on an increasing basis each year, with over \$10 billion last year and more than \$14 billion this year. Water, roads and transport, education and training, health and energy all receive funding boosts. I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition directs his selective myopia, but he surely does not look at Queensland. I would also say to him that just because the media uses the word 'crisis' does not necessarily make it so. Certainly, problems have arisen in areas of our society, but this government has tackled the problems and they are still being addressed. Our citizens know our proactive approach, and that is why there are 1,500 new residents each week coming to share in Queensland's good government and prosperity. Of course, that influx causes other problems which this budget is set to address.

One of those areas is health. This is because the new people and existing residents are flocking to hospitals because of the quality of care received. Never complain about our public system until you try to get an appointment in the private sector. You can wait for three to six months, but if people have to wait two or three days in the public system that is a crisis. I recommend that the opposition grow up and move into the real world. I also say to the members of the opposition that if this budget is so bad, and 1,500 new people each week are moving here, then we would not miss 25 people who emigrated. If those opposite do not believe that the future of Queensland is assisted and encouraged by this budget, I invite opposition members to emigrate somewhere else! That would be a problem for them, but if they decide not to go perhaps they could remove the red rubbish with which they have been invited to desecrate our cenotaphs.

It will be a difficulty, because Labor governments through every state and territory are building those states while the federal government sits on mountains of money and refuses to fund any infrastructure unless states play the Commonwealth's puerile games to take us back to the previous century. An instance of that is the report in today's paper. There was a great claim by the federal government that it would introduce Australian technical colleges, but I think it is fairly instructive to note that it spent all of this money and only has about half the number of students it thought and guess who provides the training in Australian technical colleges? It would not leave people mystified to know that it is provided by TAFE, not by the federal government.

We heard great comments about John Howard from speakers on the other side, but nobody really touched the truth. The greyest years of federal government in Australia in recent memory are the years from 1975 to 1983 under Malcolm Fraser, but people should not forget that John Howard was his Treasurer. He is the Treasurer who introduced retrospective legislation and also world parity pricing for petrol. Do not kid yourself that our economic prosperity is engendered by Howard or Costello. The real basis for that prosperity is the floating of the Australian dollar by Paul Keating in December 1983. We had some correction in the late 1980s when world markets corrected their trading and financial dealings, but we are now reaping the financial benefits of what Paul Keating sowed.

Howard has not changed, and the claims by the member for Robina about housing bear that out. We heard that the affordability index for housing has gone down. He should consider these facts. In 1986 the cost of a house was three times the average annual income—that is, three years average income was the full cost of a residence. Even though interest rates had risen—and I will say something about that shortly—a mortgage was affordable. In 1990-91 housing affordability went to four times average annual salary and in around 1997-98 it went to six times average annual salary and it is that today. To borrow a modest amount to buy a house was affordable in the 1980s, but it now takes two incomes to meet any repayments. A 0.25 per cent interest movement on a mortgage of \$300,000 is not a hiccup; it is a disaster for many families who have been forced to borrow heavily to realise their Australian dream. If the member for Robina does not believe those figures, he should talk to the UDIA.

Mr Hinchliffe: And the Property Council of Australia.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I take that interjection—and the Property Council of Australia. I recall a comment that everyone wants to eat at the government's table but nobody wants to do the dishes. Queensland's funding of so much infrastructure is allowing John Howard and Peter Costello to eat at the Queensland government's table. But the opposition need not worry, because with this expansionary budget the Treasurer has accepted that Queensland will do the dishes.

Let us consider one area alone—that is, housing. We are being starved of \$400 million in social housing funds while Costello and Howard have failed to stimulate the private housing market with their rental subsidy. In actual fact, their rent rebate has contributed to the absolute collapse of the private rental market. Our budget earmarks \$719 million which includes a \$500 million five-year social housing program. I know the housing minister will direct those funds to the needy people who have been short-changed by our federal government. In addition to that funding—and this covers the whole of the state and is not specific to my own electorate—the cut in mortgage duty by 50 per cent from 1 January 2008 and abolition from 1 January 2009 and the land tax relief measures of capping valuation increases and increasing thresholds should assist investors in their input into the private sphere. As a lawyer I know that the impact of those duties and those changes will benefit all Queenslanders, as will the other budgetary measures.

When I talk about those other budgetary measures, I talk about things like an investment for a sustainable future. There is a \$9 billion investment for construction of the south-east Queensland water grid. There is another \$100.8 million for WaterWise rebate schemes. There is \$414 million for climate change, including \$50 million for a Renewable Energy Fund, \$300 million for a Climate Change Fund and a \$300 million commitment to clean coal technology. With regard to clean coal technology, I do not know if members have been to inspect the centre for clean coal technology at Brookfield, but if they get half a chance they should go and have a look, because the Queensland government has been supporting that centre for a number of years and the advances that it has made up to when I had seen it about 18 months ago were very impressive. It is also working with ZeroGen in relation to the sequestration of carbon in underground sinks.

In my own area there were substantial amounts of funds actually earmarked and allocated, one of which related to the bane of my life being the Yeppoon Hospital. We have the land and the cash has now been allocated—that is, \$6.25 million—and construction of that should start very shortly. There is also \$4.1 million to continue redevelopment of the Yeppoon Police Station. In terms of the money to be spent on roads, there is \$1.75 million for the construction of an access road to what will be known as the multimodal buildings on the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road. Funding of \$55,000 has been allocated to construct a bikeway on Moores Creek Road in the Rockhampton part of my electorate and confirmation has been received of the payment of \$1 million to construct bikeways at Yeppoon and Emu Park. There is \$70,000 in funding for a car park extension for Mount Archer State School in Wiltshire Street, and I heard the comment by the member for Cunningham about maintenance for schools. This is an extension which had been fought for over a number of years and in actual fact will be partly funded by the Rockhampton City Council. There is also a \$50,000 funding grant for a set-down area on Taranganba Road at Taranganba State School.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Moorhead): While the honourable member for Keppel takes a drink of water, I acknowledge in the public gallery Rear Admiral Carol M Pottenger and representatives of the United States Navy. Welcome to our chamber.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr HOOLIHAN: There was not a lot of water in the glass! The Taranganba State School will receive funding of \$50,000, which has been earmarked, but there will be some difficulty gouging the other \$50,000 out of the Livingstone Shire Council, because they do not really like to put their hands in their pockets for anything.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I take that interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook: they might not be there for very long, but that is up to an independent commission. We will await the outcome of that.

A sum of \$125,000 has been allocated for passenger set-down improvements at Frenchville State School. These might sound like small figures to some of those who have received larger grants, but they will fund things that have been fought for and sought by people in my electorate for a number of years.

I go back to my original statement about putting future into the present for good government. I submit to the House that this is a very good budget. It will benefit Queensland in the short term and in the long term. I commend the bills to the House.

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (12.00 pm): I am pleased to contribute to the debate today, because this budget delivers for Queensland on many fronts. Obviously, there is substantial investment in health, education, infrastructure, police, water and transport, but this government delivers for the environment as well. I would like to highlight a few of those initiatives.

Under Labor, Queensland has seen substantial increases in our national parks, marine parks and, just as importantly, increases in the number of rangers and their budgets which will deliver improvements in the day-to-day management of our parks. This will be further improved through increased permanent funding for weed, feral pest and fire control, despite the member for Burdekin's assertions earlier on. Additional money has also been allocated for improved visitor facilities and to finalise the new zoning plan for the vitally important Moreton Bay Marine Park.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Ms NELSON-CARR: I am glad that the member is happy. We will also continue to expand the off-parks areas of conservation by expanding the number of nature refuge agreements with landholders. Yesterday we were involved in such an agreement with landholder Graham Turner, who made one-third of his property a nature refuge.

This government takes the protection of our environment seriously. Last night I was quite amazed and also alarmed at the comments made by the member for Charters Towers when he tried to explain what ozone layers actually are. Unlike him, we want to protect our environment and we take that very seriously. That is why we have allocated an additional \$5 million to employ up to 60 new officers to monitor pollution and enforce strict environmental protection laws. The chances of detection and prosecution for polluters are about to increase substantially.

This government, the community and apparently even John Howard and George Bush acknowledge that climate change is real, that it is linked to human activity and that we need to do something about it. The Premier has announced major initiatives to tackle climate change and our government is definitely acting. However, as I said before, it seems that we have some incredible sceptics on the other side.

Once again I allude to the comments made by the member for Charters Towers last night, which were nothing short of extraordinary, and those of the member for Southern Downs. Not only were they in denial; they also spoke about conspiracy and myth. That is a poor substitute for decent policy and action. That goes to show—indeed, it places on the public record—just what the National Party really thinks about environmental issues. A couple of weeks ago the shadow minister was spruiking the environmental credentials of the National Party, but if one takes the time to listen to the contributions that its members made yesterday, one would hear a very different story.

We have allocated funding to deal with what we call orphan spills. Those are pollution incidents where clean-ups are needed but the perpetrators cannot be found. This new funding will allow councils that respond to such incidents to be reimbursed for the costs associated with the clean-up. An additional \$500,000 has been allocated to set up a chemical pollution advisory service. These initiatives will build on the already impressive track record of the EPA in ensuring that our air and water quality are protected.

Speaking of water quality, the budget allocates a further \$20 million to improve the water quality of south-east Queensland. This investment is the latest contribution by the state government to the south-east Queensland Healthy Waterways Strategy. It will ensure that the current boom does not come at a high environmental cost to our waterways. The funding will focus on practical and cost-effective projects, working to reduce water pollution loads from rural and urban sources. It will restore degraded waterways and build social capital for improving waterway health into the future.

The government made an election commitment to provide \$30 million for acquisitions to expand our national parks, including targeting the priority regions of the Cape York Peninsula, the Daintree rainforest and the south-east Queensland rainforest. Overall, the government is on target to meet the commitment of having five per cent of Queensland as a national park. Just as importantly, each year the government has set aside more money for the never-ending task of park maintenance.

As part of the 2007-08 state budget, the Environmental Protection Agency will invest more than \$7 million to maintain roads, tracks and other assets in Queensland's national parks. In addition, an extra \$2 million will be allocated to QPWS base funding to enhance pest and fire management in parks,

to continue to build on the successful projects undertaken over the past three years. This supplements base level funding of more than \$3 million each year for pest management and \$5 million for fire management. Through this initiative, Queenslanders can expect safer facilities, improved access to parks and better protection of the natural values of parks and forests.

In keeping with this theme of people enjoying our natural assets, the Beattie government has committed \$6.5 million over four years for another four Great Walks, in Cooloola, the Conondale Range, Carnarvon and the Whitsunday islands. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is working with Tourism Queensland to develop concept plans for each of those walks.

Protecting Queensland's heritage is a priority for this government and the \$5 million Living Buildings and Places heritage grants initiative is intended to encourage the contemporary use of historic places so that they continue to be used and protected, and will continue to be appreciated by the broader Queensland community.

Moreton Bay is an amazing asset and we need to make sure that we value it. On the doorstep of Brisbane and in the heart of one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, we have a marine park with turtles, dugongs, sharks, dolphins and whales. An extra \$500,000 has been allocated in the budget to help progress the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan review. This funding will be invaluable in allowing more robust decision making based on science and economic data, and will also allow for the maintenance of the level of public engagement that stakeholders expect during this process.

As the Queensland Minister for Multiculturalism, I formally reaffirm Queensland's commitment to the values of multiculturalism. Australia is one of the most successful culturally diverse societies in the world and we should all aim to pursue social cohesion within a multicultural framework. The government is determined to keep Queensland at the forefront of multicultural development and this budget will enable us to deliver on that.

A number of innovative and exciting programs will receive funding in the 2007-08 budget. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of this speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Some of the innovative and exciting programs that will receive funding in the 2007/2008 budget include:

- \$1.055M to community based organisations for the Multicultural Community Workers Program to assist migrant and refugee communities to better access services;
- \$1M for local governments for the continued support of the Local Area Multicultural Partnership to support positive community relations at the 'grass-roots' level;
- \$730,000 for community festivals, events and projects to overcome barriers, reduce prejudice, support communities and celebrate cultural diversity;
- \$150,000 for the Queensland Roars Against Racism campaign;
- \$150,000 for community based schools that teach language and culture; and
- more than \$100,000 to support the peak ethnic community body, the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland.

Other areas being funded include arts, translating and interpreters, research, funds for the Muslim Community Engagement Strategy, and funds to continue the highly successful Australian South Sea Islander tertiary scholarship program.

Approximately \$700,000 has been allocated for the popular Queensland Multicultural Festival and Premier's Multicultural Photographic Awards.

Mr Speaker, whilst I am proud to be the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism, I am especially proud to be the Member for Mundingburra, so I always look for how any Budget benefits Townsville and North Queensland.

My electorate and the Townsville region overall have done very well and needs have been addressed across the board.

I welcome \$579,000 for North Queensland under the Queensland Skills Plan to provide additional training places to meet skills shortages and \$3.27 million targeting employment assistance for people in the region who are deemed as disadvantaged.

Major initiatives include: \$625,000 for Ross River Parkway, \$1.28 million to complete construction of six cluster public housing units in Mundingburra for people with spinal injury, \$136,000 for selected school maintenance projects, \$80,000 for much-needed car parking at Townsville Community Learning Centre and cash for a birthing centre at Townsville Hospital.

Over the last few years I have had several meetings in Townsville with members of a group called Friends of the Birth Centre.

Their objective to achieve a dedicated birthing unit at Townsville Hospital was boosted last year when Premier Beattie made a pre-election commitment of funding.

That pledge has now been honoured with \$780,000 to proceed with the facility, which is expected to employ four midwives and be able to handle 160 births annually.

The centre will provide an environment where midwives can offer specialised care for expectant mothers.

Last April, Health Minister Stephen Robertson opened Townsville Hospital's new \$2.6 million 22-bed emergency medical unit which is part of a Beattie Government promise to fund an additional 100 hospital beds.

I am very pleased to report that \$1 million was allocated in the budget to progress that expansion.

There were also budget allocations of \$400,000 to enhance oncology services at Townsville Hospital and \$30,000 for Child Health services in Mundingburra.

Mr Speaker, I make special mention of \$160,000 for youth justice programs, \$22,000 to the Good Shepherd Hospice to deliver health and fitness services and programs, \$320,000 for accommodation and support services for women and children escaping domestic and family violence and \$53,000 to provide before and after school and vacation care for school age and under school age children.

\$414,000 will enable coordination of a range of practical and counselling intervention services for children and young people in Mundingburra, with a total of \$1.42 million set aside for that purpose.

Aitkenvale and Cranbrook State Primary Schools and Pimlico and Heatley State High schools will benefit from a total \$136,000 for targeted maintenance projects.

Approximately \$57.18 million will be invested in vocational education and training in the North Queensland region during 2007/2008 and \$24,000 is earmarked for Smart State PHD grants at James Cook University.

Mr Speaker, \$625,000 has been set aside during 2007-08 for Stage Three of Ross River Parkway, bringing the State's contribution to this world-class network of walking and bike paths and associated facilities around Ross River, to more than \$5.2 million.

The joint Parkway development with Townsville City Council is one of the top recreational attractions in the Townsville region on a par with The Strand and Riverway.

A major feature of the next stage of Ross River Parkway will be construction of access points for boat and canoe landings as well as fishing platforms.

I know that my colleagues Mike Reynolds and Craig Wallace share my satisfaction that a State contribution of \$2.13 million will assist Townsville City Council in developing the Townsville Arts Hub flexible performing arts space, to be located behind the old heritage listed Townsville railway station.

This year's \$2.13 million allocation is part of a Beattie Government commitment of more than \$5 million to the arts hub which will provide an opportunity for Townsville's performing arts companies to come together under the one roof. The development will include an intimate theatre for up to 300 patrons.

I also welcome \$1.23 million to assist with refurbishment of Townsville Civic Theatre and \$1.77 million towards extensive upgrading of the PCYC multi-purpose facility in Wellington Street Aitkenvale.

My office in Townsville received a call on budget afternoon from Townsville City Council querying the budget amount for the PCYC.

I am pleased that Mayor Tony Mooney and the council could quickly be reassured that the Beattie Government's commitment to the project is unchanged at \$2.77 million. \$1.77 million is however, the amount allocated for the project this financial year.

When completed, the facilities will increase the ability of the PCYC to provide the widest possible range of sporting and recreational activities for residents of all age groups in Aitkenvale and surrounding suburbs.

Important road upgrades to be funded in the Mundingburra electorate include:

- \$90,000 for intersection improvements of Acheron Avenue and Ross River Road
- \$15,000 for construction of a bikeway on Discovery Drive between University Road and the Townsville Hospital
- \$45,000 for an indented bus set-down area at Pimlico State High School
- \$110,000 for pavement rehabilitation on Fulham Road between Armit and Hugh Streets
- \$108,000 to complete improvements to traffic signals on Ross River Road and \$239,000 to commence further signal upgrades—also on Ross River Road—as part of the Intelligent Transport System, or ITS
- \$25,000 to construct a bikeway on Mooney Street between Fulham Road and Tyrell Street and
- \$80,000 for a roundabout at the intersection of Palmerston and Tobruk Streets.

Mr Speaker, \$41,000 of a total \$82,000 State contribution, will be made available to Townsville Golf Club for an irrigation system and to upgrade four existing fairways with drought tolerant grass—a practice that needs to become the norm in these times of diminished rainfall and increasing water shortages.

I also commend the budget allocation of \$70,000 to assist Townsville City Council with lighting of Cambridge Park in the suburb of Vincent.

The park has been extensively redeveloped with assistance of \$435,000 through the Community Renewal Program in a joint council/State Government project. Money to light the park as a safety measure at night is additional to that amount.

In the time available I have only touched the highlights of spending within my portfolio and electorate and the greater Townsville region.

I congratulate Treasurer, Anna Bligh, and commend this budget to the House.

Mrs LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.08 pm): The annual state budget is the primary economic blueprint of Queensland and embodies not only the financial accounts of the state but also its policy framework. The reporting of a budget will often concentrate purely on economic measures; matters like the surplus, taxation rates, growth rates and gross domestic product. Such indicators are measures of performance only and, whilst important, are not necessarily the hot topic of conversation in lounge rooms around Queensland.

The distinction between indicators and substantial items like wellbeing and individual happiness was well described by Robert Kennedy when he observed—

Gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

These are profound and powerful words. The state's financial reporting can tell us much about Queensland except those things that make us proud to be part of this wonderful state. In my contribution to the debate on the 2007-08 budget, I want to concentrate on those things which make me proud to be part of the Beattie-Bligh government and expand on why this budget is more than just a beautiful set of numbers.

It is a budget that invites us to look at the things that I would say have changed for the better in the past two decades since the demise of the conservative rump, which was the National Party government, under Joh Bjelke-Petersen. There has been some comment in the media, particularly from the opposition, that Queensland has lost its mantle as the low-tax state. As the Treasurer has pointed out, her aim in relation to taxation is that Queensland's system is efficient and competitive, but it need not on every indicator of tax levels be the lowest in Australia. I endorse those comments strongly.

When people look back at the Bjelke-Petersen government, often the comment is made, 'For all its faults, Sir Joh did preside over a sound budget and low taxes.' That is just romantic nonsense. That romantic version of the past fails to accept that we may have had low taxes, but that came at the enormous expense of provision of services and infrastructure. An appalling lack of services and indifferent infrastructure would be a far cry from Robert Kennedy's description of the things that make us proud.

Possibly my beliefs and ideas are unfashionable in an era that has been dominated by economic rationalism, but low taxes are not the reason I am proud to be a Queenslanders or proud to be a member of the Beattie government. What makes me proud is living in a community that cares about its citizens and living in a state that puts value on fairness and opportunity and is prepared to invest in order to improve the life chances of our children through education and health care. What makes me proud is that we live by the notion, 'give back, not up'. On these measures, Treasurer Bligh has delivered an outstanding budget—a budget that embraces the ideals and values of a truly caring society and a budget that clearly distinguishes Labor from the conservatives, a budget that aims to share the benefit of a strong economy and the once-in-a-generation income from the resources boom. Now is the time to invest in our people and in our infrastructure, and that is what this budget does.

I am particularly proud of the investment that we are making in the area of mental health services. I appreciate the impact that a mental illness can have on individual lives and on families—an impact that for far too long has been ignored and that has left many suffering in silence. Thankfully, misguided views about mental health are changing and, with this change, has come a commitment by governments from all around Australia to provide meaningful funding for mental health services.

In this budget, \$528 million will be added to mental health services over the next four years. That will be used to employ additional clinical staff, improve community based services and promote a better community understanding of the illness. In the Kurwongbah electorate we are fortunate to have at Strathpine an important community health centre, including mental health services, and this investment will help services such as ours.

A second matter of which I am truly proud is the \$500 million investment to boost public housing. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the minister for housing, the Hon. Robert Swarten, for his leadership in being the constant, unwavering champion of social housing. I have had a long-held interest in the provision of affordable housing. Several years ago I investigated the operation of tenancy databases which found in many cases that people were denied rental accommodation by being unfairly black-listed. This work contributed to Queensland leading Australia in enacting legislation to ensure fairness and transparency in the way databases operate. Currently, I am working with the member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, in advising the minister for housing on issues regarding the overheated rental market and emerging practices such as rent bidding.

One concrete response to this problem is to increase the public housing stock to accommodate those most vulnerable in our community, and this budget does just that. The budget also makes changes to tax arrangements which will remove some cost pressures from the housing market and which will help in housing affordability. These are good changes, but there is more to do in the area of housing and I will be arguing that housing remains a top priority for our government in future years.

The budget continues the Beattie government's investment in our education system. Queensland is expanding its education system through the introduction of prep year classes at one end of the spectrum to funding technical education at the other end. The state remains a financial supporter of our universities whereas we find in most other states the only funding a university gets is from the federal government and that university's own revenue measures.

The budget also recognises the importance of moving our classrooms into the 21st century by allocating funds to provide every teacher with a laptop computer. I imagine all the other members received an email the same as I did from someone called L Taylor. This person asserts that the decision to fund laptops for every teacher is a loony decision. I ask Mr Taylor to consider the decision this way: laptops are to the 21st century classroom what blackboards and chalk were to the 19th century classroom and whiteboards and markers were to the 20th century classroom. We would not expect a teacher to have to provide their own whiteboard or blackboard, so why does he assert that they should have to provide their own computer?

Earlier I mentioned the comparison between the approach under the National Party regime that I grew up under as a teenager and young adult and the approach under our government. I do not do this in terms of thinking that comparisons could be made in dollar terms about funding of programs as Queensland and the world are very different places now from what they were 20 years ago. But I think a

comparison can be made on philosophy. Robert Kennedy spoke about understanding the things that really count—things such as the happiness of children, the strength of families and the sense of community. These were the things, he said, that were not measured in economic statistics. Today, Queensland has a government that values social capital as well as economic capital. We value personal relationships and the environment in which we live. We are prepared to invest in programs and initiatives that make these things stronger. Twenty years ago this was not the case. Queensland was low tax, but it spent well below the national average on health and education services. Its approach was to exploit the environment, not protect it. It was an entirely different outlook.

Although times and attitudes and, indeed, understanding have changed, it is interesting to listen to the opposition's response to this budget. The criticism is that it is bad that Queensland will undertake modest borrowings to fund levels of capital investment. The National Party argues that taxes should be reduced, presumably at the expense of funding in health, public housing and education. Yet it refuses to identify which projects or services it would scrap. It cannot work both ways. If taxes are to be lowered, then programs must be cut or new revenue found.

This is a very good budget and Treasurer Bligh is to be commended for its underlying values. It shares the benefit of growth and supports the disadvantaged and most vulnerable in our community. It invests in the future through major infrastructure projects. It tackles climate change. It is about the things that matter in our everyday lives. It is about the things which make me proud and which should make all of us proud.

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (12.18 pm): There were two events this week that put a big smile on my face and I am sure on the faces of many people around Queensland. One of those was a natural occurrence—the amazing rainfall we witnessed—and the other a product of very careful planning and thought—the state budget. Low rainfall and climate change are the most urgent challenges facing Queensland and in particular my region of south-east Queensland. My guess is that the rainfall overshadowed the budget in the popularity stakes this week. But the 2007-08 state budget deserves to be in the public spotlight as it is a financial plan that sets us on a strong economic path while caring for many of the social needs that cause individuals and families great distress.

At the Brisbane Ekka as a kid I remember hearing the sales pitch from side-show alley: 'Every child wins a prize'. This budget makes a very substantial effort to provide something for everybody. Business will be delighted with the ever-growing investment in capital programs—\$14 billion worth of projects, the highest of all states and territories. Business will be delighted with the ever-increasing investment in education, skills and training. The world-class trade centre at Acacia Ridge, in my local electorate, with campuses statewide is a leader in its field. It is receiving a further \$33 million for stage 2 of its development.

Everyone—individuals, communities, industries—is feeling the impact of water shortages. The ongoing development of the water grid is central to this budget and to easing the anxiety many people in Queensland are feeling about the drought in south-east Queensland. I pay tribute to residents in my local area and the public generally for the part everybody has played in limiting water use. One in 10 people in south-east Queensland have installed a rainwater tank under the state government's rebate scheme and they will be happy this week that they have filled up.

Families around the state will also be relieved to hear of the record investment this government is making to improve our health system, including unprecedented increases to mental health services around the state. It was very pleasing to see this week the thumbs up from key health stakeholders such as Dr Christian Rowan from the Rural Doctors Association and the new president of the Queensland AMA, Dr Ross Cartmill.

Families will also be relieved to hear of the record investment to make housing more affordable and more available for low income people. Over \$500 million will be allocated to social housing, including the construction of more public housing. The Queensland economy is strong; employment is at a record high with the lowest unemployment levels in 30 years at four per cent. Many working people with decent jobs and sound investments are doing well, but young people must be thinking how they will ever afford to own their own house or even get a decent rental product in the current market. Housing affordability has not received the national attention and the action from the federal government that it so critically deserves. Did we see a commitment to put more people into secure and low-cost housing in the federal budget? No, we certainly did not. The federal government's response of rental assistance to individuals and homeowner grants has inflated the housing market. House prices and rentals have spiralled upwards at a time when we need a national housing action plan and urgent construction of more affordable public housing units.

I commend the Deputy Premier and her colleagues in cabinet for tackling the housing issue head on with a massive injection of funds for new housing construction, land tax relief and determined efforts to ease the cost of new housing by taking greater control over local government development charges, land release and approval processes. We cannot wait for the federal government to come good on housing. We need a national affordable housing action plan but at the state level we are taking very responsible action now.

A similar story can be told in health. Health funding from the federal government ought to be on a 50/50 basis with the states. That is the formula that has traditionally been the basis of the Commonwealth-state health agreement. But not these days. Under the federal Howard government states like Queensland are putting in more like 60 per cent to the 40 per cent being coughed up by federal government.

In my daily work I hear of the tragic suffering of people living with mental illness and those caring for them. In fact, the reality seems to be that one in 10 people will suffer some form of mental illness, including depression, so no family remains untouched by this issue. With the rollout of over \$528 million over four years to improve hospital and community based mental health services, we will soon see more hospital beds for people with severe mental illness and more staff in community and government agencies available to support families in their own communities and homes. I commend the Queensland Alliance and the other mental health organisations for dedication to their work. They have called for this significant growth in funds and they will be very pleased with what they see in this budget.

Locally in my electorate I am very pleased to see additional money for local schools, including \$500,000 for the wonderful little Pallara State School. It is like a little country school in the city. Over \$1 million will be allocated the Forest Lake State School for the development of the oval at a total cost of \$1.5 million. The school community in Forest Lake has been very patient. This project has been on the drawing board for a couple of years but due to compulsory acquisitions and other matters it has been slow. They have been very patient but over the next few months we will see this project come to fruition.

This state budget is fiscally responsible. It does prepare us well for the challenges of water shortage and climate change. It is fair in offering hope to people living with the daily worry of housing stress, poor health or disability problems. It is an outstanding budget. It is a budget that balances economic and social priorities. It is a wonderful Labor budget.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (12.25 pm): I am very proud to belong to a Labor government that keeps our community strong by investing in our schools, health care services, roads, rail and police. I am pleased to report to the constituents of the Bundamba electorate the outcomes of my representation, on their behalf, to our Labor government. This representation has resulted in our electorate once again getting more than our fair share of the budget allocation. I will outline details of the budget on a suburb by suburb basis.

Swanbank has been at the heart of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project over the last year. This financial year this work will continue as we fight the drought. Everyone in our community driving along the Cunningham Highway has seen the pipeline workers digging up the earth, laying pipes and covering the pipes. The pipeline between the Swanbank Power Station and the Bundamba advanced water treatment plant is now 87 per cent complete. This week work is continuing on preparatory work to pour the second slab at the Swanbank pump station. The amount of \$7.58 million has been allocated in this budget towards ongoing upgrades to improve the efficiency of the Swanbank Power Station.

The community is aware that in this parliament I called for Queensland Organic Recycling Systems, QORS, to get out of our electorate due to their reckless environmental practices. I am pleased to advise residents that QORS will be leaving the Box Flat site this month, that orders have been sought by the EPA in the Planning and Environmental Court that QORS cease using that site for composting purposes and that the company apply to the EPA to surrender the registration certificate. Charges have also been laid by the EPA in the Ipswich Magistrates Court alleging that QORS breached the development approval and an Environmental Protection Order. Our community does not want corporate environmental vandals and I say good riddance to this company. Get out and stay out!

It should be noted, however, that the council zoning of noxious industries in Swanbank makes it difficult for EPA and council to refuse future applications for noxious industries. I am pleased that meetings are progressing to have that zoning removed. The quicker the council can move on this the better. I am pleased that in the budget papers funding for the EPA will be increased. I thank the Swanbank Community Reference Group for their dedication to their community, particularly on environmental issues.

Bundamba is the centre of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project. Some \$1.18 billion has been allocated to the project and we can see this money being well spent in our electorate. I have never seen so many cranes on the skyline at Bundamba, so many pipes, concrete trucks and so many people working on the construction site at Bundamba. The Bundamba advanced water treatment plant is progressing well with the fourth reverse osmosis membrane unit arriving this week. This week at the Bundamba pump station the mechanical team is installing components and the interior contractor is working flat out. I thank the people in Bundamba for their understanding as this project construction team is working 24 hours a day trying to drought proof south-east Queensland. The construction workers have also been welcomed with open arms in our community.

I am pleased that a variable message sign will be installed by the Department of Main Roads on the corner of Brisbane Road and Taylor Street over the next two weeks. The sign will be slightly smaller than those on the Ipswich Motorway. Residents will remember that I campaigned long and hard to get these electronic signs for our community and I am pleased that Bundamba will receive the sign which will contain important information on road conditions.

Bremer Institute of TAFE, headquartered in Bundamba, is going from strength to strength as the region's training provider of choice. This year the TAFE's output is expected to be its highest ever—around three million training hours. The TAFE will receive increased funding to deliver training over the next financial year. The students will also benefit from additional plant, equipment and building refurbishments and increases in training delivery areas.

Initial planning is also underway for the capital investment next year announced under the Queensland Skills Plan. Bremer TAFE has also contributed magnificently in its water reduction strategies. In 12 months it has reduced its water consumption by over 50 per cent, a saving of 19,149 kilolitres. Fourteen water tanks are presently being installed for use in grounds maintenance.

Many students living in my electorate also attend Bundamba State School. In this year's budget, \$187,500 has been allocated to improve the bus set-down and parking area at the school.

Bundamba State Secondary College was involved in the school laptop trial, and the school has advised me that the provision of laptops to all teachers has had enormous benefits including freeing up designated computer labs, and providing real-time learning for students. Portable lesson preparation is also great for teachers and family friendly work practices.

Blackstone State School was refurbished to accommodate new prep students at a cost of \$100,000. Open spaces for group activities, carpeted areas for storytelling and wet areas are important facilities. Some \$360,000 has been allocated to progress the Blackstone reservoir connection main.

The Lions houses at Ebbw Vale have become a real community hub. Lions clubs meet there, and starting this month the local Lioness Club will also meet in these houses. I understand that Lions will meet with Bremer TAFE about delivering training courses to the local community. Tom Boyle, the president of Lions, is highly respected in our community as a tireless worker for the people. Residents will recall that I saved these houses from being sold by Powerlink and lobbied strongly for them to be given to the community. The Lions Club is a safe custodian of these houses.

The connection road between the Cunningham and Warrego highways will affect Ebbw Vale residents. Details are provided below.

The southern regional water pipeline construction crews are currently working in Ebbw Vale. Tunnelling is continuing under Brisbane Road at Ebbw Vale and changed traffic conditions are in place.

The Dinmore Murri Baptist Church refurbishment, funded under the Department of Housing's Community Renewal Program, was the last of the community renewal programs to be finished in our area, and is well used by the church and the community. This project was close to my heart, as I was born and bred in Dinmore and I have a strong relationship with our local Murri community.

The Dinmore Railway Station park 'n' ride has been allocated \$1.5 million for a much-needed expansion. It will be built as an extension to the existing car park along the Ipswich Motorway. Currently there are 181 car park spaces, with a proposed net increase of 231 car park spaces. I know that the residents of Dinmore will be grateful when this car park is finished.

Some \$7.39 million has been allocated for concept planning between Dinmore and Narangba for the western Brisbane network investigation. An amount of \$5.23 million has been allocated for construction of the connection road between the two highways at a total cost of \$86 million. Planning and design works will continue this year.

Some \$100 million has been allocated in Commonwealth government funding for planning and acquisition of the Goodna bypass between Dinmore and Gales. The officers of the Department of Main Roads and the Department of Housing are doing a good job in listening to the community during this very stressful time and are trying to accommodate their needs in a compassionate manner. Residents in this corridor know of my personal commitment to them during this time of family and community upheaval.

The Western Corridor Recycled Water Project is also going through the Riverview area, and I thank the Salvation Army and local residents for their patience with the construction.

Riverview Neighbourhood House continues to serve its community in various ways. I am grateful that funding will continue to provide training programs aimed at getting people back to work. The partnership between our government and Riverview Neighbourhood House has meant that many

people have been trained, have gone back to work and have their lives back on track. Training delivery to local residents costs around \$6,000 per person and it is money well spent. Aged care and retail courses are offered throughout the year. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Redbank:

The Redbank Ambulance Station has an iconic presence in our community. I am pleased that our Labor Government will be recruiting new ambulance staff this year and that some of these officers will be allocated in our local area. There will be over 140 new Ambulance vehicles purchased and I request that we get our fair share for the Redbank Ambulance Station.

I recently opened the Skilling Solutions QLD Office on the third floor of Redbank Plaza. This office provides training information to people who would like a job, or who wish to upgrade their skills.

The new JP Centre has also recently opened at the Plaza, on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. I would like to thank the JP (Quals) for their dedication in volunteering their time to the community. The service is supported by the Justice Department.

\$1.33 million has been allocated to complete the upgrade of 24 locomotives at a total cost of \$55.74 million.

\$52.74 million has been allocated to continue fabrication of 770 VCA coal wagons at a total cost of \$150 million.

\$40.3 million will purchase 15 x 4000 class locomotives at a total cost of \$93.57 million.

\$15.75 million will be allocated to continue overhauling QR's 12 and 16 cylinder locomotive fleets at a total cost of \$80.39 million.

The Redbank Library will receive money from the \$637,000 allocated to Ipswich libraries.

The Redbank State School continues to receive support from the Redbank Railway Workshops.

Collingwood Park:

Two classrooms were upgraded at Collingwood Park State School in readiness for the Prep Year. The total cost of the refurbishment was \$210,000 and teachers, parents and students are very proud of their new facilities.

Teachers at the school will receive laptops to assist them in their work, lesson planning etc.

Redbank/Collingwood Park Sport Complex which was fully funded by the Queensland government (over \$2.4 million), and operated by the YMCA through a contract with Ipswich City Council, continues to cause some community angst due to the high costs of the hiring the venue. On behalf of our community organisations, I ask that the fee structure be reviewed, as recently a local community organisation was quoted a \$3000 fee for just over 1 days hire, obviously out of their restricted budget, as it is a not for profit organisation.

Goodna/Gailes:

\$384.5 million has been allocated in the budget to alleviate pressure on the Ipswich Motorway. There will be a 6 lane upgrade of the motorway between Wacol and Darra. Some funding has been provided by the Commonwealth government.

Work on the Ipswich Motorway-Logan Motorway interchange continues with \$121 million provided in the budget.

Goodna State School was one of the first schools in the state to have a roof replaced due to asbestos building materials. It was replaced as part of the \$120 million Asbestos Roof Replacement Program.

Unfortunately last year the administration block of the school was burned to the ground. It is now being re-built, in colonial style, costing some \$1.2 million.

Goodna State School will be allocated \$32,000 for maintenance and also money for re-painting works

Goodna Special School is enjoying its new \$1.6 million classroom block which helps its senior students develop life and work skills. It was so successful that this year the School won an EQ Showcase Award in the senior phase of schooling. Well done, Goodna Special School!

The Powerlink sub-station opposite Palm Lakes Resort in the Goodna/Redbank area has been opened.

Goodna State Emergency Services will be included in the roll out of new technical and communication equipment.

The Goodna TAFE House provides training directly where it is needed to local Goodna and Gailes residents, particularly to those who may have transport and language difficulties. Studies in spoken and written English are well attended as are courses in Retail Operations.

\$514,000 has been allocated to our area to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness.

\$69,000 has been allocated toward construction of a skate park at Leslie Park at Goodna.

\$27,000 has been allocated to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program. The Goodna Health Centre will continue to be well funded by our government. The Health Budget has increased to \$7.15 Billion, and there will be more doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals employed.

\$123,000 has been allocated in continued funding for the Ipswich Tactical crime squad which targets crime hotspots such as drug offences and property crimes.

Goodna and Gailes will receive a share of \$30.6 million to upgrade Department of Housing dwellings, particularly disability modifications.

Redbank Plains/Bellbird Park:

Redbank Plains State School was refurbished at a cost of \$70,000 in preparation for Prep Year and the new Science Block, costing over \$700,000 will be opened soon. In this year's budget, Redbank Plains State School will receive money for essential repainting works.

Kruger State School, due to strong enrolment increases, received a new \$550,000 two classroom Prep building. Members of the community driving along Kruger Parade can see this state of the Art building from the road. Kruger State School will receive money for repainting works.

\$24,000 has been allocated to provide outside school hours care activities for young people aged 13-15 years.

Redbank Plains Library will receive a share of \$637,000 allocated to Libraries in the Ipswich region.

I am pleased that at long last School Road and Redbank Plains Road will be fixed. Our government has contributed to the funding of these works.

Only last week I went to Redbank Plains to inspect progress on the Queensland Government's Springfield to Yamanto Road costing some \$270 million. I can report that the construction is many months ahead of schedule and some interesting facts are:

- The excavation and compaction of 1.8 million cubic metres of earthworks has been completed. This is equivalent to excavating 900 Olympic size swimming pools.
- Clearing of unexploded ordnances (bombs) at the site was completed as it was a former bombing range during World War 2.
- Relocation of native fauna completed.
- Not one drop of water is coming from the water grid with even the site offices using tank water.

The Main Roads Officers and their contractors have done a brilliant job in our area and the quicker this road is built the better.

Redbank Plains residents would be aware that a corridor has been planned for railway lines to link up through Ipswich to form an Ipswich loop-line. Two railway stations are being planned in Redbank Plains with park'n'ride facilities.

\$160,000 has been allocated to provide the Redbank Plains Reservoir Connection Main.

\$257,000 has been allocated to a pilot service under the Prevention and Early Intervention Future Directions Funding initiative.

Camira/Springfield/Springfield Lakes/Augustine Heights:

Springfield Lakes State School, recently opened by the Minister Rod Welford, will be allocated \$6.89 million to complete Stage 2 construction work. Enrolments are increasing week by week at the school.

\$40.1 million has been allocated to complete construction of the new transmission line from Middle Ridge to Greenbank and associated sub-station upgrades.

The new Springfield Police Station that I announced as an election commitment will be allocated \$1 million to commence planning and design works. This is a great start to a new facility.

\$134.2 million has been allocated to start planning and other initial works for upgrading the Centenary Highway to 4 lanes between Springfield and the Ipswich Motorway, and to extend the railway line to Springfield. Residents will be consulted during the planning phases, and already consultation documents have been distributed in the community. Residents are encouraged to have their say as the planning progresses.

Tens of millions of dollars have been provided for the planning, design and early works of the rail component of the Darra to Springfield Transport Corridor Project.

Springfield and surrounding suburbs will continue to be included in the Department of Housing spot purchase programs. The Department of Housing is boosting its supply of social housing across the State and our area is included.

The Bremer TAFE has been operating under a sub-lease of the USQ at Springfield since Semester 1 2006. Enrolments have more than doubled with 220 students undertaking business, accounting, community service, language, and education and horticulture subjects. I am pleased to advise that Bremer TAFE plan to open a state of the art hair and beauty training salon later this year.

It was a pleasure to open Queensland Health's Baby Clinic at Springfield Lakes earlier this year, and the service is well supported by local parents. This year there will be established a Universal Postnatal Contact Service where mothers of new-borns are offered a home visit to ensure they are coping with parenthood. The service will commence in pilot sites in 2007-08 before being rolled out across Queensland.

In conclusion, this budget delivers for our community. It is about building for the future. It seems nearly every suburb in my electorate is a construction site from Bundamba, the capital of the water projects, to Springfield where the major road and rail infrastructure is being planned and built. I am grateful for the hundreds of millions of dollars being invested in my electorate.

But, I want more.

I want more for schools so that our children can have the best facilities, world class technologies, and access to resources that can carry them right throughout life as life-long learners. And I will not give up until I achieve that as a good education is your ticket to a good job, to owning a home, to contributing to the community. So that is my log of claims. I am now going to knock on the Minister for Education's door. Watch this space!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): I acknowledge in the public gallery teachers and students from the Western Cape College, which is in my electorate of Cook.

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (12.34 pm): This year's budget is a budget for all Queenslanders. It is also a good budget for the residents of the Inala electorate. As Queensland is a growth state, so too is the electorate of Inala becoming a major gateway to the outer western suburbs of Springfield and Ripley Valley. Growth in this region will also bring with it more jobs. I welcome the Premier's news yesterday and the Treasurer's reinstatement of the fact today that unemployment in Queensland has reached a record low of 3.5 per cent. However, I am concerned that in some parts of my electorate youth unemployment is higher than the average. Over the coming years I will be focusing on this very issue, on trying to reduce the youth unemployment rates in my area and calling for more skills based training centres in Inala, linking in with the local business community, linking in with TAFE Queensland and linking in with Glenala State High School. I want every young adult living in my electorate to have a good opportunity of obtaining a job and a job locally if they so choose once they complete their education.

As reported last week in the *Courier-Mail*, Inala continues to be one of the top five growth suburbs in Brisbane. This is great news. A mix of public housing combined with private investment has contributed to this growth. Boasting in some areas magnificent city views ranging from Mount Coot-tha to the city skyline, Inala is a suburb that will continue to grow.

In relation to economic infrastructure, the Treasurer said that cars and trucks will be driving on the Boundary-Kelher roads underpass on the Centenary Highway this year. The state government has committed over \$30 million towards this upgrade and \$12.46 million this financial year to construct a two-lane underpass on Boundary Road. It is on track and due for opening in a few months time. I notice the minister for transport has just walked into the chamber and I look forward to him opening this project.

The other commitments in this budget include \$57.3 million to complete the concept planning of the upgrade of the Centenary Highway between Springfield and the Ipswich Motorway. In addition, parts of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project—the key to our water grid—will be going through parts of my electorate.

We cannot have economic infrastructure without social infrastructure in our community. I will now address social infrastructure in my electorate. This budget provides \$479 million in capital funding for housing. The Commonwealth has failed to continue providing necessary funds for the construction of public housing and has redirected its funds to rental assistance.

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the member for Ashgrove's interjection: it is shameful. Housing is a very important issue in Inala and parts of Carole Park. Part of this new funding will be invested in Inala to provide much-needed housing to reduce public housing waitlists. Over \$2 million will be spent this year on housing in the electorate. This will comprise \$580,000 to commence construction of six public housing apartment units for low-income earners at a total cost of \$1.88 million and \$212,000 to complete construction of public housing in Inala for severely injured persons as part of the spinal injury initiative to house severely injured persons at a total cost of \$446,000.

In addition, this budget will see the continuation of the very successful Community Renewal Program that has changed Inala and is now being extended to Carole Park. Some \$2.95 million will continue the second phase of the Community Renewal Program in the Brisbane south-west zone.

I am pleased to report that \$300,000 from community renewal was released from last year's funding to create the Inala-Carole Park domestic violence service. This is a much-needed service and will benefit women and children in my local area. This new service will operate two days a week out of the HUB centre in Inala and three days a week out of Elorac Place based at Carole Park. I have been a strong advocate for this service, and this vital service is supported by locals, Legal Aid, community organisations and, very importantly, the local police.

I am proud that for the first time the budget for Disability Services Queensland for 2007-08 has reached \$1 billion. At the QCOSS breakfast on Thursday morning, the Treasurer announced that a \$237 million injection of new money is allocated for disability services in Queensland. This represents a 220 per cent increase in disability funding since the Beattie government first came to office.

I would like to contrast the Queensland government's commitment to that of the Commonwealth government. The federal minister, Mal Brough, who is from Queensland, stated that the federal budget 'contains further new measures worth \$128.2 million for the next four years'.

Mrs Sullivan: Typical of conservative politics: too little too late.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is too little too late. When we contrast this with the Queensland government commitment of \$237 million of new money—almost twice as much—we begin to understand the priorities of this government as opposed to those of the federal government.

Mrs Sullivan: Kevin Rudd will stick up for all Queenslanders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. Mal Brough should hang his head in shame. Recently, the Premier announced the Queensland government response to the Carter report. This year's budget will fund a total of \$113 million towards an innovative and comprehensive package of reforms to improve the lives of people with a disability who exhibit severely challenging behaviour which makes them a danger to themselves and their families and carers. I would like to briefly read from the Carter report where he explains challenging behaviour on page 8. He states—

Challenging behaviour which is exhibited not only by persons with intellectual disability but also by those with mental illness and in some cases with physical disability not only may put at the risk of injury the particular person and others but also it potentially deprives the person of access to the community and in some cases denies that person the opportunity to engage in the normal affairs of community living. It is therefore a matter of considerable significance. It needs to be addressed in a way which enhances the prospects of the person's personal development and enhances that individual's opportunity to establish a quality of life. Services and service delivery should be designed and implemented to achieve that objective.

In an attempt to address the housing arrangements, Bill Carter QC highlighted that accommodation should be built out at Wacol due to the close proximity of the park to any assistance with mental health issues and to DSQ therapy staff. The government accepted this recommendation and housing will be built in my electorate at Wacol. A sum of \$5.83 million has been earmarked to deliver accommodation and \$2.94 million is allocated to provide purpose designed housing for people with a disability in Inala as part of an ongoing commitment.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the minister for communities for implementing this very comprehensive report. It makes me proud to be part of a Labor government that confronts complex legal and social issues head-on and finds a solution. I would also like to congratulate the Hon. William Carter QC for his handling of this matter and I congratulate the many families who shared their stories with him as part of this report.

The other part of the Carter report touched on the creation of a Centre of Excellence. I would like to briefly outline the role of this centre. It will: advise on, develop and ensure the maintenance across Queensland of consistent and best practice service options for all persons with an intellectual disability and challenging behaviour which expressly apply the human rights and service delivery principles expressed in the Disability Services Act 2006; facilitate the establishment, maintenance and ongoing review of a system of positive behaviour support for persons with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour, which is based on comprehensive assessment and targeted individualised intervention in the community and the plan management and coordination of those services; and continually monitor and review the quality of service delivery across Queensland to persons with an intellectual disability and challenging behaviour.

I notice that the minister for communities and disability services is in the House. I pay tribute to him for all the work he has done to improve the lives of people with a disability in this state.

Several people living in my electorate have been the victims of historical abuse. They have fought hard over the years to put their lives back on track. Over the years I have met with many of these people and listened to their stories. I cannot make a speech in this House without commenting on the \$100 million redress scheme for children abused in Queensland institutions that the Treasurer and the minister for communities have made available. There will be \$100 million made available for distribution by way of ex gratia payments to eligible former child residents of Queensland institutions and detention centres. As the Treasurer said in her media release on 31 May, 'Our hope is that the redress scheme will offer some support and assistance and will help bring some closure to individuals and families.' Their voices have been heard and the government has delivered. The past cannot be forgotten but an opportunity now exists for them to move forward with their lives.

This budget provides a great resource to the teachers in our state schools. This resource—laptop computers—will not only be a valuable educational tool but will also enable teachers to network with other teachers worldwide. This year's budget has committed \$500 million to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state. The electorate of Inala will benefit from \$113,000 for improvements to our local schools, including Glenala State High School, Durack State School, Camira State School, Richlands East State School, Richlands State School, Inala West State School and Carole Park State School. This funding clearly demonstrates the Beattie government's commitment to our local schools in the area.

The community groups in my electorate are outstanding.

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. The member for Ashgrove's father works in the electorate of Inala and he does a wonderful job at the Inala family and youth accommodation service.

The Inala PCYC provides programs and sporting opportunities to the youth in Inala and surrounding suburbs. I would like to publicly thank Sergeant Raymond Murray and his committee for the outstanding work they have done in growing the organisation. As part of this year's budget, \$32,000 is allocated to the PCYC to deliver a program to develop and maintain healthy and active lifestyles in primary school aged children. A total of \$922,000 has been allocated for family support programs to improve the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and their families.

Inala Community House provides a range of community services to families in my electorate. This year we will continue therapy support for families with a commitment of \$458,000 for counselling, youth worker support and social and recreational activities.

The government has also enhanced mental health services across the state. I am proud to report that \$861,000 will be allocated for refurbishment of the The Park Centre for Mental Health, including the upgrade of Anderson House and Fleming House at a total cost of \$2 million at Wacol.

In conclusion, the residents in the Inala electorate will indeed benefit from the government's budget. It provides funding for the necessary infrastructure to cater for the growth in the region over the coming years and it caters for the community infrastructure which is needed to help those in need. I congratulate the Treasurer who has delivered a true Labor budget—one which history will reflect upon as being innovative, inspirational and in accordance with our needs. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth) (12.47 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this House and support the Appropriation Bill introduced by Treasurer Anna Bligh. This is an excellent budget. It is a genuine Labor budget that gets the economic fundamentals right and at the same time delivers on our strong commitment to social justice.

The state government's estimated 2006-07 operating surplus of \$2.393 billion reflects strengths in the economy and responsible fiscal management carried out by this government. As a result, taxes are \$131 lower than the average for other states and territories. With the Fuel Subsidy Scheme taken into account, Queenslanders are on average \$257 per person better off than their interstate counterparts. A 50 per cent cut in mortgage duty from 1 January 2008 will save homebuyers between \$360 and \$500 on home loans of between \$250,000 and \$300,000, with full abolition from 1 January 2009.

This year's budget involves the biggest allocation of funds to my portfolio, encompassing Communities, Disability Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Seniors and Youth. A total of \$1.8 billion is a significant investment in a portfolio whose client base includes some of the state's most marginalised and vulnerable citizens. Only a Labor government has this level of commitment that will ensure all Queenslanders share in our state's current prosperity.

There are a number of functions newly transferred to my portfolio: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Home and Community Care Program and community mental health services provided by non-government organisations. These additions to what is now the largest human services portfolio in Queensland's history account for a sizeable chunk of additional funding. However, there have also been substantial increases in funding for the core areas of communities, families, youth justice services, youth and children, and disability services.

The people from my part of this wonderful state, far-north Queensland, will benefit from these funding increases. Today I want to outline some of the budget initiatives as they relate to my own electorate of Mulgrave. The Mulgrave electorate, which was severely impacted on by Cyclone Larry in 2006, has received a huge funding package for health, schools and roads in the Beattie government's 2006-07 state budget. This builds on 10 years of continuous growth in investment by the Beattie government.

There is ample funding to finish the job associated with repairing the damage to community facilities and the livelihoods and lives of people caused by Cyclone Larry. I welcome the investment required to convert the temporary prison camp which was established following the devastation of Cyclone Larry to a permanent fixture in the Innisfail district. I am aware of some controversy regarding its location. However, I acknowledge that the community as a whole accepts the concept and the benefits it can deliver. A total of \$819,000 has been allocated for the ongoing operation of this facility.

This is a budget that really builds the infrastructure of the area. The government recognises the need to plan with a firm eye on the future, which is why there is a range of funding for road projects in Mulgrave. A figure of \$94,639 has been set aside for further upgrading of the Yarrabah Range access road. This is a project I commenced in 1990 and continues to receive funding each budget.

Another \$77,500 has been set aside to widen and reconstruct Mount Peter Road in Edmonton to service a growing urban development. A further \$192,500 in funding will see the widening and sealing of Hussey Road, Edmonton. \$163,000 will be set aside for profile correction and asphalt surfacing of the Mourilyan Road loop road. Following on the expenditure of some \$300,000 in recent years to upgrade the Deeral boat ramp, a further \$80,074 will be made available to provide a sealed car park at the ramp.

At Goondi State School \$50,000 will complete the construction of a pick-up and set-down area. More than \$10,000 has also been set aside to construct a pick-up and set-down area at St Michael's Catholic School in Mill Street, Gordonvale. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that more than \$500 million has been allocated to build and upgrade schools across Queensland.

Money has been set aside in the budget to develop four "Schools of the Future" and I have indicated to the Minister for Education that I will continue lobbying for the inclusion of Innisfail as a site for one of these state-of-the-art educational facilities.

The Hambleton State School has been under enormous pressure with burgeoning enrolments and has found it difficult to keep pace with high urban growth.

I am pleased that \$4.74 million is available for the construction of a General Learning Area Block that will relieve some of this pressure.

Minor works at Goondi State School, Gordonvale High School and Hambleton State School totalling nearly \$100,000 will assist with such projects as roofing, painting and landscaping.

In addition, the Isabella State School, which took its first intake this year, continues to grow and \$2 million has been allocated to complete the second stage of construction.

I have responded to requests from the P&C of Innisfail State High School to acquire funds for the redevelopment of its existing tuckshop.

An amount of \$130,000 has been made available for this purpose but I am still hopeful that it may not be required, should my lobbying for a "School of the Future" meet with success.

In the health sector, both Yarrabah and Innisfail are big winners.

The \$41.7 million redevelopment of the Innisfail hospital is nearly complete and the \$3.56 million in this budget will see this important work brought to a conclusion.

The replacement of an ageing St Luke's Hospital in Yarrabah by a modern primary health care centre valued at \$15.7 million will commence, with \$6.63 million being made available to commence initial works this year.

I would also like to highlight the importance of community facility funding.

The Gordonvale swimming pool will finally receive its much-needed upgrade to eight lanes and will firmly establish it as a key short-course, 25m facility.

Despite issues surrounding problems with the tendering process entered into by Cairns City Council, I have successfully lobbied the Minister for Sport and Recreation to provide an extra \$327,000 on top of the original \$400,000-plus allocated in a previous budget.

Sporting facilities at Yarrabah will receive a substantial upgrade with \$130,650 going to the Yarrabah Seahawks Rugby League and Sport Club to construct a new amenities facility incorporating disabled toilets, to replace existing facilities, under the Minor Facilities Program.

Some \$6,000 will also go to the Seahawks to assist with the further development of rugby league in the community.

A further \$42,000 will assist with the development of a sport, recreation and open space plan for Yarrabah Council.

An amount of \$120,000 will be made available to the Cairns AFL club to construct a multi-sport oval at Gordonvale next to Djarragan College.

This will be the home base for Pyramid Power.

The Babinda Bowls Club will upgrade its green surface incorporating a water-saving irrigation system as a result of an \$86 330 grant from the Minor Facilities Program.

I also welcome \$1.35 million in funding for the new Yarrabah Ambulance Station, which was contained in this week's budget.

The new centre will be co-located with the primary health care centre, giving the citizens of Yarrabah the quality of health services and emergency response equivalent to any other community in the region.

Other big-ticket items planned for the Mulgrave area include \$61.4 million for the replacement of the transmission line from Kareeya to Innisfail and from Innisfail to Edmonton.

This is part of a key project to secure a reliable power supply for Far North Queensland.

During the last five years, a small number of residents affected by the route have mounted a strong campaign against this construction.

While I respect their views, it is my responsibility to take a broader view and ensure the community as a whole has its energy needs met well into the future.

The new State Emergency Services headquarters will be shifted to the TAFE grounds adjoining the Johnstone River.

This is part of a commitment given by the Premier in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry.

The final \$7.55 million for the construction of the MaMu Canopy Walkway near Crawford's Lookout will see total investment in this project reach \$10 million.

Costs have risen because of materials and the availability of civil engineering capacity.

As well, the new figure includes a car park, an entry facility and the construction of a safe intersection adjoining the Palmerston Highway.

I am particularly pleased that the MaMu people will—through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement—obtain conditional freehold title to 14 hectares of land fronting the walkway entrance.

This will enable them to realise further commercial return as a result of the project.

An allocation of \$621,000 to upgrade the Grace Street and Lily Street intersections on the Bruce Highway, and \$404,000 to upgrade the highway itself between Innisfail and Ingham, will be important steps in bringing this major transport artery up to an acceptable level.

Two roundabouts—valued at \$120,000—will also be constructed at Mourilyan to improve highway safety.

As a former teacher, I applaud the allocation of \$70 million to be spent over four years across Queensland to provide laptops to all state school and TAFE teachers.

A sum of \$550,000 has been allocated to complete the stabilisation of the river bank at Innisfail East State School, as part of a project worth a total of \$1.2 million.

This has been a long process and I am pleased to see it will finally come to a conclusion.

Counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness will also be bolstered with \$315,000 to be spent in the Innisfail district.

Additional support services for young people through youth development programs will be funded as a result of a \$286,000 injection.

An allocation of almost \$1 million will also ensure that disability services in the electorate are meeting demand.

Funding of \$717,000 has been set aside for respite, to provide short-term relief for families, carers and people with a disability.

Almost \$210,000 will assist young adults with a disability and their families to plan supports for when they leave school.

This is an important time of transition in their young lives and appropriate assistance will have significant positive benefits.

Meantime, a further \$7,000 has been set aside to support non-government organisations in addressing rising costs and viability issues.

The construction of public housing has also been the beneficiary of further funding.

Unfortunately, the Howard Government has turned its back on public housing and allowed ideology to over-ride commonsense.

The expectation that rent assistance in the private market would provide necessary outcomes has proven to be pie in the sky.

I am pleased that the Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten, has secured nearly \$500 million for investment in public and social housing.

More than \$1 million will improve stocks in the Innisfail district through the construction of two general accommodation units and adaptable dwellings for older South Sea Island people.

Part of these funds will be applied to the provision of crisis accommodation.

Yarrabah will receive \$2.584 million for the construction of new dwellings and the ongoing maintenance of existing stock.

In our protected areas, \$81,000 has been set aside for the replacement of the pedestrian bridge at the Henrietta Creek Camping Area in the Wooroonooran National Park.

A figure of \$162,000 has been allocated to road improvements in the Palmerston Forest Reserve.

Johnstone Shire Council will receive \$69,000 to assist with the repair of the former St Andrews Church a heritage listed property damaged by Cyclone Larry.

All residents in the Mulgrave electorate will also share in multimillion dollar boosts to child safety, mental health and ambulance services state-wide.

The government will be recruiting 250 new ambulance staff in 07-08 across Queensland as part of a \$50 million injection to the Queensland Ambulance Service.

The electorate of Mulgrave has once again fared well from the State Budget.

As an area undergoing constant growth I am, as local member, continuously challenged to secure funds to keep up with demand.

I have been pleased to support my far northern government colleagues in lobbying for capital works in our major regional centre, Cairns, that have a direct benefit to the region as a whole.

Significantly, \$82 million will be applied to the ongoing upgrade of the Cairns International Airport to further entrench our region's excellent reputation as a tourist destination of choice.

Mr Speaker,

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (12.51 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the 2007 budget. With the Queensland 2007 state budget being presented on Tuesday there were lots of members with long faces who were quite unhappy that they had received precious little for their electorates. However, I am not one of them. I am extremely happy about the very big slice of the pie that Maryborough has received. It certainly puts to bed the tired old rumour that Independents cannot get anything for their electorates.

When members consider that we got \$104.62 million in rail contracts alone—and I certainly thank the state government for that—Maryborough has a lot to smile about. There could always be more spent especially in terms of the health spend. Our health district is straining at the seams like many other health districts. In particular, our mental health unit could do with a lot more in terms of resources. But here is a snapshot of what we received.

We received an extra \$250,000 for additional amenities at St Helen's State School, \$200,000 for additional amenities at Aldridge State High School, \$1.5 million for prisoner security facilities at Maryborough Court House, \$14.249 million to continue the duplication of sections of the Maryborough to Hervey Bay road to four lanes—that amount is obviously shared with the Hervey Bay electorate—and \$351,000 for a Bruce Highway overpass near Gayndah Road, Maryborough for the construction of a bikeway/footpath, which will be very welcomed, especially by the students at the TAFE college who have to cross the Bruce Highway to get to college.

In terms of disability services, there is \$2.628 million for innovative housing at Maryborough West. Under Mines and Energy there is \$20.7 million to reinforce the 132kV electricity supply to Maryborough and Hervey Bay. As I mentioned before, in terms of Queensland Rail, there is \$89.55 million for additional MetTrip Citytrain rolling stock and another \$15.047 million on additional Citytrain rolling stock.

The Teebar Creek substation also received an additional \$14.6 million for completion. The estimated total cost was \$41.3 million of which \$20.67 million was allocated last budget. The remainder to finalise this work has been allocated in this budget. All in all it is an extremely good result for the Maryborough electorate. There has been some criticism from people in my electorate that not enough will be spent on health, which I have already talked about. We certainly look forward to an upscaling of resources there. It is a Labor budget. What members opposite have said is true; it is a classic Labor budget in that it does spend a lot of money on disadvantaged people. I have no problem with that at all. In terms of any social justice issue, people who cannot defend themselves and cannot fend for themselves deserve our best support.

My only note of caution—as opposition members have pointed out on a lot of occasions—is that it is a big spending budget. It is also a big borrowing budget. I believe the Treasurer would need to be extremely careful with the amount borrowed should interest rates rise substantially. It has been well said that anyone can look good in a leased car. We would certainly encourage the Treasurer to keep a very close eye on that lest the running costs of that borrowing get out of hand. All in all, I am very delighted with what Maryborough got. I commend the budget to the House.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, I acknowledge in the public gallery the Association of Independent Retirees from the electorate of Noosa, which is represented in the chamber by Glen Elmes.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (2.30 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate in reply to the Appropriation Bill as it relates to my electorate of Hinchinbrook. The Beattie government's budget for the financial year 2007-08 sets Queensland on a path into debt. The budget papers reveal that by 2010-11 the Beattie government intends to run up borrowings of \$52 billion which will eventually incur an annual interest repayment of \$1.14 billion. Despite record tax revenues thanks to the GST and increases in state taxes and royalties from the mining industry, the Beattie government has been forced to borrow huge amounts of money, incurring unprecedented levels of debt to fund huge emergency infrastructure projects particularly in south-east Queensland. Think of the extra projects, resources and services that could have been delivered to Queenslanders and Queensland communities across the state with the \$1.14 billion in interest repayments that will need to be made by the state government to service that debt.

The future interest payments could have built new hospitals, provided more resources to and upgraded facilities at schools, employed more police and ambulance officers and given them better resources and facilities. The interest payments could have built new roads and helped to maintain the existing ones which need work. Instead, we will be making interest repayments. The Beattie government has been sitting on the treasury benches in Queensland for nine years, enjoying the revenue benefits of an economic boom delivered by a surge in the mining sector and the strong economic management of the federal coalition government. However, in contrast to the federal coalition government, which through strong economic management has been able to pay off the \$96 billion in debt left behind by the Hawke and Keating Labor governments, the Beattie Labor government has at the same time led Queensland into debt.

In relation to my electorate of Hinchinbrook, there are a number of things announced in the budget which I welcome. The budget has revealed that the overall allocation for the new Ingham Hospital has more than doubled in 12 months from \$22.1 million in 2006-07 to \$44.9 million in 2007-08. This recognises that it is important to ensure that this new hospital, which will undoubtedly be required to service the healthcare needs of the communities in the Herbert River district for many years to come, will have the facilities to deliver those health services.

Stage 1 of the new Ingham Hospital finally began earlier this year. The Beattie government has promised the project for several years and several state elections. The first plan that Queensland Health brought to the table was unacceptable. However, to its credit, Queensland Health listened to the community about the growing needs of the Ingham Hospital, which is increasingly servicing areas north of Cardwell and south of Rollingstone as well as the Herbert River district. The 2007-08 budget shows that \$1.69 million has already been spent to date on the project, with a further \$9 million to be spent by the end of June 2008. The balance of the allocation—some \$34.2 million—is due to be spent beyond June 2008. But despite the doubling of the budget, I understand that Queensland Health still does not plan to have a permanent maternity ward or offer dialysis treatment at the new Ingham Hospital, which is an issue that I have consistently raised with the Minister for Health.

There was a recent announcement from the state government advising that the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme would be boosted from 10c to 15c a kilometre, and I have mentioned this issue on a number of occasions. While this small increase is welcome, it will not make a significant dint in the transport bills being faced by many people in regional areas of Queensland like my electorate who are being forced to travel long distances more often to access an increasing number of healthcare services. The Beattie government has continued to concentrate a larger range of healthcare services in bigger provincial cities like Cairns and Townsville and it is costing these patients dearly. The most harshly affected are those least able to cope with the costs such as the chronically ill, older Queenslanders and others on low and fixed incomes. The announcement did not address the issue of the accommodation subsidy part of the patient travel subsidy scheme which is also inadequate.

I welcome a number of road transport projects which have been earmarked for the Hinchinbrook electorate. There are about \$30 million worth of projects planned which will construct overtaking lanes, turning lanes, improve road surfaces and mitigate the effects of floodwaters on parts of the Bruce Highway. The projects include \$1.5 million for the construction of an overtaking lane between Althaus Creek and Saunders Creek just north of Townsville, \$2 million for the construction of overtaking lanes and turning lanes at Balgal Beach near Rollingstone, \$25 million to upgrade the road and mitigate the impact of floodwaters between Tokalon Road and Lannercost Street at Ingham, and a capital grant of \$1.26 million for the Hinchinbrook Shire Council to seal the road to Mount Fox.

The projects providing turning lanes and overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway will significantly enhance the flow of traffic and thus the safety on our roads, particularly with the increase in tourism and heavy vehicles on the highway in north Queensland. I would, however, like to see more projects for turning lanes off the Bruce Highway in the Northern Beaches area of Thuringowa City Council between Black River and Bluewater to enhance access for residents living in those communities, and I have raised these projects with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. There is the issue of the Kirrama Range Road near Kennedy just north of Cardwell which is in a state of disrepair and has actually been closed. This is a significant local road and it is an issue that I have brought to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Minister for the Environment and Multiculturalism, as the

road is located in a national park. It is an ongoing issue. Whilst I acknowledge that the state government has provided some assistance to assess the road to determine what upgrade costs may be faced, I urge the state government to take responsibility for this road given that it does go through a national park and it has strategic importance as far as the tourism industry is concerned.

I also welcome the announcement that there will be investments in boating infrastructure in the electorate of Hinchinbrook. The budget allocates more than \$3 million in funding for the upgrade of recreational boating facilities right across Queensland, including the Mourilyan Harbour boat ramp as well as boating facilities at Toomulla Beach near Rollingstone. Queensland fishermen and boating enthusiasts pay their boat registration fees and their boat trailer registration fees every year, and they deserve to have those payments returned to them in the form of new and upgraded boating infrastructure.

As far as energy infrastructure is concerned, on the one hand I am pleased to see that the Kareeya Power Station has attracted a further allocation of capital works improvements in this budget, up from \$5.6 million in 2006-07 to \$8.2 million in 2007-08. The Kareeya Power Station certainly has provided a number of employment opportunities for the people in the Hinchinbrook electorate and Stanwell Corporation has provided welcome support to Tully State High School students through scholarships and encouraging career paths. On the other hand, however, the Beattie government's budget papers have revealed that the costs associated with the construction of Powerlink's controversial Tully to Innisfail transmission line have blown out. In fact, the total cost of the project has more than tripled from \$21 million in 2002 to \$68 million in 2007.

The Beattie government argued for seven years with the local community about having to choose the least-cost option to replace the ageing Kareeya to Innisfail transmission line, which it claimed was the coastal route. The Beattie government must now admit that it was wrong. The public was originally told in 2002 that the coastal route would cost \$21 million and that maintaining the alignment on the current inland route would be more expensive at \$41 million, despite the fact that the inland easement was already in place. Now that Powerlink has forced the alignment through almost 200 properties between Tully and Innisfail, we find out that the cost is actually \$68 million and the local communities have every right to feel outraged.

The Minister for Mines and Energy knows that I have consistently objected to this project and I feel now that the budget papers have revealed this extravagant blow-out, the community also has a right to feel vindicated in its opposition over a long period of time. If the Beattie government had simply done the common-sense thing and replaced the transmission line along the existing inland alignment, it would have been done by now and saved \$27 million of Queensland taxpayers' money, not to mention the anguish and the frustration caused to the families in this area as well as the lost land value and lost production area. I condemn the Beattie government for the outrageous contempt that it has shown to the communities between Tully and Innisfail in relation to this issue.

The cost of the MaMu canopy walk has more than doubled from \$4 million in the 2006-07 budget to \$10 million in the 2007-08 budget. I support the MaMu walk project as a worthwhile initiative to encourage tourism in the Wet Tropics, but I am worried that the ongoing delays could compromise the project if there are further problems and cost increases. The delays that have occurred to this point have been numerous and all the while the budget has blown out. I hope that this does not see the completion date put back any further, considering that the budget has now more than doubled.

The budgets submitted for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the Environmental Protection Agency were cause for concern to me as a member of this place representing a regional electorate. Like the shadow minister for primary industries, the member for Toowoomba South, I was dismayed when the Treasurer failed to mention primary industries once in her speech. This is despite the fact that the rural sector contributes tens of millions of dollars to the state's economy and brings vital export dollars to Queensland.

The member for Toowoomba South made some very valid observations in the wake of the budget in relation to the claim by the government that the size of the DPIF budget has increased. I wonder if the Treasurer or the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries could provide a breakdown of the budget for the DPIF, taking into consideration the straight transfer of staff and resources from other government departments to form the new Queensland biosecurity unit within the DPIF. Once this is taken into account, perhaps we will see if there has been any funding increase to the DPIF in real terms.

All the larger capital works projects in the DPIF budget are in south-east Queensland at Gatton, Redlands, on Bribie Island and at Nambour. I wish those programs well. However, all of those major initiatives are located less than an hour's drive from Brisbane. Two smaller initiatives are planned for Oonoonba in Townsville and Coen on the Cape York Peninsular.

The South Johnstone Research Station in my electorate, which focuses on tropical agriculture in north Queensland and far north Queensland, is overdue for a fair go from the Beattie government. I hope that the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries gives serious consideration to widening the scope of capital works initiatives in the DPIF budget next year.

I am also very concerned that the Beattie government appears to have reduced its commitment to the control of feral animals and pest weed control in Queensland's national parks in this budget. On 6 February this year I asked the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism a question on notice. I asked the minister to provide a breakdown of the EPA's expenditure on pest animal management and pest weed management for 2005-06 and what the EPA estimated it would spend on the same programs for 2006-07. The answer was promising, insofar as it indicated that it planned to increase funding from approximately \$4.5 million in 2005-06 to approximately \$5 million in 2006-07. I thought we were moving in the right direction.

As someone who has consistently raised with a number of Beattie government ministers the serious problems associated with the growing issues of pest weeds and feral animals, at least as far as the Wet Tropics is concerned, the announcement via press release from the Premier and the Treasurer on 4 June 2007 that this figure would be cut in the 2007-08 budget by \$500,000 to \$4.5 million has come as a major disappointment to me. The control of pest weeds and feral animals may not be a sexy environmental issue, but the reality is that as pest weeds and feral animals become more prolific they pose a major threat to the survival of endangered plants and animals, and cost farmers and landholders millions in lost production and control costs.

A number of projects have been carried over from or are not yet completed from last year's budget. I am glad to see that the Queensland government remains committed to them and in some cases they have increased the allocation. Included amongst the projects returning for another run in the 2007-08 budget papers include \$1.9 million to establish the Innisfail Community Centre. This was up from an allocation of \$1.45 million in last year's budget and this project will service communities in the far northern areas of my electorate.

A sum of \$1.5 million has been allocated to the development of the Bohvale District Community Centre. This project will service communities in the far southern areas of my electorate. There is a welcome increase in the budget for the riverbank stabilisation project being undertaken at East Innisfail State School, which takes a number of students from my electorate. It is up from a budget allocation of \$460,000 in 2006-07 to \$774,000 in 2007-08. There is an increase of \$12,000 in the budget to build additional amenities at Tully State High School, which is up from a budget allocation of \$496,000 in 2006-07 to \$508,000 in 2007-08. I look forward to those projects being completed this financial year.

Importantly, I acknowledge and thank the state government for its contribution through the departments of Education, Local Government, Planning and Sport and Emergency Services towards the funding package for the multipurpose centre at Tully. The last piece of the funding package from the federal coalition government arrived recently and that facility will be a great asset to the community in the Cardwell Shire.

Like the rest of my colleagues from the coalition, I was appalled with the decision by the Beattie government to increase stamp duty on the sale of motor vehicles. While the Beattie government has made a big fuss over its belated decision to phase out mortgage duty over the next three years, it is hitting regional and rural Queenslanders in particular with this decision to increase stamp duty on motor vehicles, and most significantly on heavy transport vehicles and utilities. Almost no drivers will be spared this tax grab, with six cylinder family cars to also be hit by the stamp duty increase.

Stamp duty on a four-cylinder car will increase by 50 per cent. For a six-cylinder car, stamp duty will increase by 75 per cent and the stamp duty increase on vehicles with eight or more cylinders will increase by 100 per cent. That is an outrageous and punitive attack on the road transport industry.

So much relies on road transport in my electorate of Hinchinbrook and across north Queensland and far north Queensland generally, and this decision will undoubtedly have a very serious impact on the cost overheads of road transport operators. I am at a loss to understand why the Beattie government insists on targeting Queensland's most important and productive industries, such as the agricultural and mining sector, which are heavily reliant on heavy road transport.

The Beattie government has made much of what is in this budget for public housing. In the north and far north regions that my electorate covers, some programs have been given a boost and some have been cut quite significantly. I have written to the Minister for Public Works and Housing in relation to the shortage of public housing in the Hinchinbrook Shire. I look forward to his advice in relation to that issue.

While I welcome and am grateful for the allocations that have been made to my electorate of Hinchinbrook, I hope that the Treasurer takes notice of the issues that I have raised and can take steps to address them as soon as possible.

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (2.36 pm): The budget is the government's opportunity to present what we are outlining for the people of Queensland. It is also an excellent opportunity to find out what the alternative government would do, what the alternative Premier would outline for the people of Queensland and how he would

fund that. Yesterday, for 30 minutes we listened to a sad testimony to a leadership that is fading and going out the door. For 30 minutes, we heard no ideas except one. The Leader of the Opposition's whole answer to climate change was to give the shadow minister for the environment the added responsibility, in his terms, of sustainability, as if sustainability had nothing to do with the environment.

Throughout this debate what we have heard from the opposition is confusion. On the one hand, there is their great regret at the funding in this year's budget, which sits right alongside their great regret that we did not spend more. On the other hand, in their view we will send the place broke, but do we hear any calls from them to slash the funding in their own electorates? Not one tad of it! It was tucked away in the last day of the last campaign where 1.5 per cent was going to be slashed right across-the-board. Tucked away in the shadow treasurer's speech yesterday was a concern about recurrent funding for the Public Service. We all know that means that, despite all of their crocodile tears, they would not put on any extra doctors.

All we have to do is judge them by their form. When last in government, they did two things that were quite reckless in a growth state. When they first came to office, rather than address the infrastructure needs of a growing state, they had a capital works freeze. The second thing that they did was even more lamentable. I did not have any truck with selling off Suncorp Metway; that was fair enough. However, they then proceeded to earmark that money and put it into recurrent expenditure. That is the most reckless thing in a budgetary sense that could be done, and that coalition government did it. That was the financial legacy it left to us.

So often we hear about the power crisis, or whatever it is that the Leader of the Opposition manufactures or has manufactured for him. We have a crisis all right, and it is a crisis of confidence in the alternative Premier. The last power crisis we had was when the coalition was in government. There were three days of continuous blackouts a couple of days before the people summoned them out the door.

This budget is an ample opportunity to contrast the two sides. This government recognises the infrastructure needs, understands that in a growth state there are challenges but faces up to those challenges in a way that is responsible and in a way that will require constant yearly overview. That is what we are committed to doing. In my own electorate of Logan—a fast-growing area on the south side of Brisbane and in north Beaudesert—we are facing up to those challenges in this budget. I welcome the commitment to the upgrade of the Mount Lindesay Highway, which will mean safer motoring for the people who live in North Beaudesert and further south. We will have an overpass at Crest Road with the accompanying side streets that will mean that people do not have to get on to the main road if they want to pick up their kids at the Park Ridge State School or the Park Ridge State High School. In addition, there will be a safer side road from Stoney Camp Road up to the Munruben west area. I welcome that.

I have had a meeting with the minister for transport concerning the need for express buses to take people, who now catch the bus outside the Greenbank RSL, into town very quickly on the busway. That is what infrastructure development is about. I welcome the fact that the minister could take up our concerns to make sure that we have extra buses between six o'clock and 7.30 in the morning and again in the afternoon when people are coming home. Additionally, I would like extra services at around 4.30 pm.

I notice also in this budget a number of commitments to making sure that police numbers are growing in line with calls for service. To that extent, I welcome the commitment of the government and the police minister to establish a new police station servicing the Crestmead-Marsden area. That will make a significant difference to the lives of the people who live in that Crestmead-Marsden area. Along with that, I urge the minister for police to consider the needs of the local community. They have asked me to make sure that I put before the minister the need to retain the police beat that currently operates at Crestmead. This police beat is an old-fashioned system of making sure that police are walking the streets, attending to the local schools and getting to know the people in the area. The police on that police beat have done a marvellous job in the community. I congratulate them on that. I urge the minister to make sure that, after the police station has been built at Crestmead-Marsden, every consideration is given to retaining that police beat.

Along with the member for Woodridge, I also want to make sure that we can get a breakthrough in the establishment of a police citizens youth club at the Crestmead Community Centre to service the Crestmead area. I know there have been some hassles with the management of the community centre. I am confident, though, that if people sit down and discuss the issues that are of concern to the local community the young kids in that area, particularly at school time, will be able to undertake activities provided by a magnificent police citizens youth club.

I now want to turn to sport and recreation and what the government is doing in the Logan area to make sure that the young people there have access to a range of activities. To that extent, I welcome the commitment of the minister for local government to the establishment of the Logan Metro Sport Park at Heritage Park in my electorate. This facility is being funded jointly by the state government and the

Logan City Council. It is a magnificent breakthrough and offers my community first-class sporting opportunities. In fact, I have urged the council to make sure that the schools in my area in the third and fourth semesters of this year can access those sporting fields, because they know that roadwork activity for the upgrade of the Mount Lindesay Highway may disrupt the services that they currently access.

I also want to commend the minister for making sure that money is available to upgrade the change room facilities at the Greenbank sport and recreational facility. Currently, that is one of the largest facilities in Logan West and any funding that we can put into making sure that the kids and the club members there can have improved club facilities is particularly welcome.

I also want to commend the minister for main roads for making sure that the new bikeway is going to be put in at Green Road underneath the Mount Lindesay Highway. That means that the upgrade to the highway, which is much needed, will not cause a community disconnect—that kids who live at Regents Park will be able to ride their bikes to Park Ridge State High School. That helps to create a much safer community and I welcome that commitment.

I also want to commend to the House the outstanding work that has been done by the members of the Regents Park State School Parents and Citizens Association. They have worked tirelessly to establish a new community facility with their school. We have gone to see the minister, Andrew Fraser, about this matter. He has agreed to get behind the P&C's efforts to make sure that we have what I know other communities and little country towns take for granted, and that is a community hall. We do not have many in Logan West at all. So it has been left to the P&C to raise the funds. I am absolutely delighted that our government could recognise what people in country towns get as a matter of course from their local councils, and that is a community hall. I welcome the fact the minister recognises that we have a vibrant, young community in Regents Park and that the government is funding that facility.

Finally, I want to talk about education. I welcome the fact that prep is now available to the young families in my electorate. I think it is a magnificent initiative. So many people from New South Wales and Victoria make their homes in my electorate. The implementation of this prep year means that children will have the same educational opportunities locally as there are nationwide. So no longer do kids who are in year 4 in New South Wales have to drop behind when they move up here to Queensland. I think this initiative is magnificent.

I also want to commend to the House the work that is done by the high schools in my electorate. The school-to-work transition program that they undertake makes sure that the young people in my area leave school equipped. Perhaps some leave school equipped for university—and that is a wonderful thing but university education is not the be-all and end-all; there is also having an apprenticeship. The kids in my electorate are really grabbing those school-to-work transition programs.

I also want to commend the minister for training for this initiative. He decided to build that new facility at Acacia Ridge to make sure that it is right in the heart of an industrial estate. That means that the industrial estate and the people in that estate will drive the skilling needs of that facility. That means that the kids in my electorate can catch a bus to Acacia Ridge to make sure that they can get in there and access those skills. There is no doubt about it, if a person has gained those skills, then their chances of obtaining and retaining long-term employment are greatly enhanced.

Finally, I want to say that even though the unemployment figures were what they were yesterday—at 3.5 per cent; a magnificent achievement—I also recognise that there are parts of adjoining electorates to mine that still suffer from a greater than average unemployment rate. An unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent statewide also masks the fact that in the electorate of Inala, and probably in the electorates of Bundamba, Waterford and Woodridge, there are going to be areas that have a 16 per cent unemployment rate. As minister—and this is a commitment that I give to all members; the lot of them—I want to make sure that employment programs that recognise the special needs of those unemployed people in those areas are going to be funded. When there is an economy as robust as ours, there has to be a reason why people see the door to employment locked to them. We want to recognise those special challenges and continue to work with those people. If those people cannot access employment when the economy is so robust, they have no chance if the economy turns sour.

I want to make sure that people in all electorates have the chance to get that access. It is the role of government to do it. I do not expect the private sector to pick up that burden. That is the commitment I make to the neighbouring electorates of Caboolture and the Wide Bay area where there are pockets of high unemployment. We will work with those people. I commend the budget to all members.

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women) (3.00 pm): In rising to support the tenth Beattie budget, I thank the people of Albert for their continued trust in and support of me as their state representative. I welcome to the public gallery a person who is not only very important in my life but also the lives of the people of Albert and that is my electorate officer, Ms Sharon Soward.

As a member of the Beattie government, I am proud of the wonderful people I have the honour to represent in this House. I remain as committed as ever to working hard to deliver the best possible services and infrastructure for them. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Anna Bligh, on delivering a balanced budget which demonstrates innovative leadership in tackling our government's challenges of unprecedented population growth coupled with the worst drought on record.

While record investment in infrastructure moves us closer to a water grid, the Beattie government has not forgotten its mandate to Queensland families. Health and education remain central to our government's vision for the future and both, I am pleased to say, are big winners in this budget.

Since Albert is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, it is vital that essential education facilities and services keep pace. I have worked closely with the minister for education, Rod Welford, and the local principals and school communities to identify needs and to secure funding where it is required. As a teacher who has taught students from kindergarten to postgraduate university, I am passionate about the role of education in helping young people reach their full potential. With this budget's allocation of more than \$500 million towards building new schools and training facilities across the state, it is pleasing to be part of a government that recognises education as an investment in our future.

Albert, I am pleased to say, will benefit from the addition of a new state school in northern Coomera which will open in 2008. The school will contain state-of-the-art facilities and provide initial enrolments for prep to year 7 of 350 students. This represents a major boost for education services in the region. However, residents can be confident that I will continue working hard to secure more schools for Albert.

This budget has delivered \$12.34 million for development and stage one planning of the new state school in northern Coomera and \$42,000 for maintenance to existing facilities at Windaroo Valley State High School, Beenleigh Special School and state schools at Logan Village, Mount Warren Park and Woongoolba.

Our government also remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering quality and affordable health care for all Queenslanders. Imperative is the need to ensure that services are able to cope with the large numbers of new Queenslanders migrating from southern states. A record budget of \$7.15 billion demonstrates that the Beattie government is serious about improving Queensland's health system, serious about delivering more hospital beds, more doctors and nurses, and more mental health services. I am pleased to report that Logan Hospital performed well in the recent Public Hospitals Performance Report. While experiencing increased demand, Logan rated above average in mental health, gynaecology and obstetrics, and performed considerably more elective procedures than the peer group median. Recent data also notes that the waiting times for many non-urgent procedures, such as ENT, are up to 25 times shorter than other hospitals.

On behalf of the people of Albert, I would like to congratulate Dr Mark Mattiussi and all staff at Logan Hospital on this excellent result and thank them for the vital work that they do. I know that the members for Waterford, Logan and Woodridge recognise the terrific work that the staff at Logan Hospital do. I add that the Gold Coast Hospital also responded well to the considerable spike in demand.

Albert residents can rest assured, however, that this budget reflects a refusal by the Beattie government to rest on its laurels when it comes to health care for our region. The amount of \$438,000 has been delivered to commence repairs on the Logan Hospital annexe building and to complete the upgrade of the hospital's emergency department; \$14.5 million has been set aside for the development of a new 750-bed Gold Coast University Hospital at Parklands; and the Gold Coast Hospital will receive \$5.12 million for the upgrade of its emergency department which will increase acute capacity by 30 beds.

For many people in Albert, renting and buying a house has never been tougher. Rising house prices and five interest rate rises in less than four years threaten to push home ownership beyond possibility for the next generation. For Queenslanders, the failure of the Howard government to address these issues has contributed to an alarming jump in rents in the private housing sector. Despite the federal government's complete lack of action, our government remains committed to secure, accessible and affordable housing. This year's budget includes a record Queensland housing assistance package of \$719.3 million. The minister for Housing, Robert Swarten, can be very proud of this. This includes a \$500 million five-year investment in social housing that will fund more than 1,700 new units of accommodation. As the member for Albert I will be discussing with Minister Swarten how my electorate can share in this \$500 million investment in social housing.

For Albert, \$3.74 million has been delivered to upgrade public housing dwellings in the Logan to Gold Coast region and this is very welcome. Homebuyers will also benefit from an election commitment to abolish mortgage duty in two stages. From 1 January 2008 a 50 per cent reduction will apply, with full abolition to take effect from 1 January 2009. On a \$360,000 mortgage this would equate to a saving of more than \$1,000.

Given the time, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech into *Hansard*. Before I do that I recognise not only my hardworking electorate officer, Sharon Soward, who is in the public gallery, but also Dan Skuse and Judy Hendrikx who do terrific work in my electorate, as well as our amazing and outstanding volunteer, Ruth Keenan, who I could not do without. I also acknowledge the hard work of my ministerial staff who are absolutely outstanding in their dedication and loyalty.

Leave granted.

Transport

This week's Budget also recognises the strain our population growth places on transport infrastructure. This is especially significant for the Albert electorate, which straddles the critical Gold Coast corridor. I am pleased to report that the Beattie Government has delivered a major injection of funding for our vital roads and transport system state-wide; with more than \$30 million for road improvements, infrastructure and public transport for the Albert area.

A share in the Budget allocation includes the delivery of:

- \$4.22 million for provision of noise barriers between the Logan Motorway and Nerang, on the Pacific Motorway;
 - \$400,000 for the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Mt Warren Boulevard and Beenleigh-Beaudesert Rd;
 - \$375,000 for intersection improvements at Tamborine-Oxenford Rd & Reserve Rd; and
 - \$140,000 for development of a car park at Ormeau State School.
- Funding has also been committed for the provision of increased TransLink services for Albert. The new 726 and 727 bus routes will provide greater access to public transport for many residents in the region. This is great news, and demonstrates mine and this government's resolve to ensuring that transport services are able to meet increased demand as Albert continues to grow.

On a number of these projects, I have worked closely with community groups and local residents to secure funding. To achieve these results through a collaborative community effort is very satisfying and I thank all those involved.

Communities

The Treasurer's Budget reflects the Beattie Government's continued commitment to sustaining economic growth, while also retaining its fundamental social responsibility to those in need.

This year, Budget allocations in the areas of Child Safety, Disability and Emergency Services, and Community Development emphasise Labor's ongoing dedication to Queensland families. More support is being provided than ever before.

In Emergency Services, Albert residents will benefit from:

- \$3.65 million to continue construction of the new Coomera District Office;
- \$2.3 million to continue the upgrade of Beenleigh Police Station; and
- \$400,000 for the completion of a permanent accommodation complex for the Beenleigh Fire and Rescue Community Safety Unit.

In the area of Community Services, almost \$5 million has been delivered for Albert. This includes:

- \$1.86 million for libraries in the Albert / South Coast area; and
- \$815,000 to continue the second phase of the Community Renewal Program in the Beenleigh/ Eagleby area.

While community development remains a priority of this government, it is also important to acknowledge the many volunteer community groups that also do so much for so many in this area. I refer to those individuals and organisations that tirelessly raise money to put back into the community.

The Albert community is lucky to have many such individuals and groups.

Recently, the annual Rotary Beenleigh and District Cane Festival raised in excess of \$50,000 for needy families. Cane Queen winner Elle Tait alone raised more than \$25,000. Congratulations to Rotary festival organisers and in particular I offer my thanks to John and Di Crawford for another wonderful event this year. Other volunteer organisations such as Quota and Soroptomists continue to serve the Albert community through literacy and food parcel programs.

Conclusion

This year, the Beattie team has again delivered a practical and responsible Budget, focussed on putting dollars where they are most needed. Record funding has been allocated for local schools, health, public housing, and disability services.

I am proud of the great outcomes which have been achieved in this Beattie Budget for the working families of my electorate.

In particular I would like to thank my friends in the many community groups and members of the Beenleigh Labor Party branch for their ongoing support and advice on projects which require State Government support.

I am deeply indebted to my husband Peter, and children James, Joshua and Helen and parents Vic and Val Rogers who are always there to support me and who offer their love and guidance so generously.

On behalf of the residents of Albert, I applaud the Beattie Government's 10th Budget.

I congratulate Treasurer Anna Bligh on an outstanding effort which will ensure Qld's booming economy, low unemployment and wonderful quality of life continues.

Debate, on motion of Ms Keech, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Consumption

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (3.07 pm), by leave: I am pleased to advise the House that south-east Queenslanders deserve a huge pat on the back today. I have just been advised by the Queensland Water Commission that average water consumption over the past week has dropped below 140 litres a day per person. Today's average shows use per person at 139 litres a day. The region used an average of 537 million litres a day for the seven days, a saving of 25 million litres a day on the week before.

Obviously we have had good rain this week and that may well have helped to bring consumption down, but I do recall that early on when Target 140 was set it was headlined as a very tall order. It is a very tall order, but when you set a Queensland challenge anything is possible. I congratulate the people of south-east Queensland who are doing an extraordinary job. It is excellent news and it deserves celebrating, but I caution people against celebrating by turning on the tap. As hard as it has been to reach this target the real challenge will be to stay there. We all have to continue doing the good things people have been doing. I certainly take my cap off to every single householder in south-east Queensland who is doing their bit.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 2141.

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (3.09 pm): This is a budget that benefits Queensland generally and my electorate in particular. My electorate of Murrumba is the most populous in the state with 36,300 people enrolled to vote as at 31 May this year. It is also a diverse electorate, spanning several different demographics and producing many different views of the world.

The world looks very different depending on whether you view it from Klingner Road, Kippa-Ring or Ogg Road, Murrumba Downs or Deception Bay Road, Burpengary. So it is fitting that the budget contains initiatives for each of these extremities of my electorate. The \$1.5 million for a hydrotherapy pool at the Redcliffe Leagues Club is a great initiative, and I sincerely thank the minister and those officers of our government whose wisdom led to the decision to deliver this initiative. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sure that you agree with me in respect of that particular matter. The citizens of Redcliffe city, especially the large number who are ageing and convalescent, who will be the main beneficiaries will have their lives and their prospects transformed by this project.

Several suburbs away and at another corner of my electorate a different demographic will benefit from nearly \$30,000 being provided to the Strathpine branch of the Little Athletics centre to upgrade the high jump and javelin facilities at John Oxley Reserve, Murrumba Downs. Meanwhile at the north-west boundary of my electorate, the pedestrians and cyclists of Burpengary and Deception Bay will benefit from \$122,000 for the construction of a pedestrian-bikeway bridge across the highway at the Eastern Service Road in Burpengary. This is an initiative I have long advocated, and I thank the minister and his officers for their appropriate response.

Schools in Murrumba have received a number of valuable boosts. At Deception Bay High, \$19,000 will go to the establishment of an outdoor fitness trail, which will be a very fitting complementary facility to the high ropes course built with community renewal resources. The other day I did the high ropes course with the principal, Jim Box, and a group of students, and I now invite them to accompany me over the outdoor fitness trail as well.

The incredibly rapidly growing suburbs of Mango Hill and North Lakes require rapid and expansive development of education facilities, so \$750,000 for a special education facility at North Lakes State College is necessary and welcome, as is the \$3.75 million for the funding of stage 6 of the college and \$190,000 for multipurpose sports courts.

A \$12,000 repainting program at Undurba State School will revitalise an already energetic school community. I am very pleased with the \$14,000 in maintenance for Deception Bay North State School and the \$12,000 at Hercules Road State School. These sums are much needed by those schools, and I will continue to make representations on their behalf.

The budget delivers considerable social infrastructure to the Murrumba electorate. The beautification and the heightened utilisation of the Deception Bay foreshore which began with the Community Renewal Program will be continued with \$90,000 for the construction of a walkway-cycleway. The Kinsella sports field, serving North Lakes and Mango Hill, and the Australian football field at Rothwell Park will receive major lighting upgrades. Rugby League at Talobilla Park in Kippa-Ring will receive upgrades to fields and facilities, and Redcliffe Leagues Softball at Kippa-Ring will receive a field upgrade.

The burgeoning population of the suburbs I represent requires the development of new health facilities. But the population of these new areas is predominantly a young one, and a new hospital providing for the ills that beset the elderly is not what is required. So, very appropriately, the primary healthcare centre in North Lakes will be configured to meet the need for urgent, routine or minor conditions, and the \$47 million in total that will build it will be well spent.

In conjunction with the philosophy of dispersing accessible community based health services throughout the community, such as, for example, the family centre located next to my office in Deception Bay, the \$4.48 million to provide community based health services will be apt, too, and effective in the community I represent. The initiative, by the way, is called the North Lakes and Surrounds Health Partnership Precinct Project and is referred to by locals with the catchy acronym NLSHPPP.

While the many initiatives specific to my electorate greatly benefit the people of Murrumba, the greatest benefits that flow to any community come from not what they uniquely get for themselves but from the overall level of wellbeing which everybody shares. The budget enhances overall community wellbeing. The declining overall levels of unemployment, even though the levels remain above average in my region, are a really major contributor to the quality of life of my constituents. The increased spending on housing will help to address a sinister level of homelessness that is blighting our society, and my area in particular.

The \$13.37 million to reduce hospital waiting lists in the Caboolture-Redcliffe region is bound to reduce the grief now being experienced by some who have to wait for soul-destroying periods of time and greatly enhances the quality of life of many patients and their loved ones. Of course, the availability of medical practitioners will determine which waiting lists are reduced and by how much. This is a budget that seeks to ameliorate the plight of those in deepest need and enhance the wellbeing of the rest of the community. I commend the bills to the House.

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (3.15 pm): A good government builds for the future while responding to current need. This takes sound economic management, vision and courage and that is exactly what this budget demonstrates. The Treasurer, Anna Bligh, her staff and the Queensland Treasury are to be congratulated for delivering yet another bumper budget.

Queensland's strong financial budget position means that we can borrow to build for the future—something every Queenslanders does when the bank agrees they have the capacity. I do not know anyone who saved every single dollar under the bed until they had the total amount of cash in hand to purchase their house, except perhaps my mum, who paid a few hundred pounds for her house in Wodonga in the 1960s. But today we all borrow to build or buy, whether it is a house, a car or a kitchen renovation depending on our income, financial standing and credit rating. In fact, most people find, like me, that the more they earn the more debt they have. That does not mean my children will be paying off my debt. That means my children will benefit from the investments I am making now and will be in an even stronger position when they reach adulthood. It is a simple enough concept. It is the reality of the 21st century. It is a century the opposition does not seem to want to drag itself into. It has not entered it yet because it simply does not understand it. The Liberal leader went so far as to berate the government for borrowing at a time when the state's coffers are flush with cash. Perhaps his bank threw money at him for investments before he became a millionaire, but I doubt it.

Now that I have dealt with that rubbish, let us have a look at some of what the Beattie government will be funding with this landmark budget. A record capital works budget of more than \$14 billion is building tomorrow's Queensland today, supporting some 100,000 jobs this year alone. The bulk of that infrastructure spend will be on water projects as well as record allocations in transport and roads, education and training, health, housing and energy. But the cornerstone of this budget is the massive injection of \$500 million into social housing, resulting in a total package of \$719 million in 2007-08 including a \$470 million capital program.

This \$500 million five-year funding injection has been made possible by the sale of electricity and gas retail businesses—a process that realised \$3 billion which the government used to establish the Queensland Future Growth Fund. This fund will also provide billions of dollars for water projects, transport and commercial infrastructure and research. The decreasing availability of affordable housing is causing an enormous strain on many Gold Coast families. Low-income earners and pensioners alike are forgoing luxuries such as food and lifestyle just to pay the rent. On any given night up to 3,000

people on the Gold Coast are either sleeping rough or sleeping on someone's couch, but the Beattie government has not and does not let these battlers down, with much-needed funding going into public housing, crisis accommodation, affordable housing—including additional funding to the Gold Coast Housing Co.—community housing and boarding houses.

We continue to work with organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, which is building a fantastic new facility—a shelter for homeless parents and their children. It has just started work on the facility, which is in Arundel in the community precinct. That will make an enormous difference to parents who have fallen on hard times—either single mothers or single fathers who have their children with them and who are at risk of having their children taken into foster care—and will help them get back on track. The project is aptly called 'Families Back on Track'. I continue to work with both the housing minister and the Minister for Communities in getting enough support for that project.

Disability Services has also received its first ever billion dollar budget—a billion dollar budget. It is the largest allocation ever provided to the department. It is an increase of 13.1 per cent, representing an increase of 371 per cent over 10 years. The DSQ budget for 2007-08 includes \$717 million for Disability Services, \$348.5 million for Home and Community Care services and \$16.5 million for mental health services.

One of the major issues on the Gold Coast and throughout the country is mental health and the level of support available for sufferers and their families both in acute care and within the community. The Beattie government is building a better mental health system, with a record increase of \$528.8 million over four years in this budget with much-needed funding to go to infrastructure, hospitals, specialised staff, hospital wards and community support through government and non-government agencies. A record health budget of \$7.15 billion will continue to drive reform in the health sector and deliver a health system to meet the needs of the 21st century.

I very much thank the government for the Robina Hospital accident and emergency ward which is almost complete and due to open very soon—in fact at the end of August depending on the weather. The staffing allocations have been made and the staff are very happy and very excited to be going into that new facility. It will make an enormous difference for the people in the southern and western suburbs of the Gold Coast.

The Beattie government has reaffirmed its commitment to the Gold Coast's transport and road infrastructure with continued and increased funding for the planning and design of the Pacific Highway upgrade and related interchanges, rail and bus improvements, and the rapid transit project. There are many details on funding for roads and transport on the Gold Coast in the budget—far too many to go into here one by one—but I want to stress that this budget in relation to not just roads and transport but in total is a budget fixed firmly on the future. It builds for that future, which is more than I can say for the federal budget which completely ignores the Gold Coast again. The best local federal members can do is tease Gold Coast residents and obfuscate when it comes to the region's deserved fair share of AusLink 2.

The federal member for McPherson, Margaret May, says, 'Trust me, the money is coming for the Pacific Highway upgrade'—or words to that effect—while the federal member for Moncrieff, Steven Ciobo, claimed in his budget flyer that the Gold Coast 'will share in the \$22 million AusLink allocation to Queensland'. He gives no indication, none at all, as to what our share may be, while Margaret May, the member for McPherson, promises that \$500 million, she expects, will be coming. 'Watch this space,' she said in her glossy brochures she sent to everyone.

Mr Gray interjected.

Mrs REILLY: I thank the member for Gaven for that interjection. Which is it? What is the reality? When is the money coming? Gold Coast residents who have dutifully voted for John Howard and Peter Costello deserve to know if their loyalty to Steven Ciobo, Margaret May and the Liberal government has been repaid or if they have been taken for granted.

Mr Bombolas interjected.

Mrs REILLY: The money has gone to Willprint; I take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth. The Beattie government is ready to call for tenders and start work now. We are forging ahead with the planning and design for the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway and all the interchanges. The consultation is underway. The design, the planning and the engineers are ready to go on the Nielsens Road interchange—the most congested part of the Gold Coast. The plan and design is ready to go. I get stuck in traffic there every single day and I know how frustrated my constituents are because we just want to see a commitment—some commitment, some noise—from our local federal members.

Steven Ciobo has denied for years that there is a federal government responsibility for the Pacific Motorway upgrade, even though the Pacific Motorway upgrade in northern New South Wales is attracting \$1.6 billion from the federal government over the next 10 years. It is okay to throw it over the border into northern New South Wales—

Mr Wettenhall: They're playing politics.

Mrs REILLY: They are playing politics. I thank the member for Barron River. The federal government is playing politics with the lives of Gold Coast residents, drivers and commuters and it has been doing it for years. It can throw the money across the border into the same stretch of road but it has put up a big gate that does not let the money go through into the Gold Coast.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mrs REILLY: And you'd know, member for—whoever you are.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gympie.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs REILLY: I beg your pardon, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I said, this government, the Beattie government, is ready to forge on and build the road that we need, and I do not hear a peep from the opposition members—although it is nice to hear some noise from the opposition benches finally, proving they are still awake. I do not hear anything from the members for Robina, Currumbin or Surfers Paradise, who cannot actually be bothered talking to their federal counterparts, unless it is to get together and have a bit of a laugh about how they might run their state Liberal candidates. They cannot even be bothered fighting for their constituency.

Mrs Sullivan: But they know how to advertise.

Mrs REILLY: I thank the member for Pumicestone for that interjection. I am particularly pleased to see funding in this budget for our national parks. We are looking after our places of natural beauty as well as our schools, hospitals and roads. Funding for national parks includes: \$84,000 to upgrade the Natural Bridge circuit in the Springbrook National Park; \$750,000 to complete the extension to the Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk in the Lamington National Park; and \$83,000 to complete the replacement of amenities at Mount Cougal in the Springbrook National Park.

There can be no argument that education is the key to the future success of the next generation, which is exactly why we are investing in our schools and TAFE institutions with a \$70 million commitment over the next four years to provide every teacher with their own laptop computer. Anyone who doubts the value of this investment and the professional development that goes with it should watch the proficiency with which first grade kids navigate the internet. It is absolutely vital that our teachers not only keep up with their students when it comes to technology but utilise it to its fullest possible extent to extend the learning experience and open the world up to our young people.

Additional funding for schools in the Mudgeeraba electorate, I am pleased to announce, includes \$100,000 through the RRR maintenance program for reroofing at Mudgeeraba Special School; \$9,000 to improve physical fitness for all children through exercise and nutrition at that school; \$20,000 for targeted maintenance of hard external surfaces at Mudgeeraba State School; \$5,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures at Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre; and \$13,000 for maintenance at Worongary State School.

I could not help but notice earlier that opposition members seemed a bit bemused that maintenance money for schools was actually being announced in the budget. They think it is funny. The member for Cunningham was quite amused. They would find it novel, wouldn't they, because when they were in government they let state schools go to rack and ruin. They did not put any money into budgets for maintenance. They did not even know where the state schools were. This government cares about our state schools and all our children and all of our education system, including our fantastic independent and private schools, of which I have many in my electorate. Our state schools are now first-grade and topnotch, and our children are getting a better education than they ever would have had the chance to get if the National Party and Liberal Party, or whoever they are, had been in government.

In policing, we have increased funding to a record \$1.4 billion. An extra 200 police will be on the road, on the beat, in the police stations and out there doing what our community wants them to do. We have also increased funding for road safety, traffic enforcement and education. In road safety, there is funding of \$17.7 million. There is a \$30 million increase in capital works for police. There is \$100,000 this year for the scoping and planning of the new police station, which was an election commitment for Reedy Creek and the southern suburbs of my electorate.

Finally, I have to mention the rural firefighters in my electorate who do an absolutely fantastic job. A lot of areas around Mudgeeraba and in the Gold Coast hinterland are affected by dangerous fires that are either purposefully lit by ridiculously stupid people or started by nature and get out of control and threaten homes and property in the area.

The rural firefighters are an extremely dedicated and highly skilled group of volunteers. They jump in and put their lives on the line to protect homes, property and lives. I am very pleased to see a record allocation of \$24.24 million to upgrade vehicles and equipment and continue to develop the skills of volunteer rural firefighters. Some of this will be for communication equipment and for increased firefighter safety in the IZone. The IZone is the urban-rural interface where towns meet the bush, where suburbs meet rural areas, and Mudgeeraba has many typical IZone-type areas.

I encourage my rural firefighters to jump in and apply for their fair share of the funds because I know how very hard they work. There are many more things I would like to mention. In the budget there is increased funding for the Ambulance Service. Many times people in my electorate ask me about the ambulance levy and how much of it actually goes into the Ambulance Service. For their information, I reiterate that every cent of the ambulance levy goes into ambulance services. The ambulance levy covers about 30 per cent of the Ambulance Service's total budget and the state government puts in the rest. There is a 14 per cent increase this year to give them a budget of \$400 million. This is a fantastic budget for Queensland and all Queenslanders. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (3.30 pm): In 2006-07 this state government raised state taxation revenue of \$8.376 billion and for the first time it exceeded GST revenue, which in the same period raised \$8.053 billion. State taxation revenue this financial year was up 13.2 per cent. One would have thought with the large sums of money coming into this state from state and federal sources that the Attorney-General's department would be able to meet the capital commitments it made in the budget for 2006-07. 2006-07 was the fourth consecutive year that this portfolio did not achieve its goals as stated in its capital acquisition statement in either of its two components—property, plant or equipment or other capital acquisitions. I intend to come back to those figures in due course and outline the horrendous history associated with the department in its failure to obtain not just adequate but catch-up essential capital to keep the court and legal processes moving.

In addition, in those four years we have had three Attorneys-General and not one of those has been able to meet the capital budget, nor obtain from cabinet sufficient funds to meet that budget. This is a clear indication of what this government really thinks of the legal system in this state, the judges who serve the people, the people who work in the courthouses and those residents who are required to deal with the system.

As I said, for the fourth year this department has not met its capital acquisition statement goals. By failing to do this it does two things: it does not put in place the modern physical structures across Queensland in which legal issues can be resolved whilst at the same time providing a modern safe environment for all who wish or need to attend a court; and it fails to put in place an efficient process for legal issues to be dealt with quickly whilst at the same time maintaining the principle that the decisions are delivered with justice and equity. Not one of the three Attorneys-General over the past four years has delivered a budget which delivered services and infrastructure in those two areas.

In 2003-04 this government failed to meet its capital acquisition in the Attorney-General's department by \$14.775 million. In 2004-05 it failed to meet its target by \$2.768 million. In 2005-06 the shortfall was \$2.763 million. When we look at the 2006-07 figures we find that the estimated figure for property, plant and equipment and other capital acquisitions was \$74,091,000. We find, however, that during the year the figure that was expended was \$38,262,000—a whopping \$35.829 million dollars was missing or not put into infrastructure and other resourcing of the judicial system in this state. In total over the past four financial years the Attorney-General's department capital acquisition statement has had a total shortfall of \$55.935 million. This cannot but have an impact on the delivery of justice services to the people of Queensland.

Let us look at exactly what that means. We should consider the Productivity Commission's report into the backlog of criminal law cases in the Magistrates Court in this state. As I have said before in this House, these figures indicate that over a short time that backlog has escalated. In 2003-04 the backlog of criminal matters in the Magistrates Court was 26,450 matters. At that point in time, that was the third highest figure in Australia. In 2005-06 that figure climbed to 31,356 criminal matters backlogged in the Magistrates Court. This moved Queensland from No. 3 to No. 1 in Australia in terms of backlog. In 2005-06 that figure had jumped to 34,626 matters. Again Queensland maintained the status of having the most backlogged Magistrates Court in this country.

More telling is that the percentage of cases waiting in excess of six months in the Queensland Magistrates Court system had risen in those three years from 25.4 per cent to 30.9 per cent. This is a clear indicator that the government has failed to provide efficient access and efficient delivery of justice in the primary court in this state. On many occasions, members of this government have stood here and claimed that the Magistrates Court takes care of the bulk of work across the various courts, and it does; there is no doubt about that. The Magistrates Court deals with by far the overwhelming bulk of legal matters in this state.

The fact is that this government has not done anything to remedy the situation. It has not provided more courthouses, more technology and more efficient delivery of services so that the people of this state can access justice on a more current basis. The government does not care about the delivery of justice. The fact that the capital acquisition statement in both its property, plant and equipment and its other capital acquisitions components for the past four years has not met the expectation of the people of Queensland highlights that without a shadow of doubt.

But it gets worse. When we go back to 2003-04 we find the budget component for capital acquisition of the Attorney-General's department was \$119,108,000. It has not been anywhere near that figure since that time. In 2004-05 it fell to \$63,768,000. In 2005-06 it then dropped down to \$32.737 million. In 2006-07 it went to \$74.091 million. In 2007-08 one would have hoped that the shortfall would have been picked up but it only moved to \$101.842 million. We are still way under the 2003-04 budget figure of \$119 million.

We have not been able to match the 2003-04 capital figure. This is a very sad indictment. It really puts into perspective where the justice system fits in this state government's order of importance. It highlights the inadequacies, inefficiencies and incompetence of this government in delivering justice to the people of Queensland.

As one example, if we look at the Integrated Justice Information Strategy, which has been in each of the last four capital budgets, we find that on not one occasion has the budget been met. In fact, it is approximately \$14.5 million in shortfall in the 2006-07 year. If we go to the notes for the past four financial years we will find on at least two occasions this explanation for the deficiency—

During the year the original budget was adjusted to reflect reviewed project timeframes. Estimates actuals are in line with this revised accrued budget.

That theme appears over and over again. That particular system was clearly identified in the 2001 report by the CJC—under the heading of 'Legal aid and public prosecutions in Queensland'—as one of the agency's critical steps to ensure that information, not just with regard to what happens in the courts but statistics, is brought together and shared across other jurisdictions and with the people of this state.

But in the period since 2001 to the current date, this government has not been able to implement that system in a manner that delivers more efficient and more cost-effective justice to the people of Queensland. At the same time, this state government proclaims that it is going hard and fast in relation to criminal activity and it will deal with those people who need to be dealt with in a very harsh and speedy manner. No wonder Patel is sitting comfortably in the United States knowing that the clanking Queensland government is unlikely to get itself together, and he may in fact expire before this government can call him to account in this state.

One of the real concerns I have now is the new Brisbane Supreme and District Court complex. As we know, that complex in its current format is, shall we say, on its last legs; in fact, it passed the point of no return several years ago. The new complex will consist of 47 courtrooms at a cost of \$600 million due for completion in 2011. The 2007-08 budget has a figure of \$11 million, but when we drill down we find that \$7.3 million was actually funded in last year's budget—\$6.3 million for capital funding and \$1 million for operational funding. In three years time when we review the budget I do not want to see that that complex has in any way blown out or the time line moved further into the future. I have had the chance to view and go through the current complex on a couple of occasions now, and that complex is in desperate need of replacement. The justices of the courts who serve in that complex cannot afford to remain where they are at this point in time. It is antiquated and it is quite dangerous when one looks at the modern necessities of providing for the judiciary, the legal profession, the juries, the people who work in the complex and those who enter it for various purposes.

Of equal concern in the Attorney-General's department is the output statement contained within the MPS document. There are a number of matters where the target estimates for 2006-07 were not met during the year if one considers the output statement of the department and looks at such figures as the civil appeals in the Court of Appeal, civil trials in the trial division of the Supreme Court, the civil law District Court trial matters and many others. Instead of looking at how we improve the current system and how we bring into account modern, efficient capabilities and capacities to deal with and move matters along, the government then drums down the new target estimate figure for 2007-08 so that it sits below the 2006-07 figure. Again, this government is showing that its capacity to handle the justice system is, to say the very least, by way of dumbing it down so that it can fool the people of this state that it is meeting its target figures.

This inability to meet target figures is a direct consequence of not putting money into the capital requirements of this state and into the efficient resourcing of gathering information as contained in the last four MPS documents, where we see over and over again budget commitments have not been met in relation to other capital acquisition components of the capital acquisition statement contained in the documentation. Until such time as this government does something to rectify the problem, we are going to continue to see the backlog in the Magistrates Court, as one example, if criminal matters continue to grow. We will continue to see the percentage of matters that are six months and longer in the Magistrates Court continue to grow.

Mr Shine: We're leading the country.

Mr McARDLE: I take that interjection. We are leading the country all right, but we are leading the country at the wrong end. We should be at the top end. We are trailing the country and we are leading the country down in a negative barrow. It is also interesting to note that in the QPILCH submission in November 2006 to the Attorney-General it was requested that the Attorney-General pursue with vigour funding for the civil law fund and the environmental law fund. The request by QPILCH was to place

\$6 million into the civil law fund with a primary injection of \$5 million from the government. QPILCH in its documentation is very concerned as to the funding of civil law matters in this state. We know that Legal Aid has very little civil law funding except for those matters involving child protection issues. In days gone by, the Legal Aid Office did provide civil law funding for more what you would call mum and dad matters within various jurisdictions in this state. I know that because I worked with it at that time.

The funding of these matters, as we know, is a question that this government and future governments will have to deal with, because, more importantly, as a result of the legal costs involved in taking matters on board mums and dads are not able to do so. We are becoming a society whereby if you have the deepest pockets you simply win the case. The Attorney and I both know that that should never be the case. It should be that the person who has the right to take the matter to court should be funded, particularly if that person is right in what they are saying. The fact of not having money should not deter other people from taking the matter to court. It is my concern that civil law matters need to be reviewed with regard to whether we provide Legal Aid to take those matters that are outside child protection matters.

I am also happy to see the extra \$12.5 million to Legal Aid in this state budget. I do note, however, the funds were drawn from legal practitioner interest on trust account funds administered by the department. There is no indication in the MPS budget papers that I have seen to date as to how those moneys will be used, but I assume they will mainly be used for children's issues and not outside of that component that has been funded in the past by the Legal Aid Office. The government certainly and with good reason funds, through Legal Aid, people who have been charged with serious criminal matters. But there will come a time in this state when there is a necessity for civil matters to be reviewed again to determine whether or not funding via Legal Aid or some other fund, such as QPILCH indicated, should be taken up by this government.

I want to quickly move on to my electorate of Caloundra. Caloundra has indeed received some good funding from the state government—I certainly do not deny that—and I thank the Treasurer and relevant ministers. There is \$2.73 million to Currimundi Special School towards a general learning area block. That is a very good area of funding. These kiddies do not have a childhood akin to most people in this House or in fact in Queensland, and that school will relish those funds. There is \$14.22 million to Meridan State College for stage 2 of its construction. Again, these funds are needed for the school and certainly will help the children at that school as grades progress to grade 12 in the next two or three years. There is money for the Caloundra Hospital for 12 renal chairs. There is \$1.75 million for the council to assist with the Bulcock Beach revitalisation project and funding for the multimodal corridor between Caloundra Road and Creekside Boulevard. These moneys are very welcome, and again I thank the government for providing them.

I want to use the time left to raise a couple of other issues that Caloundra needs assistance with. The first one is the question of the aerodrome, the Queensland Air Museum and the Air Cadets. The area in which these three entities operate is in fact owned by the state government and it is certainly more likely than not that it will be sold at some point in the near future. There are historical needs associated with each of those three entities—the Air Museum because of the aircraft and memorabilia; the Air Cadets because it provides an avenue for young people to receive training in such things as teamwork, leadership and cooperation; and the aerodrome because there are industries that provide long-term benefits for young people across Caloundra by way of mechanical training, avionics and IT training.

The issue of domestic violence in Caloundra certainly has come to the fore since we now have a full-time magistrate within the city. The figures are showing, as they are across the rest of Queensland, that domestic violence is an issue that is not going away. We in this House know that domestic violence has a long-term impact. There is a definite need for a women's refuge in Caloundra. We need a place for women and children to go to if they are subjected to domestic violence. We want them where they live, where they can be safe and close to police services.

In addition, in Caloundra mental health is an issue that is continuing to raise its head. Figures indicate that as time goes by it is becoming a more and more critical problem. Facilities to deal with mental health are essential in Caloundra, as they are across the rest of Queensland. There is a population explosion across the Sunshine Coast, and with that comes many problems including isolation for both young and old. Mental health concerns will grow as we grow as a region.

My final point is the necessity for industrial land across Caloundra to be opened up, but at an affordable price. We do not want only the large organisations to invest. We want mums and dads— young people who have children—to move to the area, grow their own businesses and pour money back into the economy. Being retired is good, but retirees do not spend as much money as those with a young family. Retirees are more guarded with their expenditure. The costs involved with a young family grow.

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (3.50 pm): I thank the member for Woodridge who has graciously let me speak before her, and I also thank the acting whip, the member for Hervey Bay, for arranging that. I have some important meetings with the river trust later on.

This is a good budget for Natural Resources and Water in Queensland. The 2007-08 state budget for Natural Resources and Water ensures that my department has the financial resources to effectively manage water, vegetation, climate, Indigenous services and land matters right across the state. The budget provides \$608.6 million to ensure the agency continues its work in securing water supplies for urban and non-urban water users. This funding also allows us to undertake comprehensive reviews of the water recycling framework in place across the state and expand the critical work of the Queensland Climate Change Centre for Excellence. Further, it enables us to complete the policies, guidelines and assessment processes required to implement the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy.

Of the \$608.6 million allocated in the budget, \$340 million has been assigned to water and catchment services and \$268.6 million for land and vegetation business. Some priority tasks in the year ahead will be delivering the WaterWise Rebate Scheme. The member for Sandgate knows a lot more about that scheme after our briefing session. The scheme assists households and the environment by making homes and gardens more water efficient.

Ms Darling: It is highly successful.

Mr WALLACE: It is highly successful, and funding of \$100.8 million has been provided in 2007-08. It is a priority to finalise additional water resource plans and resource operations plans. By June 2008 it is anticipated the NRW will have finalised and released a cumulative total of 30 WRPs and 24 ROPs.

We are allocating \$7.6 million over four years from 2007-08 to evaluate the effectiveness of cloud seeding and tackling our Blueprint for the Bush obligations to rehabilitate high-risk bores in the Great Artesian Basin. I can advise that a further \$6.5 million over four years, beginning in 2007-08, has been allocated to identify potential sources of groundwater.

Another coup is the \$25 million allocated to the SEQ Urban Water Security Research Alliance, which will help develop a coordinated system of water management in south-east Queensland by looking at the total water cycle from upstream catchments to Moreton Bay.

I turn to native title. Funding of \$2.3 million has been allocated over three years, which will continue the program where officers help native title representative bodies and native title parties to implement the expedited Native Title Protection Conditions procedures.

In land and vegetation services, the 2007-2008 budget has ensured the continuation of many valued programs within this unit. These include land, vegetation, forest products, registry and information and Indigenous services relating to land, native title and cultural heritage.

Highlights of the Natural Resources and Water budget for land and vegetation include completing the policies, guidelines and assessment processes required to implement the state rural leasehold land strategy. Under this strategy, farmers and graziers will be able to get longer leases if they improve the condition of their land.

Programs to recognise Indigenous natural resource interests and resolve tenure issues will be continued, particularly in Cape York. I know that the member for Barron River in particular will welcome that announcement. We also have added \$20 million to our Vegetation Management Structural Adjustment Package, which I know the member for Mount Isa is very keen to see rolled out.

Earlier today in his speech on the budget, the member for Darling Downs and shadow spokesman, in his usual manner, made some wildly inaccurate statements that I cannot allow to pass. He said that only \$17.85 million went to water outside south-east Queensland. To correct the record, because I think that we should have accuracy in this regard, the correct figure for all entities under the portfolio is \$93.4 million.

Mr McNamara: How much?

Mr WALLACE: Much more than 17. It was \$93.4 million.

McNamara interjected.

Mr WALLACE: Yes, it is very close for National Party arithmetic. A further \$40 million will go on salaries and other operating expenses for water related activities outside south-east Queensland

The honourable member was also wrong when he said that there was no funding for regional dams such as Nullinga Dam. There is over \$21 million for regional dams, including Nullinga, in the infrastructure department's budget. In addition, my own department's budget provides \$15 million to complete the \$114 million upgrade of the Ross River Dam. I know that the member for Hervey Bay takes a special interest in that, having visited the site and seen the excellent work underway there.

Towards the end of his contribution, the member for Darling Downs made the bizarre claim about the new Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. He seemed to question the space that we had—

Mr McNamara: More into party change excellence.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection of the member for Hervey Bay. The member for Darling Downs seemed to question the viability of the centre. I said to my staff, 'Let's just check', and the facts are pretty interesting. The centre's 56 staff occupy three separate buildings in Brisbane and Toowoomba, so it is not a small set up. They will move to a new ecosystems precinct at Boggo Road in Brisbane in 2010.

My portfolio includes my role as the Premier's representative in north Queensland. In north Queensland, we welcome the budget. The member for Hinchinbrook has done very well, and I thank him for his support of the budget. The member for Burdekin was a little critical last night, even though she got lots of goodies.

Mr Bombolas interjected.

Mr WALLACE: That is correct; the member for Burdekin was a little bit critical. One of the things that we see as essential for the future growth of the north is developing our vital industries. That is why, when the Premier announced that a clean coal power station had to be built in Queensland, probably by 2012, I said, 'North Queensland's a great place to put it.' We need the energy for the north, we have the water infrastructure, we have the water, we have good people—

Mr Mulherin: Coal.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection from the member for Mackay. He is a keen advocate of the coal industry. We also have growing industries. Therefore, I wanted to support the Premier and I said that Collinsville would be a great place to put it.

The member for Burdekin, whose electorate actually covers Collinsville, has taken a bit of umbrage to that. Over the past couple of days of parliament she has called me into account. Indeed, very close to midnight last night she attacked me for having the hide to support Collinsville.

I ask the House, what is the member for Burdekin's dirty little secret in relation to Collinsville? I can tell members what it is. She supports John Howard's plan for a nuclear power station. I think that is what it is. We know that Collinsville is the site for that nuclear power station. It is close to the electricity grid, tick 1; it is close to water supplies, tick 2.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr WALLACE: Exactly! The member for Mackay hit the nail on the head. It is in the member for Dawson's electorate, tick 3.

Mr Gibson: No it's not. It's just outside it.

Mr WALLACE: The member is correct; it is just outside her electorate. The member for Burdekin is a great supporter of the nuclear power industry and I think that is why she has taken umbrage at my comments. I think that that is why the member for Burdekin has attacked me for my support of a clean coal technology power station in north Queensland. How else can we explain her having a go at me, day after day in this place?

I will stand with the member for Mackay, I will stand with the member for Whitsunday, I will stand with the member for Cairns. We will support north Queensland. We believe we should develop the north. We do not want dirty nuclear power up there, regardless of what the member for Burdekin says.

There were great announcements for my electorate in the budget. There was \$58.2 million for the Townsville Ring Road—a big investment in that road. As I said earlier, there was an allocation of \$15 million for the final stage of the Ross River Dam. That will add about 10 per cent to the capacity supply of water for Townsville and Thuringowa. Finally, for all the Cowboys fans here, there is an allocation of \$5.95 million for the Cowboys' stadium. This is a good budget for north Queensland, it is a good budget for natural resources and water and it is one which I endorse wholeheartedly.

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (3.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the budget bills and inform the House of some of the benefits of the budget for my electorate of Cairns and some of the initiatives in my portfolio of Child Safety. For the people of Cairns, an increase of 12 per cent in funding statewide for hospitals and health and an additional \$528 million for hospital and community based mental health services is great news indeed. In the suburbs of Cairns, the level and the quality of services, particularly in the health field and most particularly mental health, have been of concern. So this increased funding is indeed great news.

For the people of Cairns, and for me as their local member, there is no higher priority than health. Therefore, I am particularly pleased by this much needed expansion. I have to say that there is also some specific money in the budget for Cairns Base Hospital in terms of improved oncology and cardiac services. This, too, will be welcomed. There is, however, only \$1 million in the budget for further building

work at Cairns Base Hospital. Some people have questioned why that is so. I am pleased to inform the House that the reason that is so is that planning for an expansion of Cairns Base Hospital is underway at the moment. Until we know how much expansion we need and where that expansion will take place—whether in the form of new buildings on site or on another site—then we cannot do the budget documentation and go to Treasury to ask for those funds. Therefore, it is highly likely that the expansion moneys that will be needed for the further redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital will be reflected in the next budget rather than in this budget.

I have to say that the best kept secret in the budget is the huge boost it gives to public housing. With housing affordability being a real problem for so many people, an extra half a billion dollars for housing spread across the state will help. I will make sure that Cairns gets its fair share of both the increase in health and public housing funding.

The budget also includes a big boost to education. I have no doubt that the announcement of a laptop for every teacher will be welcomed as will the list of school-specific building and maintenance projects. Several of those are the \$2.16 million redevelopment of the Cairns campus of the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE, \$1.4 million for Balaclava State School to complete the construction of a replacement amenities block, and \$1.97 million to Whitfield State School to complete the development of a general learning area block.

There is a lot of good news in the budget, but as a member who represents a regional electorate I make particular mention of the pleasing figures that show that 54 per cent of capital spending will occur outside south-east Queensland. I pay tribute to the Treasurer for managing that. Given the water infrastructure pressures in south-east Queensland, I would not have been entirely surprised if this balance in capital spending was changed. But I compliment the Treasurer on maintaining her clear recognition of the importance of development and infrastructure for all of Queensland, not just south-east Queensland.

There have been some comments in Cairns, particularly by the mayor of Cairns, that the budget is not very good for Cairns and the far north. He has persisted in the view that the money that has been allocated to Cairns airport and Ergon should not be counted in the state budget and certainly should not be counted as government funding for Cairns. That is quite a peculiar position for him to take. These worthy organisations are government owned corporations. Particularly in terms of where those government owned corporations do work that has a public benefit, then it is of considerable interest to the shareholding ministers. None of these government owned corporations can proceed with work plans until they have received the approval of the shareholding ministers and, therefore, the government.

I think this issue is important, because the Cairns international terminal is probably the most important piece of economic infrastructure we have for our region. It is not simply a matter of it allowing some business travellers or family and friends to move in and out of Cairns; it is the underlying infrastructure that is essential to our tourism industry. Therefore, I think it is a great credit to my government that another \$120.7 million will be spent on the Cairns international terminal for the second year of the \$180 million four-year redevelopment of the domestic and international terminals at Cairns airport. To take these figures out of the budget announcements for Cairns and say, 'Well, it's been a lousy budget because you can't count that \$120 million' is not reasonable at all.

Work at the airport in the coming financial year—and I might say that Cairns airport is Australia's fifth busiest airport; a busier airport than some state capital city airports—will focus on expanding the baggage reclaiming hall and the retail areas of the international terminal, upgrading runways and aprons and installing better lighting, better surfaces, a new Australian Quarantine Inspection Service building and the redevelopment of the domestic terminal building. There is also an allocation of \$913,000 as a contribution towards the establishment of a technical and cabin crew base in Cairns in conjunction with Jetstar Airways through the Department of State Development. I welcome that. There is an allocation of \$8.86 million towards a new state-of-the-art rescue helicopter to be based in Cairns at a total cost of \$16.11 million.

Additionally, there is an allocation of \$5.62 million for the widening from four to six lanes of Mulgrave Road in Cairns between Ray Jones Drive and the Captain Cook Highway. There is an allocation of \$800,000 to complete stage 2 of the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Art at a total cost of \$1 million. I compliment the minister for public works, who is present in the House. There is an allocation of \$7 million in his budget for the commencement of stage 2 of the William McCormack Place office building in Sheridan Street, Cairns at a total cost of \$79.5 million.

Mr Schwarten: A good building, too.

Ms BOYLE: I take that interjection from the minister. It is an environmentally sustainable design and a building of which we are very proud. There is an allocation of \$750,000 to the Cairns City Council to assist with the botanic gardens redevelopment. There is an allocation of \$1.63 million towards the construction of an amenities facility and kiosk and the upgrade of existing facilities at Barlow Park, Cairns. There is an allocation of \$547,000 towards the redevelopment of Cazaly's Stadium, incorporating a lighting upgrade and additional seating and \$61.4 million towards replacing power transmission lines from Innisfail to Cairns.

What is missing in the budget is money for the Kuranda Range Road upgrade. Some Cairns people may be concerned about that. Even though there are some who are not in favour of that road upgrade, most of us are. We know it is a really important upgrade in order to open up the communities of the tablelands and to provide for the kind of population growth that we can expect in our region in the decades to come, particularly considering that Cairns is a narrow coastal strip. In such a precious environment, limited development can occur in a spreading suburban kind of way in the city of Cairns.

I particularly wanted to mention that the reason the Kuranda Range Road upgrade does not figure in the budget is that it still has not been approved by the federal government. In fact, the proposal has been with the federal government for a year for its consideration and approval in terms of its environmental impacts and design. The Wet Tropics Ministerial Council, of which I was previously the chair as environment minister, has given it the tick, but after a year the federal government cannot find the time to look at this important piece of infrastructure and give it the approval that it needs.

Until then, of course, as a state government we are not in a position to consider whether and how we will fund it. So I let the people of Cairns know that we sincerely hope that the federal government will be providing us with that approval and the news of the approval very soon. I hope it will not have to wait another five or six months for the federal election and be suddenly found in somebody's drawer in the week or two prior to the election. I hope that it does the job that should have been done some six months ago and give us that approval and give it to us soon. It is, after all, the business of the member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, who appears to have gone missing. He announced the Liberal candidate for Leichhardt some time ago and whenever there is business for Leichhardt it is she who speaks on his behalf. We have not seen Warren Entsch for a very long time and I am shocked that the media, whenever there are federal government stories, do not appear to contact him at all. Yet it is my information that for this remaining period of his term he remains on full pay with all his printing and other allowances and can therefore reasonably be expected to do the job right through to the very last day of this term of government. One of the actions that he can take and take very soon is to get the approval for the Kuranda Range Road upgrade.

There are some marvellous initiatives, I am pleased to say as the Minister for Child Safety, that will be implemented through the Department of Child Safety beginning in this next year. I am aware, however, of the pressure on time, so I seek leave to have the remainder of this speech, particularly in relation to the Department of Child Safety initiatives, incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In relation to my portfolio, the Department of Child Safety's 2007-08 budget has increased to \$551.3 million.

That's an increase of nearly \$50 million on last year and it's more than triple the budget allocated to child protection just four years ago.

The continued budget increases for my department show the Queensland Government's commitment to protecting children who are harmed or at risk of harm.

After years of massive change this is the first budget not centred on the sweeping reforms recommended by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

With all 110 CMC recommendations implemented and a solid foundation in place we are moving from a period of intensive reform to a new phase of enhancing what we do.

We will now work on improving and refining existing practices and developing new and improved policies and services as we continue to strengthen child protection.

Evidence of this in our budget includes our new, \$12 million "One Chance at Childhood" initiative and our "safe houses" initiative for Indigenous children in remote communities.

Under our "One Chance at Childhood" initiative we will employ about 36 specialist staff to boost the protection of babies and toddlers in the child protection system.

We want to try to ensure that all children get a stable start in life as early as possible.

Recent scientific research has identified that chronic neglect and abuse over the early years of childhood can have permanent and debilitating long term physical and emotional effects.

Our message to neglectful parents is absolutely clear.

The government will give you intensive help but if you don't get your act together then your children will get their chance at a happy, stable, permanent home elsewhere.

We want to avoid situations where children "drift" from foster care to their parents and back to foster care.

Under this initiative specialist staff will intervene at three critical stages:

- When babies and toddlers enter the child protection system;
- When babies and toddlers are reunified with their parents; and
- When reunification fails and alternative homes must be found for babies and toddlers.

Early childhood officers will make sure parents of the most vulnerable babies and toddlers are linked in to the right support from other government departments and non-government agencies.

And they will also advise on expectant mothers who have come to our attention because there are risks to the health of the unborn baby.

Specialist reunification officers will focus on parents in situations where we have had to remove the baby or toddler.

These parents will receive intensive assistance and will be clearly told what measures must be in place before their child can be returned.

If, however, despite best efforts a child cannot be safely returned home then specialist permanent placement officers will step in.

These officers will secure a permanent home for the children including long term guardianship orders or adoption.

We will tread very carefully as these are important decisions.

The aim is to put the needs of the children first and to give babies and toddlers some stability in their young lives. After all, they only get one chance at childhood.

Mr Speaker, Indigenous children are overrepresented in the child protection system.

There are two major new initiatives to address this problem. The Child Safety budget includes funding to establish "safe houses" for children in remote Indigenous communities and for Child Safety officers to live closer to these communities.

\$19.1 million operating and \$15.5 million capital funding have been allocated to these initiatives.

We're taking a new approach with Cape York's Indigenous communities.

Until now Child Safety officers have flown in from Cairns for brief periods to carry out their work.

In cooperation with these communities we will establish accommodation and office space for Child Safety officers to operate out of branch offices in Weipa, Cooktown and Thursday Island so that they can live near the areas they serve.

In this way they can form closer ties and work in cooperation with Elders to strengthen child protection.

In terms of "safe houses" I expect to see the first of at least five established at Kowanyama and Doomadgee, where the councils had already offered land.

In the past day land has been offered at Pormpuraaw, and others will be set up at Aurukun and Weipa/Napranum, and another on Palm Island.

In addition, community consultation is planned with communities on Mornington Island, in the Torres Strait Islands and on Eastern Cape York to see what is needed there.

The "safe houses" are a result of consultation. They are what the communities want.

They will give children a temporary place to stay within their communities when they have been harmed at home and their longer-term needs are being assessed.

That keeps kids close to their extended families and friends, which makes it easier to get everyone involved in a solution to keep them safe.

The "safe houses" will also provide longer-term residential care for children who are unable to return to their families.

We expect they will house four to six children and be staffed by community support workers, who will provide practical advice and intensive support to children and families.

The combination of "safe houses" and Child Safety staff living closer will help involve entire communities in keeping an eye on their kids ... child protection should be everyone's business.

Mr Speaker, this Budget acknowledges the important role that more than 3000 foster and kinship carers play in healing abused and at risk children.

In 2007-08, \$65.2 million will go directly to foster carers to help cover the costs of caring for children. This money will cover the new, increased allowances that came into effect earlier this year.

A further \$4.03 million will go directly to foster carers as high support needs allowances to help them care for children with disabilities or significant behavioural problems.

In all, \$287.7 million—more than half the Department's Budget—will go to community partners. This includes organisations that recruit and support foster carers, provide counselling for children who have been abused and Indigenous organisations that provide advice about Indigenous children in care.

Capital funding of more than \$36 million includes spending to extend the reach of child protection services and strengthen their presence in regional and remote communities.

Capital funding highlights in Child Safety's 2007-08 budget include:

- \$9.6 million to build or expand office accommodation to support a growing workforce across the State, including: a new Child Safety Service Centre to cover the Forest Lake/Centenary area; the completion of new centres at Woodridge, Caloundra and Nerang; the relocation of centres at Fortitude Valley and Roma and the relocation of the Cunnamulla branch office; the expansion of the Bundaberg centre; and planning for the relocation of the Rockhampton North and Thuringowa centres.
- \$6.4 million to establish therapeutic residential homes in Cairns, Townsville and South-East Queensland. These will be for children with complex behaviours or mental health issues, which often arise because of the abuse they have suffered.
- \$3.6 million for residential care homes to provide a wider variety of placements, for example, for large sibling groups, children with extreme disabilities or highly-complex needs. These will be in Mackay and on the Gold Coast and the Darling Downs.
- \$6.7 million for information technology, including an additional \$3.7 million for ongoing investment in the Integrated Client Management System which gives Child Safety officers instant access to state-wide records.

Capital funding will also continue the work of building and expanding offices to cater for our increased workforce, which has grown by 85 per cent since the new Department started.

Our Budget includes funds to hire more staff including:

- \$4.8 million to hire about 13 additional Child Safety officers, 29 additional Child Safety support officers and 16 additional court coordinators;
- \$4 million to hire 53 permanent record keeping officers to ensure accurate, up-to-date records to assist in child protection; and
- \$0.46 million for the upgrade of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) coordinator positions to provide the level of expertise required and ensure the department is appropriately represented in complex case discussions.

We are determined to stay at the forefront of child protection practice and service delivery in Australia as we face another challenging year.

By June 2008 we anticipate having 7900 children in out-of-home care. During the 2007-08 financial year we expect to record about 73,500 concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing with an estimated 33,600 of these being notifications of suspected child abuse and neglect.

There remains an unacceptable level of parental neglect and abuse in this state.

Our budget shows we are committed to taking action by extending and strengthening child protection services across the state.

But in the end it is parents who must face up to their responsibilities to provide a safe and loving home for their children.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (4.11 pm): In rising to make a contribution to this cognate debate I would like to start by making some comments on the Appropriation Bill. Being my first budget, I have listened with interest to all honourable members as they have made their budget reply speeches—that is, the portions of their speeches that have not been incorporated into *Hansard*. When one strips away the political ideology and the rhetoric the theme is the same: as elected representatives we want the best, the best not only for our electorates but also for Queensland and for the future. It is clear that there is disagreement as to the method of achieving this, but it is reassuring to know that everyone who has spoken in this chamber does so with the best intentions for Queensland.

I do not disagree with the sentiments that have been expressed that we need to invest in infrastructure. In fact, I wholeheartedly support it. However, I am puzzled as to why it has taken so long. The Labor Party has had up to 10 years in government and now we see the urgency to invest in infrastructure. Naturally when one does nothing for so long the demand increases as existing infrastructure crumbles. However, we must never forget that debt is always a burden on our economy and on our future.

The member for Redlands in his speech last night put it in simple terms by relating the budget to ordinary mums and dads. I will follow in his theme. Every person who has a credit card knows that borrowing is dangerous and every person who has a mortgage also knows that borrowing is a necessity. But whether one has a mortgage or a credit card or both, we know that when the interest rates go up we will be paying back more to the bank. That is the major risk of this budget. Good borrowings or bad borrowings, when the interest rates rise—and unfortunately I am sure that at some point in the future they will—Queensland mums and dads will have to pay back more, more in taxes, more in fees or less in services.

The second thing that every mum and dad knows is that, if they take the family on a trip before a long weekend and buy the petrol on the Friday before they depart, they will be paying a whole lot more. We are finding this today in the lead-up to the Queen's birthday long weekend. Why do we buy petrol on the Friday? Usually because we have procrastinated for a few days when the price of fuel was cheaper. We have said things along the lines of, 'I must put petrol in the car but I haven't got the time. I'll do that later'. It has happened to all of us, I suspect, at some point and we silently curse our inaction. But when we pay the inflated prices we do so because of the cost of our inaction.

This budget is no different. Can members imagine how much the recycled pipeline would have cost if it was built back when it was first proposed by the coalition? Not to mention how much water would now be available if we had been using a secondary water source for the last 10 years that was not climate dependent. Like the driver who procrastinated over fuel, this government now has to borrow to pay for the increased prices due to its earlier inaction.

Let me be very clear: there is no courage involved in spending more money. For the past nine budgets this Labor government has spent money and what do we have to show for it? It is clear that drawing a line in the sand on spending is hard for any government but particularly hard for a Labor government. The differences between the coalition and the Labor Party are major. Anyone who has followed the speeches in this chamber over the past few days would clearly see that. I believe that Queenslanders understand our positions and understand what both parties stand for and what they represent. It will be up to them to make the decision in the future based on the decisions that are made on this budget.

The Queensland budget for 2007-08 has nothing but tears for Gympie. The only major spending in this area—\$285 million for the Traveston Crossing Dam—has been reported as a war chest designed to destroy the Mary Valley with continued premature bullying of residents out of their properties. The Premier described his deputy in the media as 'Bligh the builder'. In the media in Gympie she has been referred to as 'Bligh the wrecker'. After the expenditure of the Traveston Dam the numbers grow much, much smaller. However, I do welcome the government's other announcements for our region: the money to finish off the Gympie Hospital emergency upgrade is necessary and the \$400,000 for the replacement of the Tin Can Bay auxiliary fire station is well overdue. I note that the \$25 million promised for the Gympie urban road network is federal government money and not from the state. We then have a big step down in commitment to work on the Mary Valley Water Scheme of \$2.23 million, and I can only hope that that involves work on the Borumba Dam.

There are already concerns from people in my electorate over this budget. My office has been contacted by staff from the Gympie police administration and communications area. They are wondering about the funding in the budget for the new police call centre and are naturally worried about the security of their jobs. I doubt that the call centre will be placed in Gympie. That is not to say that we would not want one. It would certainly help lower the unemployment rate in my electorate which is traditionally above the state average.

The long-needed Boreen Point to Tin Can Bay road will receive only a paltry \$174,000—hardly enough to get the trucks to the site. The announcement of construction of a two-lane, all-weather sealed road is necessary but the funding is an insult to all residents of the Cooloola coast. I am told that the rough planning figure is \$1 million per kilometre of road, so by this reckoning I figure that the government is planning to engage some mates to do another report and that is about it. For that kind of money we will not see any bitumen laid, that is for sure.

I must be frank, the expenditure on services in my electorate is pitiful compared to that of other electorates. Where is the money to upgrade the Gympie Special School which is so desperately needed and something that I mentioned in this House in my maiden speech? Where is the money to fund better dental health services so that individuals who are waiting for up to three years to get dentures can begin to enjoy some quality of life again? I do commend the government on its increased funding for public accommodation and hope that some of that money will be available for crisis accommodation in the Gympie region—something that is so desperately needed.

Budget 2007 offers no relief to families in my electorate in their ongoing battle to meet their weekly bills. State tax revenue per head of population has risen from \$1,185 per Queenslander in 2000-01 to \$2,027 in this budget which represents an inflation adjusted increase of 43 per cent. That means that for a family of five like mine the state tax revenue has risen to over \$10,000.

I note that one minister within the government has had the courage to admit that the proposed dam at Traveston Crossing is having a negative impact on the region and has obtained funding to help combat that. I commend the tourism minister for wanting to help. The \$620,000 over three years as a tourism-boosting trade-off for the proposed Wyaralong and Traveston Crossing dams will be welcomed, but I do fear it may be too little too late. After being kicked in the guts we finally have the recognition of the negative impact that this proposed dam has already had on the Mary Valley.

Health funding for the electorate has to be more than just finishing off the hospital's emergency department. I was concerned to see that there was more money allocated to the Nambour Hospital car park than there is for the whole of the old Gympie health district.

Another area that I would like to mention in the budget that is of personal interest is the provision of services for the disabled and in particular the deaf. It is wonderful that this government has committed such a significant amount of money for disability areas, but I am concerned that it is not being directed into the right areas. Currently we have a situation where the federal government has provided funding so that a deaf person can access an interpreter for a private medical appointment. However, if they attend a public hospital an interpreter is not always available. I understand that the Disability Discrimination Act requires government departments to provide interpreters for deaf people to access government services. The sad reality is that this does not always occur.

I appreciate that it is not always possible to obtain an interpreter, particularly in rural and regional areas, but there is technology available today that would help address that, with video D-Link interpreting services that can be provided via computer across the whole state. Deaf Services Queensland has been running a very successful trial with this technology, and a funding commitment from this government to roll out this technology across the state would ensure that a deaf person could access a government service wherever they lived confident in the knowledge that the information they would be obtaining would be in their primary language—sign language.

I would like to also recognise the great work that Deaf Services Queensland has done in our state over many years. It has provided interpreters for a range of people, often at no cost, when it realised that the cost of the interpreting service would be passed back to the deaf person. It is that type of commitment from organisations that makes Queensland such a great state.

I would also like to raise the issue of funding for a call centre used for dental health appointments on the Sunshine Coast. Currently there is no facility for a deaf person to be able to make an appointment directly with that service, that is, there is no TTY facility. This is a very small expenditure and to bring this in would enable deaf people to be able to make a call directly without having to rely on a family member or friend to make an appointment on their behalf.

I would now like to take the remainder of my time to contribute to the debate on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007. Most people probably associate coal with the bygone industrial age—a dirty 19th century type technology. They look to renewable energy sources as the clean 21st century type technology. I cautiously welcome the intent of this bill, but I am reluctant to wholly embrace clean coal technology. I have concerns about the safety of underground CO₂ storage. I also have concerns that the final decision on which projects are funded and the amount which is provided from the COAL21 Fund will rest with the Premier.

We have seen in the past this Premier disregard advice and go ahead with a project which the current reports advised him not to. So what did he do? He went ahead and announced Traveston Dam anyway. We can only hope that, unlike the Traveston Crossing Dam, the Premier will actually listen to the advice from key government, industry and other relevant experts in clean coal technology.

Coal may never be as clean and green as renewable energy sources like wind and solar. But, while research continues to work on clean coal technology, coal will be a major source of power well into the 21st century, and coal is likely to remain one of the nation's lowest cost electric power sources for the foreseeable future.

According to the Australian Coal Association, clean coal technologies 'reduce emissions, reduce waste, and increase the amount of energy gained from each tonne of coal'. The technology that is being researched has optimists predicting that it will be available in demonstration form in 10 years. But it has been reported that to make geosequestration work is an engineering feat on a scale bigger than anything we have ever tried in Australia. It begs the question: wouldn't the effort be better spent on energy technologies that do not create carbon dioxide in the first place?

In a statement on its web site, a research NGO, the Mineral Policy Institute, noted that a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's leading scientific body on climate change, estimates—

... by 2050 only about 30-60% cent of emissions from electricity generation will be technically suitable for capture. And even for the power stations that are suitable, CCS can at best only sequester 80-90% of their emissions...

As a result, if the projected increases in power plant construction in the next 50-100 years are borne out, then even widespread use of CCS would see emissions from the global electricity sector continue to climb.

The MPI noted on its web site that CCS promoters claim CCS will be ready within 10 years. It may be ready theoretically, but will it be used? In 10 years time cold nuclear fusion power may be ready theoretically, but will that be used? I am concerned that not one molecule less of carbon dioxide will be emitted into the atmosphere as a result of this bill.

No discussion of clean coal technology is complete without including the issue of greenhouse gases. The correlation between CO₂ and global warming is in dispute. We have arguments on both sides of the case, and there are some scientific records that show the warming occurs first and then follows the increase in CO₂. Let me be clear that I am not a climate change sceptic. I have no doubt that the planet is warming and our climate patterns are shifting. I am also of the view that man-made pollution from all sources has a detrimental impact upon the global environment, and we have a responsibility to do all we can to minimise the impacts of pollution while balancing the demands of development. However, I am yet to be convinced that global warming is purely a result of increases in CO₂. It appears to me that we must also include as an associated reason for global warming the increase in sunspot activity that is associated with increased cosmic radiation, which in turn has caused increased cloud cover. There is scientific evidence that sunspot activity and changes in cloud cover are much more strongly correlated with global warming than changes in CO₂.

It is interesting to note that it was reported in the *Australian* today that a study has concluded that hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean are increasing because of natural weather patterns rather than global warming. Global warming had been cited as a possible cause, but researchers looking at sediment and coral deposits have now identified natural variations in their frequency. Global warming may even have been responsible for unusually low levels of hurricanes in the 25 years before 1995 when the number began rising, according to scientists led by the Geological Survey of Sweden.

I mention this only to highlight that the findings are at variance with the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is clear that there is still much research that needs to be done. I commend the government for its commitment to the Climate Change Centre. All sides agree that the planet is warming. What we must clearly determine is the reason why and how we can address this. If during this process we can also reduce general pollution in the environment, then that will always be welcome.

Finally, it has already been mentioned that this chamber is a forum of debate. I for one in my brief time here have enjoyed listening to the contributions made by all members, and I must admit that I have learnt from many on both sides of the House as to what has been said. The procedure of incorporating speeches into *Hansard* denies us the richness of parliamentary debate. If this practice continues, the obituaries of members who currently sit in this chamber will read something like, 'They could write a good speech.'

A great example of this was the member for Indooroopilly, who spoke in this House in the debate on the carbon trading bill. I learnt much from his examples. I did not know that you could carbon-neutral a dog, but now I do.

Mr Lee: And your home and your office.

Mr GIBSON: I knew that but I did not know that you could carbon-neutral a dog. I do not doubt the member's commitment to the environment but I also know that his hands are tied by allegiance to the Labor Party. If he were free to speak, I am sure he would join the WWF and the Australian Conservation Foundation and other committed conservation groups by speaking out against the environmental vandalism that the proposed Traveston Dam will be. His failure to utter one word in defence of the environment in the Mary Valley speaks volumes—

Mr LEE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I must take a point of order. The suggestion by the member that I was not speaking freely in this chamber is outrageous. The Speaker always ensures that members of both government and opposition can speak freely. I think the member should withdraw his comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Gympie, I ask you to withdraw those comments.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not clear: did he take offence to the statements or does he just want me to withdraw because he does not agree with them?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the clear implication of what was said was that offence was taken and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr GIBSON: I withdraw. I do note that the member has not uttered one word in defence of the environment in the Mary Valley—the lungfish, the Mary River cod or the Mary River turtles. This speaks volumes about what Labor stands for with regard to the environment.

I have previously raised in this House the report by the World Commission on Dams that has found dams are a significant contributor to climate change. It has been found that decomposing vegetation in dams emits carbon dioxide and methane—a greenhouse gas that is reported to be 20 times more potent. I think we need to understand that you cannot have your water and the environment. You must make tough decisions, and I would encourage this government to look at alternative water sources and scrap the Traveston Crossing Dam. Let us embrace alternative water sources from all areas, whether it be desalination or recycling. That will enable us to move forward in such an important area. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to these two debates. I commend these bills to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Kawana—Lib) (4.29 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2007. The benefits for the Sunshine Coast, and particularly the seat of Kawana, are as follows: the upgrading of the Sunshine Coast Motorway from two lanes to four lanes; the construction of an interchange at Sippy Downs and associated roadworks; the purchase of land for the new 650-bed hospital at Kawana; support for the local police by way of a new police station at Sippy Downs; funding for the relocation of the water police to a site by the water instead of on the land; funding for the purchase of land for a new fire station; and funding for local schools and TAFE. On behalf of the constituents of Kawana, I thank the government for the funding for these projects. We do appreciate it very much.

I want to talk about some of the issues that need to be funded in the future and should be funded now. We need the fast-tracking of CAMCOS, which is a rail transport corridor on the Sunshine Coast. We need to look to the future. If we build these transport corridors, we will not have to build more roads and that will save the government and the people of Queensland a lot of money in the future. The government needs to take this on board and think about where the funding has to go.

We have a regional plan and we know where the population is going so we have to put money into those areas. We continue to talk about putting money into these particular areas. The people keep coming but the money is not arriving. We are not getting the funding that we need to cater for the population growth in those areas. I would like to talk about upgrading public transport and possible light rail on the Sunshine Coast. This is exactly the same situation: the money is not being made available. The people are coming. The regional plan says the people are coming to the Sunshine Coast, this government says they are coming, but the money is not being made available.

My electorate is the largest electorate by population in the whole of Queensland; roughly 38,000 people now live in the electorate of Kawana. The hospital that has been promised will be delivered in 2014. I refer back to that statement about the regional plan. The people are coming; they will be living there well and truly before 2014. It is now only 2007. What will the sick people do in the meantime? Where will the people who are moving to the Sunshine Coast go when they get sick? At the moment they are being carted around in fire engines. We need more ambulances, more hospitals and more people to work in those hospitals. The existing hospitals on the Sunshine Coast at Nambour and Caloundra need money so we can have doctors and staff to cater for this growing population.

We continue to hear from the Premier on a daily basis when we sit in this place that the population in south-east Queensland is growing by 1,500 people a week. We need the money to cater for those 1,500 people a week who are moving into our state. The people are moving to Kawana, to the Sunshine Coast, to Brisbane and to the whole of south-east Queensland.

I would like to touch on the police station I mentioned earlier. There was a commitment in this budget for a police station at Sippy Downs and I was excited to hear that. But I would like to table two documents from January 2004 and I will read a statement from one before I hand them over. This is from Chris Cummins, who said—

Our area has had another win for community safety on the Sunshine Coast.

This is brilliant news for the residents of the area. Securing a new police station for our area was part of my long-term plans after being elected in 2001.

This new station will equate to a new police division and extra police.

It is the new \$3.1 million police station that has never been built—and that commitment was released again this year. Is this called the recycled budget, or is this a real budget with real money and real facilities that will be put on the ground? I table these and members can have a look any time they like.

Tabled paper: Newspaper extract (1 page) dated 17 January 2004 containing article and advertisement by Chris Cummins.

Tabled paper: Extract (1 page) from Buderim Chronicle of 31 January 2004 containing advertisement by Chris Cummins.

That was a promise back in 2004 but the government did not deliver for its own minister. I am very proud that the government has come forward this year and decided to deliver on behalf of a Liberal representative. I am grateful and the people of Kawana are grateful.

When government members make promises to the community of Queensland, they should fulfil them. Government members have made a lot of promises but they are not fulfilling them. They need to be fair dinkum. When they make a statement to the community and the people of Queensland, they should deliver on it. Do not just make promises because that is not the right thing to do, and they all know that.

I would like to touch on the stamp duty for family vehicles. The increase for a four-cylinder vehicle is 50 per cent. The government says it has only gone from two per cent to three per cent, but that is actually a 50 per cent increase. A six-cylinder vehicle has gone up by 75 per cent and an eight-cylinder vehicle has gone up by 100 per cent. If it were \$10 or \$50 that might have been acceptable, but we are talking hundreds of dollars. The majority of people drive six-cylinder vehicles. It is not that we want them to; they just do. They are not all brand-new cars. They have second-hand vehicles and they turn them over every two or three years and this will cost the mums and dads of Queensland an absolute bomb.

Government members need to think about this. When they introduce a tax, that has an impact on every single one of these people. We heard the conversation in this House this week about water. Water will not get cheaper; it will get dearer. Mums and dads are paying more in their bills. This is another kick in the guts. That is exactly what this government is continuing to do. We have a 50 per cent increase, a 75 per cent increase, a 100 per cent increase. They are not little hits on the community; they are huge hits on the community.

We have to think about the impacts. What about the effect of the amalgamation? What about the cost of rates, the cost of water? The government needs to think about the community organisations that normally get funded by local governments. Where will their money come from? They all drive around in cars to go to the little community groups and they will be impacted as well. The impacts are compounding and compounding, and so is the debt on the Queensland government. It is continuing to compound and compound. Have a look at the Howard government. When it came to power after Hawke and Keating, it inherited a debt of millions and millions of dollars—actually, it was billions not millions—but today that debt is zero. This state government is going down the same path that the federal Labor government has in the past. It is heading towards debt.

I am giving government members the heads-up now. They need to start to curtail their expenditure and use their money wisely. They have not spent wisely in the past. Had we looked at water resources five years ago, we would be in a better situation than we are today. We knew it was coming. We talk about the Smart State, but how smart are we when we let ourselves get into this position?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to represent the people of Queensland and we should be doing it much better. Each and every one of us has to do it better; we all have to take responsibility. We should speak openly and fairly in this House because we have let this happen to ourselves. Do members know who will pay at the end of the day? It will be the residents of Queensland. It is just like the increase in the stamp duty on vehicles—the 50 per cent increase, the 75 per cent increase, the 100 per cent increase. It is a bang, bang, bang, right in the hip pocket of the people of Queensland.

Government members need to think about the people of Queensland. They are our relatives, each and every one of them. We all know somebody. We are all related to people. They all pay these bills. Taxes are getting worse right across the country. It does not matter which party puts them forward; they are happening and they will impact on them all.

The hospital that is being built at Kawana will provide 650 beds by 2014. They are doing a PPP, a public-private partnership. I have experienced one of those. It started in 1998 with the Maroochy Shire Council. Guess what? It is still trying to happen. They actually broke the law. Government members need to think about what they are getting themselves into. The hospital on the Gold Coast is being paid for with cash money, the new children's hospital is being paid for with cash money, but the one on the Sunshine Coast is PPP. I think it stands for poor, poor, poor government, because it will not have any money. I think that is where it is heading.

Mr Hinchliffe: That was an inventive alliteration.

Mr DICKSON: God, there are some geniuses in this House! I wish they were geniuses when we were in trouble with water.

The impact of the regional plan is something we need to take notice of. The people continue to come but we are not prepared for them. I do not know why we are letting more people come to this state because we cannot even give them a drink of water. When they come to Queensland, we should give them a bottle of water and say, 'This is what you get from the Beattie government. You can have a drink out of a bottle of water but you can't turn the tap on.'

I do not know if this government will pull through. The pipe supply for our dams, recycled water and desalination are all good ideas to a point, but they will not happen in time. If it does not rain, the people of Brisbane will be out of water. Government members know it and I know it. I think we should all pray really hard because without rain this government is lost. It will be the only government in history to actually drown without any water. I thank honourable members for their time.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (4.38 pm): What a great budget, and may I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the Hon. Anna Bligh, and her committee and Treasury officers. This is a budget which delivers a solid base for continued growth economically. We are dealing with a burgeoning population and, no, we are not going to put up a Berlin Wall at the border.

I believe that this budget is very positive in terms of the growth that we are experiencing. Our essential services such as water, energy, health, education and transport infrastructure have all received huge allocations. Importantly, for electorates such as I represent, this is a budget that cares about people.

It is an absolute honour to sit in this place to represent the people of the Woodridge electorate. I can offer no greater description of my electorate than to describe a recent scene that greeted me following a citizenship ceremony one evening at the historic Kingston Butter Factory. Seated against one wall was a long-time resident of Logan City with one of the new Australian citizens. They sat embracing one another—one a white woman, the other one of our delightful African refugees. I thought of the words of that song 'Ebony and ivory fit together in perfect harmony'. As I spoke to them, the long-time resident told me this was the best neighbour she had ever had. The newly arrived resident said, 'My friend has helped me so much—I am very grateful.'

My community thrives on love, care and support for one another. On Queensland Day, just this week, I held my annual volunteer and service awards. These heroes represent a myriad of workers out in the community, many in paid positions, but equally dedicated, the massive number of people who volunteer day after day to ensure that all of our services are running well. From young people to many in their 80s and 90s they are out in our community making a difference—in our churches and sporting clubs, service organisations, hospital and schools, music and art groups, Neighbourhood Watch and community groups and, literally, wherever there is a need. Many thousands of hours of volunteering happens right on our doorstep every single week. They are the glue which binds our community together and it was my privilege to recognise just some of these heroes this week. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* the names of those who received awards on Queensland Day.

Leave granted.

These are our special volunteers who were awarded in 2007:

Patricia Shearer and Mariama Fuamoli—Woodridge North SS
 Betty Byrne and Ashley McWhirter—Logan Central Meals on Wheels
 Ann St Johnwood—Groves Christian College
 Val Vysma and Helen Ng—Marsden State High School
 Joyce Gaunson—Marvellous Mature Women
 Alcnia Mignd—Harris Fields State School
 Sandi Wetere and Louise Moore—ADRA Community Care
 Jim Freeburn—Murri & Torres Strait Islander Network
 Gail Harrower—Southern Springs Community Care Logan
 Agnes Gibson—Logan Central Lions Club
 Lindel Waters and Gail Wyr—Kingston East Neighbourhood Group
 Sue Green—Marsden State School

Ray Whiteside and Ilona Csiszar—Multilink Community Services
 Andrea Christie and Robyn Caffrey—St Paul's Primary School
 Dorothy Murphy—Palliative Aids for Logan Seniors
 Sallie Fletcher and Ivan Bush—Woodridge/Kingston Lions
 Claire Beaney and Mandee Stevens—Logan City Special School

Many professionals have made an impressive contribution to life in Logan and have a huge commitment to our community in many areas of work. We appreciate their service and thank them. Those recognised in 2007 were:

Sarah Sheppard—Marketing Manager, Trinder Park Rest Home
 Francine Barker—Principal, Kingston College
 Lorraine Brown—Co-ordinator, Centre Education
 Garry Parkes—Client Service Manager—Dept of Housing
 Karen McNeil—Funding Co-ord and Accommodation Support, Family & Kids Care
 Ruby Entrop—Administrative Assistant, Woodridge State High
 Snr Const Steven Miles—School-based Police Officer, Woodridge & Mabel Pk High
 Dr Trevor Holcombe—Director of Oral Services, Logan/B'desert Health District
 Barry Watson—Manager, Murri & Torres Strait Islander Network
 Lea Budge—Manager, Radio Logan 101 FM
 Judy Brown, Kay Marken, Carole Rattray—Teachers, Woodridge Nth State School
 Kay Opperman and Chris Brightman—Teacher Aids, Woodridge Nth State School
 Cheryl Hirst—Former Teacher & Deputy Principal, Berrinba East State School

There is one feature that very clearly defines the difference between a Labor and a coalition budget. Yes, we can all build roads, bridges, schools and hospitals but, when it comes to the people who really need a hand up in life—those on disability support or the mentally ill or even those who have just been dealt a mean hand in life—this government clearly shows it cares for people.

When Rob Borbidge assumed the premiership, one of the first programs to be slashed—no, not slashed but completely wiped out—was Community Renewal. Originally introduced by Terry Mackenroth, it was quickly re-established by our housing minister, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, when Labor resumed office in 1998. The people of Woodridge rejoiced. There is little doubt that this program, which has delivered many millions of dollars to my electorate, has done more to lift the image, services and spirit of the people I represent than any other program. I thank this minister for his commitment to the people of my electorate.

I was very pleased to see a continued commitment to this program in the budget with \$5.52 million for continued work in the Logan zone as well as the Marsden-Crestmead area. Sitting alongside the Community Renewal Program is the upgrade of public housing. Some \$2 million has been allocated to continue the work of renewal and maintain the value of housing stocks. This program has given residents greater pride in their homes with the upgrade of kitchens, bathrooms, internal painting, and external awnings, carports, garden sheds et cetera. It is well demonstrated that many people now take an interest in the garden and their general neighbourhood due to this program.

A further \$1 million will be allocated to commence 26 studio apartments for low-income earners with a total cost of \$4.68 million. Logan and Beenleigh Home Assist Secure will continue its valuable work of maintenance and modifications to ensure that people are able to stay in their own homes longer with a budget of \$564,000. Some \$246,000 will allow Interlink Housing to provide additional short- and medium-term accommodation for public housing applicants.

The people of Logan value highly our hospital, which continues to offer first-class treatment on many levels. During 2006 the emergency department has been undergoing a multimillion-dollar expansion and a figure of \$338,000 is allocated for its completion. A further \$100,000 will assist with elective surgery. On a statewide basis, the health budget has been increased by 12 per cent to \$7.15 billion to continue the Health Action Plan. In addition to this, \$528 million over four years has been set aside to assist people with mental illness. It will result in 140 new psychiatric beds, 360 additional clinical mental staff and improved community based services. This is a welcome commitment to a sector that has experienced increased demand for services. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker: Employment is the key to independence and to those who are physically able, to give a person a feeling of self-worth and a healthy, active lifestyle. It is good to get up each morning knowing you are needed and you are making a difference—be it in the paid workforce or as a volunteer. As one of the areas which still has a high unemployment level, I welcome the continued commitment of this government to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I am constantly attending graduations of Community Jobs Plan participants and it is not unusual to have 80% of them already in fulltime work by the time their program is completed. In this budget, \$3.63m has been allocated to the Greater Brisbane area (including Logan) under the Queensland Skills Plan, \$22.84m for Skilling Queenslanders for Work (2,930 jobs in '07/'08) and \$4.64m for training for the disadvantaged. It is evident this government is serious about getting people trained and skilled up for work. And that is all that stands in the way for many of the unemployed to find a job—skills. We well remember the jeers from those opposite when the Premier announced his

"absurd" target of 5% unemployment. And now we are at an all time low unemployment level of 3.5%—but the electorate of Woodridge is far from that target. Yes, we do have many people on welfare support for a variety of reasons—disabilities, mental and depressive illness, young supporting mothers, and many people who come to our area to access our superb services and seek affordable housing. I sometimes liken my electorate to an Intensive Care Unit. Underneath the wonderful community which I believe has found the secret of true happiness—being connected and engaged in helping others—there are many who need a great deal of help. They arrive in our community, they plug into our services and many are made well and go on to live happy, fulfilled lives. I long for the day that the electorate of Woodridge is way down the list of the unemployed.

Mr Speaker: Good parenting and sound education will ensure the next generation of children in my electorate are able to grow into active, happy and healthy adults, involved in community, able to make choices in life about their futures with a good education and employable skills. In recent years, too many young people have fallen through the cracks and have not completed their education. Yes, many come back when they gain a little more maturity and we have great services such as the Continuing Education Centre at Kingston College to allow them to complete their high school certificate. I must commend Kingston College and Bob Topping who heads up the Continuing Education Centre for their Regional Award for Excellence which was announced during Education Week. The Education Budget has much to offer our schools in the Woodridge electorate. While there has been a huge outlay both in capital funding as well as for additional teaching staff to implement our Prep Year, nonetheless, there are considerable outlays in this budget.

Mr Speaker: The following schools will receive funding:

- \$1m to Harris Fields State School to commence construction of new Admin block
- \$250,000 to Woodridge SS to improve current amenities
- \$433,000 for reticulation at Kingston College
- \$42,000 for re-roofing at Mabel Park High
- \$46,000 classroom maintenance—Kingston College, Woodridge High and Woodridge Nth State School
- \$36,000 for maintenance at Mabel Park High and Marsden State School
- \$35,000 for maintenance building structures Kingston and Woodridge Nth State Schools
- \$10,000 to assist with Active Schools Program in 8 primary schools
- \$11,000 for maintenance of hard external surfaces at Mabel Park High and Woodridge State School
- \$457,500 for bus set-down and safety improvements at Marsden, Crestmead and Kingston State Schools and Kingston College

Mr Speaker: Other items of note in this budget are the \$1.25m to Logan City Council to assist with the construction of an Indoor Sport and Rec Centre at Crestmead with a total contribution of \$2.5m, Logan Art Gallery, \$200,000, \$32,500 to assist with the Wireless Safety Camera Network and security lighting in Ernie White and Wells Park at Crestmead.

Other funding to assist the vulnerable in our community includes \$3m for intensive levels of care in the carer's own home for children/young people with complex and extreme support needs (total funding \$9.01m), \$472,000 to assist adults with a disability to live and participate in their community, \$94,000 for Youth Justice programs, \$332,000 for accommodation and support to women and children escaping domestic violence, \$601,000 for counselling services and support for young people at risk of becoming homeless, \$42,000 to support older people, enhancing safety and wellbeing, \$100,000 as a commitment to commence planning the new Police Station at Marsden/Crestmead, \$81m to continue the Home Water Wise Rebate Scheme, plus millions of dollars for roadworks, the duplication of the rail line between Kuraby and Kingston, \$29m for Skills Tech Centre at Acacia Ridge which will offer exceptional training for our young apprentices, and so much more.

Mr Speaker: Queensland is strong, smart, innovative, and is punching way above its weight. It is not by chance that our unemployment rate is so low, it is as a result of good policy. Our aviation industry, bio-medical and nano technology, marine industry, composite fibre industry, food processing, tourism to name but a few have been directly nurtured by this government. The Brisbane Airport precinct is a great example of what in the near future will be like a mini city, with not only airport traffic, but industry and manufacturing, apprenticeship training and air crew training including flight simulators, retailing, hotels, and so much more. This government has created a climate in which businesses can thrive, and with our tropical climate, friendly people and the promise of jobs, many families and individuals have made the decision to move from interstate and overseas. There is a youthful vibrancy which is very evident wherever you go. It is hoped that we will soon be able to say the drought is ended and we can see an end to the extreme suffering of so many people in the bush. This is a great state and Logan is the heart of the great South-east. I commend the Treasurer on a budget which favours every sector, and commend the Bill to the House.

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (4.45 pm): I rise to support the 2007-08 state budget handed down on Tuesday by the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, the Hon. Anna Bligh. The budget is proof of the Queensland government's commitment to the future of Australia's fastest growing state. It is a budget that appropriately directs the vast majority of funding to priority areas such as health care, infrastructure, transport, education and community services. It is a budget that recognises the needs of all Queenslanders.

Government agencies including the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources and Water, the Environmental Protection Agency, Local Government, Environment and Multiculturalism and the Office of Rural Communities collectively increased their budget investment in the rural sector from \$772 million in 2005-06 to \$886 million in 2007-08.

The Queensland government's 2007-08 state budget is about building the infrastructure of Queensland to keep the economy strong. Queensland's economic growth is forecast to grow by five per cent in 2007-08 and again exceed growth nationally. Per capita Queensland is investing more than any other state. I congratulate the Treasurer on a budget that is responsible, innovative and provides Queensland with the infrastructure that it needs to become even stronger.

Before I speak on my electorate of Mackay, I would like to address a specific issue raised by the member for Toowoomba South with regard to my portfolio of primary industries and fisheries. Today, again, as they have done ad nauseum since I became minister, those on the other side of this House

have overlooked the facts to attack the DPI&F budget. It is a fact that the DPI&F budget has increased in 2007-08 by 4.4 per cent. It is also a fact that DPI&F did not—I repeat: did not—receive significant funding when the coalition was in power and indeed the department suffered staff cuts.

It should be noted that during the last election campaign the coalition proposed \$1.6 billion in savings. In fact then coalition Treasury spokesman and former MP, Michael Caltabiano, was quoted on page 6 of the *Australian* on 8 September last year saying that there would be a 1.5 per cent cut across the Public Service, saving almost \$1.6 billion a year by 2009-10. Regardless of the flimsy mathematics of that statement and depending on whether we use the 1.5 per cent or \$1.6 billion figure as the base, when spread across all departments this would have meant funding cuts of between \$19 million and \$30 million to the DPI&F budget. This would have rendered the coalition's proposed boost to R&D funding completely meaningless and led to further reductions in staff numbers.

Some of the options the department would have been forced to consider in the face of such a cut could have included dismissing more than 150 staff across the organisation; abandoning our entire animal biosecurity effort, leaving Queensland's beef industry exposed to foot and mouth and BSE and increasing the risk of avian influenza entering Queensland; abandoning intensive animal science research, development and extension necessary to maintain the competitiveness of industries worth some \$4 billion plus to the Queensland economy; reducing science efforts in grains, sugar, forestry and cotton in the face of increasing competition from countries such as Brazil; and abandoning fishing compliance and bather protection such as the shark safety program. Those facts would make absolutely meaningless any proposed promises made by the opposition with regard to primary industries and fisheries.

Under the Beattie Labor government the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has a clear goal. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is moving ahead with a clear strategy developed in concert with staff and industry to build an even more productive, sustainable and secure future for the state's primary industries and fisheries. The budget handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday promises a strong and sustainable future for Queensland—a future in which the Mackay region, a major recipient of the record \$14 billion capital program, will continue to be a key player. While much is made of the fact that Queensland receives about \$1.5 billion in coal royalties from the mining industry, not enough is made of the fact that the equivalent—in fact, more than \$1.5 billion—is being put back into capital works in central Queensland where the Bowen Basin coalmines are situated. In the Mackay region alone, \$760 million has been earmarked for capital works. A further \$769 million will be invested in the Fitzroy region.

The Mackay region will be sharing in a record health budget of \$7.15 billion, more than \$500 million that has been allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state, and massive statewide funding for transport and main roads. Mackay also will be gaining a much needed share of the \$719 million allocated to social housing. This is a huge cash injection which, along with land tax cuts and reductions in mortgage duty, will help people seeking housing across the state. Specifically for the Mackay-Whitsunday region, \$13.18 million has been allocated for capital and current grants, upgrades, land and construction. In addition, the housing department is working on an acquisition program for the purchase of existing dwellings in areas of high need and is interested in working with housing developers to identify opportunities to purchase additional dwellings.

Therefore, while \$13.18 million will be spent in the Mackay-Whitsunday region in 2007-08, Mackay also will benefit from the department acquiring existing properties to help meet the need for social housing in the city. Continuing the theme of social and community assistance for the Mackay-Whitsunday region in 2007-08, initiatives include \$2.1 million to support homeless and at-risk people, \$1.3 million for community support services, and \$740,000 for youth development services. At this time given the time constraints, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I am also pleased to say that the rapid growth of the Mackay region has been recognised by funding in the Budget to continue the redevelopment of the Mackay Airport.

\$500,000 has been earmarked to expand and renovate the Mackay Airport passenger terminal, a further \$1.2 million to complete the design and construction of additional long term car parking at the airport and \$100,000 to build covered walkways at the airport drop off area.

Continuing with infrastructure there also is an important package of bridge and road funding in this budget to tackle the growth that Mackay is experienced.

This includes:

- \$15.18 million for duplication of the Forgan Bridge and approaches on Mackay—Slade Point Road;
- \$6.27 million for widening to four lanes between Sams Road and Barnes Creek Road, on the Rockleigh—North Mackay Road;
- \$1.32 million for widening, repairing and strengthening works between Barnes Creek and Kooyong intersection, on Mackay—Slade Point Road; and
- \$15.4 million for construction of the Hospital Bridge and approaches in Mackay.

Other infrastructure issues being tackled include that the feasibility studies for the 130-kilometre channel pipeline system from the Burdekin River to Bowen area should be completed in 2007-08 and that the raising of Kinchant Dam is currently undergoing preliminary investigations to determine its feasibility and commercial viability.

More than \$133 million has been included in this Budget to construct power transmission lines between Nebo and Broadsound and Strathmore and Pioneer Valley.

And almost \$50 million will go to duplicating track between Broadlea and Wotonga rail sidings and improve the overhead electrical system on the Goonyella coal rail network.

There also is a reinforcement of our commitment to the Mackay Convention centre Precinct and CBD development with funding of \$33.6 million.

There is \$50,000 to assist Mackay Turf Club Inc with costs of maintaining training facilities; \$75,000 towards the construction of a shared pathway through Iluka Park, South Mackay and \$20,000 in funding for bikeway at Slade Point bikeway link, north of Mackay.

Mr Speaker, education, including via schools, remains a key aspect of this Government's Budget strategy.

The Government has pledged a further \$9.62 million in this Budget to continue development of the specialist trade campus in Mackay.

Schools have not missed out.

There is:

- \$400,000 to Pioneer State High School to commence construction of a Hall;
- \$100,000 to Mackay North State High School to rectify cracks in walls;
- \$100,000 to Mackay State High School to rectify external cracking; and
- \$550,000 to Mackay North State School to commence construction of replacement amenities.

Mr Speaker, sporting organisations have not been overlooked.

Mackay is an extremely strong sporting town. Sport plays an integral role in the lifestyle that many in north Queensland enjoy every weekend.

It is entirely appropriate that this be recognised in this Budget through:

- \$133,000 to the Mackay Cricket Association to install fixed sight screens under the Minor Facilities Program;
- \$100,000 to the Mackay Lions Soccer Club to construct two additional change rooms at Lions Park under the Minor Facilities Program;
- \$13,412 to the Mackay North Horse and Pony club to construct an equipment storage shed under the Minor Facilities Program;
- \$50,000 towards the installation of lighting to competition standard to a soccer field at Andergrove;
- \$46,387 to the Mackay Wanderers Football Club to install lighting for the soccer and cricket field under the Minor Facilities Program;
- \$107,124 to the Mackay Surf Life Saving Club to construct storage area and training room facilities under the Minor Facilities Program; and
- \$75,040 to the Mackay Bowling Club to install a retractable shade structure under the Minor Facilities Program.

Mr Speaker, there has been some ill-informed and predictable criticism as to what the Mackay/Whitsunday region is perceived to have missed out on in this Budget.

Let me just say at this time in regard to the Mackay Hospital that I have been informed that a draft Master Plan for the Mackay Health Service District has just been completed.

The plan contains a number of possible options for the future redevelopment of the hospital.

The options must first be examined for feasibility to ensure the very best outcome.

Once that process is completed, the Northern Area Health Service will need to develop a business case for consideration by Government.

This is not a process that can be rushed. As I said, we must make absolutely sure of the very best outcome.

Mr Speaker, I stand firmly behind my earlier statement that Mackay has again fared strongly from a State Government Budget.

For those who constantly harp that this Government is Brisbane-centric, I should point out that more than 50 percent of capital expenditure will occur outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.

This reaffirms this Government's commitment to regional and rural Queensland.

That attitude is further reinforced by the financial commitment of more than \$886 million for rural Queensland, given by a number of Government agencies, including my own portfolio of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

The Queensland Government's commitment to rural communities and industries has been shown with a 2007-08 Budget of \$332.5 million for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

This is a budget that will allow DPI&F, one of the state's leading economic development agencies, to continue to directly invest in and build profitable, sustainable and secure primary industries.

DPI&F's investment in the state's rural sector has grown from \$318.4 million in 2006-07 to \$332.5 million in 2007-08.

Despite the continual moaning of an Opposition who have failed to comprehend the machinations of the Budget process, this represents a 4.4% increase—well above the CPI inflation rate of 2.4%.

2007-08 also represents the first full year of the new agency Biosecurity Queensland, which brings together all of Queensland's biosecurity functions under one organisation.

This agency is being supported by an investment of \$82.5 million.

This will aid in securing our domestic and international markets, support the tourism industry, and meet the community's needs for safe produce and a safe environment.

The Budget also recognises the risks that the sector faces in the form of climate change and drought, critical skills and labour shortages, ongoing biosecurity threats, demographic and market forces and the R&D imperative.

Drought relief assistance is ensured with the continuation of new initiatives that commenced in 2006-07, such as the Drought Rate Rebate Scheme.

DPI&F's economic development credentials are being supported by an investment of \$205.7million in Industry Development.

Implementation of the 'Rural Skills, Training and Labour Strategy' will continue with initiatives such as Gateway Schools in Agriculture, a campaign for promoting and building careers, and the AAA Farmbis program.

AAA Farmbis is a jointly-funded initiative of the Australian and Queensland governments to provide financial assistance to Queensland primary producers and land managers undertaking management training and education.

DPI&F will continue to pursue the Food & Agribusiness Export Strategy via an investment of \$3.9 million in trade and export activities and further investment will be in developing new Asian markets and markets in China.

The importance of R&D is recognised through the investment of \$130.9 million in 'Smart Science' to deliver new technologies for industry and working with industry to adopt these technologies and build skills within food and agribusiness enterprises.

Biosecurity Queensland will help primary industries maintain their access to global markets by ensuring Queensland's reputation for safe, clean and environmentally-sustainable production.

Investment will continue in the management of systems, skills and facilities to prevent or detect pest, disease and invasive species.

Initiatives include:

- ongoing surveillance;
- \$4 million in 2007-08 (a total of \$11 million over three years) for the 'Reclaim the Bush' pest offensive; and
- invasive plants and animals programs, which will be implemented under the Australian Weeds Strategy and the Australian Pest Animal Strategy.

Following the successful implementation of the NLIS, this Budget foreshadows a new system for registering livestock properties and brands to further enhance traceability of animals in Queensland during a biosecurity incident.

This initiative, which will include a new set of fees, charges and exemptions, will result in a better registration system for producers.

It will enable additional investment in enhanced response capacity for emergency biosecurity events and education programs to reduce biosecurity risk, particularly in peri-urban areas.

The Budget includes provision for a Regulatory Impact Statement and further details will be provided when the RIS is released for public comment on July 2, 2007.

Today in this House I also outlined further good news in regard to NLIS with the price of tags set to fall by up to 60 cents to around \$3 as a result of Innovations Grants system.

DPI&F also is investing in four strategies to address the recommendations of the Watson Report into sugarcane smut:

- development and extension of farmer decision making tools for crop planting/removal, and smut-specific business viability information packages;
- extension of farming systems practices that enhance soil health and reduce farm inputs;
- extension education tools for on-farm surveillance, epidemiology and farming systems practices; and
- accelerated breeding and propagation of smut resistant varieties.

Mr Speaker this is of particular interest to the Mackay-Whitsunday region as one of Australia's main sugar growing regions.

Through the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Queensland Government has committed \$5.98 million over three years to support the industry's management of sugarcane smut.

\$3 million of this will be to increase the variety and availability of smut-resistant cane.

DPI&F will also commit nearly \$3 million for farming systems work to reduce the likelihood of smut spreading.

\$2.02 million of the three-year total has been allocated for 2007-08.

This includes funds for development, training and technical support for the Farm Economic Analysis Tool.

The Queensland Government has already provided millions of dollars for the biosecurity response to smut, and commissioned an independent report by Dr David Watson into the economic impact of the disease and the way forward for industry.

The State Government also made legislative changes to ensure recommendations in the report regarding variety approval could proceed.

This commitment demonstrates one of the key strengths of this Government—a willingness to partner with industry and the ability to look at the big picture to look what is needed by all Queenslanders.

In the coming financial year, DPI&F also will invest \$43.7 million in Fisheries.

This funding will ensure implementation of management arrangements for profitable and sustainable commercial fisheries and their value chains and managing the state's recreational fisheries for future generations. This represents an increase of \$1.7 million.

In 2007-08, a range of important statutory programs and government and societal priorities will be delivered including:

- vital policy and legislative outcomes such as the Inshore Fin Fish Management Plan, to ensure sustainable and appropriate resource use;
- industry development initiatives through partnerships with industry in areas such as aquaculture;
- implementation of the Great Sandy Regional Marine Aquaculture Management Plan, to include "wild" farming such as scallops;
- management of fisheries resources and habitats and the continued implementation of the recommendations of the DEWR review to ensure ongoing access to export markets; and
- continued compliance and enforcement responsibilities to ensure our waterways are safe, and the industry is sustainable and profitable.

DPI&F's capital expenditure program for 2007-08 is \$25.7 million with the primary focus on the development of world class research facilities.

Projects include the Health and Feed Sciences Precinct at Coopers Plains, the Queensland Crop Development Facility at Redlands and the upgrade to DPI&F's Bribie Aquaculture Research Centre.

Mr Speaker, briefly in finishing, the 2007-08 Budget clearly shows that this Government fully appreciates the input of a Mackay region rich in sugar, cattle production and mineral wealth.

This Budget also show a Government that does not in any way take for granted the primary industries and fisheries sector, worth almost \$11 billion annually to the state of Queensland.

This is a Budget which underlines this Government's fiscal acumen and determination to foster continued economic growth.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (4.52 pm): As part of the budget process, on behalf of Boonah State High School I want to present an idea that it has which it wants to present to the minister for education for extra funding. Recently Mr Wayne Wendt, the member for Ipswich West, and I were invited to Boonah for the opening of a magnificent community centre. After that we were invited to the Boonah State High School to have a look at its Smart Choices program in its tuckshop. Even though I was a high school principal who used to live at the tuckshop with one voluntary lady, a pie warmer and a Coke machine—and that was probably enough in the old days—I must admit that what is happening at Boonah is an amazing success story. I was most impressed and want to present it as part of the budget, because it really is a proposal to invite the Queensland minister for education to the Boonah State High School to enjoy a tuckshop lunch to highlight a Smart Choices good news story.

The P&C seeks to encourage consideration of funding a project to develop a fully accredited school tuckshop recipe book and menu planner. To further assist the P&C, the P&C would seek to engage a nutritionist and experienced chef to ensure that a recipe book is both practical and meets all of the guidelines. Boonah State High School is an excellent model of what can be achieved when the Smart Choices initiative is taken on with enthusiasm. It has the runs on the board in terms of successful menu planning and tuckshop business management. The concept could be easily transferred to other school sites, and that is obviously what it wants to do. It has had such success that the school wants to continue and develop its program further and then present the concept to other schools, and certainly the concept would meet the needs of many schools in addressing current agendas.

Boonah State High School is a country school in south-east Queensland with a population of 600 students. One of the reasons that the program has been successful is that the Boonah high school P&C with the enthusiastic support of principal Jeff Hennessey adopted all of the principles of the Smart Choices Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy from the first day of the 2006 school year. The students have responded well to the changed and expanded menu. The new menu relies heavily on homemade style dishes and products which are produced on site at the school tuckshop. Today the outlet easily complies with the balance of green and amber foods and its customers have indicated their satisfaction through words and patronage. The P&C realised that a whole cultural change had been enacted when a 'red' day in October resulted in students declining the offerings of what are now red menu items and asking if any of the 'green' ones could be made before the lunch hour had finished. The chocolate cake sold out of course, but the high-fat, high-salt or high-sugar main course items were rejected by most students. The red days now tend towards homemade cakes and slices while maintaining the mix of green and amber savoury menu items. The tuckshop manager has experimented with the menu and before introducing new entries will offer sample tastes to the student body.

Boonah State High School will be building a new tuckshop facility this year to replace the cramped, 40-year-old facility that it is doing the program through at present and anticipates that the installation of a commercial-grade kitchen and more person-friendly building will allow it to further expand the menu. Menu item prices remain in the cheap category, but profits have increased significantly since the introduction of the Smart Choices program. The school believes that the things which have aided the success have been the introduction of a more business-like approach to the management of the tuckshop; the engagement of casual staff to replace the ever-dwindling numbers of volunteers; a can-do attitude and the adoption of the excellent Smart Choices strategy; replacing of commercially prepared and packaged items with prepared on-site dishes and products that have reduced purchase costs but have increased labour input; engagement of the students in the development of the menu; and good partnerships between the P&C, the school staff and local business. On behalf of Mr Wendt and myself, I very sincerely thank the Boonah State High School, principal Mr Hennessey, secretary Mrs Wendy Creighton and Boonah State High School P&C President Mr Rick Stanfield for a most enjoyable day. I will present this to the minister for education and hope that some sort of funding can be provided.

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (4.57 pm): I am proud to rise in support of the Appropriation Bill 2007. I want to commend the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on bringing down a budget that is both economically responsible and delivers crucial infrastructure to build our state. During the coming 12 months a record \$14 billion will be invested in capital works while maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating. With seven state taxes abolished since 2001, Queensland taxpayers continue to pay less state taxes than the national average and significantly less than residents in New South Wales and Victoria.

Our unemployment level is 3.5 per cent, the lowest in 33 years. This record capital investment includes a number of projects that will significantly benefit my local community. It is fantastic news that \$2.4 million has been allocated for the construction of a new ambulance station to service Ashgrove and The Gap. There is no doubt that our paramedics are facing an increasing demand for ambulance services, particularly in the western suburbs.

I can advise that the Queensland Ambulance Service has already started planning for the new station and is currently investigating suitable land to secure a site as soon as possible. I assure local residents that I will be working closely with the QAS and the local community to deliver this new station. When complete, it will be a state-of-the-art, purpose-built facility to meet the requirements of our 21st century Ambulance Service and will deliver a welcome boost to services in our local community. Our paramedics are some of the most highly trained anywhere in the world, and I am pleased that they will have a new centre to help serve the people of the Ashgrove electorate.

Residents of Ashgrove and The Gap will also benefit from the record investment in our Police Service. This year more than \$1.4 billion will be allocated for the police budget, with an additional 200 sworn police positions. This new injection lifts the overall number of extra police positions created by the Beattie government to 3,000. We have significantly more police on the beat than ever before.

In the budget \$100,000 has been allocated to start the design and development of the new-look \$1 million police station at The Gap. Residents of The Gap will remember that in 1996 The Gap Police Station was shut down by the then Liberal and National coalition government. Having been opened by the Goss government in July 1992, only four years later The Gap Police Station was closed after the change in government. This was not only a dreadful decision for The Gap, one of the largest suburbs in Brisbane which clearly needs a strong police presence, but also a great waste of taxpayers' resources.

I am proud to be a member of the Beattie government that not only made the right and sensible decision to reopen The Gap Police Station in 2000 but also has committed a further \$1 million to build a better station on the site, which services Ashgrove, Bardon, The Gap and portions of Brisbane Forest Park and Mount Nebo. I will keep residents informed of the progress of this new station.

In my maiden speech I spoke about my commitment to education. I often visit the schools in my electorate, and I take this opportunity to thank the dedicated principals, teachers, support staff and parents, particularly those who serve on our P&Cs and P&Fs, for making our local schools some of the best and highest performing schools in the state. One of the real delights of my job is working with local school students, who will be the leaders of the future.

This year's budget delivers more than \$500 million to modernise schools and training facilities and includes a \$1.5 million allocation to a new numeracy initiative that will provide teachers with professional development opportunities. A sum of \$35.6 million is being invested over four years to improve literacy for students in all schools.

A big highlight in this year's budget is the announcement that the Beattie government will invest \$70 million over the next four years to provide every teacher who works two days or more per week in a Queensland state school with a dedicated laptop computer for their classroom. There is a further \$7 million provided specifically for non-state schools so that their teachers can also share in this initiative. More than \$200,000 has been allocated to make capital works improvements at Ashgrove State School, The Gap State School and Oakleigh State School.

Because we do have such great schools, as well as some of the most desirable and picturesque suburbs, locally we have seen a rapid escalation in land values, which is putting pressure on housing prices. I speak to many young couples and families who want to buy a home in the suburb because they grew up there or because they want to be close to their parents, but the prices are simply out of reach. This budget delivers on the government's commitment to reduce mortgage duty by 50 per cent from January next year. The complete abolition of mortgage duty for homebuyers will come into effect from 1 January 2009.

I am very pleased that this budget also introduces several new measures to lower housing costs. This budget lifts the individual resident tax-free threshold on land tax from \$500,000 to \$600,000. This change will apply from 1 July. In addition, a 50 per cent cap will be placed for three years on the annual increase in land values used for calculating land tax for all parcels of land other than newly created lots. This will ensure that, in the face of large land valuation increases, no land tax payer will see more than a 50 per cent increase in the land's value used for land tax purposes. This will significantly reduce the impact of large movements in land valuations, such as we have seen in our local suburbs. It is expected that during the next 12 months alone this will put \$50 million back into the pockets of property owners.

Protecting our environment for future generations is one of the issues that motivated me to stand for the seat of Ashgrove. I know it is an issue that many people in my local community are very concerned about. I am very proud that this budget includes more than \$714 million in new funding over the next five years to respond specifically to the climate change challenge. This includes \$400 million from the Future Growth Fund.

As the guardians of one of the natural wonders of the world, the Great Barrier Reef, which is extremely sensitive to temperature change, I believe that Queensland has extra responsibility to take action. The whole-of-government strategy ClimateSmart 2050, which was announced as part of the state budget for 2007, is a strategy with real measures to tackle climate change now, protecting our environment for future generations. A key component is establishing a \$300 million Climate Change Fund to ensure Queensland is at the forefront of developing new technologies like hydrogen fuel cells and investing in emerging technologies.

We will also promote research and development into renewable energy sources to meet our renewable and low emissions target of 10 per cent by 2020. The development of renewable and low emission technologies is a key part of climate change mitigation. On a local front, we will benefit from record spending by the Environmental Protection Agency to maintain roads, tracks and other assets in Queensland's parks and forests, with \$200,000 allocated for upgrades at Brisbane Forest Park.

Another key strategy to protect our environment is to invest in public transport. Residents in Enoggera, the Grange, The Gap, Alderley, Ashgrove and Gaythorne are big public transport users. I am pleased to advise that a record \$1.2 billion will be spent on public transport infrastructure and services such as the \$333 million new Inner Northern Busway extension, which is already ahead of schedule. This will see more buses and trains added to the public transport network to increase services. A further \$60 million is being injected into TransLink to integrate ticketing and fares, including rolling out TransLink's smart cards.

Growing up in a large household with only brothers, I know how important sport is for getting kids active. Through sport, young people benefit physically while learning skills and the benefits of teamwork. Four local organisations including The Gap Netball Association, the Northern Suburbs Hockey Club at Ashgrove, the Valley District Cricket Club and GPS Rugby at Ashgrove will benefit from a \$50 million package to upgrade sporting facilities.

Health continues to be central to Queensland government spending. A record budget of \$7.5 billion will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan to improve health services in our hospitals such as more hospital beds and record numbers of doctors and nurses. This includes more than \$250 million to improve conditions for hardworking Queensland Health staff, including visiting medical officers as well as clinical and administrative staff.

As we are experiencing the worst drought on record, water infrastructure is also a pivotal part of this budget. The government is undertaking unprecedented expansion of water infrastructure, with \$9 billion invested in the south-east Queensland water grid. A sum of \$640 million is allocated in 2007-08 for the construction of the grid network of pipes to move water where it is needed most. When finished, the grid will do two things. It will drought-proof south-east Queensland and it will enable water to be piped to where it is needed when it is needed.

Currently, there are 22 bulk water assets owned by 12 different entities and 17 councils that deliver water in the region. The new water grid structure will see that streamlined to just three bulk water providers, which will be state owned statutory authorities. Councils will retain control of the domestic distribution system and water retail business. This plan makes a lot of sense and will ensure that water is delivered fairly and equitably to all of us.

This year there is a further \$81 million for the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which will offer rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers. So far, one in five south-east Queenslanders have accessed the rebate and one in 10 people have installed water tanks with the assistance of state government subsidies. I thank local residents who have taken action to do their bit to reduce the demand on our water supply.

As well as investing record funds into building better infrastructure, this is also a very decent budget. There are funding boosts in the key areas of disability services, mental health services and social housing. For social housing—the policy area that I previously worked in—a record \$7.19 million will be invested to help people who are in greatest need in our community. When the Beattie government was elected, only \$330 million a year was allocated for housing services. Under this government, we have more than doubled this assistance. Public housing in the Ashgrove electorate will benefit from the \$30 million allocated in the budget to upgrade dwellings in Brisbane. The 2007 budget delivers the infrastructure and social investment we need in a growing state. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (5.09 pm): I stand here in this House privileged to represent the people of the Currumbin electorate—one that I have told members on numerous occasions is the most breathtakingly beautiful electorate in the whole of Queensland. Twelve months ago when I was giving my budget reply to this House I likened the Treasurer's effort to the movie *The Truman Show* and warned of a rosy facade that covered up the unfortunate truth. I am sorry to say that my predictions have become a reality with record borrowings required by this government to rescue the state from running out of water. Owing to years of poor planning, Queenslanders will be fleeced with the government paying premium prices as a result of its slovenly attitude over the past nine years.

On the other hand, the Howard-Costello team are sound economic managers, delivering two million more jobs and clearing the \$96 billion debt on which we paid over \$8 billion per year in interest under Labor. Our interest rates are lower than when Costello took charge of the economy and prosperity has never been better. On Wednesday this week it was announced that the Australian economy is at its strongest in four years.

The Premier and the Treasurer are pompous enough to take full credit for the prosperity that booming real estate markets, strong employment growth and a thriving mining sector have bestowed upon the fair folk of Queensland. If the truth be known, it is more a case of lady luck shining upon us than any management prowess of these two economic pirates.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to a few salient features of this year's state budget. It is projected that in 2010-11 the debt for which this government is responsible would have reached \$51,725 million compared to the 2006-07 budget estimate of \$21,748 million. Over that period interest costs will total almost \$10,000 million, or 20 per cent of the 2010-11 borrowings. Government owned corporations mainly will have a debt burden of \$32,383 million. On assets of \$63,466 million in 2010-11, they will show a positive operating balance of \$139 million. It is noted that in that year 16 per cent of their revenue will come from state government grants. In just four years, interest expense will consume over six per cent of revenue compared to the 2006-07 budget of three per cent.

This government is starting to show the same appetite for debt that we saw in the Cain and Kirner Labor governments in Victoria and the Keating Labor government in Canberra. If this government persists, its reckless and imprudent policies will place enormous burdens on taxpayers and on continued investment in the state's future for generations to come.

At a minimum, the government must immediately rein in its employee expenses, which have risen by over \$1 billion in a year. Before anyone attempts to defend this outrageous example of irresponsibility by arguing that that increase was due to the employment of extra ambulance workers, police officers, doctors, nurses et cetera, the budget papers reveal that only 1,800 additional staff of these classifications were to be hired, costing no more than \$200 million.

Historically, this government has a track record of squandering opportunities due to its abysmal economic management skills which saw it selling off assets to pay for basic services that are not a privilege but the right of every Queenslanders. After sitting on their hands for years and watching the state suffer through drought, these irresponsible leaders recently discovered, as panic buttons continued to be hit, that they will need to fund a water grid, the cost of which has blown out from \$6.5 billion to \$9 billion or more. Mind you, this is no surprise when we look at the saga of the Tugun bypass. A decade ago costs were under \$55 million, but owing to this government's woeful negotiation skills with its New South Wales Labor counterpart—which, I might add, is still not contributing one cent towards the construction of the bypass—costs have exploded to \$543 million.

This government is rolling in money to the tune of around \$30 billion from taxes, grants and subsidies. Yet it is forcing more taxes on Queenslanders. For example, we hear that the tax on new and used cars is supposedly going to fund our sorely neglected mental health services. Although I welcome much-needed funding for mental health services, one would think that a government, which is supposedly so dedicated to climate change, would have allocated these moneys in an environmental direction.

I ask members to remember what happened to the ambulance levy that entitles all Queenslanders to utilise Queensland ambulance services, which some people are forced to pay several times. A total of \$440 million has been raised in taxes, yet the Ambulance Service is crumbling. For over two years paramedics and other Queensland Ambulance Service employees have been warning the minister and his department that the culture of bullying has caused such low morale that the numbers of qualified paramedics and officers was dropping and that in many instances equipment was past its use-by date. A large injection of funds in this budget is expected to be the panacea and cure-all for this much-bullied service. But unless the serious issue of morale is addressed and dedicated paramedics feel that they are valued, the service will continue to flail and suffer from resignations in numbers that outstrip new recruits.

Under this Labor government Queensland has lost the title of being the low tax state. Residents and businesses can expect whopping hikes to their electricity bills and water prices are predicted to go through the roof. Commerce Queensland is clearly disappointed, stating that this year it has received only budget crumbs. Our public health system has decayed to such a sorry state that even full limb amputations will not stop the disease from spreading. My genuine respect goes to the staff who survived the bullying and overwork to continue their professional duties. This crisis-ridden government is relying on the private sector to bail it out time and again to reduce waiting lists by performing public patient surgery. Most recently it moved the Robina palliative care unit to an unpopular location in Southport with only a week's notice. Alas, nothing has changed internally as the culture is still all about

bureaucratic number crunching with compassion and staff consultation a very low priority. Money alone cannot change culture and despite a promise of \$7.15 billion in this year's budget, unless health professionals are treated with some admiration and valued for the significant contributions they make, the crisis will not abate.

A shortage of 600 beds on the Gold Coast indicates that patients will still have to wait unacceptable times for medical attention. There should be 2.4 beds per 1,000 people, which means that the Gold Coast should have at least 1,200 beds. Doctor recruitment has gone backwards. In 2004 there were 1,220. In 2005 there were 1,144. In 2006 there were 1,162. That does not include the 2,500 doctors who have left the public system over the past few years owing to poor pay and bullying by this Labor government.

I now move to my shadow portfolios of child safety, disability and mental health policy. We continue to hear from the government that it is spending record amounts as if it deserves a pat on the back for its efforts. As I have said, all Queenslanders deserve basic health, transport, education and community services. It is obvious that, with a growing population, there would be pressures placed on systems. You do not need to be Einstein to work that out. For this government to prance about as if it is doing Queenslanders a favour when it is the people's money it is spending shows just how arrogant and puffed it has become.

Before commenting on the budget for Child Safety, I would like to take a moment to thank the minister for inviting me to a budget briefing yesterday. May I also express my gratitude to staff in the minister's office for their helpful manner. Of all government departments, Child Safety is responsible for looking after the welfare of society's most vulnerable, our children. Complex needs accompany children who have suffered severe violent sexual and emotional harm at the hands of their perpetrators. It takes staff with specialised training and innate skills to make decisions that affect these precious charges.

This portfolio carries a half billion dollar budget investment which, whilst highly commendable, will do little to reduce the alarming rate of child abuse notifications and the number of children in care until the department adopts a more therapeutic rather than a heavy-handed investigative approach. Stakeholders tell me that the government must change its focus and do more preventive work because, according to some sources, up to 50 per cent of children come into care due to neglect. Neglect needs to be recognised as a systemic issue, such as homelessness or poor parenting skills, where help and education could play an important role in improving the wellness of the notified child.

A spokesperson for QCOSS has further criticised the budget for not having any plan to tackle poverty in Queensland. Despite much brouhaha about the importance of early intervention and prevention, there is no increase in this budget. Early intervention, coupled with prevention through education, is the basis of the new Ditto program that has been devised by Bravehearts. Thanks to a grant last year from the child safety and communities departments, this program is being delivered in schools.

An article in the *Courier-Mail* yesterday stating that child abuse reports were expected to rise is seen by some as an admission of failure by this department to effectively understand and deal with the problem. The minister has acknowledged the fact that funding for Indigenous children is disproportionately represented and is further aggravated by big distances between communities in far-north Queensland which necessitates better services and housing for staff. There has long been suspicion in Indigenous communities of government intervention in their communities. This budget is seeking to work towards keeping Indigenous children who are identified as being at risk in close connection with their culture through the new residential care facilities, the first placement house on Palm Island and establishing employee housing and facilities within these communities. Since the establishment of this department the Beattie government has been insistent on throwing more and more dollars at more layers of bureaucratic services when these could be handled effectively by utilising more services from NGOs.

After years of battling this government and the findings of the Forde report eight years ago, the announcement of a \$100 million one-off redress scheme for children abused in Queensland institutions was received with a certain degree of elation. A number of victims have publicly stated the fact that the outcome is marred by the length of time it took the government to accept responsibility for making sure compensation was paid.

In the area of disabilities, stakeholders are expressing their enormous disappointment over this budget, feeling that they have been overlooked with increased funding going to infrastructure rather than services. It is all very well for the Treasurer to boast of bigger spending than ever before and increasing spending in this sector by 222 per cent over nine previous budgets, but Queensland's spending on support for people with a disability per capita of the potential population remains lower than any other state or territory.

There is no substantial funding for community based services to address unmet need in Queensland. While there has been an increase in indexation, it falls well short of matching the rising costs of delivering services in Queensland. Excuses from the Premier and Treasurer that Queensland's rapid growth is the cause of unmet need is both a dispassionate and lame one. As the population grows

so does the need for disability services. Like many members in this House I have heard countless legitimate stories of people with disabilities and their families who cannot access any care packages or respite. Funding must be invested primarily in the people the department is responsible for helping, not just programs, bricks and mortar. More money is being spent but it is not equating into services. NGOs are losing their character as compliance mechanisms become more restrictive and prevent disabled people from taking part in activities.

Disability organisations that are well used to making every funding dollar stretch as far as is humanly possible are genuinely worried that they will no longer be able to meet the disability support needs in their respective communities. The big issue is why in this prosperous state of ours is the gap growing in unmet need and what will the long-term social and economic costs be to this state if we fail to meet these needs adequately?

Mental health has finally been given some recognition with a half a billion dollar boost to funding in this budget, together with an acknowledgement that it was an area neglected by the Labor government. I note the Premier's comments in a media release dated 30 May where he stated, 'The most important issue for those with a mental illness is for them to be able to get help when they need it.' I could not agree more. Yet under the Premier's leadership, years of chronic underfunding and a failure to recognise the escalation of the problem has seen Queensland lag behind other states despite numerous reviews and inquiries.

An additional 140 mental health beds for the whole of Queensland is nowhere near enough for our current population let alone future growth. It is not stated in the budget where these beds will be located. The Gold Coast alone needs 40 acute adult psychiatric beds right now to bring us into line with the recommended provision of beds per population. Other regions are in similar situations with existing services and staff stretched beyond what many would consider reasonable boundaries. Emergency departments will continue to overflow with an increase in demand for mental health beds and the situation is not helped by an increase in medical and surgical beds. Apart from a shortage of acute mental health beds, there is an urgent need for extra beds for older age psychiatric patients, drug and alcohol detoxification plus forensic psychiatry units. Supported accommodation for chronically ill patients that is staffed 24 hours and has rehabilitation and recovery services inbuilt is also crucial if we are to supply help when it is needed, as identified by the Premier.

I note the \$10 million per year for four years for the Department of Housing to build or purchase specially designed accommodation for people with a mental illness, together with a further \$22.4 million also over four years to provide a range of social support services to people living in the new accommodation. However, when one considers the scope of this problem, \$10 million does not equate to a large number of residences across Queensland. Establishment of a statewide victim support centre and additional forensic mental health staff as per recommendations in Brendan Butler's review of the Mental Health Act 2000 are welcome budget items.

The Currumbin electorate has secured funding for big-ticket items such as the ongoing construction of the Tugun bypass, which is being built with both state and federal monies, and infrastructure for the billion-dollar Tugun desalination plant which is a partnership between the state government and Gold Coast City Council. There were also a number of smaller allocations. These include \$400,000 for the widening of the Tallebudgera Connection Road to help ease increased traffic in our suburbs; \$200,000 for improvements at the Tomewin Street and Gold Coast Highway intersection near the entrance to Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary; \$22.5 million for high-voltage feeders from Currumbin to Burleigh Heads to supply power to the desalination plant; \$5.73 million for the Currumbin substation upgrade; and \$4.35 million for underground cables to supply power to the desalination plant. Sadly there was no funding for the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary which continually has to play second cousin when it comes to funding as it receives absolutely nothing from the state government. Fleay's Wildlife Park at Burleigh, however, received \$250,000 for redevelopment, which seems unfair. Funding is desperately needed for a new wildlife hospital to cater for the 4,000 plus injured native animals brought in for care each year.

I heartily congratulate the sanctuary on the initial success of its koala exchange program and recent birth of twin koalas to Murrumbidgee in the world-class Xiangjiang Safari Park in Guangzhou, China. Michelle Monsour and her team are to be praised for the way they have managed this very delicate transfer of our beloved koalas to another country. With loving care from their Australian handler, the koalas all appear to be thriving and millions of Chinese are suffering from koala mania such is the joy our furry fauna bring.

HOST—Homelessness Outreach Support Team—funding of \$600,000 was announced last year to provide help to those who sleep rough and cannot access crisis accommodation. Spread out over three years and covering a region from Beenleigh to Coolangatta, this funding is to be used to provide assistance to people with complex needs who experience difficulty accessing the crisis accommodation that is dearly needed. Liz Fritz of the Uniting Church's Blair Athol crisis accommodation facility brought together a consortium of like-minded agencies to bring about this innovative project which was successful in receiving funding.

Affordable housing has been affected by an increase in the number of households and an undersupply of affordable housing. I applaud the funding from the minister for more public housing as the waiting time in my electorate is eight to 10 years. I just paid the minister a compliment and I hope that he will take it.

Tugun's desalination plant is expected to be finished in November 2008 at an estimated cost of \$1.12 billion. As I look back over my budget reply from last year, I see this project was merely an investigation with a \$14 million investment by the state government. Current spending is about \$70-80 million per month and around 25 per cent of the total project has been completed. Work is about to start on the tunnels and construction of the main water distribution pipeline from Tugun to Worongary started last Friday. Staff who will be working on the offshore barge are undergoing helicopter crash training as part of their safety preparation. This is not for the faint-hearted, I am told on good authority.

It is worth remembering that the people of the southern Gold Coast had to wait 20 years for the Tugun bypass and almost ended up with a road going east of the airport and the resumption of homes. The good news is that this motorway from Currumbin to Tweed Heads is well on schedule. I take this opportunity to commend Main Roads and everyone involved with this long-awaited project.

Talk of quality transport corridors flows freely from the transport minister's lips. At Coolangatta we are literally the end of the line and will have to wait more than a decade to see a rail service. Several million people fly into the Gold Coast airport each year with the newly opened runway extension. This government is always bragging about the value of our tourism industry, but we will not be able to catch a train in Coolangatta until 2018. Suburban Elanora further north will not see trains until at least 2011-12.

The memorandum of understanding between the Premiers of New South Wales and Queensland in February this year has seen common sense prevail with the establishment of dual taxi ranks to assist passengers who undertake cross-border taxi journeys.

I am pleased to report that concentrated policing efforts throughout the electorate have resulted in a reduction in crime, especially in Coolangatta, thanks to the directions of Inspector Des Lacy and Senior Sergeants Steve St George and Mark Johnston.

The Southern Alliance Task Force has contributed largely to the improvement in behaviour of some of our youth, although residents have recently started contacting my office with reports of troublesome youth gatherings in Tugun. I congratulate Jim Keogh on his recent appointment as superintendent of the Gold Coast district. Jim lives in the Currumbin electorate and is very active in many community groups, having a big involvement in the local surf lifesaving movement.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the terrific achievements and contributions made by our community groups and volunteers such as Neighbourhood Watch, Lions, Rotary, Volunteer Marine Rescue, rural fire brigades and surf clubs to name a few.

In 2005 the Premier listened to huge public pressure from southern Gold Coast locals and promised to protect the site of the original primary school on Kirra Hill from residential development. Heritage listing was sought for the building which was in a poor state and the land was to be handed over to council by the state government. Here we are in 2007 and the government has stalled the Kirra Hill master plan. I urge the government to assist the Gold Coast City Council with this historic and nostalgic project by investing \$500,000 towards the restoration of the old school.

Many surfers believe our famous surfing break at Kirra to be a victim of the Tweed sand bypass project which has pumped millions of cubic metres of sand northwards. The Gold Coast City Council is negotiating with the state government to gain support for a feasibility study to examine the possibility of moving unwanted sand and I encourage the government to explore that.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Stuckey, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rose, Ms M

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (5.30 pm):
When Merri Rose was given a custodial sentence last week, I assured the Queensland public that she would not be given preferential treatment in our prison, and she has not. Let me state unequivocally that I have no involvement in the decision making concerning her or any other prisoner in custody. However, there appears to be misleading information in the public arena suggesting that Merri Rose is being treated more favourably than others. This is not the case. To maintain public confidence in the correctional system, I have asked the department to provide responses to a number of questions put to

my office this week, and I wish to put on the public record these responses in order to assure people that every prisoner in our system is treated equally. I table a copy of those responses from the department.

Tabled paper: Document (undated) refuting six statements regarding Merri Rose.

Tabled paper: Document (undated) titled 'Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre Structured Day and 2007 Winter Menu'.

I also seek leave to incorporate the responses in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

(1) Merri Rose was processed differently to other prisoners when she was inducted into prison. She was not strip-searched.

Prisoner Rose was treated like every other offender during the reception process in line with the policies and procedures. This includes checking the warrant, recording and storing her property, and recording her information. A strip search was conducted and recorded in the register provided, and she was interviewed by the counsellor, psychologist and medical staff.

This prisoner has been assessed, managed and progressed consistent with QCS policies and procedures. She has not been treated more or less favourably than any other prisoner.

(2) Merri Rose has received special visit privileges.

Every prisoner is allowed two hours of visitations each week and Prisoner Rose has not received any more visits than other prisoners. Visits can occur on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

(3) Merri Rose has been entitled to longer telephone calls than other prisoners.

Prisoners are allowed 10 different telephone numbers to call and each call is limited to 10 minutes. There is no limit on the number of telephone calls prisoners can make. Prisoner Rose has not been allowed to have telephone calls any longer than other prisoners.

(4) The prison gymnasium was closed down so she could exercise alone on Saturday and Sunday.

Prisoners have an entitlement to exercise. Prisoner Rose did exercise on her own under the supervision of an officer on 2 and 3 June 2007 while she was accommodated in the health and medical centre. This is a common practice for new prisoners who have not had their assessment completed and appropriate accommodation identified. The exercise took place in the multi-purpose hall in between scheduled activities. No other prisoner was disadvantaged by this action. Daily Routine attached.

(5) Merri Rose has received a different menu to other prisoners i.e. bacon and eggs.

No prisoner received bacon and eggs. The menu for prisoners is cyclic over a six week period. Breakfast provisions for prisoners are the same throughout the year. The menu provides for a Continental Style breakfast that includes cereal, milk, toast with spread and a beverage. On Sunday, prisoners are served yoghurt in addition to the Continental breakfast. Prison Winter Menu attached.

(6) Merri Rose was being kept in the prison medical centre until Monday afternoon.

Prisoner Rose arrived at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre approximately 5.15pm on Friday, 31 May 2007. The reception process usually takes up to 2 hours to complete. All assessments were not able to be completed prior to the lock away at 6.30pm. A decision was made to complete the assessments on Monday 4 June 2007 and to accommodate Prisoner Rose in the Health facility pending the completion of the assessment. This is not unusual with new prisoners.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 2171.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (5.31 pm): I am honoured and humbled to be here today as the representative of the people of Clayfield and to address the appropriation bills and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. My only regret is that I will have to report to the people of Clayfield that they are being ignored by this government for yet another year. The record of neglect of Clayfield continues, and we know why. The comments of the member for Ashgrove on Wednesday made that abundantly clear. The prejudice of the Left against anyone who is successful, who works hard to make their life and that of their family better, is redolent in this chamber. Even the member for Thuringowa showed his hatred of successful people with his snide reference to BMW motor vehicles. He does not like them, and God forbid you are successful. And this from a member of a government that has just increased the duty on cars by up to 100 per cent. The member for Thuringowa must have licked one too many stamps. Nevertheless, I will continue to fight for a better deal for the people of Clayfield and, indeed, a better deal for all Queenslanders. Let me turn to the budget as a whole.

I have heard many honourable members on the government benches say that this is a true Labor budget. I agree; this is a true Labor budget—a reckless, big-borrowing, big-taxing, big-spending, wasteful budget. It is the type of budget that worked to the detriment of those in Victoria under Cain, that worked to the detriment of those in South Australia under Bannon, and that worked to the detriment of those in Western Australia under Bourke and Lawrence. Most significantly, it is the type of Labor budget delivered under the auspices of that economic vandal, the old undertaker himself, Paul Keating—the destroyer of the federal budget of Australia.

I will just go through some points for the illumination of members on the other side—a big-borrowing government. Let us reflect on where Labor left us at the federal level in 1996—\$96 billion in debt. We were vulnerable to the vagaries of the world economic trends. We all remember the 1995 law, law, tax cuts—the tax cuts promised but never delivered. They have disappeared. In fact, they have disappeared into a black hole—the \$8 billion black hole that we discovered when the federal coalition came to power. So we had a debt equal to 18½ per cent of GDP in 1996; a budget black hole of \$8 billion—money disappeared, with no explanation; just a black hole.

Labor left the people of Australia repaying interest at the rate of \$8.4 billion a year or about 1.5 per cent of GDP in 1996-97. So what do we see here in Queensland this year? We have a government borrowing and borrowing big—following in the footsteps of the Keating, Cain, Kirner model. Like all Labor governments, the borrowing starts off slowly but then balloons so that in a very short time the combined government and GOC sector debt will be \$51.73 billion in 2010-11—\$51.73 billion. Net debt at that time is forecast to be \$12.4 billion and repayments of debt will amount to \$1.54 billion. That is \$1.54 billion per annum in debt repayments.

We have heard from this side about the bad effects of debt on state governments, but I thought we would go a bit further afield. Let us have a look at what others say about state government debt. We thought we would have a look at *Hansard* to quote some comments of a few years ago. Let me read this quote into the record—

The Treasurer missed a key word when she dreamed up her description for this budget—'Delivering for Queenslanders' should have read 'Delivering Debt for Queenslanders'. There is widespread criticism that the budget delivers little else ... and that it has been made possible only by mortgaging our future ... we will all have to find \$106 million every year to service that debt. That will mean fewer jobs and higher prices. Every time someone turns on a light they will be paying for the power and helping to repay the Treasurer's debt.

Who was the author of that quote? Who did not like the fact that they would be paying \$106 million every year to service debt? Who was concerned about the raid on the electricity industry? Does anyone want to give me some money?

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am willing to take it, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will take them all on. It was none other than the then Leader of the Opposition, the member for Brisbane Central, who did not want to take on debt.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Clayfield to address his remarks through the chair.

Mr NICHOLLS: Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take them all on. There is no problem with that. The Premier did not want to pay for \$106 million worth of debt and he was concerned about the rip-off in the electricity industry. This is from someone who sold off the electricity industry. He sold off the retail arm under the name of full retail contestability so that he could get it past his union mates. He was worried then about \$106 million in interest.

What has happened to the Premier since his concerns of 10 years ago? Did he visit the road to Damascus on his latest trade mission? Now he is comfortable with debt. He is comfortable with raids on the electricity industry—he ought to be; he has done it often enough—the privatisation of state enterprises and the sell-off of state assets, the proceeds from which he uses to prop up his budget. It would be fair to say that his appetite for debt has changed. In fact, his appetite has become gargantuan as he munches his way through an interest bill of \$1.14 billion in three years time.

What would we get if we had not incurred that debt and if we were not spending that \$1.145 billion? We would certainly be able to air-condition quite a few more schools along the way and help our state schools, our teachers and our students in a better learning environment. We could help a few other schools along the way as well. We could build plenty more skills tech campuses and certainly hire new teachers at those campuses. This would address the skills shortage and truly be investing in our future. We could upgrade the M1 Motorway or the Bruce Highway, build a second range crossing, put more into rural roads and highways or build a high-speed train service like the Magna rail in Shanghai that I am told travels up to 400 kilometres an hour. We could get on with many other jobs that the transport minister and the Treasurer continually bleat about needing more federal government assistance to do.

The second hallmark of a true Labor government is a big-spending government. A big-spending government is another hallmark of this Labor government's blow-out budget. But are we getting value for money for our spend? One has to wonder when we look at the cost of wages. A close look at chapter 6 of Budget Paper No. 2 highlights the big increase in general government sector expenses and, in particular, the wages component. Total expenses for 2007-08 increased by \$1.339 billion over the \$28.8 billion spend in 2006-07.

How is this explained? How does the government try to gloss over that blow-out in expenses? If we go to page 114 of the Budget Strategy and Outlook, it says—

General Government expenses in 2006-07 are estimated to be \$30.164 billion, an increase of \$1.339 billion over the 2006-07 Budget forecast of \$28.825 billion. This increase is primarily due to:

- expensing of Tugun Bypass ...

which is an accounting measure—

- increased Vegetation Management program ...
- implementation of a Redress Scheme for former child residents of institutions
- additional expenditure on the Government's WaterWise rebate schemes
- actuarial revisions to superannuation
- additional expenditure to match increases in specific purpose grants from the Australian Government ...

I thought that was quite a lengthy explanation for a \$1.339 billion increase in government expenses, but it is not the truth. For the truth we have to go to page 116 under 'Employee expenses'; we have to plough on to page 116. There it is revealed that employee expenses are in fact the single largest contributor in the increase in expenses. They have increased at almost eight per cent or \$1.042 billion. So \$1.33 billion is explained with six items on page 114, but there is no mention of the single biggest increase of \$1.04 billion in wages. Why is that? Because the government is paying off its union mates. We all know the last bastion of the union bosses are in the Queensland state public sector.

This government will do whatever it can to prop up the union bosses and apparatchiki and their safe secure income stream and their donations to the ALP coffers. If ever there were a conflict of interest, it is the cosy arrangement between this government and Trades Hall. In fact, in Queensland real gross operating costs per capita were up by 15 per cent over the period 1999-2000. In Queensland the increase in remuneration per public sector employee has been 49 per cent in 2005-06 relative to 1999-2000.

This would not be a bad thing if we were receiving better services, but are we? Many would argue that we are not. Despite this increase, are the people of Queensland getting a better service? Are the hospital elective surgery waiting lists getting that much better? How many more hospital beds per thousand of population will we receive? How many more kilometres of new rail track will be laid?

Let us go to page 1-22 of the portfolio statement for Transport and Main Roads and look at the road toll. One would think the road toll would be fairly important for this government. Let us look at the measures of performance for the road toll on page 1-22—'Road fatalities per 100,000 population'. Not only did the government fail to meet its target of 7.2 per 100,000 people last year but it increased its target this year to what it achieved this year—that is, 8.55 fatalities per 100,000 people. In effect, this government is condoning an 18.75 per cent increase in the road toll for 2007-08. If that is not bad enough, the government is also accepting a 15.4 per cent increase in the hospitalised road casualties per 100,000 people this year.

These astonishing admissions come on top of the government's failure to reduce the road toll to reach its targets in both 2005-06 and 2006-07. Those are the figures in the book. They are not made up by anyone. They are what the government is printing there.

Let us look at people's perceptions of safety while travelling on public transport and the measure of those perceptions in the Police and Corrective Services portfolio. It is a fact that this government has revised its target downwards for perceived feelings of safety on public transport. The government's own target for feeling of safety last year was a meagre 45 to 55 per cent; so only about half the people need to feel safe while travelling on public transport, according to this government.

A study was done last year on people's perceptions of safety on public transport and it revealed that only 40.9 per cent of people felt safe on public transport. So what did the government do? It revised the target down to 40 to 50 per cent. Rather than fix the problem, the government changed the target. And which way did it get changed? Downwards. This is despite the transport department's road use funding increasing from \$219 million in 2005-06 to an estimated \$258 million in 2006-07. Dollars up, service down—that is the story of this budget. This is a government which is spending big on wages and interest; those areas will increase by almost \$2 billion each year for the next four years.

The third item of a typical Labor government is a big-taxing government; this is another hallmark of a Labor government. Budget Paper No. 2 indicates the Labor tax grab will increase by \$897 million next year. This is a better than 10 per cent increase on the current year, which in itself is half a billion dollars more than was forecast in last year's budget, which was in itself a billion dollars more than the year before.

Taxes are going up, hand over fist, and the big contributor is transfer duty—with a \$400 million increase. No wonder the Treasurer does not want to abolish it. Vehicle registration duties are up by \$100 million and we know that \$80 million of that in the first year at least—because it goes up to \$200 million next year—is a result of the tax change that was shoved through this House on Wednesday.

We have already discussed how the Labor tax grab will impact the ordinary car buyer and how Labor and the Treasurer do not care. They do not care. Their false claims are that they want to do it for the environment. And this is from a government that subsidises petrol to the tune of 8.3c a litre. So government members want to subsidise petrol for a spurious reason—so as to increase the claim they are environmentally friendly. What a contradiction. They say, 'We'll give you more petrol, but you've got to have fewer cylinders in your car.'

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: How they loathe their hypocrisy being pointed out to them. How they loathe their hypocrisy. They would love to ban motor vehicles. We know the mind of the Left over there—no motor vehicles and back to the horse and cart. It is just spin to cover up another tax grab.

In fact we know that the major tax going backwards is the duty that the government is being compelled to abolish as a result of the federal government's intergovernmental agreement on taxes and charges. Because of the federal government's GST, because of the money flowing here, the one major tax concession in this budget is that which is being brought about because of the federal coalition—and that is the mortgage duty.

But government members cannot even do that right. They announce it now but they do not deliver the first tranche—which is only 50 per cent—until 1 January 2008. So everyone still has to wait six months before they get a 50 per cent reduction, and then the 100 per cent reduction will not be introduced until 2009. It is an old trick. This is always done by governments wanting to protect their revenue. Compare that to the increase in stamp duty on the transfer of vehicles. When does that come in?

Mr Langbroek: In three weeks.

Mr NICHOLLS: Exactly. It comes in on 1 July, straightaway. So are government members quick to hand out the money? No. Are government members quick to take it? Yes. They are the oil companies. They are like the price at the petrol bowser that they are always complaining about. They jack it up as soon as they can but they are pretty slow to push the savings through.

I turn now to public transport and traffic sections of the budget, and what a sorry and sad tale of this government's incompetence they tell. We see that integrated ticketing is still not complete despite it now being three years overdue. What a spectacular fall from grace it has had. This project was originally budgeted at \$130 million and it is now \$200 million and way behind schedule.

We can tell when things are not going well with this government because the number of press releases drops off. When it is all sweet and light and joy, we cannot get out of the way of the press releases fast enough. But when things are going bad, they start tailing right off. How many press releases have we seen about the smart card since this government was re-elected last year? We have seen five, and there have been three in the last four days all saying exactly the same thing—nothing else—and one asking for 100 more volunteers to do a trial up and down the coast. That is it; there you go.

Mr Bombolas: Can you recommend a good printer?

Mr NICHOLLS: Can you recommend someone who can make a smart card? No, you cannot because you have failed to deliver.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Darling): Order! Member for Clayfield, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr NICHOLLS: Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: If Willprint were doing it, it would have been built by now, that is for sure.

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: They throw money at it. There are other examples. There is the south-west arterial from Springfield to Yamanto which started at \$120 million three years ago and is now \$366 million. The Logan Motorway and Ipswich Motorway interchange is now at last getting started. There have been other cost blow-outs in this budget.

In terms of TIDS spending, there was \$60 million budgeted in 2006-07 and only \$27 million was spent—there is \$33 million to go. This government cannot do it. In my own electorate there has been good work coming through in a very few areas. The Nundah Community Health Centre in the member for Nudgee's electorate has been allocated \$12 million. This is a project that was promised five years ago. I will be sorry to see the end of that project because it was a living, breathing example of this government's inability to deliver in and around the inner north of Brisbane.

But there is no funding to upgrade the Nudgee Road/East-West Arterial or Gateway roundabout interchanges—a vital piece of road infrastructure that the transport minister knows has to be fixed. There is no funding for a police beat in Nundah despite the increase in crime. There is no funding for a new library and resource centre at Eagle Junction State School. There is no funding for a new school assembly hall.

This is a bad budget. It does not deliver. It increases debt. Our children may well look back on this budget and be reminded of Dickens' quote—

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,
It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,
It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,
It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness,
It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair,
We had everything before us, we had nothing before us,
We were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

A Tale of Two Cities indeed! A tale of two governments: under a coalition it could have been the best of times; under a Labor government we risk the worst of times.

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (5.50 pm): I am very pleased to support the Appropriation Bill introduced by the Treasurer. I wish to commend the Treasurer on the budget and the strong investment it makes in the future of our great state.

As Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I am delighted with the increased funding in the portfolio and its aim for open, fair and accessible justice for all Queenslanders. I have received a letter already from the President of the Queensland Law Society, Mr Joe Pinder, responding to the budget. In his letter, Mr Pinder wrote—

Certainly, the initiatives are well targeted and we are particularly pleased by the funding for the Drug Court and court diversion programs, the access to justice for Indigenous Queenslanders programs and the boost for Legal Aid Queensland. These are critical areas of need and should go a considerable distance to meet urgent needs.

The pre-Budget announcement of the new Supreme and District Court complex in Brisbane is the centrepiece of Budget initiatives for your portfolio responsibility although that announcement does not diminish the Budget announcements of other court buildings. They are all recognised as high priority projects.

I am sure that these announcements will be as well received publicly as they are appreciated by the legal profession.

The budget papers refer to an increase of judicial officers in 2007-08. I can confirm today that the budget allocates funding for an additional judge to the Court of Appeal, an additional judge to the District Court and an additional magistrate. These additional judicial officers will be a further boost to the efficient operation of Queensland's courts. As Attorney-General, I have been determined to work with the heads of each jurisdiction and the department to monitor resources and workloads. The government has responded to the need for additional judicial resources in this budget.

I was pleased to announce an additional magistrate to Southport late last year. The additional appointment provided for in this budget will be the fifth additional magistrate appointed in less than three years. The appointment of a further magistrate will ensure more frequent circuit courts are conducted in the gulf, Cape York and the Torres Strait. The budget also commits \$2.4 million over three years to a pilot program for judicial registrars, which are to be created by legislation currently before the House.

Importantly, I would also like to detail the funding for initiatives for the Toowoomba region. The investment in the Toowoomba region in this budget is very significant. Some of the key investments in the region include: \$118 million to complete and commission Kogan Creek Power Station near Chinchilla; \$18 million to improve the New England Highway between Toowoomba and Crows Nest; \$10.6 million to improve safety along Ruthven Street by upgrading it from James to Long streets, including a redevelopment of the Perth Street and Long Street intersections; \$6.8 million to construct external infrastructure for the Charlton North Industrial Estate; almost \$4 million for the Skilling Queenslanders to Work initiative for the Darling Downs-West Moreton region with an aim to create 728 jobs next financial year as part of the government's \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan; as much as \$4 million for a synthetic racetrack at the Toowoomba Turf Club, providing certainty and security for the racing industry and jobs; \$3.95 million to reinforce electricity supply to Highfields and establish stage 1 of the new power facility at Cawdor at a total cost of \$15 million; \$2.34 million to refurbish the Toowoomba medical ward and provide additional bed capacity as part of a \$19.8 million investment in upgrading the Darling Downs-West Moreton region hospitals; \$2 million towards the redevelopment of Clive Berghofer Stadium; \$1.6 million for safety-enhancing stabilisation of the Toowoomba Range railway line and new railway signalling equipment at Toowoomba; \$1.4 million to replace the Oakey Ambulance Station; \$527,000 for new automotive teaching facilities at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE at Bridge Street, which is where state cabinet met in December last year; \$500,000 to redevelop Toowoomba's Kitchener Road Fire Station; and \$400,000 to complete the new Highfields Auxiliary Fire Station at a total cost of \$815,000.

I conclude by again offering my congratulations to the Treasurer on this outstanding budget for Queensland and an outstanding budget for Toowoomba and the Darling Downs.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (5.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of both the clean coal and appropriation bills. I will address the two in that order. The clean coal bill, as the minister outlined in her second reading speech on Tuesday, provides for the establishment of the Clean Coal Council, an expert advisory panel established to advise government on which clean coal demonstration project proposals should receive funding from the COAL21 Fund, the \$600 million fund established by a 20c per tonne levy on the coal industry. The case for the dogged pursuit of clean coal in Queensland rests on two simple moral and economic imperatives. Firstly, to understand the reality of climate change is to be deeply frightened by it. Those of us in positions of authority who have done the reading and who have observed the now clear-cut scientific consensus around the issues understand that climate change is a major threat to civilisation.

The economic imperative is just as clear. While Kyoto refuseniks like the Howard government have sought for more than a decade to weasel their way out of action on the basis that Australia produces less than two per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, there are some simple facts that cannot be avoided. Australia might produce less than two per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions at home but, with coal-fired power stations producing 21 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and this country supplying more than a quarter of all the world's coal, albeit largely for steel production, our international carbon footprint may well be more like five per cent.

In doing so, the nation earned \$25 billion from coal exports last year, making up 19 per cent of all commodity export earnings. If the world at large decides that the environmental cost of coal-fired electricity generation is too great a cost to bear, the Australian economy will incur serious damage. This is by no means an idle possibility. On 27 November 2006, New South Wales Land Court judge Justice Nicola Pain made the historic decision to set aside the director-general's acceptance of the environmental assessment for the Anvil Hill coalmine on the grounds that it did not include a comprehensive greenhouse gas assessment, even though the proposed mining of coal was for export. The New South Wales government did not appeal the decision.

On Monday this week, one of Australian coal's largest export destinations, China, moved to cut coal's contribution to the national energy mix when it announced a 16 per cent renewable energy target by 2020. European nations including Hungary and Britain are renuclearising as a means of escalating their post-Kyoto response to climate change. The prospects for coal are not for business as usual, and it is utterly incumbent on both the industry and the government to acknowledge the economic and moral imperatives by trying to make clean coal work. That is what this bill does.

Clean coal technology essentially comprises two parts. At the front-end the idea is to wash, pulverise and/or gasify the coal so as to improve the efficiency of the burn and to eliminate the sulfur. The back-end process of geosequestration is the oldest idea in the world—burying the waste, in this case in aquifers or disused gas seams, where, it is hoped, it can be safely stored indefinitely. While there is a great deal of excitement around clean coal technology, the reality is that it has a long way to go. While improvements have been made in the front-end technologies in recent years and geosequestration has been tested for instance in Norway, at this stage of the game there are no clean coal demonstration plants, let alone commercial generators operating anywhere in the world. In that sense, there is a real opportunity for Australia to genuinely become a market leader in the development of such technology.

It would be wrong to assume that this will, by any means, be a simple task. Power stations produce vast volumes of carbon dioxide. The FutureGen demonstration plant, which is slated for construction in the United States by 2012, projects that it will need to sequester a million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year for the production of just 275 megawatts of power. Such vast quantities present serious problems. Members may remember the 1986 Lake Nyos disaster in which 1,800 people living within 20 kilometres of the lake died when 1.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide which had been naturally supersaturated in the water spontaneously escaped. In addition to the health risk of escape posed by poor understanding of aquifers and seams along with seismic activity, serious challenges are presented by the simple problem of finding secure seams and aquifers in which to secure such vast volumes of gas. I raise these points by no means to argue that clean coal should not be explored. As I said at the outset, the moral and economic imperatives make this policy essential. In view of the time, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

We cannot, however, invest all our eggs in this basket. The best way to manage greenhouse gas emissions remains simply not to produce them and I as I stand here on a perfectly pleasant day in a building with the natural light blocked out and air conditioning turned on, I remain seriously concerned that the capacity of demand reduction remains unexplored.

With that in mind, I call today for the Australian government to get serious, as many European nations now are, about energy reduction.

Australia should urgently establish a national energy reduction target rather than assuming the inevitability of demand growth. Households should be assisted in that regard by the national roll-out of smart meters so people can see how much they're using and how much they pay, we should get serious about energy efficiency rating across the board for both vehicles and appliances and we must end anti-environmental policies like the uniform electricity tariff to industry which provides a massive power subsidy to highly energy intensive industries like mining.

As I said earlier, to understand climate change is to be genuinely frightened by the impact it will have on civilisation in my lifetime, not just in the lifetimes of those who will follow.

Right now the risk we face is that as people are starting to get hooked in to the reality of climate change, our motivation will be sucked up in gimmicks—the kind of cheap measures to assuage our guilt that come from businesses who tell you you can drive a V8 and still be carbon neutral if you slip a small fee their way or political leaders like the federal government who want to trade into the future on policy responses rather than making the more courageous political call to actually cut our emissions by picking the low hanging fruit.

The issue here is that it's actually not that easy being green but as the people of South East Queensland have shown today by beating the water target of 140 litres a day, people are willing to do it. When it comes to energy efficiency, government should not be too timid to ask.

I now wish to turn, Mr Speaker, to this week's State Budget and what it means for Ipswich.

Members may recall, Mr Speaker, that in the Address in Reply debate earlier this year I set out an agenda for sustainability in this time of relative affluence. I have also spoken frequently in this place about housing affordability and the need to adopt more sustainable practices in urban design.

The comments I make in relation to the Budget should be understood in terms of that commitment to ensuring community and minimising our environmental impact through better urban planning.

Ipswich is a great city. Unlike many places Ipswich has never lost its sense of community. The people are down to earth and value the city's community and heritage but I think they are also open to change and optimistic about the future. I consider it an enormous privilege to represent these wonderful people in the city where I was born.

Ipswich is currently growing at a rate of about 4% a year. Any basic economic grasp will tell you that the growth is driven not by the council or indeed by anyone else as is so often claimed but by the simple reality of population drift to the warmer climes of South East Queensland coupled with the twin pull factors of Ipswich's housing affordability relative to Brisbane and its abundance of industrial land.

The challenge for Ipswich is to grow in a way which retains its sense of community. The opportunity is that with the growth coming now, just as we are getting a real grasp on climate change and peak oil—Ipswich can grow as a genuinely sustainable city. That's an enormous opportunity and one we should take by expecting quality development. We should not squander our chance by accepting the proposals of any developer with a cheap proposal who walks through the door.

In that regard, I repeat my call today for the State Government to take over planning just as we have done with water. That is by no means a criticism of Ipswich Council who I think by and large have been pretty good but a reflection of my view that as resources become scarce, planning decisions should be made by the government that pays for the power and transport infrastructure communities need.

As I have outlined before in speeches to this place over time, I believe there are 5 keys to quality growth in Ipswich.

- We must maintain our heritage—something we have started to do with projects like the \$1.5 million upgrade of the historic courthouse in recent years.
- We must use our river—as we've started to do with RiverHeart but can now take further.
- We must rejuvenate the CBD—for a city without a centre is not a community, it's just sprawl.
- We must build public transport—as the State is now doing by preserving a corridor from Ipswich to Springfield.
- And we must establish high standards of sustainability both in building design and by entrenching higher density and walkability in the urban plan.

With that in mind, while the Budget delivered a plethora of projects across schools, emergency services and roads around Ipswich, there are three funded projects on which I really want to focus.

The first is to welcome the \$1.1 million in funding over last year and this for the Ipswich CBD taskforce partnership with the Ipswich City Council. This excellent project will develop a real working master plan for the Ipswich CBD and I hope will lead to the rejuvenation of the centre.

The second is the more than \$100 million for the new Ipswich courthouse and police station. Together, this Ellenborough Street building project is the biggest infrastructure project to have been undertaken in central Ipswich in more than a decade and will lead to significant rejuvenation of that part of town.

And the third is ongoing funding through Transport to plan and preserve the Ipswich-Springfield Public Transport corridor. I well understand that retrofitting infrastructure is hard but in light of peak oil this project will be vital to providing transport options for Ipswich's growth and my support of it should not be underestimated.

As I said earlier, Mr Speaker, Ipswich is a wonderful place with a unique opportunity now to grow well. I believe that these three budget items in particular form part of a bigger picture in which Ipswich's development is as sustainable as it can be.

That's an exciting future where infrastructure keeps up with growth, where the city heart is restored, where our heritage is valued, where transport is affordable and where we have attractive public spaces to share. That is the future to which I am working and in which this Budget plays a substantial part.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (6.01 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of the Appropriation Bill and I commend the Treasurer on bringing down her second budget. This is a strong budget that delivers on the vital economic, social and intellectual infrastructure necessary to Queenslanders and addresses a number of the key challenges facing our state. Importantly, this 10th budget of the Beattie Labor

government continues the sound economic management that we have brought to the finances of the state. Beginning in 1998 with the jobs, jobs, jobs credo, this government set a bold target of five per cent unemployment. Whilst many scorned this target, this week we have brought down a budget in an economic environment including unemployment figures at 3.5 per cent.

As the government has tracked its course over nine years, major challenges have arisen and been addressed. We have tackled the historic systemic underfunding of disability services. We have restructured the energy industry and rebuilt electricity infrastructure. We have continued the hospital rebuilding program initiated by the Goss Labor government and gone on to provide the greatest injection of funds to the health system through the Health Action Plan. We have provided the capital funding to deliver the biggest schools rebuilding program in the state's history. We have put Brisbane on the international map through funding the world-class Brisbane arts precinct, and we have funded roads and public transport infrastructure across Queensland. This week we deliver a budget that tackles another raft of challenges, including water infrastructure, mental health funding and the demands for social housing.

Today with 62 per cent of Queensland in drought, water levels in our dams at an all-time low and level 5 water restrictions in the south-east, there are strong demands on government to change the way we manage water resources and this budget funds the implementation of key projects to do this, including the south-east Queensland water grid and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project. Additionally, the budget addresses housing affordability and accessibility, investing \$500 million in social housing and taking measures to reduce land tax and mortgage duty and alleviate the impacts of increasing land valuations. The budget's commitment to funding mental health services tackles one of the hardest areas of health service delivery. One in five Queenslanders at some time in their lives is afflicted by a mental illness and all members in this House will have worked to assist people who have needed the assistance of mental health services.

I will outline further how this budget benefits people in my electorate of Yeerongpilly, but before doing so I must say how disappointing the opposition response to the budget has been. Speaker after speaker from those opposite have attacked this budget and, whilst I expect it from them, I find it disappointing that they have failed to even attempt to outline an alternative. Where is their vision? What would they do if their hands were on the levers? What would they cut? These questions they have not even attempted to provide answers to. Instead, what we have seen is a resort to Cold War rhetoric and old Menzies dogma. Does the opposition really think that repetitively referring to the government as socialists in a baseline name-calling fashion gives it any traction in today's voter land? It might work in the rural back blocks and it might create a warm inner glow for it in the party room, but is it a transition to government strategy? If the opposition really believes that this is a socialist budget and therefore to be feared, how does it account for the support given to the budget by organisations such as the Australian Industry Group, the ANZ bank, Standard and Poor's and the AMAQ—well-known bastions of socialism in the community?

The reality is that the opposition resorts to name calling and fear mongering because there is no alternative and there is no vision. If one needs an indication of the low point that those opposite plummeted to, it was when the opposition leader came into this place to deliver his reply to the budget and spoke for half of his allocated time. There was 30 minutes left hanging there—30 minutes to articulate a vision, 30 minutes to dazzle us, but there was nothing. So I went looking for myself to see if I could find the opposition's alternative plan for government. I went to the National Party web site. There was no alternative plan there. I went to the Liberal Party web site and found a raft of policy statements—all of them written before the last election and subsequently comprehensively rejected by the people of Queensland. Finally, I happened across the web site for the member for Burnett.

Mr Gray interjected.

Mr FINN: I take that interjection from the member for Gaven; I did actually vote in his web poll. Finally I happened across his web site and I found a link to the coalition's plan for water. I thought, 'Here we go. We've got a plan. We've got a strategy.' But what I found was a plan presented by Lawrence Springborg and Bob Quinn. So that is it. The reason for 30 minutes of silence from the opposition leader is that the opposition's vision for alternative government ended when it sliced Bob and Lawrence. While talking about the member for Southern Downs, I was in the chamber for his contribution in this debate—a passionate and colourful contribution to the debate. But what the member was doing was lamenting what he calls a decline in the robust debate in this place. I say to the member: if you do lament a decline in robust debate, then you really have to put up an alternative. You cannot lament a decline in robust debate if there is only one side to the argument. It is not only a bit rich for the opposition to bang on with its fear mongering and doom and gloom when it has no alternative, but I think it is also reckless neglect of its role as the state's opposition.

With the delivery of the 10th budget of the Beattie government, Queensland continues to be in a strong fiscal position. I turn now to the economic highlights of the budget and outline the provisions that deliver to residents in my electorate of Yeerongpilly. Given the time, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The budget continues to support economic and industrial growth in Queensland with a record investment in infrastructure. Total capital spending in this budget exceeds \$14 billion, with infrastructure projects partially funded by borrowings of \$3.6 billion.

The Queensland State Government invests \$3212 per capita in capital programs when compared with other states and territories averaging \$1553 per capita. Our investment in infrastructure is 6% of our GDP compared with the Federal Government's investment of 1% of GDP. Our state remains low geared and retains its AAA credit rating and has a negative net debt per capita of \$5931 compared with \$517 per capita in other states. Our economic growth continues to be above the national average of 3.75% at 5%.

As a result of our continued economic performance our GST revenue will decrease by \$166 million in 2007-08 as we continue implementation of the 1999 Intergovernmental Agreement to abolish a number of state taxes. In fact in this budget the Queensland Government will sacrifice \$465 million in revenue to tax cuts.

In allocating GST Revenue it is fundamentally the role of the State Government to deliver infrastructure and determine spending priorities for the people of Queensland.

Mr Speaker, residents in my electorate of Yeerongpilly will benefit from a number of initiatives in this budget.

Housing

This budget addresses the issue of housing and recognises that Queenslanders are increasingly facing barriers to affordable and accessible housing as identified by Housing Industry Association last October when they stated that "affordability dropped by 8.8 per cent in Brisbane ... restricting home ownership and exacerbating already very tight rental markets".

The recent federal budget failed to address housing affordability and as noted by HIA last month. The HIA stated that the Federal Government failed to show leadership on this issue of housing affordability. Once again the State Government is taking the lead and investing a record \$500 million in social housing and taking a number of measures to ensure that Queenslanders are not disadvantaged by the Federal Government's failure to address housing affordability.

In the electorate of Yeerongpilly housing affordability is an issue that concerns a number of constituents and I am frequently approached about affordable housing in relation to home ownership and the rising costs of private rental.

The Budget will reduce the impact of escalating land values by implementing a 50% cap for three years on the annual increase in land values for calculating land tax on all parcels of land except for newly created lots. Further the tax-free threshold for land tax will increase from \$500,000 to \$600,000 from 1 July 2007 and there will be a 50% reduction in mortgage duty from January 2008 with the abolition of the duty in January 2009 relieving pressure on Queensland home owners.

This budget supports the construction and completion of a number of Department of Housing properties to meet increasing demand for public housing and provide accommodation to low-income earners in my electorate. There is massive demand for public housing and my electorate office frequently assists a number of constituents who are seeking accommodation as they have been priced out of the private rental market. In my electorate the budget provides commitment to several social housing projects including:

- \$778,000 to complete construction of two community managed duplex units
- \$2.93 million to complete construction of 12 Department of Housing units
- \$1.88 million to complete construction of 8 Department of Housing units
- \$800,000 to construct 14 new Department of Housing units funded by the Queensland future growth fund
- \$4.67 million to construct 21 new Department of Housing units

I am also pleased by the continued funding of \$461,000 to the Home and Community Care Modifications Program, and South West Brisbane Home Assist Secure Program of \$729,000. Both of these programs provide essential information and assistance in relation to home maintenance and modifications. These programs have been invaluable to a number of constituents in my electorate who are elderly or disabled.

Education

This budget invests \$70 million in education with up to 192 additional teacher and teacher aide positions for Queensland Schools and classroom laptops for permanent teachers in State Schools and TAFEs under the Computers for Teachers Program.

Schools in my electorate will benefit from funds allocated to build and upgrade educational facilities including:

- \$484,000 for completing the construction of a multi-purpose facility at Moorooka State School
- \$55,000 for re-roofing at Moorooka State School
- \$40,000 for classroom maintenance at Moorooka State School
- \$30,000 for repainting at Salisbury State School
- \$12,000 for flooring at Salisbury State School
- \$20,000 for building maintenance at Yeronga State High School
- \$14,000 for Yeronga State High School to promote physical activity and nutrition to Year 8 & 9 refugee students through the Community Partnership Grants Program
- \$10,000 for building maintenance at Yeronga State School
- \$9,000 for Our Lady's College to deliver physical activity opportunities and nutrition awareness through the Community Partnerships Grants Program

It is great news for my local schools, particularly Moorooka State School which suffered extensive fire damage last December. The budget's contribution to the multi purpose hall is greatly welcomed by the school community who have worked very hard to raise funds. Last year for example many parent volunteers formed a hard working team and raised \$30,000 at the school fete.

Main roads and transport

The Ipswich motorway is one of the main arterial routes through the Yeerongpilly electorate and is another issue that the Federal Government and the Federal Member for Moreton has failed to adequately address for a number of years.

The 2007-08 budget will provide \$384.5 million to reduce congestion on the Ipswich Motorway.

An investment of \$1.2 million will complete the installation of Automatic Number Plate recognition technology to restrict trucks over 4.5 tonnes from using Mt Gravatt-Capalaba, Kessels, Raiwena and Granard Roads to travel between the Ipswich and Gateway Motorway. The State Government's Brisbane Urban Corridor initiative will address the issue of heavy vehicle traffic on a number of roads throughout the Yeerongpilly electorate to the benefit of local residents.

Policing

Policing is an issue that has been raised by a number of constituents in Yeerongpilly. We have a low crime rate in our local suburbs due in no small part to the great work of local police officers. This budget provides funding for 200 additional police positions each year for the next two years across Queensland and \$76,000 in continued funding for the South Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad.

Health

The Queensland State Government continues to invest in the Health Action Plan with \$7.15 billion funding to Queensland Health and specific initiatives that will benefit my electorate of Yeerongpilly include:

- \$4.51 million to continue the upgrades of Scientific Services at Coopers Plains
- \$7000 for the completion of the New Bone Bank at the Queensland Health Pathology and Scientific Services Facility at Coopers Plains

Sport and Recreation

I am often approached to support local sporting and community groups with funding for sport and recreational facilities and I am pleased that the electorate of Yeerongpilly will benefit from the investment of \$13.45 million allocated to the construction of the State Tennis Centre at Tennyson. A number of other Clubs in my electorate will benefit from this budget including:

- \$752,000 to the Hellenic Sports and Cultural Association Inc for the construction of a multi-purpose activities centre at Yeronga
- \$19,000 for the installation of lighting for night bowls at Tarragindi Bowls Club
- \$72,360 for the Moorooka Sports and Community Club to convert a bowling green to two synthetic futsal courts

In addition to the benefits I have outlined for the electorate of Yeerongpilly this budget addresses the issue of access to justice in Queensland.

Access to Justice

Legal Aid Queensland will receive \$12.5 million under the 2007-08 Budget and Community Legal Aid Centres and other initiatives will be funded to the tune of \$1.1 million. This funding will assist in enhancing access to justice for disadvantaged members of our society. This is particularly important given the Federal Government's continuous reduction in funding to community legal centres and the decrease in funding to Legal Aid since 1997.

The increased focus on protecting vulnerable people in the justice system in this budget further reinforces the State Government's commitment to enabling enhanced access to justice for disadvantaged Queenslanders. This is particularly evident through the investment of:

- \$3.7 million to implement the recommendation of the review of the Mental Health Act 2000 (Qld)
- \$2.8 million for the four year trial of the Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion program through the Murri Courts
- \$1.5 million for the Drug Court Program

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the 2007-08 Budget will continue to provide essential services and infrastructure to the people of Queensland.

This budget delivers the infrastructure to ensure our continued economic and industrial growth as well as providing the services to ensure that issues like housing affordability and access to justice continue are addressed to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

This is a strong budget that delivers for Queensland and I commend the Bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.08 pm): It is an absolute pleasure to be able to rise to speak to the 10th Beattie Labor government budget. This is a strong and well-rounded budget which looks towards an ever-growing population base in ensuring that modern and essential infrastructure is delivered. Further to this, it also looks at the provision of essential services through health, education, police and other social service programs. It is a Labor budget that looks after the needs of all residents and ensures that those in most need are given the extra help they need. I must say that I am pleased that the Treasurer has looked at the Glass House and Caboolture region and has understood the pressure that this high-growth area faces in terms of needing additional money for schools, transport infrastructure and community assets.

Understandably, I represent one of the most popular areas for people flocking to Queensland and looking for somewhere to live. That is why it is critical that we build for the future. To this end, the Beattie Labor government has a capital project of over \$14 billion, which is far in excess of other states, and an increase over the past 10 years of over \$9 billion.

In the Glass House electorate, the money being spent on transport infrastructure is significant. I will detail the funding announcements. Firstly, there is \$500,000 to complete concept planning to eliminate the open level railway crossing at Beerwah, and there will be significant additional funding as construction is due to commence by the end of this year. The railway crossing removal project is a significant project for Beerwah. Since I was elected in 2001, it is the one thing that people have constantly contacted me about.

Beerwah is a growing centre and, through the South East Queensland Regional Plan, we have designated it as a major activity centre. Local councillor Anna Groffkreutz and I sat down to work out a plan that would deal with the road network and we formed the Beerwah District Roads Task Force, which was approved by the transport minister and is attended by senior officers from the Department of Main Roads, Queensland Transport, Queensland Rail and the Caloundra City Council. We have been working together to map the issues for the road network and find solutions.

This has seen a lot of local roadwork being done, including the Beerwah-Peachester road upgrade, the signalisation of Simpson Street, road improvements to the CBD area to improve traffic flow, as well as roadworks on Roys Road and Steve Irwin Way. We realised that the main problem was the operation of the open level crossing and the way that the entire town gridlocks every single time a train comes through. A solution was required and I am thrilled that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads has ensured that a solution can be delivered. He has brought the funding forward from the out years so that the open level crossing can finally be removed. The community thanks him for his obvious concern for the safety and wellbeing of local residents.

TrackStar has been charged with the investigation, design and delivery of this project. We have just completed extensive community consultation on a preferred option that would see an overpass constructed over the railway line and the diversion of traffic away from the main street. At last count, the TrackStar team had received almost 1,000 responses and over 90 per cent of them supported the preferred option, which is an outstanding result.

I have spoken to some residents and business operators in Turner Street who like the first part of the preferred option but would like to see the future road link brought forward to be funded as part of this project. To that end, I would like to table a non-conforming petition containing 386 signatures, saying yes to the preferred southern option and asking for the future road link to be built straightaway and not direct traffic down Turner Street.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to the Beerwah Rail Crossing project.

After spending 18 hours doing the community consultation with the consultants and Councillor Groffkreutz, I believe that I can reliably say that most of the community would like to see that part of the project brought forward. I look forward to the minister's final decision on the level crossing removal option and, obviously, the start of construction.

One of the benefits of having an energetic Minister for Transport and Main Roads is that he spends time travelling around electorates such as mine and is constantly working to improve the road and public transport networks. This budget contains a lot of large infrastructure projects and the ongoing commitment of money means that Glass House residents can be confident that this government will continue its commitment to them.

Due to the time of the sitting, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The investment that is in this Budget includes:

- \$15 million to complete the planning and design stage for railway track upgrades between Beerburrum and Landsborough which builds on the work that is already under construction from Caboolture to Beerburrum.
- \$1 million to continue planning and land acquisition for the upgrade of the railway track between Landsborough and Nambour.
- \$65,000 for bus set-down and parking improvements at Maleny State School.
- \$12,500 for bus shelter at Landsborough Primary School.
- \$45,000 to provide a car park at Beerburrum Primary School.
- \$50,000 towards traffic signals for school crossing at Glasshouse Mountains State School.
- \$200,000 to construct Old Gympie Road to two-lane sealed standard, Landsborough.
- \$200,000 for widening, repairing and strengthening between Fritz's Gully and Jager Drive, on Maleny-Kenilworth Road.
- \$1.5 million for the planning phase for the duplication from two to four lanes of Steve Irwin Way between Landsborough and the Caloundra Interchange with the Bruce Highway.
- \$4.84 million to complete widening, repairing and strengthening works between Red Road and Moffats Road, on Steve Irwin Way.
- \$220,000 to replace a bridge on Ahern Road, Harper Creek.
- \$100,000 for further construction on Roys Road, Beerwah, to a new sealed two lane standard.

- \$6.27 million to complete construction of a two lane bypass between Caboolture Northern Bypass, the Bruce Highway and Old Gympie Road, on the D'Aguilar Highway.
- \$798,000 to complete construction of a two lane bypass at Caboolture Northern Bypass (Mewett St, Lagoon Creek and Old Gympie Road), on the D'Aguilar Highway.
- \$4.5 million to complete duplication of Beerburrum Road from two to four lanes between Hasking, James and McKean Streets, Caboolture.
- \$3.16 million to complete intersection improvements at Henzell Road and McKean Street, on Beerburrum Road.
- \$400,000 to construct to a two lane sealed standard Pumicestone Road, Caboolture, with a total State Government contribution of \$800,000.

Communities

Community organisations and infrastructure are also vital to any growing region and this Government wants to ensure that we retain our liveability and that we provide social programs for our community.

Funding includes:

- \$422,000 as part of an ongoing commitment to improve the stock of books in public libraries.
- \$201,000 for ongoing regional tourism marketing.
- \$31,000 to commence planning and construction of the upgrade to Ngungun summit track in the Glasshouse Mountains National Park.
- \$29,000 to upgrade roads and fire trails in the Conondale National Park.
- \$85,000 towards construction of an equestrian dressage arena, practice oval and horse lunging arena at Mooloolah.
- \$50,000 for Community Solutions Inc to provide an innovative activity development program for children under 6 years at Landsborough.
- \$8,410 to the Maleny Bowls Club to construct a shade structure.
- \$579,000 for counselling and support for victims of domestic and family violence in the Sunshine Coast and hinterland region and to work with men to encourage them to modify their violent behaviour.
- \$180,000 to provide post-school support for young adults with a disability and their families as part of an ongoing commitment.
- A share of \$242,000 per annum over three years for family counselling.
- \$180,000 to provide post-school support to young adults with a disability and their families
- \$662,000 to provide counselling and support for victims of domestic and family violence in Caboolture.
- \$46,000 to provide before/after school and vacation care for school age and under school age children in Caboolture.
- \$205,000 to coordinate a range of practical counselling and intervention services for children and young people in Caboolture.
- \$250,000 to assist with the Caboolture Central Project Stage 1—Cultural Centre.
- \$450,000 to assist with the Caboolture Central Project Stage 2—Library—these amounts are in addition to \$6.2 million already contributed to the Central project.
- \$20,000 towards installation of two light towers for little athletics, cricket and hockey at Wamuran.
- \$325,000 for the Caboolture and Kilcoy Home Assist Secure program.
- \$42,398 to the Caboolture & District Lawn Tennis Association for the upgrade of two clay courts.
- \$38,000 towards the construction of an enclosed dressage and show jumping arena at Caboolture.
- \$9,000 for footpath construction at St Peters School, Caboolture.

Housing

This Budget is making a significant investment in delivering housing solutions to low-income Queenslanders who struggle to find affordable housing.

Glasshouse will benefit from a share of the record Queensland Housing assistance package of \$719 million, including a massive \$479 million housing building program.

In particular there is \$645,000 to commence construction of eight public housing seniors' units in Caloundra Street, Landsborough and \$470,000 to Breakthrough Community Housing Service under the Community Rent Scheme.

Jobs

To assist with Jobs, Glasshouse will benefit from:

- \$7.55 million in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program targeting employment assistance for disadvantaged people in the North Coast region and creating 930 jobs in 2007-08.
- \$910,000 has been allocated for the Sunshine Coast region under the Queensland Skills Plan to provide additional training places to meet skills shortages in the region, at a total cost of \$5.92 million.
- \$1.18 million to provide training for disadvantaged people on the Sunshine Coast to improve their skills and employment prospects at a total cost of \$3.56 million over three years.
- \$1.53 million for redevelopment of trade facilities at the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE (Nambour Campus).

Emergency Services and Police

Glasshouse will benefit from:

Local residents are always concerned that our emergency services and police are able to provide a high level of service to the community.

This Budget delivers across the state \$15.65 million for over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace older vehicles

We look forward to sharing in the recruitment of 250 new ambulance staff across the state in 2007-08, part of a \$50 million injection to the QAS to meet growing demand for services and a share in the additional 200 police positions across the state. It is important to note that the number of officers in the Queensland Police Service will increase to 9,928 by October 2008.

In the Glasshouse electorate there is \$68,000 in continued funding for the Sunshine Coast Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

The Caboolture Police Station has been allocated \$1.2 million to complete stage three of the Station and Watchhouse extensions. It has been great to see the continued allocation by the Police Minister for Caboolture—the Principal Activity Centre for the region.

Health

The Beattie Labor Government continues to make real progress in improving the public health services across Queensland. Glasshouse will benefit from a record budget of \$7.15 billion which will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan that are improving the state's health system, meaning better mental health services, more hospital beds and record numbers of doctors and nurses. In addition \$635 million will be spent building world-class infrastructure to take our health system into the next decade.

Glasshouse will particularly benefit from:

- \$2.12 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care Program providing support and maintenance services of eligible people at home to prevent early admission into residential care.
- \$215.4 million to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including visiting medical officers, clinical staff and administrative staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over three years.
- \$1 million to provide 16 additional renal chairs in the Sunshine Coast Health Service District. Twelve chairs will be established at Caloundra while an additional four chairs will be provided in an upgrade of the renal service at Nambour.
- \$13.37 million for initiatives to reduce the waiting list for elective surgery in the Redcliffe-Caboolture Health Service District.

Education

The Beattie Labor Government is focused on the education and training needs of young Queenslanders, and this Budget again delivers.

We will benefit from \$89.91 million invested in over 5.9 million hours of vocational education and training in the region in 2007-08.

Also the Glasshouse electorate will benefit from \$120,000 to implement a Skills Formation Strategy on the Sunshine Coast to address skills shortages in the tourism industry.

Residents of the electorate will also benefit from \$418,000 for development of Quad Park as a training venue at the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE.

Funding for schools includes:

- \$37,000 to Tullawong State High School to provide shaded seating and landscaping
- \$40,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures at Caboolture State School
- \$25,000 for high priority maintenance related to a classroom at Caboolture State School
- \$10,000 to Glenview State School to complete an electrical upgrade
- \$10,000 to Peachester State School to complete an electrical upgrade
- \$6,000 for high priority maintenance related to re-flooring at Glenview State School
- \$9,000 for targeted maintenance of hard external surfaces at Landsborough State School
- \$6,000 for high priority maintenance related to re-flooring at Mooloolah State School

Teachers are telling me that they are pleased with the commitment of \$70 million over the next four years to provide every teacher in a Queensland State School or TAFE institute with their own laptop computer.

It is vital that teachers are leading the way in the use of technology and demonstrating to our students the importance of improving their learning capacity.

Teachers will be able to use their computer for lesson planning, digital presentation of lessons and student assessment and reporting.

The necessary professional development opportunities for teachers is included in this funding commitment and I look forward to seeing the program roll out over the coming years.

Water

The Beattie Government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of urban water infrastructure with the \$9 billion SEQ Water Grid which will secure more water for the region and also enable it to be moved to the areas of most need.

The Budget also allocates \$160 million to progress delivery of the Northern Interconnector Pipeline between Landers Shute and Morayfield at a total cost of \$300 million.

The electorate of Glasshouse also shares in \$81 million for the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme offering rebates for water saving devices.

It is vital that we drought-proof the south east corner, and the Water Grid will do just that.

Summary

Mr Speaker, what I have detailed above is just a part of the many initiatives that benefit residents of Glasshouse, and I urge my constituents to contact me to discuss the Budget in full.

Mr Speaker, Queensland is the economic engine room of Australia. The Beattie Labor Government has worked hard and smart over the past ten years to ensure we have a booming economy, low unemployment and ongoing business investment growth.

This Budget builds on our knowledge-based economy to ensure we are globally competitive.

In our state, people can get the jobs they want, they can access training and skilling solutions which ensure our traditional and emerging industries can continue to grow.

By ensuring we have a sustainable economic future, we are able to deliver services and programs to people in our community who need extra assistance.

We will continue to provide the atmosphere that enables people to enjoy a good quality of life and be part of a vibrant community.

I commend the Budget to the House.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (6.12 pm), in reply: First of all, I address my comments to the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. I start by thanking members for their support of the need for clean coal technology and, for the most part, their understanding of the critical importance of this technology and investment in the research about this technology to the long-term future and prosperity of the Queensland economy.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Queensland coal industry and, indeed, the Australian coal industry for their willingness to work in partnership with the Queensland government. Through the Australian Coal Association, the industry has reached an agreement on the proposed Queensland Clean Coal Agreement for the further research, development and demonstration necessary to accelerate the deployment of clean coal technology to achieve deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

There is no doubt that this is a unique and historic agreement. On the research that has been done to date, it is not clear that there is another such agreement anywhere in the world. In my view, it is a great credit to the Queensland coal industry and a great credit to the Queensland government, and particularly to the Premier, that this agreement is before us today.

The bill will, in essence, establish a council that will give effect to the agreement between the coal industry and the Queensland government. It is through that council that decisions will be made in relation to the expenditure of funds invested by both the Queensland government, out of funds from the Future Growth Fund, and the Queensland coal industry, through a voluntary levy on tonnes exported. As I said, it is unique, it is historic and, mostly, it is incredibly important to all of our futures.

A number of contributors to the debate have questioned whether or not the ZeroGen project was on the agenda and they questioned the Premier's commitment to it. For the benefit of the members of the House, I put on the record that this government has been very proud to champion this project as a Queensland project that can contribute to a long-term future of clean coal. There has been absolutely no back-peddalling on this issue. We remain committed to the project. When we reach an agreement to work in partnership with another group of people, in this case the coal industry through the council established in the legislation, we will work to ensure that all projects that are funded have the complete agreement of all parties. ZeroGen will be one of the projects actively considered and may well end up being the project that receives the bulk of the funding. That will be the subject of further discussion between the parties, as is appropriate under an agreement of this nature.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed, as some kind of negative, that the Premier 'has behaved in an extraordinary way about clean coal'. This is probably one of the few times that I am going to agree with the Leader of the Liberal Party. You bet the Premier has been behaving in an extraordinary way. He has been a national champion for this issue. He has put it on the national agenda. He has rearranged government to make sure that the best minds of the state government are applied to it. He has brought the federal government, kicking and screaming, to the table to recognise it. He has now brokered a deal with the industry, which is the bill before us tonight.

The Premier has been an unashamed champion for this issue. He has been backed in that cause by his cabinet and caucus. By comparison, where has the Queensland coalition been? Where have they been championing the cause of coal? Where have their colleagues in Canberra been? No where! In fact, yesterday, after spending a quarter of their own question time arguing about how long they would have to speak on either clean coal or the Appropriation Bill, the Leader of the Opposition, in the one hour that he had available to him to speak on both of these bills, did not speak to this bill. He did not speak to the clean coal agreement bill. Not only did he fail to fill the hour he had to outline his alternative economic vision for the state as part of his contribution to the Appropriation Bill; he failed to address this bill in any way, shape or form.

I turn to some specific items that were raised by a couple of members. The member for Charters Towers sought clarification on the role of the Clean Coal Council versus the Clean Coal Technology Project Board. The Clean Coal Council, as proposed in the bill, is different to the existing project board

by virtue of the fact that it is a collaboration between industry and government. The object of that is to provide advice to the Premier. The council's functions are an extension of the original mission statement of the Clean Coal Technology Project Board to the extent that the council is to assess and recommend on funding priorities. As has already been indicated in the public arena, the future role of the project board will have to be reviewed in the light of the bill that we have before us this evening.

I think this bill speaks for itself. It is a great and important step forward for economic growth in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

With your agreement, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will move on to my comments in relation to the Appropriation Bill. Firstly, I thank all honourable members of the House for their contributions to the bill. The appropriation bills are very important bills that come before the parliament every year. For governments of all political persuasions at all levels, the annual appropriation bills are the expressions of a government's priorities. In this year's budget, we have clearly laid out the priorities that we have for Queensland. By contrast, all that we have heard from those on the opposite side during the debate over the past two days is a great deal of hand wringing over debt and a litany of shouldn'ts, couldn'ts and wouldn'ts.

What we have seen is another episode of the coalition's war on everything. They have had a war on pipelines, they have had a war on recycled water, they have had a war on sport stadiums, they have had a war on dams and now we have a war on borrowing for infrastructure. This is the right time to borrow and we are borrowing for the right kind of infrastructure. This economy can afford to borrow. We are recording high levels of economic growth and the cost of debt is low.

Our net financial position, that is our financial assets compared with our liabilities, is the best by a country mile of all the states in this nation. This position will remain unchanged as a result of the decisions of this year's budget. We are taking a prudent and responsible attitude to borrowing. It is borrowing for economic infrastructure. These investments in water, road and transport and energy will support and drive economic growth for decades to come.

When I listened to those opposite make their contributions in this debate I waited for their suggestions for alternative funding models for these projects. Of course, there was nothing—nothing. We could only infer from this silence that the members opposite would do one of two things: they would either not build the infrastructure at all—and, of course, they are not prepared either in this chamber or outside to be honest and tell people of Queensland which roads they would cut, which hospitals they would cut, which schools they would not build, which dams they would back away from—or perhaps they would pay for it without using the credit status of the Queensland budget and that they would do it by cutting out the heart of our services, such as cutting funds out of our police force, our health system or out of education system. Infrastructure cannot be built by whingeing and wishing. It has to be paid for with dollars and cents.

If you run a strong economy, as we have, if you have an effective fiscal management strategy, as we do, these dollars and cents are a lot cheaper on the international market. In fact, late last year the global head of Standard and Poor's corporate and government ratings went on record to state—

Among state and regional governments around the globe it (Queensland) has few peers in terms of its commitment to funding current spending and pension obligations from current revenues, and strictly limiting debt usage.

Standards and Poor's went on to note that the state is approaching the expansion of investment in infrastructure from a position of strength. If members read the analysis of this week's budget by the ANZ Bank, they would read a very similar analysis.

But what we have heard from those opposite is fear about dangerous levels of debt. So I thought, 'What was the level of debt when they were in government?' Let us see what 'dangerous' means. On the question of debt usage, it is worth observing that over the most recent period—and let us not even think about the Bjelke-Petersen years; let us just look at the two-year period June 1996 to June 1998, roughly coinciding with the term of the previous coalition government—total on-lendings by the Queensland Treasury Corporation in that time grew by a total of \$3.3 billion. Over the eight-year period from 1998 to 2006, that is the last eight years of this government, debt outstanding with the QTC grew by \$2.9 billion. So it took eight years of a Labor government to raise 80 per cent of what the coalition raised in just two years. Yet the members come in here talking about danger—

Mr Beattie: They're Socialist Left types over there.

Ms BLIGH: They were all dressed in red today. Chairman Mao would have been very proud of them. On the issue of taxes, Queensland remains competitive. We will remain below the national average again in this financial year, with Queenslanders paying an average of \$131 less in state taxes per capita than taxpayers in the other states and territories. Taking into account the benefit of the fuel subsidy scheme, on average Queenslanders are \$257 better off. It is better to live in Queensland than in any other place in this country.

Over the past two days I listened to coalition members telling me over and over again what a terrible miserable place Queensland is. I think it is terrific, and I think most Queenslanders think it is terrific. As long as the members opposite keep trying to tear it down, we will be out there talking it up.

Let us look at business taxes in Queensland. Queensland's payroll tax regime was again adjusted in last year's budget. What did that mean? In Queensland, 90 per cent of employers pay no payroll tax at all: zip, nil, nada, zilch—

A government member: Zero.

Ms BLIGH: Zero. Those who do pay payroll tax pay it at the lowest rate in the country. I commend the South Australian Labor government for this week in its budget lowering its rate of payroll tax. But guess what? It is still ahead of ours.

Likewise, our land tax regime has the highest threshold and the lowest rate in Australia. I note that some members of the opposition during the debate sought to compare Queensland's economic management to the record of the federal coalition government. In particular, the member for Toowoomba South pointed to the federal government's Future Fund as a prime example of how the federal government manages its finances. Why is the Future Fund necessary? Because the federal government does not fund its liabilities and never has. Our funding under our Future Growth Fund is being used to fund infrastructure projects. We are transforming one asset for Queenslanders into another. Mr Costello's fund is a pension fund. Mr Costello's Future Fund will fund the Commonwealth's unfunded superannuation liabilities estimated to be \$150 billion by 2020 because it has failed to manage its finances properly by putting aside funds along the way. It is a great credit to previous Queensland governments—and I do not do this very often for the Bjelke-Petersen government, but the one thing it deserves credit for is deciding to fully fund these liabilities and every government of all political persuasions since deserves credit for doing that. The only reason Peter Costello needs a Future Fund is that at a Commonwealth level this funding of liabilities has never been done.

As to Australia's economic growth, Queensland and Western Australia have been driving this growth. Queensland has contributed almost half of the nation's jobs. We saw that again this morning with the release of the unemployment figures. We want to keep that economy strong. We want to prepare for the future. That is what borrowing and building is all about. Queensland is growing and, like a growing young family, we are borrowing to build the things that we need now and for the future. It is sensible financial management to prepare that way in the home and it is sensible to do it for the state. We will continue to build the economy and we will not allow our economy to stand still.

I will refer to the contributions made by some of the speakers in the debate over the past couple of days. I do not actually have much to say about the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition, because he did not have much to say himself. There was a lot of 1950s claptrap. The only thing I really felt that needed any kind of answering was an astonishing claim from him—

... the Ambulance Service has never been worse.

I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition was when they ran the whole show with chook raffles. I do not know where he was when they were baking lamingtons to rescue heart attack victims. The Queensland Ambulance Service has been put on an increasingly certain footing under our government and it has continued with this budget.

I turn to the contribution of the Leader of the Liberal Party. Much of the contribution of the Leader of the Liberal Party centred on what seemed to him to be an astonishing revelation that Queensland's government owned corporations, in comparison to the government owned corporations of other states, have relatively high levels of debt. As evidence of this he produced and tabled a chart from the Commonwealth budget papers this year and he encouraged all members to have a look at it. So I did. What did I find? I found the usual slippery half-truths that we get from the member for Moggill.

Members will see on this page that there are a number of graphs. Let me tell members what those graphs say. They say 'individual state net debt by sector' and they compare all states. In the general government sector what is the net debt of Queensland? It is the lowest of any state in Australia. If we combine the debt in the general sector and the debt in the GOC sector what do we get? The lowest rate of net debt in the country. Then one might ask why would Queensland have a higher rate of net debt in the GOC sector? We have got GOCs, that is why. I do not think there is an energy GOC left in Victoria after Jeff Kennett had his way. We are the only state in the country that still owns its railways. It is not surprising, when we have 18 GOCs and most other states have four, three or two, that we would be borrowing more in each and every one of them. We unashamedly have public ownership of our utilities. It is one of the things that helps us build our economy and we will continue to make sure that there are responsible levels of borrowings, as there always have been, in our GOCs.

As usual I would encourage all members when hearing anything from the member for Moggill to have a very good look at the full facts. There were a number of contributions from members opposite that one after the other complained about a lack of commitments in their electorates. All I can say is that they have failed to read the budget papers or look at any of the documents in relation to their region. One of the best was the member for Burnett who claimed 'there is no extra money whatsoever set aside

for pay rises for police and corrective services officers'. Budget Paper No. 2 makes it very clear that the government has included a provision for wage increases of approximately four per cent per annum across the public sector, not just in Police and Corrective Services but in other areas, which is equivalent to the previous EB outcomes across most employee categories.

In the debate on the revenue bill I predicted—particularly for those members who are new to the House and for whom this is their first budget debate—that what members would hear on Thursday and Friday was a series of speeches from those opposite that one after the other said in one way or another what we should be doing is funding more services, particularly in their electorates, what we should be doing is building more projects, particularly in their electorates, and at the very same time we should be cutting taxes and we should be cutting debt.

As many have commented before, this is the magic pudding approach to economics. I join with the member for Stafford who drew to the attention of the House that the alternative to the magic pudding is the old fallback of printing money which may indeed be the economic theory being put forward. Then I had another look at the Leader of the Opposition's contribution and thought, no, what we have here is a completely new theory of economics. I think we could call it the 'theory of the sustainability title'. When one wants to build a big program of major projects what one should do is add the word 'sustainability' to the title of one of the ministers. I am surprised that the Premier has not thought of it. By my reckoning, if he added the word 'sustainability' to each and every title we could fund the entire Capital Works Program. I think the Premier should have the admin order drawn up next week and we would not need to have any borrowings in this year's budget!

I conclude by thanking those members of the House, and they were predominantly on this side but not all—there were some members of the opposition and there were certainly a number of Independents—who took the opportunity in the budget debate to identify what a budget like this means for their own electorates and the people that they represent in this House; who came at it as positively as they could; who used the opportunity constructively to identify things that they would like to see in the future but who also talked about what a failure to invest particularly in some of the social service areas of this budget would mean for real people. I thank them for thinking so carefully about their obligations here and for taking their responsibilities so seriously. I look forward to working with each and every one of them in the development of next year's budget.

In conclusion, what do we have? We have a strong economy with a strong budget underpinning it. It is a budget with a very firm eye to the future. We will build our economy, we will build our roads, dams, ports, schools and hospitals. We will build the future of this state and we will do it responsibly. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Reference to Estimates Committees

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): In accordance with the order of the House on 23 May 2007, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill are referred to the estimates committees. We will now consider in detail the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11 (Premier may make agreement)—

Dr FLEGG (6.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 New clause 10A

At page 6, after line 24—

insert—

'10A Tabling of reports etc.

'(1) This section applies if the Minister receives any advice, assessment, recommendation or report from the council under this part.

'(2) The Minister must table the advice, assessment, recommendation or report in the Legislative Assembly within 30 days after receiving it.'

The debate on this bill would have to be described as a shambles because of the decision to make it a cognate debate. It is difficult to get a handle on what various people might have included in their speeches in relation to this. We explored the issue of clean coal technology. I think it was well established. Everybody that I heard speak in relation to this felt that clean coal technology was important to the future of Queensland, a coal dependant state.

What we have seen in clean coal technology in recent days is a farce. The farce was the shift from the enthusiastic support of ZeroGen to the point where the Premier tried to seize control of industry funds to fund the budget blow-out for that project, a project that would have produced relatively insignificant amounts of electricity. In the process we saw this appalling—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Will the member confine his debate to the amendment at this stage.

Dr FLEGG: The amendment that we have circulated is in relation to the fact that in this bill there is provision for a Clean Coal Council, but that council is nothing more than a little advisory body over which the Premier has the final say on the investment decisions not just of the funds provided by the government but also the funds that are provided by the industry—some \$600 million on their current voluntary levy—plus an indication that additional funds will come from various sources in the future.

What we saw in relation to ZeroGen is exactly the reason we want to amend this bill to at least remove one of the noxious parts. This bill makes provision for the Premier to attempt to pick the winners and overrule specialists. That is exactly what this bill makes provision for. We have in place a Clean Coal Council, but the Premier has the power to override it. Furthermore, the recommendations of that Clean Coal Council are not to be made public. The public will never know what the supposed expert body recommends to the Premier—the body that contains industry personnel, the body that can co-opt experts who make recommendations to the Premier. That is unacceptable.

I cannot understand why those opposite treat the people of Queensland with that sort of contempt. We saw with ZeroGen why we have to have some transparency. We saw with ZeroGen why the Premier having the last say and having it in secret is unacceptable. We would like to amend this clause by the amendment that has been circulated. It is a minimal amendment. It could have gone a lot further, but it is an amendment which will require this government to be open, accountable and honest. It should not be rocket science and it should not be anything that outrages anybody. It is requiring the minister to table within 30 days of receipt the recommendations he gets from the Clean Coal Council.

If there is any pretence at openness, accountability or transparency among those opposite, it is impossible to see how they would object to the public of Queensland being allowed to see what the recommendation is. There is a real threat hanging over clean coal technology, and that is that the agenda for clean coal technology gets hijacked for political purposes. ZeroGen was a political power station, not a clean carbon power station. It was hijacked because of its political potential as an announcement. I see those opposite shaking their head. The ZeroGen saga, sad as it is, is all laid out on the public record. I read it into *Hansard* in my speech on the second reading. We do not want to see that repeated. We do not want to see hundreds of millions of dollars directed into the wrong technologies because they are the ones that appeal to the government. Let us at least have a community debate.

The government has set up the Clean Coal Council. We are prepared to support that in the bill. Let the recommendations of that council be tabled in this House. Let those opposite here see what is recommended. Let the media see what is recommended. Let the people of Queensland see what is recommended. What has the government got to hide? What it has to hide is that we will see that some \$900 million will be hijacked for political purposes with no transparency and without being prepared to put the recommendations on the table. That is a threat to the coal industry in Queensland because the government has put together the body, it has brought the industry representatives in, it has given the council the power to bring in experts, it has allowed the council to make recommendations but then it has locked the council in the closet, silenced it and put the gag on it. Its recommendations will never, ever see the light of day. They will simply disappear into some file or other in the Premier's department.

I cannot imagine what would be going on in his mind to be thinking that there is anything open or accountable about this. We are talking about recommendations which are of vital importance to Queenslanders and on which the future of the coal industry and therefore the economic wellbeing of this state depends. The Premier of this state is sitting on the other side of the chamber shaking his head saying that the people of Queensland do not have any right to know. He is the only one who knows. He will have a read of it and he will do with that \$900 million exactly what he was going to do anyway. He got it wrong with ZeroGen. It was an ill-conceived project. He backed away from it at 100 miles an hour. I read the Premier's quote into the *Hansard*, but I am not sure if he was here before. The bottom line in relation to ZeroGen after he launched it with such enthusiasm was: 'I don't care as long as it's leading edge or as long as it's in Queensland.' Perhaps the emphasis should be on 'I don't care'. The reality is that this is not an acceptable system in a place like Queensland. The secret to clean coal technology has to be the fact that we go for the best—

Mr Beattie: Bruce, why did the coal industry agree to it? You tell me: why did the coal industry agree to it? If it's so bad, why did they agree?

Dr FLEGG: We have spoken to the coal industry about this bill. The coal industry had a big stick held over it by the Premier with the threat of an increase in coal royalties. He can wave his hand at me all he likes. He threatened the coal companies with increased royalties, half of which would have gone to Canberra—and he did it from overseas. He is holding a big stick over their head to force them to

agree to something. Does he think the coal industry is going to agree to the Premier deciding what the clean coal technology projects are? Does he think the coal industry is going to agree that everything should be kept secret so the Premier can announce whatever pet project he wants and nobody—

Mr Beattie interjected.

Dr FLEGG: That is right. I take that interjection from the Premier. Nobody will ever know what the industry and the experts were recommending. It will be like the old World War II papers. They will wait 30 years to find out that the industry got it right—

Mr Beattie: What have you got against Churchill?

Dr FLEGG: We are not going into Spandau at this time of night. We will wait for years to find out that the industry got it right, the experts got it right and the agenda was hijacked to get the fingers on \$900 million to run a political agenda. I do not think it is good enough.

Mr Beattie: How can you have a political agenda with clean coal?

Dr FLEGG: ZeroGen was a political agenda.

Mr Beattie: Oh, rubbish!

Dr FLEGG: You are on the public record, Premier. ZeroGen was a political agenda. It was ill conceived and it blew up, and you back-pedalled from it at a hundred miles an hour. What you have done with this bill is set it up for another ZeroGen because it is being done in secret. You do it in secret. You are setting this up for a political outcome that will fail the coal industry and the economy here. There is \$900 million plus the rest that is going to be at stake. That is why the opposition has moved this amendment.

Ms BLIGH: Let me say a few things in response to that extraordinary contribution. Firstly, I go back to what I said in my contribution to the debate on this bill. ZeroGen is an important Queensland project and we unashamedly went out on the national and international stage and we championed it. The Premier led the way. He is backed by his cabinet and backed by his caucus. What do we hear from the opposition? We hear nasty, ill-conceived ways to drag it down and pull back this great Queensland idea.

This is a very important project. This project is well and truly still on the agenda. While we are sitting here, this project is actively being assessed by the coal industry and by a range of experts. Any suggestion that this project is somehow off the agenda or that anyone is back-peddalling from it is simply wrong. The idea that the Premier has somehow set out in his enthusiasm for this project to overrule specialists is a complete and utter nonsense. We have the evidence of that tonight with this bill. This bill is establishing a specialist council and a mechanism for each and every project—not just ZeroGen. This is a council that will exist for decades. This is not a short-term issue. This is something the coal industry and all of us will be grappling with for decades. We want to see a quick breakthrough on this technology, but if we do not we will not give up. The coal industry, to its credit, has not capped its contributions. It has said that it will continue to make this contribution long into the future.

While I am talking about their contribution, I want to correct something I said earlier in terms of the levy being a levy on the tonnes exported. It is a levy on tonnes produced, which of course means we get more into the fund. The suggestion that there is something—

Dr Flegg interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Does the member have a problem?

Mr Beattie: He certainly does!

Ms BLIGH: Let me count the ways. Another bizarre suggestion is that there is something evil and sinister about the Premier of the day having control ultimately of the moneys in this fund. There will be \$300 million of Queensland taxpayers' funds in it. What on earth is wrong with the Premier of the day having control ultimately of the investment of those funds, or indeed any other state government funds, that go into it?

The levy that is coming is coming from tonnes of coal produced. Who owns that coal? That coal belongs to the people of Queensland, and the coal industry appropriately pays royalties to the state for the right to access the resource. Equally appropriately, the coal industry is making a contribution on behalf of the industry and on behalf of the people who own the resource into this research project to protect the industry. It will also protect the long-term prosperity of our state.

What we have before us is an amendment that shows, once again, the appalling lack of knowledge from the shadow treasurer about the realities of the commercial world. He has not put forward an amendment that would in some way ensure the Premier of the day can be questioned about this issue. What he has done is put forward an amendment that would require by law that the Premier or minister responsible table in the Legislative Assembly the advice—that is, all of the material that was provided to the specialists in assessing a project—the assessment, the recommendations and the reports of this council.

Can members begin to imagine the amount of sensitive, confidential, commercial-in-confidence material that would be in the advice, the assessment, the recommendations and the reports to a specialist council on this matter? At the very minimum, there would be all of the intellectual property and all of the financial costings. The opposition wants all of that to go on the table of this House so it can be put on the internet. All those Queensland companies would have invested their time, effort and intellectual property into putting that application in, and it would all be gone. Who in their right mind would put in an application in those circumstances, I ask you? The Liberal Party, perhaps.

The government is not intending in any way to be secretive about this. This will be one of the responsibilities in the Premier's portfolio or any minister that the Premier of the day may delegate the responsibility to. That means it will be open to parliamentary questions and it will be open to the scrutiny of an estimates committee, but the commercial-in-confidence parts of the work will be protected, as they need to be.

The member for Moggill does himself and his side of politics really no credit with these wild, silly conspiracy theories. These things have to be managed carefully so that we balance the legitimate public interest of the right to know what is happening in this area—and I certainly agree with the right to do that, as does the government—with the commercial-in-confidence material that will actually make these projects a reality.

The activities of this council will be subject to scrutiny in the parliament by estimates committees, question time and questions on notice. Members might recall that a predecessor of the member for Moggill came in here with wild conspiracy theories about the Future Growth Fund. So conspiratorial were they about the intention for all of this to be kept secret that they voted against the Future Growth Fund. They were the early beginnings of the war against everything; they decided they would have a war against future growth.

Mr Wallace: They have a war against each other.

Ms BLIGH: Every now and then they tire of the war against each other and they have to take on a much bigger war so they are now on a war against clean coal. Of course the Future Growth Fund is outlined in the budget speech and outlined in the budget papers, and members will find exactly the same will occur with the activities of this council. The government will not be supporting this amendment. It is without doubt one of the more foolish ones ever put forward by the member for Moggill.

Dr FLEGG: I just shake my head when I listen to that sort of drivel from that side of the House. What the government has created in the Clean Coal Council is a powerless and secret organisation. It has no power and no teeth of any sort. It does not even have the power to make sure that its recommendations are seen by the public. It operates in secret. There is \$300 million of taxpayers' money, \$600 million of industry money and money from other sources and it is going to operate in secret.

There were two starring comments in the minister's contribution and they strike fear into some of us who have been reading the budget—the budget I am not going to talk about. First, there was this incredible statement from the minister: 'What's wrong with the Premier having control?' What is the thinking behind corporatising or having any sort of GOC? It is to give it some independence from the political process. So based on the minister's argument that there is government funding involved in this and therefore the Premier should have control, the government would disband the GOCs and have the Premier control all sorts of government owned activities.

We have tried to get a bit of transparency into the system. The corporatisation of government agencies and giving them a degree of separation from the political process has been an enormously beneficial process. To now suggest that that is a nonsense and that because there is public money involved in it the Premier must have absolute control of it is rubbish. As for saying nothing should be released because there might be an element of commercial-in-confidence—

Mr Purcell: An element?

Dr FLEGG: Well, in relation to clean coal technology—

Mr Beattie: Bruce, have you ever heard of intellectual property?

Dr FLEGG: I know exactly what intellectual property is, but I am worried about some of the intellectual property on the other side of the House. On the same basis as the government thinks we should create an entirely new \$900 million secrecy fund, I can just hear the minister saying that we should declare commercial-in-confidence over Queensland Rail's train schedules in case their competitors get them—do not publish the train schedules.

There is a great deal of public funds and industry funds involved. There is a vital public interest to see that this is not hijacked for a political agenda. What we have heard from over there is a lot of claptrap that would take us back many, many years to when the Premier would run every piece of public funding in the state. The need for our amendment is heightened by some of the nonsense that I was forced to listen to from the minister.

Mr WELLINGTON: I would like to speak to the amendment and in particular the comments made by the Deputy Premier. I thought her comments were very persuasive. In her contribution and submission she spoke about the role the estimates committee process plays in the ability to gather information from the Premier and other ministers. I certainly am a great supporter of the estimates committee hearings, but one of the failings of the estimates committee process is that, although a member of a committee can ask a question, the minister has the right to answer that question in any way, shape or form he or she chooses.

Perhaps the Deputy Premier might be able to respond to me here. What assurances can the Deputy Premier give us that if questions are put to the Premier or ministers there will be a genuine and concerted effort to attempt to answer those questions without a smokescreen? As I understand it, the standing orders or the current rules mean there is simply no capacity to force a minister to answer a question if he or she chooses to answer it in a different way. I am looking for some guidance or indication that there will be genuine attempts from the minister or Premier to answer the question. Or perhaps we could amend the standing orders and put a greater requirement there. That is my question.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Nicklin for his question and his genuine concern to make sure we do get the balance right on public reporting on this. I should have also said that it will not simply be a matter that can be tested or challenged in the estimates or parliamentary question time; this will be an expenditure from the public accounts, it will have to be reported in the budget papers and it will have to be reported in the MPS. The government of the day will be subject to all of the other checks and balances, such as scrutiny by the Auditor-General and potentially something like the Public Accounts Committee.

Remember, this is not only a bill that will bind the current government but an arrangement that will bind future governments. Any expenditure out of this fund will have to be reported in the financial accounts. It will have to be subjected to the scrutiny by, as I said, those independent officers as well as an all-party committee of this parliament. So we would put all of those checks and balances together—although I do not claim then that it would be absolute perfection. In general I think we are very fortunate in Queensland and this country to have a system of public checks and balances that, for the most part, guard against any inappropriate use or misuse of public funds.

I am certainly sure that the Premier would agree that I can give an undertaking on his behalf that anything that is not commercial-in-confidence he would be willing to put into the public arena. I do think we have to be very careful about the current amendment in its current form. In relation to the comments from the member for Moggill, I think I will leave them on the grassy knoll where they belong.

Dr FLEGG: There is a suggestion that an estimates committee is going to be an appropriate forum. The recommendations from the Clean Coal Council will be secret. They will not be available. We will not be able to ask questions. We will not even know what they talked about. It is a secret process. We will be told that a cheque has been written for a project but we will never know what the experts recommended that money should go into the project for.

It is a nonsense to suggest that an estimates committee can examine a document that is secret, that is not available to examine. I think this is getting a bit ridiculous. The point is very clearly that the government has set up an expert body, asked it to make recommendations, given it powers to bring experts in, given it no powers of its own, kept it secret and then tells this parliament that it can be examined in the estimates process when we will not know what questions to ask because we will not even know what was recommended.

Mr BEATTIE: I make three points really quickly. The first one is—and this is really to the member for Nicklin—that this council is designed to establish where the project will be and its details. That is all. What are we talking about here? We are going to go out and announce where the project is. That is hardly going to be some secret. We are not building some secret power station on Mars. It is not going to be underground—the geosequestration will.

I say to the Leader of the Liberal Party: what is this council's role? This council's role is to determine where the project should be, determine which one of the projects on offer is the best and then release the detail. We will be announcing it. I will give this commitment today: when I announce the outcome of this with the Deputy Premier, the member will be invited. There will be no secret at all. Not only will there be a press release; I should warn the parliament that we will advertise to the people of Queensland where it is. That is the first thing.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: More than a ministerial statement. The second thing I say to the member for Nicklin is this: the concerns the government has—and the Deputy Premier has very eloquently explained them—are with intellectual property. What we are trying to do—

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Bruce, give me the courtesy of hearing me out because it answers what you have been going on about. We are about selling this intellectual property to the world. Why would we commercially abandon any intellectual property opportunities before we evaluated them? The Leader of the Liberal Party has got in his recommendations within 30 days. We may need more technical advice. We may need to determine how we handle issues of intellectual property. We may need to take legal advice about how we do it. What the member is saying is practically and frankly not in the state's interest.

I assure the member for Nicklin, whom I have respect for—I know he asked these questions because he is passionate about them—that the decision will be announced publicly. It will be a group of five from the coal companies, five from government and I will be appointing the chair. I might even chair it myself. That should scare the Leader of the Liberal Party. At the end of it, not only will we have technical advice but this will be determined on technical grounds.

What I have said in relation to ZeroGen is that ZeroGen is still on the agenda. But because this council has been established we have said we will pick the best location based on technical advice. That is what we will do. We will announce it. I say to the Leader of the Liberal Party, 'Please, if you want to be briefed in detail about this, the Deputy Premier and I are quite happy to arrange it.' But we are not going to support a position which is not in the state's interest. What we want to do is develop this clean coal technology, use it for our own generators and sell it to China, sell it to India, sell it to every part of the world that we possibly can and make money out of it.

I agree with what the Deputy Premier said. We are putting \$300 million of taxpayers' money into this. At the end the buck will stop with me. I have to say to members that I want to have a say where that buck will stop.

Ms BLIGH: For the benefit of the member for Nicklin and others who have an interest in this, I should just add that in addition to the \$300 million of public money that will be subject to all of the scrutinies that I have already outlined, this is an agreement. It is between two parties. It is between a government and 21 coal companies. We have an obligation when we have an agreement with another party to protect their interests. They have commercial interests above and beyond the intellectual property that might emerge in this project.

Of course we do not want unreasonably to expose those parties to additional costs, for example, in the tax treatment of the funds and the way that they are allocated. In addition to all of the checks and balances I outlined, the funds that are provided through the industry levy by the companies will then be subject to audits in order for them to comply with their Australian Taxation Office tax treatment. It is not only the public funds that are part of this project but also the partnership. That is what is unique about this bill. It does mean we have an obligation to protect their interests.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: At the risk of labouring the point, can I just clarify a point. The need to protect the intellectual property is acknowledged and the need to protect the commercial-in-confidence and some of the processes is acknowledged. There will be a number of projects that will be put forward for the consideration of the council. I believe that the community would need to know that they could have confidence that at the end of the process—and I am not asking this question to cast aspersions on anyone—the project that was chosen was the best and one a reasonable person would expect.

What light will be shed on the number of projects that were considered and the process that was used to decide on the final project that received financial support? It is the process that is the only unclear part in my mind—the examination by not only members of this parliament but also members of the community of the process that the government and council uses to determine which is the most appropriate project. The community, whose money the minister rightly said is being used—some \$300 million—needs to be sure that the best project was chosen rather than one that was politically advantageous or in some other way advantageous.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Gladstone. I will make two points. What is being asked for here is the sort of material that the member would never expect the smelter in Gladstone to put into the public arena. They could not function. They could not actually be the successful company they are and employ the people and create the prosperity that they do in a town like Gladstone if all of their material was put into the public arena. That does not mean that at the heart of their operation there is not a level of public accountability through all of the checks and balances that I outlined earlier.

As I said, it will be included in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement. I would expect that we would see in there, as we do for all other things of this nature, some description such as: five projects were assessed, three were short-listed, this is the panel that assessed it and, ultimately, this is the site that was chosen for the following reasons. At a macro level that is the sort of reporting that we would expect to see.

The other thing to remember is that all of this has to happen in the real world. This bill does nothing, nor am I aware of any legislation that could do anything, to silence or gag the coal companies. If there was a decision to spend hundreds of millions of dollars from a voluntary industry levy in a way that the industry believed to be contrary to the long-term interests of that industry or sided in a way that was contrary to their commercial interest, I do not know about the member for Gladstone, I am pretty confident that they would be out there telling someone. I have never known them to be backwards in coming forward when they honestly believe that the coal industry's long-term future is at stake. There is nothing in this bill that silences them from doing that.

Ultimately the parties agreed to the provisions of the bill in their current form because everyone recognises that when we have a committee and it is going to and fro on one thing or another ultimately we have to give someone the final say. I do believe this committee will operate in that way. This is a structural part of the bill to ensure that there is not an impasse. As I said, in the real world of commercial reality I think the member for Gladstone knows enough about coal companies to know that if they had a problem with a decision made it would not be a problem that was hidden in a cupboard for very long.

Division: Question put—That the member for Moggill's amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 11—Flegg, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Langbroek, Lingard, McArdle, Nicholls, Stuckey. Tellers: Dickson, Elmes

NOES, 43—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Choi, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Fenlon, Gray, Hayward, Hoolihan, Jones, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Wallace, Weightman, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Finn

Resolved in the **negative**.

Non-government amendment (Dr Flegg) negatived.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, 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.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.19 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 7 August 2007.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.20 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Drivers Licences

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (7.20 pm): Firstly, I want to bring to the attention of the House a suggestion for the minister for main roads to undertake a review of the renewal fees currently being charged to pensioners for their drivers licence. I have recently been approached by a constituent to seek the minister's consideration in respect of the charges currently being levied against pensioners who are seeking a renewal of their drivers licence. Queensland currently has the second-most expensive renewal fees for pensioners throughout Australia. I will now detail the current fee structure for drivers licence renewal fees for pensioners within Australia.

In New South Wales there are no renewal fee charges for pensioners. In Victoria there are no fee concessions available for pensioners for drivers licence fees. In South Australia there is a 50 per cent reduction in drivers licence fees. In Tasmania pensioners aged 65 years and over are exempt from licence renewal fees. In Western Australia there is no fee for age pensioners. In Queensland there is no discount. The current fee for one year is \$25.65, two years is \$35.70, three years is \$45.75, four years is

\$55.80 and five years is \$65.85. In the past the Queensland government had the enviable record of charging one of the lowest licence fees and vehicle registration rates within this nation. Unfortunately, under the current Queensland government we now have the unenviable position of being charged the second highest fees within Australia for our drivers licence renewal. I consider this situation to be a most unfair impost upon all of those Queenslanders who can least afford it. The government should be assisting our age pensioners instead of ripping them off by charging the second highest drivers licence renewal rates within Australia.

Secondly, I want to bring to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads my suggestion to consider a proposal to offer a concession to all drivers licence holders who have maintained an unblemished record in respect of all driving offences over a set period of years. I believe this proposal would encourage all drivers licence holders to adopt better driving habits and hopefully assist in cutting the atrocious Queensland road toll. This reward system would be a cost-effective way of improving driving habits without the costly burden of an advertising campaign utilising scare tactics in a bid to decrease the sickening road toll.

I personally do not oppose any advertising campaign if it works at all. However, I do believe a good behaviour concession fee for all drivers would be a viable option for the minister's consideration. It is my view that this suggestion would be cost-effective and achieve outstanding results. At the end of the day, the only important outcome is that it works, irrespective of how and why. We have to work together to develop the most suitable program to ensure that we save the lives of as many of our road users as possible. I call on the minister to consider both of the above options for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Ashgrove Electorate Community Awards

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (7.22 pm): On Sunday I hosted the inaugural Ashgrove Electorate Community Awards at the Ashgrove Bowls Club as part of Queensland Week celebrations. I am pleased to report to the House that around 200 local residents attended to support our unsung community heroes.

Ms Croft interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Broadwater; it was a great idea.

I decided to hold this special awards ceremony to honour the volunteers who work tirelessly to make our local community a better place to live. As the member for Ashgrove, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of local residents in helping those less fortunate than themselves. The 15 award recipients have given back to our local community in many ways through sport, Meals on Wheels, Neighbourhood Watch, sewing swags for the homeless and opening up their own homes to those in need.

To win an Ashgrove Electorate Community Award, the winners have to reside in the local community and be nominated by a fellow local resident. It was so heartening to see the Ashgrove Bowls Club filled with local residents supporting our unsung heroes. I have already had people approach me with ideas for nominees for next year. I think it is important to give credit where credit is due and each of those volunteers deserves recognition for their hard work and selflessness.

The 15 local residents who won an Ashgrove Electorate Community Award are Alan Taylor, Bob Esler, Bob Sudbury, Catherine Cloake, Len Johnstone, Margaret McGinley, Noeleen Christensen, Phyllis Stubbin, Steve Kerslake, Daphne McDonald, Mick Fletcher, Roger Kent, Emma-Kate Rose and Sam Komarowski.

I draw members' attention to the fact that Len Johnstone, whom I just mentioned, is the father of Margaret who works in our cafeteria.

A government member interjected.

Ms JONES: Yes, it is very sweet. After I doorknocked her father's home, I told Margaret that it is always the case that good people come from good homes. Len Johnstone is 85 and a life member of the rose lovers' society. He is a renowned grower and judge of award-winning roses. Len has worked tirelessly to bring happiness and joy to many people through his love of roses, including going to—

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection from the member for Yeerongpilly, who probably knows him from the rose lovers' society. He goes to a lot of the nursing homes in my electorate and presents his award-winning roses. It brings a lot of joy to people. I thank him for that.

I finish by thanking my staff for the hard work they put in. They worked tirelessly to get the awards up and running. It was our first time. I thank the member for Broadwater for her assistance. I make special mention of the photographer who took all the photos on the day. He did a great job and I know that he was not feeling well that day. Thank you all very much and I look forward to the Ashgrove Electorate Community Awards next year.

Robina Hospital, Palliative Care Unit

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (7.25 pm): Last month I stood in this House to raise awareness of the effect the lack of a medical oncologist at the Gold Coast Hospital was having on patients and staff alike. Nurse unit manager Jackie Morgan, who had worked for 20 years in cancer care, quit her job at the Gold Coast Hospital in despair over the bumbblings of Queensland Health in trying to engage a doctor. The minister has promised one oncologist will commence at the hospital later this year, but no-one will believe it until they see it. And why should they?

Two weeks ago a number of very upset patients contacted me over the rapid decision to move the ground floor palliative care unit from Robina Hospital to an upper floor ward at Pacific Private Clinic at Southport. This facility provides wonderful services, but is the wrong environment for this close-knit, dedicated unit. According to staff, cancer patients and their families, there are many issues of concern over this move. Poor parking facilities and the central business location causing difficult family access, a lack of a mortuary and no access to fresh air and the outside environment are just some of those concerns. I note that Dr Brian Bell says that this is only a temporary move, yet it is causing enormous anguish.

News from the minister that all of the unit's nurses have agreed to the move has prompted calls to my office that staff are not happy to go, but were too frightened to speak out for fear of losing their jobs and, more importantly, because they are dedicated to the work they do. For some, though, this heavy-handed treatment is the last straw. Today I heard that Dr Rob Hitchins, the respected head of the Robina Palliative Care Unit and a Queensland Health employee for many years, handed in his resignation effective immediately. Today the head nurse has gone on stress leave and the other doctor is considering his future.

Clearly, the culture has not changed. The minister has not learned from the mistakes of the past. More experienced staff are leaving the system due to enforced, unreasonable behaviour from Queensland Health.

A couple of hours ago, I heard that psychiatric patients from Robina are, within two months, to be relocated to Palm Beach Currumbin Private Hospital next to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and private residences. These are patients requiring extended treatment, many under involuntary treatment orders, who require supervision having come from P1 and P2 wards for people with acute psychoses at Southport Hospital.

Serious concerns from medical staff have been raised with me that security at this facility is too low to safely cater for these patients who need specialised care, and there would be a genuine threat to community safety should this plan proceed. Staff and local community members are asking why there was no public consultation on this issue. If palliative care is being moved for psychiatric patients at Robina Hospital, then why is there a need to utilise beds at Currumbin? The Health Minister and his department are in crisis and have a callous disregard for the staff and patients they uproot and disturb when they are at their most vulnerable.

Aged Care

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (7.28 pm): The treatment of residents in aged-care facilities is a hot topic at the moment. Listening to callers on talk-back radio, it would seem that the lid has been lifted off Pandora's Box. Often it is only when we have personal exposure to a situation that we become aware of what is happening. This has recently been my experience.

Three months ago my 84-year-old mother had major surgery and all did not go according to plan. Unexpected complications meant that she was unable to return home for a period of time. After discharge from hospital, she was transferred to a private hospital in Southport. Her stay in the private hospital was less than satisfactory. She was delivered by ambulance mid-afternoon, but when I went to visit her in the evening, she was nowhere to be found. When I told the nurse my mother had just rung me from the hospital, she remembered that a woman had been brought in but staff had been too busy to admit her.

My mother had been left alone in a single room for five hours and when I found her she was scared and disoriented, begging me to take her home. The nurse on duty apologised but said there were 19 patients in her care and that she had not yet got to my mum. This nurse was obviously overworked and the facility grossly understaffed.

After a few days, things were no better. My mother complained of bullying from some staff, delays in medication being offered and a lack of help with personal hygiene. On discussing my concerns with the manager of the facility, I was told my mother was manipulative and I should not be concerned. Needless to say, I signed my mother out of the hospital and took her home.

When I could not provide full-time care, respite in an aged-care facility seemed the answer. Here, the furnishings and surroundings were beautiful, the food good and the staff friendly. However, elderly residents need much more than that. They need to feel safe, secure and well cared for. They do not deserve to be ignored or treated with disdain, to be yelled at by some staff members or to be treated differently from how we would like our own family members to be treated. Some residents I spoke to were too frightened to speak out. They were frail, elderly men and women who felt they would in some way be punished. I found that to be an appalling indictment of a system that is meant to care for the most vulnerable members of our community.

I believe nursing is a vocation, not just a job. Those who choose the profession do so because they want to be able to help people. However, when owners and operators of aged-care facilities cut corners and run centres with too few staff, it reflects badly on everyone. I applaud the current focus on aged-care facilities and treatment of residents and believe only good can come out of this discussion. Those in care deserve much better. My mum is now back in her own home, getting stronger and learning to manage on her own.

Airport Link

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (7.31 pm): I wish to advise the House of issues relating to the approval by this government of the Airport Link project. In doing so, I would like to recognise the work done by the Kalinga Community Group, which has acted constructively and responsibly in all aspects of this matter. I also acknowledge the work of the principals, staff and the P&Cs of both the Woolloowin State School and Kedron State High School.

As members could imagine, I am a supporter of this project, having been very much the local public face of the proposal as councillor for the Hamilton ward in my previous career. Unlike my predecessor in this place, I did not shirk my obligations or avoid my responsibilities to advocate for a project that was necessary, although unpopular in certain areas.

Now that the proposal has been approved, I think there are three areas that require comment. Those concerns stem from the location of the eastern ventilation outlet at Alma Road and the works that are being conducted at Lutwyche, or the western end of the east-west part of the Airport Link tunnel. The ventilation outlet was never shown on the consultation maps and this is recognised in the Coordinator-General's report at page 19. The Coordinator-General does not specify a strategy to mitigate the concerns but merely recommends that the proponent seeks innovation aimed at mitigating risks. In my view, more could have and should have been done to deal with those particular circumstances. Similarly, at Woolloowin State School and Kedron State High School the recommendation is for consultation rather than a direct condition of approval. In this regard I refer to page 15 of the Coordinator-General's report.

In my view, it would have been much better for the government to have specified the need for air conditioning at the two schools, just like that which occurred at Brisbane State High School in the Deputy Premier's electorate with the Hale Street Bridge project, and to then allow the proponent to demonstrate that it is not needed rather than the other way round.

Mr Lucas: The final project was different to the reference project.

Mr NICHOLLS: I take the minister's interjection. The minister knows full well that there are no ventilation outlets directly next to people's houses. He knows that they are 400, 500 or 600 metres away. So the minister knows quite well the difference.

Similarly, it would have been much better to look after the needs of the residents of Alma Road and nearby streets by moving the ventilation outlet by 100 metres and extending the tolling period rather than ignoring their very real concerns.

I call on the government to act and not just talk when it comes to looking after those most impacted by this project. It is a good project. I support the project. I will continue to advocate for the project. It can be better with a little more care for those most affected by it.

I also invite everyone to the Clayfield electorate Queensland Week awards for the pineapple throwing competition. I ask the minister to come out and let us have a real throw.

Logan Employment African Project

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (7.33 pm): It has been my privilege to represent the Hon. John Mickel, Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations, on many occasions this year at ACCES Services where the Logan Employment African Project has been showing remarkable success. The Woodridge electorate is now receiving an ever-increasing number of African refugees. They are warm and friendly and have an infectious exuberance for life. They are keen to learn English, obtain their drivers licence, then to learn skills and obtain employment. Thus the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is a very important component and each graduate proudly comes forward to accept their certificate of accomplishment.

At a celebration held recently, of the 16 participants 12 had already gained full-time employment by the end of the course. Those people came from Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, the Congo and Liberia and now proudly call Logan City their home. Eight of the group had their work experience in child care where they learned how to provide personal care, appropriate communication, safety procedures and applying basic first aid. The other group were involved in community capacity building where they assisted in setting up the Logan African Community Council, developed a web site, learned protocols and processes and set up a structure for volunteer/mentoring programs, thus providing support for newly arrived African community members.

Earlier we had held a celebration to introduce the Burundi dance troupe and the new program of volunteer/mentoring, which drew several hundred of our community together. And what a celebration it was. Many of our cultural groups, including various African nations, our Burmese friends and support organisations as well as federal and state government representatives all joined to congratulate these wonderful new members of our community.

I would like to mention the work of Gail Ker at ACCES Services who, along with her team, is encouraging each of these emerging community groups to become independent and to assist and support their own members as well as newly arrived migrants and refugees. And supporting them all is Mum—Noelene Clamp—who is the heart and soul of the program. She is there with open arms to help them settle in in practical ways and to simply offer them love and care. She is rarely seen without a baby in her arms. She was specially honoured by the community.

Since the Logan Employment African Project was launched, it has far exceeded expectations. Its two-year target of 80 participants has been exceeded by 241 per cent with 193 going through the program. The Community Jobs Program job placement of 40 has become 41, or 102 per cent; the training in communities target of 40 has become 65, or 162.5 per cent; and employment outcomes, which were expected at around 67, achieved 132, or 197 per cent. I find those figures just so encouraging and know that this community will go from strength to strength.

Beaudesert Electorate, Equine Industry

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (7.36 pm): Tonight the Country and Horse Festival starts at Beaudesert. This magnificent week gives the Beaudesert area an opportunity to emphasise the role of the horse industry in Beaudesert. Beaudesert has now seen an influx of children's ponies, polo ponies, quarter horses and, above all, the glorious thoroughbreds. Those horses are transforming the rural landscape from cattle grazing and dairy farms to developed and landscaped horse studs, giving the district a new industry focus and sustaining strong land values in the area. There is nothing more magnificent than to see the construction of a new horse stud worth more than \$30 million.

The equine industry in Australia, including breeding, racing, equestrian and events, net wagering and slaughter, is worth \$8.4 billion and is second only to the grain industry, which is worth \$9.5 billion. The Beaudesert shire has a population of 65,000 people, 5,000 of whom live in the town of Beaudesert. According to the shire council, during the 2003-04 financial year Beaudesert's equine industry totalled about \$46.01 million and the Gold Coast's equine industry totalled \$20.7 million. This is big money coming into a rural district.

At the same time, residents are moving into the region at the rate of about 1,000 a week. They have sustained the strength of the property market. Land values in the area have nearly doubled in the past five years—between \$3 million and \$10 million for some properties. Big grazing properties, which three years ago would have sold for \$2,500 an acre, are now selling for \$4,500 an acre.

Beaudesert's new prosperity is a dramatic contrast to the shire 12 years ago when the meatworks closed down, throwing 1,000 people out of work. It was a terrible time then. There were 33 shops vacant in Beaudesert—that is almost all of the shops. Now there are no vacant shops at all. Even in those dark times some saw the district's potential. People realised that the horse industry needed good spelling and training properties. The district is well suited for breeding, rearing, training and spelling horses, as it has good weather, good rainfall, and it is close to big population centres and their racecourses.

It really took the arrival of the Magic Millions thoroughbred sale and its annual yearling sales to underpin the new equine industry, which has now grown to about 40 studs in our area, and all the associated construction and maintenance industries. Beaudesert forms a golden triangle with Brisbane and the Gold Coast, lying about an hour's drive from each. The equine industry is overall the district's largest economically and has brought strong employment and other new areas to the region, whether they be trainers, strappers, farriers, animal dieticians, saddle makers, saddle cloth makers and vets. It has spawned little industries and recreations like horseriding and pony clubs and brought money and a vibrant economy to the shire.

Collective Bargaining

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (7.40 pm): I could not believe my eyes as I read this week's *Courier-Mail* and *Australian* because there, as bold as brass, was an advertisement from the federal government promoting collective bargaining. My first thought was that the federal government had rolled over, admitted its mistake and abandoned its relentless pursuit of individual contracts, but sadly I was mistaken. The advertisement was in fact promoting an ACCC initiative which allows collective bargaining for the small business sector when they negotiate with larger businesses.

I support the right of small businesses to collectively bargain with larger businesses. It is just common sense and fair to allow them to do so. They do not have the power of big business, and acting collectively puts some balance back into the bargaining relationship. Some of the points made in the federal government's advertisement are worth repeating. It states that collective bargaining enables businesses of all sizes to work together cooperatively. It states that small business will benefit by joining together and that larger businesses can find it more efficient to negotiate with a group of small businesses rather than each one individually. I could not agree more. In fact, these are the very arguments which workers and their unions have been prosecuting for the past 100 years.

I know that the federal government's WorkChoices legislation currently allows collective bargaining, but we all know that this is a temporary aberration which they would dearly love to abolish if they got half a chance.

Why is the federal government not out there promoting and advocating collective bargaining for workers? Why does it think it is okay for small business but not for employees? Or is this just another case of the Howard government saying what is good for the goose is not good for the gander?

Kenilworth-Eumundi Road

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (7.42 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to share with members a matter of real public concern in my electorate—the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road in the heart of the electorate of Nicklin. I spoke on this matter earlier in the sittings. There are competing users on this road. In one case it is a designated tourist route, route No. 22, and it is also a well-used heavy haulage route. I am aware of the money allocated in the budget for the road by the minister and that the minister is due to make an announcement regarding the road in the near future.

The main purpose for raising this matter again is to stress to government and council bureaucrats who sit on speed review committees and who give important advice to ministers and senior staff that in making those recommendations to the government they need to ensure that the ministers get the best possible advice to assist them to make the very important decisions that they make. This is very timely just after the budget debate has concluded.

In relation to the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road and the Moy Pocket Road, I urge the bureaucrats involved to consider the following: our repeated requests for reduction in speed limits; our request for the need to bring forward major maintenance works on the roads; and our request for the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road to be a pilot trial program in Queensland for the installation of the two fixed speed cameras which the minister has recently spoken about. What we propose is that one camera be installed at the start and one installed at the end of the road and that they be linked. We can guarantee that the police attendance on the road will be reduced significantly. The speed cameras will guarantee that if vehicles travel between point A and point B and they get there quicker than they should they will get a ticket in the mail.

The reason we believe that the road is an ideal road for a pilot trial program is the acknowledged competing users of that road. Recently, over 3,000 tonnes of material was transported from one of our quarries along the road. I understand it has the capacity to have that amount of material excavated on a regular basis.

I thank the minister for listening to my calls for help and his willingness to meet with me and discuss these matters on a regular basis. I look forward to his announcements next week. Hopefully we could become one of the pilot trial programs for the installation of these fixed speed cameras in Queensland—in the heart of the Sunshine Coast in the heart of the electorate of Nicklin.

Yeppoon Surf Lifesaving Club; Emu Park Surf Lifesaving Club

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (7.45 pm): How many people in this House have walked onto a beach with their family or on their own and looked with pride at the red and gold flags of the lifesavers? Hopefully we all have. In this Year of the Lifesaver and the Centenary of Lifesaving I bring to the attention of this House the long service of a couple of lifesaving clubs in my electorate. In this Year of the Lifesaver the state government has provided substantial funding for the lifesaving movement and has also met the cost of their workers' compensation premium for this year.

My congratulations go to the Yeppoon Surf Lifesaving Club and the Emu Park Surf Lifesaving Club. On 26 May the Emu Park club celebrated 50 years, and I congratulate Steve Rye, the president, and his hardworking committee on maintaining a club that has such a high profile in the community. I have the honour to be a joint patron of that club. Their dinner on 26 May celebrated their 50 years.

The Yeppoon Surf Lifesaving Club tomorrow evening at St Brendan's School will celebrate 85 years. I wish Matt Cumming, the president, well. I point out to those listening that the Cumming family have for many years been staunch supporters of surf-lifesaving, along with the many people young and old who make up the lifesaving movement.

I wish both of those clubs all the best in future years. I thank them for their service to the electorate of Keppel. I thank all lifesaving clubs for their general commitment to the community and the safety of those people who live in it.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.47 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, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson